

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
November 23, 2021

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy, Commissioner Rosla Plant, and Commissioner Beth Neely-Hadley
Commissioners Absent: Commissioner Shirley Hines
Staff Present: Administrator Michelle Irizarry, Director of Special Projects Theron Gay, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Finance Director Bill Gregory, and County Attorney Michael Hill

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Threadgill called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION – Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – All

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to adopt the Agenda with the following changes. Under Public Hearing, change the order and move 1. Case #24-2021 to #2 and move 2. Case #25-2021 to #1.
All were in favor.

V. REPORT FROM FINANCE DIRECTOR

Finance Director, Bill Gregory, reported the General Fund was down and he is expecting tax receipts to come in during the next 2 weeks to 1 month. Proposals were received on Friday for re-roofing the Courthouse. This will be reviewed and added to the next Agenda.
Three spreadsheets were provided for review in anticipation of a Work Session to discuss ARP funds.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENT

Chairman Threadgill read the protocol for Citizen Comments from the Agenda.
Marcel Womack thanked the Board for voting to approve paving Beulah Evans Road. Work has started on Bob Cat Trail and Turkey Court Trail. Ms. Womack stated everyone is excited and they plan to have a cookout once the project is complete.

VII. MINUTES

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to approve the Minutes from the November 10, 2021, Regular Meeting at 9:00 a.m. All were in favor.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Motion was made by Beth Neely Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go into a Public Hearing for Case #25-2021. All were in favor. Jodi Sharpe, Zoning Manager, stated Quercus Farms has requested the rezoning of 25.64 acres at 2 Jimmy Clark Road. This property is a portion of Tax Map and Parcel #168 040 003. The Current Zoning is A1 (25-acre minimum), and they are requesting it be rezoned to NHC (Neighborhood Commercial) to build a restaurant and have rental cabins. A 100-foot undisturbed buffer with a 20-foot planted buffer is required between NHC and an A1 Zoning. Quercus Farms owns all the property surrounding the 25.64 acres that they wish to rezone. There was no opposition to the proposed rezoning. The Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development recommended approval of the Rezoning. No one signed up to speak and there were no questions from anyone. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go out of the Public Hearing. All were in favor. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to approve the rezone request as presented by the Zoning Manager. All were in favor.

2. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go into a Public Hearing for Case #24-2021. All were in favor. Jodi Sharpe, Zoning Manager, stated Marksmen Properties has requested to rezone 37.39 acres at 5334 Alvaton Road, also known as Tax Map and Parcel 164 003. The current zoning is LDR (5-acre minimum), and Marksman Properties has requested it to be rezoned to RD (2-acre minimum). The owners are proposing a 15-lot subdivision with each lot being approximately 2-acres. The Entrance to the subdivision will be off Alvaton Road. This entrance has been a concern expressed by neighbors. In addition to the entrance another concern from neighbors has been the possibility of flooding. This property was affected by the flooding in 1994 and Mr. Bob Acree is concerned that the development will cause additional flooding issues when there are heavy rains. The Department of Planning, Zoning, and Community Development recommended approval of the rezoning request.

Tim Brown, 5323 Alvaton Road, stated he was not opposed to having a subdivision but was opposed to the proposed area for the entrance. Mr. Brown was concerned of not being able to see traffic coming from Hwy. 85 and asked if they would move the driveway closer to the Event Center so cars can be seen on Hwy. 85 when people are pulling in and out of the subdivision. The traffic pattern will be larger and this will make it safer.

Patti Boggs, 5130 Alvaton Road, stated traffic is a safety issue with the proposed area for the entrance and suggested they use an entrance closer to the Event Center.

Ms. Boggs asked what the square footage of the homes would be and was concerned how so many additional wells would affect others in the area and the Event Center. Ms. Boggs stated she was not opposed to growth but would like to see the homes be at least 1,800 square feet. Most homes on the street are above 2,000 square feet. Commissioner Neely-Hadley confirmed Ms. Boggs was suggesting the entrance would come out on Hwy. 85 and stated the Commissioners would not have the ability to decide if the entrance could come out onto a State Highway. That would have to go before GDOT. The minimum home square footage for the County is 1,375.

David Hovey, Consulting Engineer, spoke on behalf of Marksmen Properties. Mr. Hovey addressed the entrance plan for State Route 85 and stated the Department of Transportation will not allow the entrance on Hwy. 85 because there is County Road access. They will not issue a permit for that driveway because of the volume of traffic that is on State Route 85 now. Mr. Hovey addressed the resident's concern of flooding at Beavers Creek. As part of this development, they will do storm water management. This entails capturing storm water in pipes and catch basins and directing it into a centralized retention basin. They will incorporate storm water detention in this development.

Mr. Hovey stated once they are further involved in this they will look at the entrance location for site distance. Currently, they are trying to get it rezoned for RD then they will dive into the site distance and entrance location. Mr. Hovey did not know what the square footage would be since Marksmen Properties would be selling the lots. Based on the estimated lot prices, Mr. Hovey thought the homes would be selling in the upper \$200K to mid \$300K price range. The property developer prefers one to two builders and no more. Mr. Hovey stated they would be willing to look at the entrance. Commissioner Neely-Hadley asked about the concerns of several wells on the property. Theron Gay, Special Projects Director, replied to the concern of the wells and septic tank systems for the two-acre area and provided the required separation distance. Commissioner Neely-Hadley thought the Board rezoned some property last year with 2-acre lots and added a condition of having several homes with a higher square footage. Mr. Hovey thought the square footage of the homes may be between 1,800 and 2,500 square feet. Vice Chairman McCoy stated from experience when a new subdivision comes in you can adjust. Vice Chairman McCoy asked if they could adjust the road entrance because of people speeding up and down Alvaton Road. The EPD is over the concern of flooding. Mr. Hovey stated they will do water retention on this project and his firm did the engineering on six fire stations in Meriwether County. As Civil Engineers it is his job to keep the development and County safe. Mr. Hovey said they would look at the entrance once they find out the property can be rezoned. There were additional questions regarding the minimum square footage and

Chairman Threadgill wanted to know the minimum square footage they were requesting. Mr. Hovey thought the square footage would be 1,800 to 2,500. Mr. Hovey stated he would be comfortable with 1,750 or 1,725 as the minimum square footage. The Board stated they would be fine with 1,725 as the minimum square footage. Commissioner Neely-Hadley wanted something added for consideration of the entrance. Vice Chairman McCoy stated the following had been addressed: Homes are to be a minimum of 1,725 square feet, look at the site distance of the entrance, and retention water had been addressed. There were no others to speak. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to go out of the Public Hearing. All were in favor. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Rosla Plant to approve the request and include the minimum square footage of 1,725 and consideration of the entrance site distance as discussed. All were in favor.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

X. APPOINTMENTS

None

XI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Administrator Irizarry provided information and an example of a new hire contract that was sent and approved by legal with some changes. The County Administrator would be allowed to sign the contract without having to bring each one before the Board. The contract would be implemented with new hires, any office where we have retention issues, and when we have trained or paid for training to get an employee certified and the employee leaves. This would be for any position where County funds are expended for training. Commissioner Plant confirmed it would be based on the individual departments and the cost involved. Following further discussion, motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to allow the Administrator to sign the contracts when the employees are hired based on the Department where the employee works. All were in favor.

2. Administrator Irizarry stated the security camera system we had in place was 10-15 years old and had quit working. The new one is cloud based. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to proceed with the purchase and installation of a new camera system at the Administration Building in the amount of \$6,135.76 and use ARP funding. All were in favor.

3. Theron Gay, Director of Special Projects, stated in August 2021 the Board approved allowing the County to move forward with purchasing additional equipment and vehicles to better equip Public Works in the maintenance of County maintained dirt roads. The County solicited and received two bids. The first quote was from RDO Equipment Co, in MN, for a 90" Profile Packer in the amount of \$31,750 each including freight. The other was from LyCox Enterprise, Inc., in MT, for a WR90 s3 Walk & Roll packer at a cost of \$39,530 each including freight. Special Projects Director, Theron Gay, recommend the purchase of two 90" Profile Packers from RDO Equipment in the amount of \$63,500 total. Motion was made by Vice Chairman McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to purchase two new 2022 Handy Hitch 90" Profile Packers form RDO Equipment Co. in the amount of \$63,500 using T-SPLOST funding. All were in favor.

4. Administrator Irizarry stated the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation names ten places each year and two that were named on the 2022 list as Places in Peril were The Cotton-Pickin' Fairground structures in Gay and the Red Oak Covered Bridge, a bridge built by Horace King in the 1840's. This Bridge is the only one remaining that was built by Mr. King. A video presentation was provided. Special Project Director, Theron Gay, stated this project started with a meeting at the Bridge that was attended by Commissioner Plant, Vice Chairman McCoy, himself, and a member of the Georgia Trust. It is phenomenal that Meriwether County has two places of Peril that was named out of ten in the entire State of Georgia. This will bring much needed help in the preservation of the Bridge. This should open the door for grants and other supporters. Commissioner Plant reached out to Representative Buckner and Representative Buckner provided the contact information for Mark McDonald, with Georgia Trust, which

helped to start the process. With Representative Buckner's support Georgia Trust came here very quickly once we reached out to Mr. McDonald. Several other people came with him to the meeting which occurred shortly after the Bridge was damaged. Commissioner Plant stated this process has been in the works for some time and they wish they could have told the public, but this was the proper way to go about securing the historic value of the Bridge and any future efforts to the Bridge.

XII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Administrator Irizarry relayed information from Department Heads, Employees, and Constitutional Officers who were very thankful for the celebration on Monday and wanted to wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Theron Gay updated the Board on the deeds on Beulah Evans Road. Bill Cawthorne has been out staking the roads for the Right-of-way. We will go back and add the legal documents and deeds as an attachment A. This will be worked on next week and they will be ready to go.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Neely-Hadley: reported this past weekend was the kickoff for the Candlelight weekends in Warm Springs. There was a great turnout. Commissioner Neely-Hadley invited everyone to come out and visit the shops which are very beautiful in the evening with all the lights. Commissioner Neely-Hadley wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: Thanked Clerk Thomas for taking the initiative of getting the Christmas Trees installed around the Courthouse, working with the Cities, Public Works and all the efforts everyone put into this. It looks very festive. Thanks to the staff for coordinating the Thanksgiving luncheon yesterday. Commissioner Plant wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Commissioner Shirley Hines: Absent

Vice Chairman McCoy: reported last Saturday night Randy Carter invited him to come down to live wrestling in Woodbury. The promoters thought it went well and plan to come back January 15, 2022, where they hope to pack the house.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: reported the Theater in Manchester will be having a lot of events between now and the end of the year. There will be programs for children and adults.

XIII. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney Michael Hill stated there was a need for Executive Session to discuss Litigation, Personnel, and Real Estate.

XV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to go into Executive Session at 6:45 p.m. to discuss Litigation, Personnel, and Real Estate. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to go out of Executive Session at 8:09 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Rosla Plant to go back into Regular Session at 8:11 p.m. All were in favor.

Action was taken in Executive Session. Motion was made by Beth Neely-Hadley and seconded by Vice Chairman McCoy to accept the terms of the Distributed Settlement of the Opioid Litigation on the recommendation of the Opioid Counsel and allow the Board to execute settlement documents and allow the Chairman to sign. All were in favor.

XVI. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman Threadgill announced future meetings and notices.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Alfred McCoy and seconded by Beth Neely-Hadley to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners

Attest: Beverly Thomas, County Clerk

Date: December 8, 2021