

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PLANNING SESSION**

January 31, 2019

5:00 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.

**REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION.** Commissioner Lange made the motion to go into Executive Session at 5:01 PM to discuss real estate acquisition or disposal. The motion was seconded by Chairman Langston, and passed unanimously.

**RECONVENE PLANNING SESSION.** The motion to go back into the Planning Session was made by 5:30 PM by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Chairman Langston, and passed unanimously.

**DISCUSSION**

Also in Attendance: Community Development Director Brian Williams, EMS Chief Jimmy Carver, Assistant EMS Chief Bucky Searcy, and EMS Shift Supervisor Tami White, and Chief Jack McClung of Pine Mountain Valley VFD.

**Current Subdivision Ordinance: Not Allowing Development on Private Roads/Easements.**

Commissioner Andrews said she has two constituents who own property on easement roads and who would like to sell some property but can't do so because of County regulations. Brian Williams, Community Development Director, explained that County regulations prohibit the subdivision of property on an easement road unless it is to immediate family members or heirs; and that regulations require all lots front on public roads. Discussion included that the Subdivision regulations have been in place since 1982 and then revised in 1994; and that options for the constituents would include turning the roads over to the County, amending the Subdivision regulations, or going through the appeal process.

**Planning Commission Actions: Lot Ratios.** Chairman Langston said that she had concerns regarding recent action by the Planning Commission; that during the January 16 meeting, the Planning Commission tabled action on a preliminary plat due to the width-to-length lot ratio (of about one-to-seven) and the length of the cul-de-sac, and recommended approval of a rezoning with the condition that the lots have a width-to-length ratio of one-to-five; and that the Planning Commission wants to amend the Subdivision regulations to require such ratios to all lots in the County and not just to those in subdivision developments. Following discussion, consensus was not in favor of ratios and to not move forward with any such amendments until after the Comprehensive Plan has been updated, after which the County will undertake the revision/rewriting of the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations, for which a consultant would be needed.

**Authorized Ambulance Drivers.** Commissioner Andrews said she was asked by a constituent to bring the matter of allowing volunteer firefighters to drive ambulances to the Board. Bucky Searcy, Assistant EMS Chief, said that an EMS policy has been in place for many years and prohibits such, but firefighters have driven ambulances from time to time; that EMS crews have been reminded about the policy and the most recent instance of violation resulted in the crew being reorganized; that most volunteer firefighters do not have the correct drivers license (Class F) for driving vehicles over 26,000 pounds per state law and the ambulances and most of the fire trucks are over that weight limit; that county EMS employees are drug tested, have the proper training, and have experience driving ambulances; that deputies do drive ambulances from time to time, but they have been drug tested and are properly trained; that being a first responder does not qualify a person to be an ambulance driver; that volunteer firefighters have not had the proper training and are not drug tested; and that first responders have shown up at scenes drunk or with their children.

**FY 2019-2020 Budget Calendar.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, reviewed the proposed budget calendar for 2019-2020. Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, said that the Board will have an abbreviated version of the calendar, as a schedule, for approval during the February 5 meeting.

**FY 2019-2020 Board Budget Priorities.** Suggestions included funding for additional land clearing in the business parks, continue funding for Melody Lakes Dam costs, continue funding for Rails to Trails development, continue funding for Ellerslie Park development, and funding for County-wide email system (so that all will have harriscountytga.gov email).

**CVIOG Proposal Regarding Employee Compensation Study.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, reviewed the proposal from CVIOG to perform a county-wide employee compensation study for about \$26,000. Consensus was to include in budget for consideration. Mr. Dowling stressed that the sooner CVIOG is notified to move forward it would be possible to have results by November 2019.

**TIA SPLOST.** Commissioner Lange suggested that work start on wording for having the TIA SPLOST on the ballot in 2020; that he will touch base with the RVRC, which serves as the facilitator of the projects, but that projects are not included in the ballot wording; that right now, the passing lanes on SR 219, the north bound lane on US 27, and the widening of US 27 (in 2022) are part of TIA; and that projects for consideration could include roads, transportation, and Rails to Trail. There were no objections to the suggestion and Commissioner Lange said that perhaps the RVRC has a model ordinance regarding same.

**Employee Recognition Program.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, suggested having a monthly drawing of employees, whose anniversaries fall in that month for a \$50 gift card to Dollar General, which would cost \$600 a year. Commissioner Grant suggested a method of using restaurant gift cards of about \$15 that could be used at one of several different restaurants in exchange for advertising their business on the other side of the card, for which there would be no charge to the County, and to provide certificates of recognition to employees for their years of service. Discussion included that there the two could be combined each month with two names drawn - the first employee would get the gift card and the second the restaurant meal card, but that all employees in the drawing would receive certificates and have their photos (a group photo) in the newspaper. Consensus was to continue working on this

**Broadband.** Discussion included that Diverse Power has indicated something should be taking place in four to five months that will enable the provision of internet via electrical power lines; that a plan is needed as to what steps the County will take to implement broadband; and that more tower sites, that could benefit broadband as well as the County's public safety radio system, may be needed; that the determination of such locations should be performed by an outside firm; and that the cost would be \$40,000 to \$50,000.

**Report to Commissioners from Committees.** Commissioner Andrews said she had requested this be on the agenda and that she would like to see some type of report provided to the Board from the various committees. Discussion included that minutes of the Airport Committee, Recreation Board, and Council of Fire Chiefs are currently on the website, with the minutes of the Board of Zoning Adjustments, Development Authority, and Planning Commission soon to be posted. Commissioners Andrews said she will take a look at the minutes to see if they will suffice.

**Emergency Management Ordinance.** Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, distributed draft copies of the revised Emergency Management Ordinance, which is based on ACCG's recent draft ordinance for same, and said that revisions to the current document are needed due to changes by EMA over the years; that while the municipalities are included in the current document, they want to see the revised document before it goes through the amendment process for approval by the Board; and asked if there were objections to providing to the municipalities. There were no objections to sending the draft document to the municipalities.

**Timeline to Prepare Annual Legislative Goals and Meetings with Legislative Delegates.** Discussion included that while the recent meeting with the legislative delegates was good, it was at the wrong time of year; that the Board's legislative priorities should be approved during May and the meeting with the delegates should be in June; and that a meeting with the Board and the legislative delegates should be arranged to take place in June.

**Community Center Investigation.** There was a brief discussion regarding the possibility of missing funds at the Community Center.

**Youth Sports Association Issue.** There was a brief discussion regarding an issue of non-payment of fees to a Youth Sports Association (YSA) by a County employee with consensus for the YSA to handle it as they would for any other recreation participant.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**MINUTES APPROVAL.** The motion to approve these Planning Session minutes was made during Regular Session of February 19, 2019, by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.