

The Agenda Setting Meeting of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, August 30, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners 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
Matt Forshee, Planning Director
Wayne Provost, Strategic & L.R. Planning
Paula Nedza, IT Director
Don Oliver, Interim Parks & Rec Director

Media Present: Vinnie Williams, The Oconee Enterprise
Merritt Melancon, Athens Banner-Herald

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

Oconee County Cultural & Recreational Affairs Committee – Cultural and Tourism Subcommittee: The Board interviewed Stacy Koffman for appointment to the Oconee County Cultural & Recreational Affairs Committee – Cultural and Tourism Subcommittee to fill an expiring term, expiring September 30, 2007. The Board will take action on this appointment at the September 6, 2005 meeting.

Economic Development Plan: Planning and Economic Development Director Matt Forshee reported on the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan. The plan was formulated to assist the County in attracting new businesses and target industries to aide in community growth, tax base diversification and quality of life enhancement.

Recommendations offered in the report fall into two categories: Internal Initiatives to make Oconee County a better place to live and work and External Initiatives to communicate Oconee County’s benefits to target industries and highly skilled individuals.

The Implementation Plan is based around four broad strategies: Marketing, Workforce/Education, Tourism/Arts and Land Use, and provides recommendations for short-term, mid-term and long-term actions. Some of the major implementation issues outlined throughout the plan include the following:

1. Create a single presence for economic development marketing and recruitment efforts.
2. Create a single website as a portal for economic development marketing and information.
3. Organize regularly scheduled marketing missions to regions outside of northeast Georgia.
4. Develop arts and tourism as a “quick impact” economic development deliverable.

Several strategies are recommended throughout the plan however, Mr. Forshee noted the plan will be modified and amended as the county grows and changes.

Land Use & Transportation Committee Update: Bob Sanders, Chair of the Land Use & Transportation Committee, reported on the Committee’s activities for the past 12 months. Issues addressed by the Committee over the prior year included better road signage, road improvement needs, master planned developments, MACORTS and TIP, and Storm Water Management. Future items for discussion and consideration will include water resources, local and regional wastewater treatment facilities, transportation issues and special tax districts for special land use.

LUTC Subcommittee Chair, Mary Mellein, presented a proposal to maintain the county's "green tree infrastructure" by establishing realistic goals for maintaining our existing tree canopy or creating a new native tree canopy, developing a tree canopy ordinance and establishing regulations and incentives to preserve existing trees and specimen trees. By consensus the Board requested the proposal be reviewed through the Unified Development Code process.

Comprehensive Plan Update: Strategic and Long Range Planning Director Wayne Provost presented a proposal from Ross & Associates for consultant services for the Oconee County Comprehensive Plan Update. Mr. Provost reported Oconee County will have to complete a 10th year update to its Comprehensive Plan by June 2007 under DCA's newly revised Minimum Planning Standards in order to maintain its Qualified Government Status. This will be a Joint Comprehensive Plan 10th Year Update with the cities of Watkinsville, Bogart, Bishop and North High Shoals.

Bill Ross will lead the process, coordinate the progress and ensure compatibility between the County's Unified Development Code process and the Plan Update. Denise Abboud will lead the public participation program.

To meet the deadline, the plan update is broken into two phases. Phase I (FY 2006) will cover the Future Land Use Map Amendment, the Community Assessment and the Plan for Public Participation at a cost of \$53,280. Phase II (FY 2007) will include the implementation of the public participation component and the completion of the Community Agenda at a cost of \$52,925. The total project timeline is 17 to 18 months, with adoption planned for June 2007.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the consent agenda for September 6, 2005.

New Park Name: Interim Parks and Recreation Director Don Oliver presented ten names for the new park on Hwy. 53 as recommended by the Cultural and Recreational Affairs Committee. The Board will take action on the naming of the new park at the September 6, 2005 meeting.

Network Telephony: IT Director Paula Nedza presented the bids for an expandable network telephony system for the Oconee County Courthouse campus. Ms. Nedza stated the network telephony, also known as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), will provide the county with cost savings, security, additional features and phone lines.

There was discussion on the second phase of the project which will connect all other county facilities to the courthouse campus.

Commissioner Norris made the motion to award the contract for Phase I of the Network Telephony System to BellSouth, at a cost not to exceed \$128,000. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. Commissioners Norris and Horton voted yes. Commissioner Luke voted no. The motion passed.

New Park Site Development: Interim Parks and Recreation Director Don Oliver and Ed Czynscon of W.K. Dickson presented the bids for construction of the first phase of the new park. Mr. Oliver noted the recommendation for Phase I will build a strong foundation to expand on in future phases. It will include all infrastructures for the park, the Senior Citizens Center, a community center, four lighted soccer/football fields, walking trails, a picnic shelter, eight lighted tennis courts and lighting installation for all athletic fields.

Mr. Oliver recommended the park construction contract for Phase I be awarded to F.E. Sims Enterprises, Inc. in the amount of \$7,364,345.75.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the consent agenda for September 6, 2005.

September 6, 2005 Agenda: The agenda for the September 6, 2005 meeting was reviewed by the County Clerk.

Statements and Remarks from Citizens: Russ Page spoke on the Farmland Protection Program. He reported the Georgia USDA has offered Oconee County an additional \$15,000 if the 25% match requirement can be met. Mr. Page said he has collected some private funds to go toward the match and asked the Board of Commissioners to provide \$3,500 from the county budget.

Executive Session: On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Norris, the Board adjourned into Executive Session to discuss potential litigation and future acquisition of real estate. No action was taken.

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

On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Norris, 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