

EFFINGHAM CO. BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

EFFINGHAM COUNTY, GEORGIA



PUBLIC WORK SESSION MINUTES

April 21, 2022

The Board of Commissioners of Effingham County, Georgia, Mr. Wesley Corbitt, Mr. Forrest Floyd, Mr. Roger Burdette, Mr. Jamie Deloach, Reginald Loper and Phil Kieffer met in Public Work Session at 6:00 pm on Thursday, April 21, 2022 in the Commissioners Meeting Chambers at the Effingham County Administrative Complex located at 804 South Laurel Street Springfield, Georgia 31329.

STAFF PARTICIPATION

Mr. Tim Callanan – County Administrator, Mr. Edward Newberry – County Attorney, Ms. Stephanie Johnson – County Clerk, Mr. Clint Hodges – Fire Chief & EMA Director, Mr. Brad Clement – Development Services Director, Mr. Matthew Cruikshank – Deputy Director of IT, Ms. Tasheena Shiggs – Deputy County Clerk, and Ms. Maraya Durham – IT Specialist

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Mr. Rich Thurmond, Mrs. Susie Thurmond, Mr. John Schwarzkopf, Ms. Joan Bell, Mr., Greg Rahn, Grady Rahn, Ms. Nicole Rahn, Mr. Jason Rahn, Mr. Logan, Mr. Matthew Frazier, Ms. Deborah Dyess, Mr. Murray Marshall, Mr. Joe Marshall, Ms. Dee Moncrief, Mr. Tommy Blewett, Ms. Margie Blewett, Ms. Margaret Kelly, Mr. Karl Disaluo, Ms. Kindall Harville, and Amy Herbert.

PARTICIPATION VIA TELECONFERENCE

None announced.

I- Roll Call

Wesley Corbitt, Chairman
Forrest Floyd – (arrived at 6:08pm)
Roger Burdette, Vice Chair
Jamie Deloach
Reginald Loper
Phil Kieffer

II- CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Corbitt called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

III – PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments shall pertain to the subject matter only. Should you wish to make remarks, clearly state your full name into the microphone before commencing to speak

IV – DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION RELATED TO MANAGING GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE COUNTY AND OPEN FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

County Manager Callanan explained the numbers related to growth and some of the action the Board has taken over the last two years. All of the focus is surrounded by the County's mission statement which is *"to provide, through the highest integrity, a County government which all assure our citizens a safe and healthy environment to encourage and promote a high quality of life."*

Some of the services the County provides for every citizen is: EMS Service, 911 Emergency Dispatch Services, Emergency Preparedness, Parks and Recreation, Road Infrastructure and Maintenance, Water and Sewer service, County Correctional facility, Animal Shelter, Development Services (planning, zoning, codes enforcement, permitting and inspections). Some other things provided are budget, facilities and administrative services for elected and appointed official offices.

Since 2010, Effingham County's population has grown by twenty-seven percent (27%) with 66,741 residents. A map was shown to show where density in the County is located. Most of the population is closer to Interstate 95 at the Chatham County border. Currently, the County is providing water services to 3,500 customers and sewer services to 2,800. In 2021, permit growth went down due to COVID-19. This year we are at a record level of new permits at 680. The County maintains 104 linear miles of pipe, 85 linear miles of sewer, 5.5 million gallons of water is distributed a day from the City of Savannah.

The County maintains 952 linear miles of multi-lane public road surface. The total workforce in the County is approximately 31,000. Staff has come up with the necessary plans needed to address the needs associated with growth. A new transportation infrastructure plan was adopted last year. This plan addresses maintenance and capacity issues. The County is currently in the process of creating a Master Plan for water and sewer.

Speaker Tim Hutchings stated to put 2,000 houses in one area is too much strain on the infrastructure. There is water and sewer, traffic, and school issues on the south end of the County. We need to grow from our city centers, outward. A lot size minimum of a quarter acre would solve a lot of problems. It should be automatic when you get a subdivision approved, you get a timber permit approved for the trees that the current ordinance allows you to remove. More small business should be bringing jobs to the County. We should incentivize the small businesses. There are a lot of small businesses that employ more than 25-30 people at higher wages than some of the industries that are starting up.

Shifting the growth is an option to try to attract some of the restaurants and entertainment type of businesses we prefer. We should limit the placement of warehouses; they should be as close as possible to the edge of the County. We should fight to get rid of the Omnitrax agreement. This will open more commercial corridor and more area for residential. As far as recreation, it would be nice to incorporate a small water park. The Atlas Sand sight could be used for recreation.

Speaker John Schwarzkopf expressed concern for a warehouse complex being built across the road from an elementary school on McCall.

Speaker Dee Moncrief explained a one hundred acres' subdivision, across from the animal hospital is being built as a rental for single-family homes and residents for our community. Single family, singly deeded properties would traditionally go to individuals but this is going to one individual. There are many studies that talk about the difference between home and rental ownership and how they maintain their

properties. Controlling this with zoning could be the only option. We have to recognize that if there are consecutive homes deeded to one individual, that is the same as a multi-family.

Speaker Susie Thurmond asked if the county could require some of the builders to create their own water and sewer system (wells). This would lessen the water and sewer problems we currently have.

Chairman Corbitt explained that it could cause an environmental issue if more people start using wells. It could be contaminated with chemicals and the aquifer could be damaged.

Speaker Susie Thurmond continued that she voted for TSPLOST based on the map that was presented and now it is nowhere to be found. She also stated that more police enforcement is needed before any more homes are built.

Speaker Debora Dyess asked where can a citizen go online to show the residents what is coming to the County?

Development Services Director Clement explained on the County's website, a citizen could sign up for multiple notifications for various departments.

Speaker Debora Dyess continued with how are commercial being approved if the Master Plan is not updated?

Chairman Corbitt explained as required by the State of Georgia, a ten (10) year comp plan land-use must be done every ten (10) years. The Board approved to update the Comp plan since they were not satisfied with the original one created by the Regional Commission.

Speaker Rita Elliot stated based on the mission statement, she does not see where the County is contributing to any kind of environmental health, personal health, or community health. There are a lot of plans for growth but no plan for green space or environmental issues. She stated that we should preserve old growth trees when we can and plant new trees. We need alternative transportation options such as bike trails and paths and consider light rails for smart growth. The purchasing of green space could add to the future of the residents that already live here, it could help with quality air, and stormwater runoff.

Speaker Ryan Thompson expressed agreement on the preservation of trees. We are growing because the County is doing well but we are also growing because our country is doing well. The County should designate the areas for infrastructure. Density can solve issues where we do not have to send water and sewer to various locations.

Speaker Rachel Sloan expressed her daughter was in a car accident leaving South High School. The speed limit is reduced right after school hours but some kids attend extracurricular activities and the reduced speed is no longer active. Some changes to be considered on Jabez-Jones Road is adding caution lights, repainting of the white strip at the stop sign and reducing the speed limit.

Speaker Chris Kavinsky stated he would love to see more Parks and Recs and additional green space and more mixed used property.

Speaker Murray Marshall expressed his opinion about moratoriums being a bad idea. The momentum we have going into the community now needs to be maintained. The County should accelerate the expenditure of money to get the professionals to work on each of the problems that exist.

Speaker Rick Thurmond stated drastic quick changes to the county are not needed. Instead, the County should just plan for it and go from there.

Chairman Corbitt thanked all in attendance for their input.

V - ADJOURNMENT

At 8:28 pm, there being no further business, Vice Chair Deloach made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Loper seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.



Wesley Corbitt, Chairman



Stephanie D. Johnson, County Clerk