

The Agenda Setting Meeting of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, October 30, 2007, 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 Chuck Horton

Commissioner Margaret Hale was absent.

Staff Present:

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

Jeff Benko, Finance Director
BR White, Planning Director
John Hatcher, Utility Director
Wayne Provost, Strategic Planning Director
Emil Beshara, Public Works Director
John Gentry, Parks and Recreation Director
Steve Hansford, Code Enforcement Director

Media Present:

Vinnie Williams, 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.

Commissioner Davis introduced Emil Beshara as Oconee County's new Public Works Director.

Joint Comprehensive Plan/Community Agenda: Strategic and Long-range Planning Director Wayne Provost led the Public Hearing on the Joint Comprehensive Plan for Oconee County and the Cities of Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals and Watkinsville with a presentation of the Community Agenda. Bishop Mayor Johnny Pritchett was in attendance.

Mr. Provost explained Oconee County and the Cities of Bishop, Bogart, North High Shoals and Watkinsville prepared a Community Agenda that covers the years 2007 through 2030 to be used in guiding future growth and development. He stated the draft update is ready to be submitted for official review.

Russ Page asked why the sentence, "The study may include transfer of development rights (TDR), farm land protection, funding, additional development, guidelines and other strategies", was removed from the Short Term Work Program. Mr. Provost said the sentence was placed on the Future Development Map, as discussed in a public meeting, but could be reinserted into the document. Mr. Page requested the sentence be reinserted and a six-month moratorium be placed on development in the south end of Oconee County until the TDR Program is fully studied. Tony Glenn, Sarah Bell and Lee Becker also spoke in support of the TDR Program.

Nedra Johnson expressed her hopes that the county and cities will take advantage of the Joint Comprehensive Plan when making decisions on current and future development.

Commissioner Luke confirmed there was a mechanism in place to amend the Short Term Work Program, if needed. Commissioner Horton said he was willing to look at the TDR issue, but was not prepared to vote on a moratorium.

On motion by Commissioner Norris and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board unanimously approved the draft update of the Community Agenda, with the above sentence being placed back into the document, and authorized its submission to the Northeast Georgia Regional Development Center and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs for official review. ***See Documentation in Ordinances and Resolutions Book No. 17.***

Development Authority: Chairman Davis reported there were three applicants for the appointment of an associate member to the Oconee County Industrial Development Authority to fill an unexpired term, expiring December 31, 2008. Applicants Lee Becker and Marion Butler were previously interviewed by the Board of Commissioners. Applicant Steve Hollis was out of town and unable to attend. The Board will consider this appointment at their November 6, 2007 meeting.

Keep Oconee Beautiful Commission: The Board interviewed Michelle Creech for appointment to the Keep Oconee County Beautiful Commission to fill an unexpired term, expiring June 30, 2009. The Board will consider this appointment at their November 6, 2007 meeting.

Land Use and Transportation Planning Committee: The Board interviewed Ernest W. Tollner for appointment to the Citizens Advisory Committee on Land Use and Transportation Planning for a 2-year term, expiring September 30, 2009. The Board will consider this appointment at their November 6, 2007 meeting.

Hard Labor Creek Management Board: On motion by Commissioner Norris and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board unanimously appointed Jim Luke, Jeff Benko and Hank Huckaby to serve as Oconee County's representatives on the Hard Labor Creek Management Board. Margaret Hale, Alan Theriault and Gary Dodd were appointed as Alternates.

Drought Update: Utility Director John Hatcher presented an update on the drought conditions and conservation efforts. He reported drought conditions have worsened across the state, but due to the high level of cooperation from our citizens, we are currently drawing 30 percent less water from the Bear Creek Reservoir. Mr. Hatcher stated all permitted wells in the county are in full production and noted several citizens have responded by offering their private wells for county use.

Gary Dodd, Chairman of the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority Operations Committee, said the Bear Creek Reservoir has dropped 13.5 feet and explained the expense of treating the "dead pool", the last 25% of water. Mr. Dodd reported, however, as of October 25th, the reservoir has leveled off and he expects the water supply in the reservoir to extend to mid-January, 2008. He noted a meeting is set with EPD in November to discuss an extension of the Authority's emergency permit to draw water from the Middle Oconee River. He recommended continuing with Level 4 drought response restrictions until the reservoir is filled.

Outdoor Water Use Ordinance: The Board held the First Reading of the Oconee County Outdoor Water Use Ordinance. Administrative Officer Alan Theriault addressed the highlights of the Ordinance and suggested the Board allow additional time for public input and review by the Drought Contingency Committee. By consensus, the Board agreed to postpone action on the Outdoor Water Use Ordinance to the November 27, 2007 meeting to allow the Drought Contingency Committee the opportunity to review the proposed Ordinance.

Russ Page commented that Level 4 drought restrictions should be maintained until the Bear Creek Reservoir can be refilled. Kate McDaniel cautioned on the use of wells and said the county should depend on surface water as much as possible.

Street Light Tax District – Bishop Pointe Preserve: On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board unanimously approved the creation of Street Light Tax District No. A-07G-L1 for Bishop Pointe Preserve. ***See Documentation in Ordinances and Resolutions Book No. 17.***

Sale of County Property: County Attorney Daniel Haygood reported one bid was received for the sale of a .998 acre tract owned by Oconee County and located on Broad Street in Bogart (Tax Parcel No. BO 02 018). Mr. Haygood recommended the Board accept the bid of \$10,000 by Bogart Christian Church. By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for November 6, 2007.

Georgia Land Conservation Program Grant (Mitchell Farm): County Attorney Daniel Haygood presented an Agreement with the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority for a Land Conservation Grant in the amount of \$467,000 to place the Sam Mitchell Farm in Oconee County's Farmland Protection Program.

On motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Luke, the Board voted unanimously to accept the Grant Award and authorized the Chairman to execute the Agreement with the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority. ***See Documentation in Ordinances and Resolutions Book No. 17.***

November 6, 2007 Agenda: The agenda for the November 6, 2007 meeting was read by County Clerk Gina M. Lindsey.

Citizen Remarks: Jeff Benko reported a benefit barbecue will be held on Veterans Day, November 11, 2007, at the Oconee County Civic Center, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Donations will be accepted to help raise funds for the construction of a Veterans Memorial at the Oconee Community Complex.

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

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

On motion by Commissioner Horton 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