

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
WORK SESSION  
September 12, 2022 – 8:30 AM

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Chairman Bill Slaughter  
Vice Chairman Joyce Evans  
Commissioner Scott Orenstein  
Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker  
Commissioner Demarcus Marshall  
Commissioner Clay Griner

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**MINUTES**

The minutes were presented for the work session of August 22, 2022, the millage public hearing of August 23, 2022, the regular session of August 23, 2022 and a special called meeting related to local option sales tax (LOST) held August 26, 2022. No changes to the minutes were requested.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**REZ-2022-15 O'Neal Properties, 2547 US HWY 84 West, R-21 to C-H, Well & Septic, 4.53 ac,** Planning and Zoning Director, JD Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request is from R-21 to Commercial Highway zoning on US Hwy 84 West. The same request was made last year and ultimately denied by the Board of Commissioners, 3-2. Access to this property is from 84 West, which is a state maintained arterial road. This property is also within the Community Activity Center Character Area and the Urban Service Area. A petition of support from the surrounding neighbors was included in this request and also a letter of opposition that was submitted late last Friday (September 9, 2022). Since last year's request and public hearing, Code Enforcement has an ongoing case of this property; multiple citations have been issued - some of which have been corrected. A list of violations remains outstanding that must be brought in to compliance, regardless of the zoning district applied. The Planning Commission heard this request at the August 29, 2022, meeting, hearing discussion both for and against the request by the applicant and neighbors, who also submitted a petition last year, and ultimately recommend approval of the request 5-1. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if Mr. Dillard had letters of support. Mr. Dillard responded yes, the applicant submitted a list of fifteen names. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if those letters or comments have been verified. Mr. Dillard responded these were signatures on a petition from adjacent property owners.

**REZ-2022-10 The Campus Transitional Care Facility - Validity of June 16, 2022 Vote,** Planning and Zoning Director, JD Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated on June 16, 2022 the Board of Commissioners did vote to rezone the property at Howell Road from E-A to Planned Development, P-D, for uses including a Transitional Care Facility. Based on the ULDC definition of a transitional care facility, and the legal definition of a halfway house, the Official Code of Georgia requires a public hearing

to be held on a proposed action at least six months and not more than nine months prior to the date of the final action of the zoning decision. Georgia courts have ruled a failure to follow zoning procedures law renders a vote on a zoning decision invalid. Mr. Dillard further stated that the first action to be taken would be to invalidate the vote from the June 16, 2022, Board of Commissioners meeting. The second action will be to host the first public hearing and start the clock for six months, not to exceed nine months.

**REZ-2022-10 The Campus Transitional Care Facility**, Planning and Zoning Director, JD Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard presented both this item and the above item at the same time.

## **FOR CONSIDERATION**

**Adopt Resolution Accepting Infrastructure for The North Acres Subdivision Phase I**, Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated The North Acres Subdivision, Phase I, is located off of Val Del Road, and consists of 24 lots. Engineering staff has made the final inspection, and all work is complete, along with all the paperwork. The developer has asked in a written request for Lowndes County to accept the infrastructure. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked has construction of homes been started, Mr. McLeod replied no, construction is not allowed until the final survey has been recorded, and the acceptance of infrastructure is part of that process.

**Briggston Road Paving Project Agreement with Valdosta Railway, L.P.**, Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated Briggston Road Paving Project is a TSPLOST Project that is currently in acquisition of the right of way and final grading design. The design engineer and staff have been working with Valdosta Railway, L.P. on an agreement for the railroad crossing to be upgraded during the project. Valdosta Railway will complete the work to upgrade the crossing and Lowndes County will pay Valdosta Railway. The work will include all engineering services, new surfaces (including new ballast, ties, crossties, rail, OTM), installing new lights and gates, bells, control bungalow, and other necessary circuitry to provide advanced train warning to the traveling public. The total cost for the upgrade is \$438,537.00.

**Extraterritorial Extension of Water and Sewer Services Parcel 0050 032 and 0050 033**, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated this extension is with the City of Hahira; this is their spray field. Hahira recently annexed the parcel north of this property into its city limits for a subdivision. The 2008 SDS Agreement provides, "any party may make an extraterritorial extension of water and sewer services upon approval of the affected party." If the County approves an extraterritorial extension of Hahira water and sewer services, the property will be in Hahira's water and sewer service areas. Hahira approves the property being in its water and sewer service areas. There is a proposed letter from Chairman Slaughter to Mayor Cain communicating this. Staff recommends approving the extraterritorial extension to the City of Hahira for water and sewer services for the property and authorize the Chairman to sign and deliver the letter to Mayor Cain. Chairman Slaughter stated if, after the regular meeting, these authorized extensions are approved, the maps will be updated to reflect these changes and a new map will be delivered to the City of Valdosta as part of the SDS agreement and hopefully this can be resolved.

**Extraterritorial Extension Water and Sewer Services – Parcel No. 149A 036D**, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated this property owned by the 3833 Inner Perimeter

Rd Storage LLC, also known as Monster Storage, is used as a self-storage facility. There are no county utilities in the area, thus the property will be served by the City of Valdosta utilities. The 2008 SDS Agreement provides, "any party may make an extraterritorial extension of water and sewer services upon approval of the affected party." This will not have a negative effect on the County. There is a proposed letter to Mayor Matheson; staff recommends approving the extraterritorial extension to the City of Valdosta for water and sewer services for the property and authorize the Chairman to sign and deliver the letter to Mayor Matheson. Commissioner Orenstein had questions regarding the timing of the request. Mrs. Dukes said there was an oversight in updating the maps and that in this instance, the City of Valdosta ran the lines without notifying the County. Commissioner Orenstein asked if we do not approve this request, what would happen. Mrs. Dukes stated we would continue to prepare the maps and leave this part out of the update and still prepare that information for the Chairman to deliver to Mayor Matheson. Mr. Stalvey stated this request is unique, in that this property was not annexed in to the City because the property owner wanted to remain in the County.

**Extraterritorial Extension of Water and Sewer Services – Parcel No. 132D 001**, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated the property is owned by Southern Gateway, commonly known as the Carroll Property, located south of the airport. This property has been annexed in to the City of Valdosta and the 2008 SDS Agreement provides, "any party may make an extraterritorial extension of water and sewer services upon approval of the affected party." This will not have a negative effect on the County. There is a proposed letter to Mayor Matheson; staff recommends approving the extraterritorial extension of City of Valdosta for water to the property and authorize the Chairman to sign and deliver the letter to Mayor Matheson. Mrs. Dukes added that Mr. Stalvey made an effort to contact Monster Storage and the City of Hahira regarding these requests, but we were unable to contact anyone with Southern Gateway, LLC Services. Commissioner Orenstein stated the County has had issues with SDS and it comes down to water and sewer. Commissioner Orenstein further stated we continue to do these agreements but we can't reach an agreement with SDS. Commissioner Orenstein continued that we have to do what's best for the client and he is in favor of these requests.

## **BID**

**Griner Lot Improvements**, Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated Lowndes County purchased the Griner property located just north of this building, at the corner of Webster Street and North Ashley Street in 2009. Recently, staff has been working on a design for the property that will improve parking, improve the esthetics, add greenspace, event space, and increase overall security for Lowndes County Judicial and Administrative Complex. The Commission had been presented design renderings for the property in previous meetings. The project was advertised for bid and staff received one (1) bid from Rountree Construction Company for \$2,542,586.00. The majority of this cost is attributed to the underground drainage system that must be installed to control water runoff on to Ashley Street. There will be 4,500 linear feet of round concrete pipe and 18 drainage structures. This will serve both parking lots. Commissioner Marshall stated in the past some of the water problem was created by the City of Valdosta putting concrete bags down in the corner of Lee Street and Webster Street. This will fix a problem that belonged to the City of Valdosta that was created years ago. Commissioner Griner asked if the drainage improvements must be handled first, Mr. McLeod stated yes that these drainage improvements must be built the way they are currently designed and that this will take care of all future growth for this property. Commissioner Wisenbaker

asked if the underground water system would interfere with a big building such as the Administrative and Judicial Complex. Mr. McLeod replied no, the effort was made to design the system to place it on the very north of the property and run it parallel with Webster Street so everything could be built to the south of that area to take all the runoff in to the City's system. Commissioner Orenstein asked why there was only one bid, Mr. McLeod stated the market allows the contractors to be selective in the jobs they take because there is so much work currently available. Due to the amount of work, the other contractors that were at the pre-bid meeting could not take on an additional job. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if this was a time sensitive project, Mr. McLeod stated the contract is for 270 calendar days. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked if the job could be finished after that time and if this was a top priority project, Chairman Slaughter responded that in his opinion, the County does need to move forward and complete the project. Commissioner Wisenbaker stated he thought this money could be better spent on paving and maintaining roads.

### **REPORTS – County Manager**

County Manager, Paige Dukes, introduced Chief Ranger Mike Williford, with the Georgia Forestry Commission. Chief Ranger Williford gave an overall activity report from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Commissioner Marshall asked what "congo grass" was and how it could be identified. Chief Ranger Williford explained this is an invasive grass that Georgia Forestry would like to try to eradicate. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked regarding the rules for burning in the unincorporated area. Chief Ranger Williford explained that the pile must be 25' from the wood line, 50' from a house, have a water hose on sight, be present the entire time of the burn, and burning is only allowed in daylight hours. Chief Ranger Williford also stated that the County's requirements for burning are stricter than Forestry's. Commissioner Wisenbaker asked Chief Green what the rules were, and Chief Green confirmed a hand pile burn must be 100' from any structure or fence line, and burns are allowed on the first and third Saturday in residential zonings. Calling in for a permit is no longer required for a hand pile. Commissioner Marshall asked regarding the fees for suppression. Chief Ranger Williford stated suppression fees are \$190 for first hour, \$130 per hour after that.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to adjourn the work session meeting, Commissioner Marshall second. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 8:54 am.