

The Agenda Setting Meeting of the Oconee County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, February 26, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commission 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
Attorney Mike Pruett
County Clerk Gina M. Lindsey

Jeff Benko, Finance Director
Rusty Haygood, Econ Development Director
John Hatcher, Utility Director
Wayne Provost, Strategic Planning Director
Emil Beshara, Public Works Director
BR White, Planning Director
Steve Hansford, Code Enforcement Director
William White, Project Coordinator

Media Present:

Vinnie Williams, The Oconee Enterprise
Blake Giles, The Oconee Enterprise
Adam Thompson, Athens Banner Herald

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

Land Use and Transportation Planning Committee Applicant: The Board interviewed William P. (Patrick) Rutledge for appointment to the Oconee County Land Use and Transportation Planning Committee to fill an unexpired term, expiring September 30, 2009. The Board will consider this appointment at their March 4, 2008 meeting.

Tax Penalties and Interest Refund Request – Jennings Mill Country Club: The Board reviewed a request for a refund of delinquent property tax penalties and interest paid for Tax Parcels #C01031A, #C01031AA, #C01031BA and #P14215. Tax Commissioner Harriette Browning recommended denial of the request. Commissioner Luke recused himself from the discussion and action.

On motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Norris, the Board voted unanimously to deny the request.

Tax Refund Request - Michael: The Board reviewed a request for a refund of property tax paid in error for Tax Parcel #B04I003G. Tax Commissioner Harriette Browning recommended approval of the request.

On motion by Commissioner Norris and second by Commissioner Luke, the Board voted unanimously to approve the request.

Tax Interest Refund Request - Griffith: The Board reviewed a request for a refund of delinquent property tax interest paid for Tax Parcel #D02040H. Tax Commissioner Harriette Browning recommended denial of the request.

On motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Norris, the Board voted unanimously to deny the request.

Impact Fee Program: Strategic & Long-Range Planning Director Wayne Provost presented a recommendation to the Board to create a committee to study a potential Impact Fee Program for Oconee County.

Mr. Provost noted in order to create a balanced or “unbiased” committee, the membership should be evenly balanced as to the number of persons who have stated their opposition to impact fees and those who are more likely to favor such fees. He recommended a maximum of 10 committee members. Commissioner Luke suggested a makeup of 3 members in favor, 3 members in opposition and 4 impartial members.

Mr. Provost outlined several basic questions which should be considered and specific tasks which might need to be accomplished. He proposed that an unbiased facilitator be utilized to assist with conducting the meetings and insuring the committee concentrates on analyzing relevant questions and facts. He also recommended that experts be encouraged to participate.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for March 4, 2008.

Rocky Branch Water Reclamation Facility – Engineering Design Services:

Utility Director John Hatcher reported the Review Team unanimously recommended the contract for engineering and design support services for the Rocky Branch Water Reclamation Facility Upgrade Project be awarded to HSF Engineering, Inc. for the Alternate Design in the amount of \$572, 000.00.

Mr. Hatcher reported that based on a thorough review and weighting of qualifications, experience and fee, the proposal by HSF Engineering, Inc. for the Alternate Design was deemed by the Review Team to be in the best interest of Oconee County for the following reasons:

1. HSF Engineering has presented a unique and innovative trademark process design, which should provide superior effluent quality through tertiary membrane filtration, at less cost than conventional membrane bioreactor technologies.
2. The project approach presented by HSF Engineering includes consultation and quality control reviews from certified plant operators from within their sister company, HS Feldman, Inc., to achieve a final plant design that meets State guidelines and provides adequate consideration of long term operations and maintenance issues.
3. HSF Engineering has designed four similar facilities in the State of Georgia and was therefore able to provide a very thorough analysis of probable construction costs for the proposed water reclamation facility based on past project experience.
4. HSF Engineering has presented a very competitive fee for design and periodic construction observation services.
5. HSF Engineering and HS Feldman, Inc. are based locally in Winder, Georgia, and would be readily accessible to provide both technical and operational support, should the need arise.

Mr. Hatcher also noted that as a result of the negotiation process, Addendum #1 for an increased scope of services to include design for a septage receiving station and a belt press system was included at no additional cost.

The Board will consider this recommendation at their March 4, 2008 meeting.

Transportation Improvement and Maintenance (TIM) Plan Amendment: Public Works Director Emil Beshara presented a list of projects for consideration by the Board for amendments to the FY 2007/2008 Transportation Improvement and Maintenance (TIM) Plan:

1. Repairs and resurfacing of 15 miles of county roads, at an estimated cost of \$2,100,000.
2. Improvements to the Mars Hill Road/Daniells Bridge Road Intersection, at an estimated cost of \$400,000.

Mr. Beshara and Finance Director Jeff Benko recommended the projects be funded with SPLOST funds.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for March 4, 2008.

Ordinance Regulating the Sale of Wine and Malt Beverages - Timetable:

On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board unanimously approved the timetable for addressing an Ordinance Regulating the Sale of Wine and Malt Beverages in Oconee County: March 11, 2008 – BOC Work Session to Review the Ordinance; March 18, 2008 – Public Hearing to allow Public Comments on the Ordinance; March 20, 2008 – BOC Work Session for Additional Work on the Ordinance; March 25, 2008 – First Reading of the Ordinance and Public Comment; April 1, 2008 – Final Reading and Action on the Ordinance.

Georgia Transmission Corporation Resolution: Administrative Officer Alan Theriault presented a proposed resolution to strongly urge the Georgia Transmission Corporation to exercise perseverance and all due diligence in seeking and securing alternate routes that avoid negative impacts to Conservation Use Easements, subdivisions, neighborhoods or other residential concentrations. The resolution also urges the utilization of underground facilities where possible.

By consensus, this item will be placed on the Consent Agenda for March 4, 2008.

Rezone Request No. 5639, Rezone Request No. 5640, Rezone Request No. 5641, Rezone Request No. 5642 and Variance Request No. 5647 – Barber Creek Land Company: On motion by Commissioner Luke and second by Commissioner Horton, the Board voted unanimously to postpone the public hearing and action on Rezone Request No. 5639, Rezone Request No. 5640, Rezone Request No. 5641, Rezone Request No. 5642, and Variance Request No. 5647 by Barber Creek Land Company, LLP to the April 1, 2008 meeting as requested by the applicant's representative.

March 4, 2008 Agenda: The agenda for the March 4, 2008 meeting was read by County Clerk Gina M. Lindsey.

Citizen Remarks: Bill Ross of Evergreen Nursery and Stewart Cofer of Cofer's Nursery spoke on the impact of the water ban on the green industry and expressed appreciation to the Board of Commissioners for their support. Russ Page said he appreciated the Georgia Transmission Resolution and asked about the timeframe of the TDR Study Program Committee. Kate McDaniel asked if a Conservation Use Easement was the same as "greenspace". John Duffett asked questions about the proposed Ordinance Regulating the Sale of Wine and Malt Beverages and urged the Commissioners to make the Ordinance as restrictive as possible. Lee Becker asked questions about the bids for engineering and design support services for the Rocky Branch Water Reclamation Facility Upgrade Project.

There being no further business, on motion by Commissioner Horton and second by Commissioner Luke, the meeting was adjourned.