

HARALSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MARCH 5, 2024
REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Ridley called the regular meeting to order. Deputy Clerk Sandi Couch offered the Invocation, and the Board led the Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioners Tarpley, Elsberry, Daniel, and Farmer were present along with County Attorney Avery Jackson.

Approval of previous meeting minutes

Regular Meeting February 6, 2024

Commissioner Elsberry motioned to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Farmer seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Daniel motioned to approve the agenda. Commissioner Farmer seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Public Participation on Agenda Items

Mr. Dewberry expressed concerns with the election schedule for the year and how much it would cost the county.

Item #1 – Lisa Nash, Drug Court Coordinator and Judge Andrew Roper

Judge Roper first of all thanked the Commissioners for their support of the Drug Court Accountability Program with additional funds from the Opioid Settlement funds. He stated that our circuit is one of the hardest hit by the opioid crisis. Judge Roper stated that the funds are used for treatment and drug testing.

Ms. Nash reported that since the drug court was started in 2015, there have been 73 participants who have graduated. They must have a minimum of 278 hours of treatment, 236 observed drug screens, 208 recovery meetings, 50 volunteer hours, and 41 court sessions. All this must be done while maintaining full-time employment.

Then, they played a video of several of the participants thanking the county for the program and a couple of participants were in person to speak.

Item #2 – Haralson County Veterans Association

Ely Elephante shared a power point presentation detailing the Haralson County Veterans Association and their activities and goals. Then, Sammy Robinson, described the project they are working on, the West Georgia Military Museum and Training Center. This will be located in Tallapoosa. They are a 501(3)C and are going to be asking for some funding from the County. The project cost is projected to be \$500,000. They have \$300,000 in donations and \$50,000 in in-kind work donated.

Item #3 – Request to rezone Tax Map 0019-0087 located on U.S. Hwy 78. The present zoning is R-2, proposed is C-GB. Requested by Patrick Walters.

There was a public hearing on this item at the February work session. Chairman Ridley recused himself. Vice Chairman John Daniel took over the meeting. He asked if there was anyone to speak regarding this request. Mr. Walters stated that he would be putting up one building to consolidate his business into one building. There was no opposition. The Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval unanimously.

Commissioner Farmer motioned to approve the rezoning request. Commissioner Elsberry seconded and the motion carried 4-0, 1 abstaining (Chairman Ridley).

Vice Chairman Daniel turned the meeting back over to Chairman Ridley.

Item #4 – Request to rezone Tax Map 0017-0012 V45, 46, & 47. Present zoning is A-1, proposed zoning is Conditional Use – Paintball Fields, requested by Brandon Harris.

The commissioners were concerned with this being 81 acres. Mr. Harris stated that he would only be using 11.499 acres on the front side. He showed a drawing that detailed where the driveway, entrance, exit, fields, picnic tables, porta johns, 40-foot container storage, and parking would be located. There was no one in opposition to speak.

Commissioner Farmer motioned to approve the rezoning request. Commissioner Daniel seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Item #5 – Executive Session

Commissioner Daniel motioned to go into executive session to discuss land acquisition. Commissioner Farmer seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Upon return, Commissioner Farmer motioned to come out of executive session. Commissioner Daniel seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Ridley stated that Item #7 Land Acquisition needed to be added to the agenda. Commissioner Daniel motioned to add Land acquisition as item #7. Commissioner Farmer seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Item #6 – Vote to approve Proposal for Master Plan for Land Development of the 1631+- acres purchased by the county between I-20 and Hwy 78.

Development Authority Executive Director, Eric McDonald reviewed the process used to come to the point of recommending which proposal would be the best for the county. He stated that 6 proposals were received ranging in cost from \$32,000 to \$165,000. The committee included Chairman Ridley and Commissioner Tarpley, along with representatives from Utilities, Water Authority, Tallapoosa City Manager, and Eric. They recommend Thomas & Hutton and are requesting that the county pay the entire \$64,500. This is less than the half expected if the county needed to match a grant to help fund the project. The regional commission recommended not using a grant in this situation. They felt like a grant will be easier to obtain for some of the infrastructure later if the county funds this Master Plan.

Commissioner Farmer motioned to approve the selection of Thomas & Hutton to develop a master plan for the property. Commissioner Daniel seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Item #7 – Land Acquisition

Chairman Ridley stated that the county would like to purchase 1.15 acres between I-20 and the 1600+ acres that has already been purchased. This didn't show up previously and only recently was found because it is up for sale for \$5500. He stated this would be much cheaper than someone else getting the property and the county have to provide an easement or having legal problems trying to develop around this.

Commissioner Daniel motioned to give Chairman Ridley the authority to sign all documents to contract and purchase this piece of property. Commissioner Farmer seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Public Participation on Non-Agenda Items

None

Commissioner Daniel motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Farmer seconded and the motion carried 5-0.

Submitted by Alison Palmer
Certified County Clerk, CPM