

The Agenda Setting Meeting of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, March 27, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Meeting Chambers at the Oconee County Courthouse.

*Members Present:* Chairman John Daniell  
Commissioner Mark Thomas  
Commissioner Chuck Horton  
Commissioner W.E. "Bubber" Wilkes  
Commissioner Mark Saxon

*Staff Present:* Justin Kirouac, County Administrator  
Daniel Haygood, County Attorney  
Kathy Hayes, County Clerk  
Paula Nedza, IT Director  
Tracye Bailey, Deputy Clerk  
Emil Beshara, Public Works Director  
Donald "Mickey" Baughcum, Assistant Water Resources Director

*Media Present:* Michael Prochaska, Editor, The Oconee Enterprise

Chairman John Daniell began the Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m. with a moment of silence, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by County Clerk Kathy Hayes.

**Approval of Agenda:**

On motion by Commissioner Thomas and second by Commissioner Saxon, the Agenda was unanimously approved.

**Statements and Remarks from Citizens:**

Amy Lanclos, Greater Apalachee River Community, spoke against the Apalachee River intake site for the Hard Labor Creek Reservoir. Ms. Lanclos is concerned about the wildlife species that could be affected and the water levels of the river as water flows have been decreasing. She stated that no environmental impact study has been done and no water withdrawal permit granted or water quality certification completed. A hearing with the Corp of Engineers has been requested. Loren Moore, resides across the river from Site 5 of the proposed intake site. A new impact study needs to be completed (last study was 2008). He is concerned about altering the river channel and access to the river by adjoining property owners. Kevin Lanclos – spoke against the project and stated there is not a current certificate of need for Oconee or Walton Counties and the projected timeframe for water needs are 2050 (Oconee) and 2025 (Walton). Edwin Snell – spoke against water needs for continued growth in Oconee County. He is concerned that Oconee County will continue to grow and a high density as that of Gwinnett County. Michael Rowder stated that he does not reside on the river, but even those that do not own property on the river enjoy using the river. He would like to see the river protected as he believes the river is slowly being impeded. Vickie Soutar, Upper Oconee Watershed Network (UOWN), stated that data and needs should be reassessed. UOWN is supportive of the views expressed relating to the potential damage of the river and ecosystem as the Apalachee River is a very integral part of the community. Lee Becker stated that the Hard Labor Creek intake facility on the Apalachee River also affects those that did not live on the river and that water/sewer rates are paying for the project. He asked that the Board consider an open discussion/public hearing regarding the County's obligations to the project. He would like for the County to move forward with a water and sewer study that will incorporate the Hard Labor Creek Reservoir.

Chairman Daniell stated that the County continues to work on the Water Resources Master Plan. On April 11, 12 and 13, there will be an opportunity for the public to visit the Bear Creek Reservoir to see the intake site and view a presentation by consultants of the Hard Labor Creek Reservoir. Questions will be addressed in the presentation. Additional questions may be submitted to Chairman Daniell to include in the presentation. Ms. Lanclos will be contacted and asked to coordinate with the Greater Apalachee River Community.

Russ Page thanked the Board members and Justin Kirouac, County Administrator, who attended the Oconee Historical Society meeting regarding the history of the Oconee River.

**Statements and Remarks from Commissioners:**

Chairman Daniell reminded the audience of the following dates:

- Draft Comprehensive Plan has been placed on the website.
- April 16 – Planning Commission/Comprehensive Plan Public Forum
- April 17 – Town Hall Meeting, 6:00 pm at Oconee Veterans Park
- April 18 – Public Budget Hearings, 9:00-5:00, Commission Chambers
- April 24 – Comprehensive Plan Approval of Final Draft at Board of Commissioners' Agenda Meeting

**Unified Development Code, Article 8 – First Reading and Public Hearing:**

County Administrator Justin Kirouac presented the first reading of the amendments to the Unified Development Code, Article 8, which relates to landscaping and buffers to provide greater design flexibility, improved aesthetics, ease of administration and better planting standards.

- Section 801 – add to the purpose of the Article
  - Section 802 – modify and add definitions
  - Section 803 – modify and add to requirements for parking lot plantings.
  - Section 804 – modify and add to screening requirements for vehicles use areas.
  - Section 805 – add and define landscape strips.
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- Section 806 – modify buffering requirements.
- Section 808 – modify and add to the buffer design standards.
- Section 810 – add a further standard for consideration of a waiver or reduction of unnecessary buffers
- Section 811 – remove exemption for issuance of foundation permits
- Section 812 – modify and add to the standards for plant materials
- Section 813 – modify and add to the requirements for the installation and maintenance of plant materials.

Mr. Kirouac stated that the Planning Commission recommended approval of the amendments as submitted.

Chairman Daniell opened the Public Hearing period.

*Vickie Soutar* asked for native species to be included in the plant list as they do very well with filtering water and water retention. Chairman Daniell responded that the amended code should allow for a broader range of plantings, including native species.

Chairman Daniell closed the Public Hearing period.

The second reading and Public Hearing with action to adopt the amendments for the Unified Development Code Article 8 will be held at the Board's Regular Meeting on April 3, 2018.

County Administrator Justin Kirouac stated that native plant species are incorporated on the plant list.

**Rights-of-Way Abandonment – Epps Bridge Centre II, Oconee Connector Tract-0.027 Acre, Plaza Parkway Tract-0.183 Acre:**

A public hearing was held to abandon the rights-of-way of two tracts located in the Epps Bridge Centre II property known as the Oconee Connector Tract of 0.027 Acre and the Plaza Parkway Tract of 0.183 Acre. At its February 27, 2018 Agenda Setting Meeting, the Board determined that such rights-of-way have ceased to be used by the public to the extent that no substantial public purpose is served.

Chairman Daniell asked for Public Comment and there was none.

*By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda of the April 3, 2018 Regular Meeting.*

**Right-of-way Improvements – GA Highway 53 at Dove Creek Elementary School:**

Public Works Director Emil Beshara presented to the Board the award recommendation for the Dove Creek Elementary School Right-of-Way Intersection Improvements Project and recommended that the contract be awarded to E.R. Snell in an amount not to exceed \$2,573,673.50.

Additional costs will be required for necessary paving on VM Osborne Road and Osborne Road in an amount not to exceed \$275,403.00. The County is self-performing paving and base work on the roads. Mr. Beshara stated that Public Works does not have funding available in its budget and asked that the Board cover the material and consultant costs. Chairman Daniell stated that funding for the E.R. Snell contract will be paid from the Fund Balance and a request has been submitted to the Georgia Department of Transportation for assistance through a School Access Grant.

Chairman Daniell asked for Public Comment and there was none.

On motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board unanimously approved contract negotiations with E.R. Snell for the Dove Creek Elementary School Right-of-Way Intersection Improvements Project in an amount not to exceed \$2,573,673.50 and authorized the Chairman to sign the contract.

**Executive Session:**

On motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Saxon, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn into Executive Session at 6:42 p.m. to discuss personnel, land acquisition, and/or potential litigation.

No action was taken in Executive Session.

On motion by Commissioner Saxon and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board adjourned Executive Session at 6:57 p.m.

On motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board adjourned back into Regular Session.

There being no further business, on motion by Commissioner Wilkes and second by Commissioner Saxon, the meeting was adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

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County Clerk

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Chairman

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Date