

HARRIS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION

June 16, 2020

7:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present in person: Becky Langston, Susan Andrews, Rob Grant, Andrew Zuerner. Commissioners Present via telephone: J. Harry Lange. Staff Present in person: Randy Dowling, County Manager; Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk. Staff Absent: John Taylor, County Attorney.

1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Langston called the Regular Session to order. She announced that John Taylor, County Attorney, was absent due to illness, and that Commissioner Lange is taking part in the meeting via telephone.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Chairman Langston led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **MINUTES.** The motion to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2020, Regular Session was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.

4. **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. **Second Reading: Amendment to Alcoholic Beverages Ordinance to For Winery.** Chairman Langston said that the First Reading was held on March 21, 2020, and that this Reading was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She asked if anyone in attendance wished to comment. There being none, she asked if there were any comments from the Board. Commissioner Andrews said that any wine sold at a winery, other than the wines produced on site, must come from wineries located in Georgia. The motion to approve this amendment was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Chairman Langston, and passed unanimously.

5. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **Kim Tharp: Chamber Tourism Update.** Kim Tharp, President & CEO of the Harris County Chamber of Commerce, appeared before the Board and made a PowerPoint presentation regarding tourism and marketing of the County utilizing social media and billboards.
- B. **Requests for Tax Refund.** Chairman Langston said that two requests for tax refunds had been received, as follows:
 - (1) **Rowan, Kimberly S.** Refund of \$75.39 due to having purchased her vehicle tag before her birthday and selling the vehicle before due date; and that the Tax Commissioner and the Board of Tax Assessors agree with the request.
 - (2) **Scott, Richard Allen.** Refund of \$93.33 due to having purchased his motorcycle tag on April 10 and selling it April 11; and that the Tax Commissioner and the Board of Tax Assessors agree with the request.

The motion to approve both requests was made by Commissioner Zuerner, seconded by Commissioner Grant, and passed unanimously.

- C. **Budget Public Hearing II: FY 20/21.** Chairman Langston called the Public Hearing to order and said that this is the second of two public hearings regarding the proposed budget. She asked if anyone wished to comment on their proposed budget. There being none, she closed the Public Hearing, and asked if there was any discussion from the Board.

In response to a question from Commissioner Andrews, Randy Dowling, County Manager, said that he had not included the penalties related to the conservation breaches, and Clint Chastain, CFO, said that those funds would be revenue for the current fiscal year.

Discussion took place regarding the truck for the Tax Assessor and the new full-time clerk for the Tax Commissioner, both of which had been removed by the County Manager but requested to be put back in the budget by the appropriate department head, and included a review of the items added and the items eliminated from the original proposed budget. Discussion was suspended in order to hold the scheduled Public Hearings.

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

- A. **Conflict of Interest Forms.** The Conflict of Interest forms were completed at the request of Chairman Langston.
- B. **Explanation of Public Hearing Procedures.** Chairman Langston explained the procedures involved regarding the scheduled Public Hearings.
- C. **Application of Michael Fuson to Rezone 0.88 acres on Map 085, Part of Parcel 095; Land Lot 114, Land District 18, from A-1 (Agricultural/Forestry) to C-4 (Highway Commercial); current use gravel parking area and green space; proposed use gravel parking area and storage for commercial use; property located at 7355 GA Highway 85, Waverly Hall.** Chairman Langston called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application, and said that both the Planning Commission and Staff had recommended approval of this application. Michael Fuson, applicant, appeared before the Board and said that his family had always assumed the property was zoned commercial and he just needs to get it corrected. Chairman Langston asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to this application. There being none, she closed the Public Hearing and asked for a motion. Commission Grant commented that this was just a zoning oversight to be corrected and made the motion to approve this rezoning application. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Andrews and passed unanimously.
- D. **Application of Edgar Hughston Builder, Inc., to rezone 58.4 acres on Map 084, Part of Parcel 112A004, Land Lot 98, Land District 18, from A-1 (Agricultural/Forestry) to R-1 (Single Family Residential); current use timber land; proposed use single family homes; property located on Abberly Lane, Ellerslie.** Chairman Langston called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application, and said that both the Planning Commission and Staff had recommended approval of this application. Edgar Hughston, representing Edgar Hughston Builder, Inc., appeared before the Board and said that this property is the last piece of property on Abberly Lane and that all the surrounding property is zoned R-1. In response to questions, Mr. Hughston said that the lots would be two or more acres in size and that the homes would be similar to the existing homes. In response to Commissioner Andrews' comment about trying to avoid "skinny" lots, Mr. Hughston said that he would try. Chairman Langston asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to this application. There being none, she closed the Public Hearing and asked for a motion. The motion to approve this rezoning application was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Zuerner, and passed unanimously.
- E. **Application of Verizon Wireless/Lance Rucker for Special Use Permit for a Cellular Communications Tower on a 100' x 100' compound located on 51.7 acres on Map 079, Parcel 011, Land Lot 13, Land District 21, located at 285 Harris Road, Ellerslie, and zoned A-1 (Agricultural/Forestry).** Chairman Langston called the Public Hearing to order, read the specifics of the application, said that the Planning Commission had recommended approval for the 100' x 100' compound only via the access easement and that Staff had recommended approval. Shannon Kraiger, representing Verizon, appeared before the Board and said that the tower would provide needed coverage in the area for cell phones as well as communications. Chairman Langston asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of or in opposition to this application. In response to a question from Commissioner Grant, Bucky Searcy, EMS Chief, said that the cell coverage would help with EMS phones and data coverage, but not the public safety radio system. In response to a question from Commission Andrews about any health issues related to 5G technology, Ms. Kraiger said she would contact Verizon and have the information sent to Brian Williams, Community Development Director, with whom she has been corresponding regarding the application. There being no further comments, Chairman Langston closed the Public Hearing and asked for a motion. The motion to approve this Special Use Permit only for the 100' x 100' compound via the current access easement was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Chairman Langston, and passed unanimously.

7. **NEW BUSINESS (CONTINUED)**

- C. **Budget Public Hearing II: FY 20/21 (continued).** Discussion continued regarding the items added to or deleted from the proposed budget, to include the funds for the Water Works trucks, which have been ordered but not yet received, would come from Water Works reserve funds; and that no funds from Solid Waste,

Water Works, or General Funds reserves were used to balance the budget due to the increase in the millage rate last year. Regarding the repair/replacement of Recreation field lighting, consensus was to not put back in at this time but consider an amendment to the budget at the appropriate time. Regarding the truck for the Tax Assessor, there were no objections to adding that back into the budget, and regarding the clerk for the Tax Commissioner, consensus was to add the position back into the budget but to not fill the position until September, after the millage rate has been set as it could have an effect on the budget. There being no further comments, Chairman Langston closed the Public Hearing.

- D. **Budget FY 2020-21 Adoption and Resolution.** The motion to approve the FY 2020-21 budget as discussed and amended during the preceding Public Hearing and to adopt the Adoption Resolution regarding same was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Andrews, and passed unanimously.

8. **COUNTY MANAGER**

- A. **Project Updates.** Randy Dowling, County Manager, reviewed various projects, as follows:

- (1) Replacement Telephone System. The project is being advertised and proposals are due July 2.
- (2) Hay Baler. Funds were rolled into the new budget for this purchase.
- (3) Three County Bridges. The design work came in today and bid will be going out this month.
- (4) Scoreboards. Most of the 10 scoreboards have been installed with those remaining to be installed this week.
- (5) Soccer Complex Pavilion. Substantially complete and should be finished by the end of the month.
- (6) Rails to Trails Project. Project is complete; have received partial payment from the Federal grant, waiting on balance and reimbursement from the other two grants.
- (7) Water Works Dump Truck & Two Replacement Vehicles. Ordered but not yet received; therefore, funds have been moved into next fiscal year.
- (8) Land Use & Development Codes Update. Project is ongoing; funds are in next fiscal year. In response to a question, Mr. Dowling said that a new schedule was received late this afternoon but not yet reviewed.
- (9) Melody Lakes Dam. Still waiting for approval of construction plans by the State; in process of acquiring two easements.
- (10) Compensation Study by CVIIOG. Project is ongoing and should be completed in late June or early July.
- (11) SPLOST Collections. At 96% of budgeted collections with two months to go, so all appears to be good.
- (12) LOST Collections. At 96% of budgeted collections with two months to go, so all appears to be good.
- (13) T-SPLOST Collections. Also at 96% of budgeted collections with two months to go.
- (14) Single Family Building Permits. Appears to be reaching a plateau; at 207 with one month to go; last year's total was 232.
- (15) Solid Waste Tonnage. Should exceed 16,000 tons for the fiscal year.

9. **COUNTY ATTORNEY**

A. **Acceptance of Resignation.** Chairman Langston said that John Taylor had tendered his resignation as County Attorney, and the Board has accepted his resignation. She said that Mr. Taylor served the County as its Attorney since 1999 and thanked him for his service.

B. **Appointment of County Attorney.** Chairman Langston said that with the resignation of John Taylor, the Board interviewed individuals interested in the position and an offer was made to Russell Britt, of Hall Booth Smith, and he has accepted. She said that a motion is needed to formally appoint Mr. Britt as County Attorney for the remainder of this calendar year, and that during the first meeting in January, the Board would reappoint him for the calendar year or make a change. The motion to appoint Russell Britt as the County Attorney for the remainder of this calendar year was made by Commissioner Lange, seconded by Commissioner Zuerner, and passed unanimously. Chairman Langston said that Mr. Britt will be at the July 7 meeting.

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

Becky Langston, Chairman

Attest:

Nancy D. McMichael, County Clerk