

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PLANNING SESSION**

November 20, 2019

5:15 PM

Conference Room, Commissioners' Office

Commissioners Present: Becky Langston, Susan Andrews, Rob Grant, Harry Lange, Andrew Zuerner. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy McMichael, County Clerk.

CALL TO ORDER. Chairman Langston called the meeting to order.

Memorial Garden at Library. Allison Nesnick, Assistant Branch Manager of the Harris County Library, was in attendance to discuss a proposed memorial garden in honor of Labertha "Bert" Tomlin who recently passed away and was an active member in the Friends of the Library. Ms. Nesnick proposed having the memorial garden with a bench as the focal point, with small stones that could be purchased for a nominal charge in memory of someone, and call it Bert's Corner; that there were two possible areas at the Library for the garden with one being between the parking lot and drive to the Community Center, or the other in front of the window near the entrance of the Library. She said there would be very little maintenance necessary, but would need assistance in placing stones. Following discussion, there was no objection from the Board and consensus was for the second option (in front of the window).

Secretary of State Visit. Chairman Langston said that she met last week with Brad Raffensperger, Georgia Secretary of State, who set up the meeting and who also met with Sherrail Jarrett, Elections Supervisor and Registrar; that Mr. Raffensperger indicated that Sherrail is going to need more storage space because she will be receiving 100 screens, 100 scanners, and 18 printers, and having to hold paper ballots at least two years. Mrs. McMichael said that the Registrar has space in the Courthouse, but she doesn't know how much space is available in that area. Discussion included that the rest of the Board should have been notified about the Secretary of State's visit in some manner.

Winery & Vineyard. Chairman Langston said that she had been contacted by Jason Powers, a Harris County citizen who works in Columbus, about the possibility of having a small winery and vineyard in the County, but that such is not currently allowed by County ordinances. Following discussion, which included that an amendment would be needed to the Alcohol Ordinance and/or Zoning Ordinance, Mrs. McMichael said that she would search for other counties' ordinances regarding such and let the Board know what she finds.

Ellerslie Park. Chairman Langston said that she had been contacted by Kelly Reynolds, citizen, about the possibility of having a Firefly Park at Ellerslie Park; that Ms. Reynolds and a CSU professor visited the Park and found it has the perfect environment for such - tall grasses, wetlands and logs - across the lake from the Lodge, and that it could also be the site for a Butterfly Park; and that having such could evolve into hosting 5K Firefly runs or other events. While there were no objections to the idea, a development plan from Ms. Reynolds was requested.

Elections/Voting. In response to Commissioner Andrews' comment to make sure there are ample supplies of paper and printer cartridges for elections, Chairman Langston said that the Secretary of State indicated there may be a possibility to receive a \$10,000 grant to help with expenses related to such. Mrs. McMichael said that Sherrail Jarrett, Elections Supervisor and Registrar, would be in attendance during the next Planning Session to demonstrate the new voting machines and discuss the upcoming March elections.

County Logo. Commissioner Grant said that some County vehicles have the old logo (the County outline) while others have the new logo (oak leaf) and still others have their own logo (Recreation, EMS, EMA/9-1-1, Sheriff's Office), and he would like to see consistency, even if the different logos incorporate the oak leaf logo in some way. Consensus was in agreement with consistency.

Planned Residential Developments (PRD). Chairman Langston said that she had tabled the resolution to extend the PRD moratorium during the November 19 meeting because the Board as a whole had not yet discussed the issue and she would like to hear any concerns. Discussion included that something needed to be done, that it should be part of the rewrite/revision of the land use ordinances, that the Board would prefer to have lots larger than 1/4 acre; that the County can go forward or backward but it can't stay the same; and that the rewrite/revision should be something that can last several years. The moratorium resolution will be on the December 3 meeting agenda for action.

Community Center Membership. Commissioner Grant said that the Community Center was built for the citizens of the County and they should not have to pay to use the facility, except for use of classroom, meeting room, or other room rentals. Mr. Dowling went through several options such as no charge to residents, but a charge for non-residents, implementing a county-wide recreation fee, or implementing a business model user fee where everyone would pay a one-time initiation fee and a monthly user fee, and that organized classes would always be a separate fee. Discussion included that Mr. Dowling will revise the fee schedule to a more workable document with fewer fees; that citizens can use the facility free of charge; that non-residents would pay a daily fee; that everyone would pay for rentals of the classroom, meeting room or other area for a special function; and that classes would also have a fee.

Short Term Vacation Rentals (STVR). Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, said that she had drafted two ordinances regarding STVR, one based on Forsyth County's ordinance, which included a special use permit, a process we already have in place, and the other based on Savannah's ordinance, which is more in depth. She asked the Board to review the documents and let her know which is preferred so that she can move forward the drafting the appropriate ordinance.

Employee Recognition. Commissioner Grant said that he was still interested in recognizing and appreciating employees. Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that he has discussed this several times with Department Heads and all indicated they are not interested in anything except having the employee compensation study completed and implemented. He suggested that in the meantime, because Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are on a Tuesday and Wednesday this year, that employees be given Monday, December 23, off as a holiday this year only. There were no objections, and this will be on the December 3 agenda for consideration by the Board.

Northwest Harris Business Park Economic Development. Commissioner Zuerner said that with the mulching of the 35 acres in the Northwest Harris Business Park, it would be an opportune time for the Development Authority to move forward with a proposal they received for a drone video. Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, said that the Development Authority, during their last meeting (November 12), discussed the matter and are moving forward with such in a way that would not require compliance with the County's procurement ordinance.

Northwest Harris Business Park Beautification of Entrances. Discussion included that plans for the beautification of the entrances to the Northwest Harris Business Park were obtained several years ago but no follow through occurred. Commissioner Lange said he still had his copy of the plan and will provide same to Mr. Dowling for follow up.

Northwest Harris Business Park Mulching. Commissioner Zuerner said that he was advised that with the completion of the mulching of the 35 acres, spraying should be done to control tree growth in the area.

Renaming of the Railroad Recreation Trail. Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that during the Ribbon Cutting for the first phase of the walking trail, he heard people talking about the name of the trail and that it was suggested that it be "Man O'War" Trail. Discussion included that appropriate signage is needed; that there is a historic sign regarding "Iron Horse", which could be an alternate name to consider, but that research is needed regarding the names. Action regarding the name of the trail will be taken at a future Board meeting once research has been completed.

ADJOURNMENT