

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
PLANNING SESSION AND AND CALLED SPECIAL MEETING
Harris County Fire Training Facility
10188 SR 116, Hamilton, GA 31811**

November 28, 2023

5:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Rob Grant (until 6:26 p.m.), Susan Andrews, Greg Gantt, Scott Lightsey, Bobby Irions. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Russell Britt, County Attorney; Andrea Dzioba, County Clerk.

CALLED SPECIAL MEETING

1. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **Resolution to Call for SPLOST Referendum.** County Attorney Russell Britt advised that a standard resolution has been provided to call the election for the SPLOST Referendum. He stated that the list of projects have been copied over into the resolution from the Intergovernmental Agreement and that the notice of election will be advertised by the Elections Superintendent after the resolution is approved.

The motion to approve the Resolution to Call for SPLOST Referendum was made by Vice-Chair Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Lightsey, and passed with four in favor (Andrews, Irions, Gantt, Lightsey) and with one opposed (Grant).

- B. **Kings Gap Water System.** County Manager Randy Dowling stated that the Kings Gap Water Association met with him on Monday, tendered the water system to the County, and provided the remaining funds in their bank account of approximately \$17,000.00. He stated that they are dissolving their Association and have provided their customer information, latest readings, and any other information that they had available. He said that the bank account funds will cover the costs of the water meters that the County would install if accepted. County Attorney Russell Britt stated that he talked with the EPD and that the County does not have to accept but said that no acceptance is not viable for the constituents of the County. Mr. Britt said that if not accepted that the EPD would fine the Association.

Discussion included that the water tower property adjacent to the system was provided by a resident of Kings Gap; that meters can be installed and the system repaired as needed; that the meters in place now are about 20 years old and the lines about 50 years old; and that maybe no additional taps should be allowed.

The motion to tender acceptance of the Kings Gap Water System conditioned on that there are no new water taps permitted on Westgate Circle and Lake Drive unless and until the waterlines are improved to County standards for capacity and safety was made by Chairman Grant, seconded by Commissioner Lightsey, and passed unanimously.

PLANNING SESSION

2. **Harris County Boards and Commissions** Chairman Grant introduced the agenda item and advised that he had asked for information related to the boards as there were some vacancies and wanted to verify the boards that currently exist. He stated that some boards are appointed by the Board of Commissioners and some have appointees of the County but the County does not control them. He said that he believes on some of the boards that are paid that some members are not showing up as expected. He doesn't think that individuals on boards should be paid for a meeting if they do not attend a meeting. Commissioner Gantt was interested in discussing the Board of Tax Assessors. Commissioner Gantt advised that a memo was received from a citizen related to the Board of Tax Assessors that discussed meeting attendance and payments made to members for meetings that were not attended. County Clerk Andrea Dzioba advised that no response was made to the memorandum due to it being sent anonymously and there not being anyone to specifically respond to. Commissioner Gantt would like if this were to ever occur again that it was addressed

more quickly and appropriately. Commissioner Lightsey stated that he was told that he was told that member attendance and payments made for attendance is the responsibility of the Board of Tax Assessors. County Attorney Russell Britt said that he previously advised that the Board of Tax Assessors is a separate entity and the only control the board has is the ability to appoint, to seek removal, and that there is a due process provision in state statute that requires a hearing in front of a superior court judge and their determination that the person is not fulfilling the duties of that office. Mr. Britt stated that he had recommended that the allegations be investigated internally and that is what has been done.

Ms. Connie Guy, citizen in attendance, advised the Board that she was the individual that sent the anonymous memo and is a concerned citizen that did not want to make her concerns about herself.

County Clerk Andrea Dzioba advised that information was gathered and that it appeared that check requests were created but not always sent to Finance to be paid. She said that there is a difference between what check requests existed and payments that were actually issued. She further said that there were instances that payments were made to two members for which meeting attendance did not occur in the last 18 months. She advised that in September of 2022 that members began to be paid through payroll and, if members did not turn in any information for payroll, no payments are made.

Commissioner Gantt requested that information be pulled and analyzed back to January 2021. The consensus of the Board was to have the information pulled from the Board of Tax Assessors, cross reference with information from Finance, and the spreadsheet expanded to include the additional data.

Chairman Grant left the meeting at 6:26 p.m. and Vice-Chair Andrews took over running of the meeting.

3. **Jimmy Cotty - Manufactured Housing** Mr. Jimmy Cotty, Executive Director of the Georgia Manufactured Housing Association, addressed the Board and stated that housing has become an issue across the state; that their products are far superior products that ever before; that the industry is highly regulated; that the homes have been considered manufactured housing - not mobile homes - since 1976; that manufactured homes and modular homes meet state minimum code standards; that the housing is made in a controlled environment; and that manufacturing housing does not lose value as they did previously. Also in attendance was Jason from Preferred Homes.

Vice-Chair Andrews recessed the Planning Session at 7:03 p.m.

Vice-Chair Andrews called the Planning Session back into order at 7:15 p.m.

4. **Rick Morris - RVRC - Joint Comprehensive Plan Update**. Mr. Rick Morris from the River Valley Regional Commission (RVRC) was in attendance to provide the Board with an update related to the last meeting with stakeholders. He said that he would like the Board to contact him if they have any additional input that they would like to add to the information compiled so far. He stated that he still needs to talk to the fire departments to discuss their needs and input for the Comprehensive Plan update and he hopes to attend an upcoming meeting of the Fire Chiefs. Mr. Morris would like to attend the January 16, 2024 Board meeting and have some public input and discussion in the hour prior to the regular meeting.
5. **Road Paving Lists** Vice-Chair Andrews introduced the topic related to the road paving lists. She advised the Cliatt Circle does not need to be on the list but that Old McKee should have been paved a long time ago and would like Old McKee to be moved up to replace Cliatt Circle. Discussion included that they had previously hoped to use TSPLOST dollars to work through the list and get roads paved; that there are instances when the right-of-way can not be obtained and the road then not paved; that Kingsboro is next on the list; that utility poles may be an issue in some areas; that there are funds budgeted to have an Request for Proposals (RFP) conducted for a road survey/engineering study to be completed that would include maps, assessments, crash incidents, and data analytics; that there needs to be a more efficient way to approach road paving than just compiling a list; and that there should be a systematic process. County Manager Randy Dowling expects that the RFP will be created during this budget cycle.

Related to the Boards item, County Manager Randy Dowling informed the Board that an Airport Authority was created by the State Legislature and would like the Board to consider whether the Board would like to complete the creation of the Airport Authority. Vice-Chair Andrews stated that maybe the County Attorney should look into the Airport Authority. County Clerk Andrea Dzioba will send information to the County Attorney related to the Airport Authority.

The Board by consensus would like to meet on Tuesday, December 19, 2023 for their regular meeting.

The Planning Session and Called Special Meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

Rob Grant, Chairman

Attest:

Andrea Dzioba, County Clerk