

The Agenda Setting Meeting of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, February 22, 2005, at 7:00 p.m., in the Commissioners Meeting Chambers, 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

Chris Thomas, Assistant Utility Director
John Gentry, Parks & Recreation Director
Wayne Provost, Strategic Planning Director
Jeff Benko, Finance Director
William White, Projects Coordinator
Mike Leonas, Public Works Director
Gary Dodd, Utility Director
Matt Forshee, Planning Director

Media Present:

Vinnie Williams, The Oconee Enterprise

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

4H Dairy Quiz Bowl Team: The Board of Commissioners presented a Proclamation to the Oconee County 4H Dairy Quiz Bowl Team acknowledging their 2005 State Championship. The team will go on to compete in the national competition in Louisville, Kentucky in the Fall. ***See Documentation in Ordinances and Resolutions Book No. 15.***

Team Captain Heather Savelle was presented a Proclamation proclaiming March 1, 2005 as “Heather Savelle Day” in recognition of her industriousness and capacity for high achievement. ***See Documentation in Ordinances and Resolutions Book No. 15.***

Henry Hibbs and Joey Bristol were recognized for their leadership of the 4H Dairy Quiz Bowl Team.

Oconee River Resource Conservation and Development Council Applicants: The Board interviewed applicant William E. “Bubber” Wilkes for appointment to the Oconee River Resource Conservation and Development Council. Applicant Kate McDaniel was unable to attend. The Board will take action on the appointment of a county representative and an alternate, for terms expiring December 31, 2008, at the March 1, 2005 meeting.

Land Application System – Permitting and Engineering: Assistant Utility Director Chris Thomas reported a price of \$94,800 had been negotiated with Precision Planning/Jordan Jones & Goulding to assist with the preparation of permits and reports as required by EPD to potentially upgrade the Rocky Branch Land Application. There were no public comments on this matter. By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for March 1, 2005.

Security Needs @ Heritage Park: Parks and Recreation Director John Gentry discussed the need for security at Heritage Park. The park has been vandalized and heavy off-road vehicles are damaging the trails. Mr. Gentry suggested establishing a residence at the park for a security professional to live on site. He noted that as the park grows, a park ranger or manager may be needed. The Board asked Mr. Gentry to come back with a specific recommendation and cost estimates.

Water Re-use Standards: The Board held the First Reading of an amendment to the Water and Wastewater Standards to include standards and specifications for re-use water systems. There were no public comments on this matter. The Board will hold the Second Reading for final action on March 1, 2005.

Master Planned Developments Amendment: Wayne Provost, Director of Strategic and Long Range Planning, reported the Oconee County Planning Commission had postponed action on an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance for the purpose of amending Zoning Article 14, Master Planned Developments to March 21, 2005. Mr. Provost recommended additional time for further research and study regarding project phasing requirements, commercial market demand, size and comprehensive plan consistency. The Board agreed it was appropriate to take the time to analyze these parameters. The goal is to have a well thought out and workable solution which benefits Oconee County, its economy and its quality of life.

March 1, 2005 Agenda: The agenda for the March 1, 2005 meeting was reviewed.

Farmland Protection: Russ Page gave a presentation on the Oconee Partnership for Farmland Protection. The Partnership's main objective is to develop a voluntary program to protect farmland in Oconee County. Mr. Page reported the State of Georgia ranked third in the nation in acres of farmland lost to development. He suggested the best ways to protect Oconee farmland was by the purchase of an agricultural conservation easement or the purchase of development rights (PACE).

This year, Georgia will receive \$1.4 million from USDA for farmland protection. Mr. Page requested a commitment of \$250,000 from the county's general fund to move forward with a \$1 million proposal to USDA to purchase the development rights on over 100 acres of Oconee farmland. Applications are due to USDA on April 5, 2005. He noted eleven farms have indicated they are interested in being involved in the program. Mr. Page also requested farmland protection be included in the next SPLOST referendum.

Finance Officer Jeff Benko was asked to determine if \$250,000 was available in this year's budget.

Citizen Comments: Debbie Stark and Mary Mellein expressed their support for the farmland protection program. Sonya Adsit requested a hold on any new MPD rezones until an amendment to the zoning ordinance is adopted.

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

County Clerk

Chairman

Date