

**HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION**

June 6, 2017
7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: J. Harry Lange, Jim Woods, Susan Andrews, Martha Chewning, Becky Langston. Staff Present: Randy Dowling, County Manager; John Taylor, County Attorney; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Lange called the Regular Session to order.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** At the request of Chairman Lange, Clyde "Bit" Geter, Animal Control Officer, led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the Regular Session minutes of May 16, 2017, and the Work Sessions of May 16, May 23, May 30 and June 1, 20017 was made by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.
4. **OLD BUSINESS**
 - A. **Tax Refund Request: Terry Nolen.** Chairman Lange said that a motion to disapprove the refund of \$20.25 was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and action tabled by Commissioner Chewning pending information as to whether the title of the wrecked vehicle was transferred to the insurance company before the due date of April 11. He said that the ad valorem tax was due April 11 but paid on March 6, and the wreck occurred March 16. Nancy McMichael, County Clerk, said that evidence provided shows the transfer to the insurance company was made on April 10. Following discussion, the motion to disapprove failed by a vote of one (Langston) to four (Chewning, Andrews, Lange, Woods). The motion to approve the refund request of \$20.25 was made by Commissioner Chewning, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed with four in favor (Chewning, Andrews, Lange, Woods) and one opposed (Langston).
5. **NEW BUSINESS**
 - A. **First Reading: Application of Audrianna Reshae Chaudhry for Beer & Wine Off Premises at Citgo Quik Mart, 9089 GA Highway 18, Pine Mountain.** Chairman Lange said that this was the First Reading and that the application has been recommended for approval by the Sheriff's Office and Community Development. Audrianna Reshae Chaudhry, applicant, appeared before the Board and said that she just wants to be able to open the business. There being no questions, Chairman Lange asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to this application. There being none, he said that the Second Reading is scheduled for June 20.
 - B. **Ambulance Remount: Declare Surplus and Trade Toward Remount Cost.** Chairman Lange said that with the recent remount of an ambulance, the company that performed the work offered \$4,500 toward the cost of the remount, originally \$29,500, if they could keep the chassis that has 300,000+ miles on it, thus reducing the cost to \$25,000. He said that the trade took place, but ratification is necessary by the Board. Following discussion, the motion to declare the chassis (2002 International, VIN 2229) as surplus and to use as a trade-in, with a value of \$4,500, was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed unanimously.
 - C. **Northwest Harris VFD: Request for Match Toward New Truck.** Byron Hawkins, Chief of Northwest Harris VFD (NWHVFD), appeared before the Board to request the County pay match of \$12,143 for a 2017 tanker purchased through a FEMA grant in exchange for the title to the truck. Discussion included that the request should have been made before grant application was made, and that NWHVFD has paid the match and would need to be reimbursed. Following discussion, the motion for the County to pay the match of \$12,143 to NWHVFD in exchange for the title to the truck was made by Commissioner Langston, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed unanimously. Consensus was to make the payment prior to June 30. Chief Hawkins also said that they plan to break ground on their new fire department this month.

- D. **Sheriff's Office: Request for Palm Scanner/Fingerprint Machine.** Chairman Lange said that Sheriff's Office had applied for and received a grant award for a palm scanner/fingerprint machine for use at the Jail to palm scan/fingerprint sex offenders; that the machine has to be purchased and then reimbursement will be made; that it is being requested that the County pay the \$20,000, which will be reimbursed per the grant award from the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council, and that the existing fingerprint machine currently at the Jail will be moved to the Courthouse for use in fingerprinting non-criminals such as teachers, firearm permits, adoptions, etc. Following discussion, the motion to approve paying the \$20,000 was made by Commissioner Woods, Commissioner Langston, and passed unanimously.
- E. **Public Hearing I: Budget FY 17/18.** Chairman Lange said that this is the first public hearing regarding the FY 17/18 budget; that there have been five work sessions regarding the budget; and that the Board has had a lot of hard decisions to make. Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that the complete proposed budget, consisting of 150 pages, is on the County's website. Commissioner Woods explained the budget process, from initial submission by the Department Heads and Constitutional Officers to the five work sessions. Chairman Lange asked if anyone wished to comment on the proposed budget.

Erin Campbell, citizen who lives on Walking Stick Drive, and asked why certain items related to public safety (portable jack, jaws of life, body armor, tasers, general replacement equipment, and four deputies) had been cut. Responses included that the portable jack was not really a necessity since the request was due to having to change a tire on a fire truck, which was successful by other means; that there is another jaws of life; and that the body armor, tasers, and the four deputies are back in the budget.

Chairman Lange announced that comments will continue after the scheduled Public Hearing for a Rezoning application occurs.

6. **PUBLIC HEARING @ 7:30 PM**

- A. **Conflict of Interest Forms.** The Conflict of Interest Forms were completed at the request of Chairman Lange.
- B. **Public Hearing Procedures.** The Public Hearing procedures were explained by Chairman Lange.
- C. **Application of Edgar Hughston Builder, Inc., to Rezone 144.16 acres of a 154.16 acre tract on Map 062, Parcel 014, Land Lots 171, 182 & 183, Land District 18; from A-1 (Agricultural & Forestry) to R-1 (Single Family Residential) for residential home sites; current use recreation/residential and farm; proposed use residential lots; property located at 13870 GA Hwy. 315, Cataula.** Chairman Lange called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application, and said that approval had been recommended by both the Planning Commission and staff.

Edgar Hughston, of Edgar Hughston Builders, Inc., appeared before the Board and said that he proposes to have seven of the 47 lots as an extension of Maple Creek Court (a cul-de-sac); that all the lots are two acres or more; that extensive soil testing has occurred to septic tank regulations. There being no questions from the Board, Chairman Lange asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of this application.

Gwen Hayes, citizen and owner of the subject property, appeared before the Board and said that it has taken seven months to get this far in the development process; that the Planning Commission did a good job regarding this development; that the subject property of 144 acres is part of a 154-acre tract, and her home is located on the 10-acre difference; that Mr. Hughston builds nice homes that are affordable to first-time buyers. She then discussed issues that were brought up during the Planning Commission meeting by those in opposition to include that comment was made that only those who have something to gain are in favor of the rezoning, and submitted letters from two adjacent property owners indicating they are in favor of the rezoning. (Letters have been placed in the rezoning file of Mr. Hughston.)

John Bunn, citizen and realtor, appeared before the Board and said that the price range of the proposed homes is in demand by prospective home owners; that more homes are needed in the County; and that he hopes the Board will consider approval of the rezoning.

There being no further comments in favor, Chairman Lange asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition to the rezoning.

Patti Greene, citizen who lives on Holland Road, appeared before the Board and said that she is not in favor of the rezoning; that the property is beautiful but it won't be once there are 47 homes on it; that the increase in homes will cause more of a burden on law enforcement, fire, and EMS; that people move to the area to get out of Columbus; that comments made during a recent Work Session indicate the county is short-handed when it comes to building inspections and more houses will increase that burden; that she hopes the Board votes in favor of the people who live in the area now; and that she is opposed to the rezoning.

Kevin Burns, citizen who lives on Woodland Drive, appeared before the Board and said that he has lived in the County for 26 years; that he is opposed to the rezoning; that while growth is inevitable; that the development will increase traffic in the area; that there will be more of a burden on the Sheriff's Office, fire departments and EMS; that residential tax dollars alone cannot fund the County's infrastructure; that the Commissioners have become greedy with residential tax dollars as base to fund most of the County needs; and that the Board weighs heavily on the issue in making their final decision.

Joyce Aderhold Cosby, citizen who lives on Holland Road, appeared before the Board and said that her property is slightly lower than the Hayes' property, so they get the runoff from the subject property; that the County is losing its rural areas due to growth and developments; that traffic is bad now on Holland Road and will only get worse with more houses; that more law enforcement will be needed; that schools will only become more crowded; that she would like to see the County remain more rural; and that the property will not be pretty once there are 47 houses on it.

Henry B. Aderhold, Jr., citizen who lives on Holland Road, appeared before the Board and said that he has a large family in the area with more family members expected for whom he will provide property for same; that he isn't against growth, but with the lay of the land and the additional road, a closer look is needed as to where people are going to travel; that eventually a traffic light is going to be needed on Holland Road and Highway 315; that there are other areas of the County that would be more conducive to building houses; that he is concerned about the proposed layout of the development; and that the Board should consider tabling the matter and bringing it up again.

There being no further comments in opposition, Chairman Lange asked Mr. Hughston for rebuttal.

Mr. Hughston, in rebuttal, said that he appreciates the comments; that he wants the County to stay as rural as it can, but the demand for homes is too great to not address the need for same; that the proposed lots will be two-plus acres, especially around the lake; that the State (Health Department) controls septic issues and a soil study has to be done on each lot before a permit is issued; that there has to be a primary and secondary fill system designated on each lot; and that he thinks the County is growing and this development is part of the growth. In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Hughston said that the proposed homes will range from \$265,000 to \$340,000 and will have cement board siding, on which paint lasts a lot longer than on other siding, and aluminum soffits; that the homes will be well constructed and most will be two-story, which has a smaller footprint than ranch-style homes.

There being no further comments or questions, Chairman Lange closed the Public Hearing.

Chairman Lange said that the Board does not make zoning decisions based on what money it may or may not bring to the County; that it is not one of the criteria used in zoning decisions. He then made the motion to approve this Rezoning application. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed with four in favor (Lange, Chewning, Langston, Woods) and one opposed (Andrews).

7. **NEW BUSINESS (CONTINUED)**

- E. **Public Hearing I: Budget FY 17/18 (Continued)**. Chairman Lange said that the Public Hearing will continue with comments from the public, and that Joe Weldon, Coroner, had signed up to speak.

Joe Weldon, Coroner, appeared before the Board and said that he understands that his proposed budget has been reduced by the cost of the health care he had requested; that he would like to have that cost reinstated because he comes into contact with at least one deceased person a week and while he takes precautions when dealing with deceased individuals, there are hazards involved ranging from blood-borne pathogens to environmental issues; that while he is covered by the County's Workers Compensation, he would rather be able to go to his physician for various tests related to what he comes into contact with; that having the benefit of mental health coverage due to his profession; that of the coroners of surrounding counties with whom he has exchanged emails regarding health insurance, 90% have indicated they are provided coverage by their respective counties; and that the last elected coroner (Lori Camp) had health insurance through the County and the last appointed coroner (Jimmy Carver) also had health insurance because he was also a County employee. Mr. Weldon concluded by asking that the Board consider this request.

There being no further comments regarding the proposed budget, Chairman Lange closed the Public Hearing and said that the second Public Hearing will be during the June 20 meeting, after which the intent is to adopt the budget.

8. **COUNTY MANAGER**

- A. **Project Updates**. Randy Dowling, County Manager, brought the Board up to date on various projects, as follows:

- (1) Library. Project is going well; construction meetings are held every two weeks; the project is on schedule and on budget; and a banner regarding the construction should be installed within the next two weeks.
- (2) Website. The new website went live about a week ago.
- (3) LMIG 2016 & 2017. Bid has gone out, mandatory pre-bid is June 15, and the bids are due June 22 with award scheduled for July 5.
- (4) Hardage Road. Bid has gone out, and bids are due June 22 with award scheduled for July 5.
- (5) High Speed Internet. Some County facilities (courthouse, 911, community development, sheriff's office and jail) went live with high speed internet yesterday, and other facilities in Hamilton are scheduled to go live in the next two to three weeks.
- (6) 911 Radio System Improvements. The Request for Proposals (RFP) has gone out, the pre-proposal conference was held June 1, and proposals are due June 23 with award scheduled for July 18.
- (7) Melody Lakes Dam. The Emergency Action Plan (EAP) will be submitted to the State EPD by the deadline (June 30).
- (8) SPLOST. Increased slightly for April, which is an increase from March and the same time last year.
- (9) LOST. Increased slightly for April, which is an increase from March and the same time last year.
- (10) TSPLOST. Decreased slightly for April, which is a decrease from March and the same time last year.
- (11) Single Family Home Building Permits. Eleven permits issued during the month of May, and if 13 are issued in June, the total will be the same as last fiscal year (at 161).

9. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

A. **Resolution of Intent to Abandon a Portion of Old C Street.** John Taylor, County Attorney, said that a resolution had been drafted for the purpose of abandoning a portion of old C Street, which the Commissioners have never abandoned. He said that Dollar General is looking at a property in Pine Mountain Valley and a title search revealed old C Street going through the front of the lot; that with the adoption of this resolution, the proper notification to adjacent property owners and advertising will take place, after which the Resolution to Abandon will be acted on by the Board during the appropriate meeting and the abandoned property will be quit claimed to the appropriate individuals. The motion to approve the Resolution of Intent to Abandon a portion of Old C Street was made by Commissioner Chewning, seconded by Commissioner Woods, and passed unanimously.

10. **ADJOURNMENT.** There being no further business to discuss, the motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Chewning, and passed unanimously.

J. Harry Lange, Chairman

Attest:

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk