

The Regular Meeting of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, October 7, 2008, at 7:00 p.m., in the Commission Meeting Chambers at the Oconee County Courthouse.

Members Present: Chairman Melvin Davis
Commissioner Jim Luke
Commissioner Donald H. Norris
Commissioner Margaret S. Hale
Commissioner Chuck Horton

Staff Present: Administrative Officer Alan Theriault
County Attorney Daniel Haygood
County Clerk Gina M. Lindsey

Jeff Benko, Finance Director
BR White, Planning Director
Jason Gantt, Planner
Brad Callender, Planner
Krista Gridley, Planner
William White, Project Coordinator
Rusty Haygood, Economic Development Director
Chris Thomas, Utility Director
Emil Beshara, Public Works Director
Steve Hansford, Code Enforcement Director

Media Present: Blake Giles, The Oconee Enterprise
Adam Thompson, Athens Banner-Herald

Chairman Davis began the meeting with a Moment of Silence. Commissioner Luke led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Davis recognized Dr. Phil Branyon and his students from Gainesville State College.

Minutes: On motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Norris, Minutes of the August 26, September 2 and September 30, 2008 meetings were approved as distributed.

Regional Economic Development Task Force: Ed Perkins, Chairman of the Oconee Athens-Clarke Regional Economic Development Task Force, presented the final report of the Task Force. Mr. Perkins explained the purpose of the Task Force was to evaluate the feasibility of initiating a regional economic development effort initially involving Oconee and Athens-Clarke counties.

The Task Force Report concluded the establishment of a world-class regional economic development entity in the Athens-Clarke/Oconee area is critical to the long-term health of the region. The report identified the five most critical factors in building a strong regional economic development entity. These factors included the appointment of an active, knowledgeable and committed board, comprised of both public and private sector members; reaching a clear consensus on the mission of the organization; the hiring of results-oriented, world-class leadership knowledgeable of the region and skilled at relationship building, fundraising and communication; the development of a mutually supportive relationship with the state government and statewide developers, including keeping databases up to date and maintaining an aggressive public awareness program with economic development leaders in Atlanta; and, the development of strong fundraising capabilities.

Mr. Perkins reported the implementation of a regional economic development entity would occur in three phases. Phase I would include the creation of a Regional Economic Development Board. Phase II is centered on product development. Phase III combines the ideas of providing one entry point, including more counties and dedicated funding.

The Task Force recommended the proposed Regional Economic Development Board be made up of 15 members - six members appointed by the Athens-Clarke County Mayor, six members appointed by the Oconee County Commission Chairman, the Athens-Clarke County Mayor, the Oconee County Commission Chairman and a UGA representative appointed by the UGA President.

The Board of Commissioners discussed potential plans to meet with the Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Council, costs and funding, recruitment of the proposed Regional Economic Development Board members and the level of economic development that would be looked at first. By consensus, the Board agreed to place this item on the October 28, 2008 agenda to allow for public comment.

Rezone Request #5742 – Oconee 316 Associates: The Board held a public hearing on Rezone Request No. 5742 by Oconee 316 Associates, LLC, ±68.045 acres, located on SR Loop 10, Epps Bridge Parkway and the proposed Oconee Connector Extension, from A-1 and AR-1 to B-2. Planner Brad Callender presented the staff report.

Frank Bishop, representing the applicant, reminded the Board a constitutional challenge was presented to the Board of Commissioners office on August 26, 2008. Tom Collins and Alex Pannell spoke in favor of the request, expressing their support for the proposed 444,056 sq. ft. retail center (Epps Bridge Centre).

Lee Becker expressed concern for the wetlands and streams on the property. He noted federal permits and state variance allowances are not yet approved. Mr. Becker suggested additional conditions to the rezone regarding the entrance/exit on Epps Bridge Parkway.

Kim Joyner, Bob Kraeling and Pat Priest were concerned with the development's impact on water sources and the environment. Russ Page spoke against the destruction of the wetlands and mitigation to a site in Greene County. Brenda Rashleigh, representing the Upper Oconee Watershed Network, and Jesslyn Shields, representing the Georgia River Network, raised concerns on the damaging effects to McNutt Creek. Sarah Bell said with the current economic conditions, the county should not assume the development will generate a lot of tax dollars.

Mr. Bishop explained mitigation must be done in the Upper Oconee Basin and the developers were only able to find property to establish a mitigation bank in Greene County. He said plans are to enhance the landscaping and tree canopy on the property and to preserve some of the wetlands on the site.

The Board discussed the additional traffic and its effect on Epps Bridge Parkway until the Oconee Connector Extension is constructed. Mr. Bishop agreed to a condition of the rezone that would limit the development to one-third its proposed size until the Oconee Connector Extension is built. County Attorney Daniel Haygood modified the condition to state no development permits can be issued prior to the Georgia DOT signing a contract for the construction of the Oconee Connector Extension and until the portion of the Oconee Connector Extension project is completed, no more than one-third of the overall building square footage of the site shall be issued CO's and allowed to use Epps Bridge Parkway as access to the development.

Commissioner Horton made a motion to approve Rezone Request No. 5742 by Oconee 316 Associates, LLC, ±68.045 acres, located on SR Loop 10, Epps Bridge Parkway and the proposed Oconee Connector Extension, from A-1 and AR-1 to B-2, with conditions. Commissioner Luke seconded the motion. Commissioners Horton, Luke and Norris voted yes. Commissioner Hale voted no. Rezone Request No. 5742 was approved. **See Documentation in Ordinances and Resolutions Book No. 18.**

Variance Request #5766 – DG Watkinville: The Board held a public hearing on Special Exception Variance Request No. 5766 by DG Watkinville, LLC, ±1.541 acres, located on Business Highway 441, to reduce the required buffer width. Planner Jason Gantt presented the staff report.

Alan Caddell, representing the applicant, requested a 20-foot natural buffer be allowed rather than a 50-foot buffer along the side of the lot line of the B-1 zoned property where it abuts property to the north zoned AR-1. He stated the 50-foot buffer requirement would impact the feasibility of building on the lot.

Jud Shiver, owner of the property, said the property was originally subdivided from a larger parcel and the lot was approved and recorded with a 10-foot buffer.

No one requested to speak on this variance request.

On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Norris, the Board unanimously approved Variance Request No. 5766 by DG Watkinville, LLC, ±1.541 acres, located on Business Highway 441, to reduce the required buffer width, with conditions. **See Documentation in Ordinances and Resolutions Book No. 18.**

Board of Health: On motion by Commissioner Hale and second by Commissioner Norris, the Board unanimously reappointed Elaine Gunter to the Oconee County Board of Health for a five-year term expiring December 31, 2013.

Development Authority: On motion by Commissioner Norris and second by Commissioner Luke, the Board unanimously appointed Larry Benson, John Morrison, Rick Rodrigue and Rick Waller as Associate Members to the Oconee County Industrial Development Authority for two-year terms expiring December 31, 2010.

Administrative Hearing Office: On motion by Commissioner Hale and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board unanimously appointed Eric Wayne Norris to the position of Administrative Hearing Officer for an initial term expiring December 31, 2008 and an additional four-year term expiring December 31, 2012.

Commissioner Norris recused himself from the discussion and vote.

2009 SPLOST Timeline: On motion by Commissioner Hale and second by Commissioner Norris, the Board unanimously approved the following timeline for the 2009 SPLOST:

Oct. 21, 2008	Public Information/input for recommended 2009 SPLOST projects submitted by Department Directors – Civic Center, 7:00 p.m.
Nov. 3, 2008	Public Information/input for recommended 2009 SPLOST projects submitted by Department Directors – Civic Center, 7:00 p.m.
Nov. 25, 2008	Public input and tentative prioritization on 2009 SPLOST allocations by Board of Commissioners – BOC Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Courthouse
Dec. 2, 2008	Board of Commissioners approval of 2009 SPLOST allocations by resolution and call for 2009 SPLOST referendum. Approval of Intergovernmental Agreements with cities – BOC Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Courthouse

Consent Agenda: On motion by Commissioner Norris and second by Commissioner Luke, the Board unanimously approved the following Consent Agenda items:

- **Alcohol Licenses:** Approved a 2008 Alcohol License for Kui Aura Hibachi and Grill (Beer Only) – Mr. Chang Hua Lin; Plates at Market Center (Beer and Wine) – Mr. Keith Rabideau; and Taqueria La Parrilla (Beer and Wine) – Mr. Alonso Haro.
- **Pumper Truck Purchase:** Approved the bid of \$337,343.00 by Sutphen Corporation and an amendment to the SPLOST line item budget of \$7,118.00 for the purchase of a pumper truck.

Citizen Comments: Tom Leach asked Chairman Davis to contact him regarding a Citizens Forum.

Executive Session: On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Norris, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss personnel and litigation matters. No action was taken.

On motion by Commissioner Norris and second by Commissioner Luke, the Board adjourned Executive Session.

On motion by Commissioner Hale and second by Commissioner Luke, the Board adjourned back into Regular Session.

There being no further business, on motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Luke, the meeting was adjourned.

County Clerk

Chairman

Date