

MINUTES
MERIWETHER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
September 26, 2023
6:00 P.M.

Commissioners Present: Chairman Bryan Threadgill, Vice Chairman Gene King, Commissioner Rosla Plant, Commissioner Emmett Collins, and Commissioner Adam Worsley
Staff Present: Interim County Administrator Theron Gay, Assistant County Administrator Blue Cole, County Clerk Beverly Thomas, Finance Directors Bill Gregory and John Gorton, and County Attorney Michael Hill

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bryan Threadgill called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by Bill Gregory, Finance Director.

III. PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

All

IV. ADOPT AGENDA

Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman Gene King to adopt the Agenda with the following changes:

Amended to continue Public Hearing, 1. 2023-2043 Joint Meriwether County and Cities Comprehensive Plan Update until the October 10, 2023, 9:00 a.m. Meeting

Amended to remove under Public Hearing - 7. Ordinance Amendment – To amend the Official Code of Ordinance Appendix A- Zoning, Article 5, Section 5.4, Accessory uses and structures, (c) and to renumber making the current #8 to read #7.

Amended to change under Public Hearing – 5. To read Article 7 rather than read Chapter 7

Amended to remove under New Business 2. Request to close Seven Branches Road from Parcel 065013 to Ward Road and to renumber as needed. This is due to a withdrawal of the application.

All were in favor.

V. PRESENTATIONS

None

VI. FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director, Bill Gregory, reported the General Fund was \$921,384 and will decrease this week following the check run and payroll. Funds may have to be moved from the Local Government Investment Pool to the General Fund to get us to the 15th of the month when we expect some large sums to arrive. Vice Chairman King asked when was the next tipping fee. Mr. Gregory stated it should be around the 15th of this month and that is also when we will receive the Insurance Tax from the State of Georgia.

VII. DEPARTMENT HEADS

None

VIII. CITIZEN COMMENT

None

IX. MINUTES

1. Motion was made by Adam Worsley and seconded by Emmett Collins to approve the Minutes from the September 13, 2023, 9:00 a.m. Regular Meeting. All were in favor.

X. PUBLIC HEARING

(Agenda amended to continue until the October 10, 2023 Meeting) 2023-2043 Joint Meriwether County and Cities Comprehensive Plan Update

1. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Emmett Collins to go into Public Hearing for Ordinance Amendment – 2023-01, To amend the Official Code of Ordinance Appendix B – SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS, Article III, Sec. 301 adding definition-Plat, minor final, means all divisions of a tract of land into two or more lots where no new streets are created. All were in favor. Cassandra Sharpe, Director of Building, Zoning, and Community Development stated this was brought before the Board a few months ago. It was tabled to make sure that we had the correct definition and Legal has approved this Ordinance. Ms. Sharpe stated she has made sure it has been regulated in any other areas of the subdivision regulations. This is so that any plat that is recorded in the Courthouse would need to have her signature. Currently there are people who come in and divide their properties more than once and they are recording the plats and that allows another person to come in and cut it again and record the plat. In some cases, it makes this fall into a subdivision category rather than an individual lot like it should be. Vice Chairman King asked about this change and Ms. Sharpe stated it will provide the definition of a Plat Minor Final. Ms. Sharpe gave an example and stated in doing this it allows her to keep this on the Zoning Map and keeps the lines more regulated. Vice Chairman King asked about a timeline to divide and if there would be something on the computer system that would show this. Ms. Sharpe stated this is something that would help her keep up with this on the Zoning Map and QPublic. There was more conversation of dividing a property and then dividing again at a later date. Interim Administrator Gay stated as long as they meet the criteria in the Zoning Ordinance there was not necessarily a timeline. Ms. Sharpe will be able to sign off and put a copy of the record in her file for the map. Ms. Sharpe will be able to see when and how it was divided to make sure it does not become a subdivision. There was more conversation of the timeframe and what could happen. Interim Administrator Gay asked to Board to only hear this tonight and allow staff to address this issue and bring back later. Michael Hill stated this will allow every parcel that is divided into two lots or more to be reviewed. There were no other questions or anyone from the Public to speak. Motion was made by Vice Chairman King and seconded by Adam Worsley to continue the Public Hearing. All were in favor.

2. Motion was made by Vice Chairman King and seconded by Adam Worsley to go into a Public Hearing for Ordinance Amendment – 2023-03, To amend the Official Code of Ordinance Article IV – PLATTING JURISDICTION, AND ENFORCEMENT, Sec. 401 Platting Authority (remove words “of a subdivision”). All were in favor. Ms. Sharpe stated this carries over from 2023-01. This is by the final platting authority; the section 401 had included recording of final plats and subdivision plats. We are taking out the word “subdivision”. Attorney Hill stated there was also a few small additions added at the same time. Attorney Hill did not think it was only to strike the word subdivision. We struck subdivided in line two, and added the words final plat or a

plat, minor final before the “of a subdivision” be struck in the last line. Attorney Hill had a redline version for the Board to see if needed. There were no comments from the public. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Adam Worsley to continue Ordinance Amendment – 2023-03. All were in favor.

3. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Emmett Collins to go into a Public Hearing for Ordinance Amendment 2023-04 – To amend the Official Code of Ordinance Chapter 6, BUILDINGS AND BUILDING REGULATIONS, by adding to Article 1, Section 6-5(g), the use of recreational vehicle while having an active building permit. All were in favor. Ms. Sharpe stated this Ordinance will allow individuals to legally live in a recreational vehicle while building their home. Currently, we have people who have sold their homes to build and they do not have the money to rent so they are living illegally in RV's. The Ordinance defines the definition of a Recreation Vehicle and the use of it as a temporary residence to the owner and the immediate family only on the building site with an active building permit for the construction of a permanent residence. Upon completion they will have to remove the RV or store it behind the house afterwards. Interim Administrator Gay stated this was for the person who was permitting the house and not someone else who would be living in it. It would be a good idea to have a time period. Ms. Sharpe stated they would have 12-months and if they had not received a certificate of occupancy they could apply for a continuance. Chairman Threadgill gave an example of an older or disabled couple that may be building a home and they want someone there to be able to watch and help with the security, we need to allow that. This would allow the applicant the ability to choose someone to live at the property in an RV during the building process. Attorney Hill stated what we are trying to avoid with the language is someone who is building a house, parking a RV onsite and renting the RV. There was more discussion including that we need to have follow up and something in the system. Interim Administrator Gay stated we can add that it cannot be rented, assign a period of time when they would have to come back to us to follow up and 12-months requires the County to re-check. There were no other comments. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Emmett Collins to continue the Public Hearing for Ordinance Amendment 2023-04. All were in favor.

4. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman King to go into a Public Hearing for Ordinance Amendment 2023-05 – To amend the Official Code of Ordinance Chapter 7, ZONING DISTRICT STANDARDS AND PERMITTED USES, by adding Section 7.3(b), Recreational Vehicle. All were in favor. Chairman Threadgill asked what the difference was between Chapter 6 and 7. Attorney Hill stated if you look at Chapter 6, you are allowed to put it in an active building site where you have it zoned for a Temporary or Special Use. In 7.3 it makes this a Special Use within the land district of A-1, RR, LDR and R1 Districts only. It would have to be part of a Special Use permit allowing for the temporary use of that RV. Attorney Hill stated there are around three sections that deal with RV's that needed to be cohesive. He and Interim Administrator Gay wanted to make sure they were not missing anything. Attorney Hill explained it would need to be an active building permit and it has to be a Special Use permissible within that zoning category. Interim Administrator Gay stated when you mention RV in the Ordinance you have to go back and make sure there is not a conflict in another area. There were questions and answers regarding someone placing an RV on property for a hunting camp. There were no comments from the Public. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Vice Chairman King to continue the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2023-05. All were in favor.

5. Motion was made by Emmett Collins and seconded by Adam Worsley to go into a Public Hearing for Ordinance Amendment 2023-06 – To amend the Official Code of Ordinance Article 10, Section 10.4, Recreational Vehicle Parks. All were in favor. Ms. Sharpe stated this is another part that goes with the previous Ordinance Amendments. As was mentioned earlier, the only place you could have an RV was in an RV Park. This would be allowed at the residence and not only in RV Parks. There were no comments from the public. Motion was made by Adam Worsley and seconded by Rosla Plant to continue Ordinance Amendment 2023-06. All were in favor.

6. Motion was made by Emmett Collins and seconded by Adam Worsley to go into a Public Hearing for Ordinance Amendment 2023-07 – To amend the Official Code Ordinance Appendix A – ZONING, by adding to Article 5, Section 5.4, (i) to allow a guest house on a lot with main house. All were in favor. Ms. Sharpe stated this Ordinance allows for a guest house/mother-in-law suite adding (i) definition under accessory uses and structures. Many have asked for the County to allow this. This would be smaller than the actual house and right now this is not allowed unless it is 1,375 square feet, which is the same size as a house and would have to be connected by a bridgeway or roof top. This Ordinance would not allow an accessory structure less than 500 and no more than 900 square feet of heated and finished floor area to be utilized as a guesthouse. The location must not exceed 100' from the principle dwelling. Guesthouse must meet all zoning setback requirements. Power service and sewer must be separate from the principle dwelling. Parking must be made available and vehicle access must be connected to the existing driveway accessing the public roadway. At no time shall the guesthouse be rented out for short-term and/or long-term rental. Chairman Threadgill stated he feels the distance should be 500 square feet -1,000 square feet but no more than 1,000 square feet. Commissioner Worsley asked why we would cap the square footage. Chairman Threadgill stated because there would be two minimal square footage residential homes.

Wilton Bettis asked if tiny homes had been considered or if there was anything in the Ordinance to address the square footage of a tiny home. Chairman Threadgill stated we do not have a Tiny Home Ordinance. Interim Administrator Gay stated the County had not moved forward with a consideration of a Tiny Home Ordinance due to the decline in popularity and concerns it would become rental properties at some point. Mr. Bettis stated he sees this on the internet, houses are expensive, and there is a lot of homelessness. Mr. Bettis asked if the County should wrap the square footage, for whatever we are going to require, into the guest house property. Chairman Threadgill stated no, that would be an entirely different Ordinance the Board would have to discuss in what they would want and the stipulations behind that with zoning. It is more complex. Mr. Bettis asked in the future if the County would have limits on tiny homes that would not be on guesthouses. Vice Chairman King stated the minimum square footage in the Ordinance now allows 1,375 which prevents you from applying for a tiny house. Chairman Threadgill stated that is something that has come up over the years but nothing that has been narrowed down and put in place. Now, there are a lot of phone calls where individuals need a place for a caretaker or elderly parents to be on the property and able to take care of them. This Ordinance will allow that. A tiny house would sit on its own property by itself without an additional home on it. Vice Chairman King stated it is a great idea and if we had either a sewer or something to look at our areas in the future, there could be a place where that would be allowable. Someone could buy the property and plat it for tiny homes. There is a need and Vice Chairman King felt everyone deserves a place they can afford to live. Vice Chairman gave an example of not wanting someone to have a nice home and then allowing the next person to build

a tiny home next to that, such as a roll off home, where it would hurt the value of the other homes in the area.

Mr. Bettis stated his neighbor, who was not a caretaker and was a subordinate to and it is his mom's property. The person wanted to purchase property from Mr. Bettis whose property is tied up in CUVA. He permitted a mancave which elevated him from the Building Department's encumbrances. This person moved his wife into the mancave.

There were no other comments from the public. Motion was made by Adam Worsley and seconded by Emmett Collins to continue the Public Hearing for Ordinance 2023-07. All were in favor.

XI. APPOINTMENTS

1. Motion was made by Rosla Plant and seconded by Emmett Collins to table the appointment to CAFI to fill an unexpired term. All were in favor.
2. Motion was made by Emmett Collins and seconded by Adam Worsley to table the appointment to the Airport Authority, District 3. All were in favor.

XII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Chairman Threadgill read the Resolution of Adoption for the Meriwether County Budget FY 2023-2024. The FY 2023-2024 Budget was presented during the Public Hearing of the Special Called Meeting on September 26, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. Motion was made by Vice Chairman King and seconded by Adam Worsley to approve the FY 2023-2024 Budget and Resolution and allow all to sign. All were in favor.
2. Interim Administrator Theron Gay stated the service truck at Public Works has a blown engine that needs to be replaced. This truck is important to the operation as it can service equipment in the field without having to return to the maintenance shop. Three bids have been received to replace the engine. The lowest complete bid received was from Mike Patton in LaGrange in the amount of \$9,900. Installation of the engine will be performed by the County, and the engine cost would be covered in the Public Works Budget. Staff's recommendation was to purchase the new engine from Mike Patton Ford in the amount of \$9,900. Fitzpatrick was the least expensive but you have to return the core. Interim Administrator Gay stated we could check on this. The other quote was from Advanced Auto Parts but it did not include everything. Interim Administrator Gay will get back with companies on the prices. Motion was made by Adam Worsley and seconded by Emmett Collins to allow the Interim Administrator to check back with the companies to see who is the least expensive then proceed with a purchase not exceeding \$9,900. All were in favor.

XIV. REPORT FROM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Interim Administrator, Theron Gay, reported he had worked on the Short-Term Work Program, we will also go back and put together a new work plan for our Comprehensive Plan since there are some items that have now been accomplished and others to add. Interim Administrator Gay stated they had discussed equipment needs for the Fire Department, spoken with a potential prospect by phone, met with the City of Manchester regarding a dispatcher for Police Services and will come up with an Ordinance or Agreement to allow all Cities to participate in the same.

The County will need to come up with a fee that could be prorated on the number of calls they have. Proposals were opened last Friday for Professional Services for Water and Sewer and Engineering and they will be reviewed soon. A meeting was held in Thomaston yesterday with GDOT regarding access on property located on Hwy. 54. The Engineer for IDA will go back and do a site distance analysis for us. Interim Administrator Gay has worked with Beverly Thomas on several Open Record Requests.

Blue Cole, Assistant Administrator reported there had been several staff members out last week in training for continuing education. A meeting was held at the guest house with KB and the Industrial Development Authority. Assistant Administrator Cole stated we are also working on hiring and retention.

XV. REPORT FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Adam Worsley: there have been a lot of communications with citizens following the last meeting regarding road work. Some have been favorable and some have not.

Commissioner Worsley thanked the staff for their hard work.

Vice Chairman Gene King: reported he received three phone calls this week from three different areas. One man called and he and his neighbors offered to pay for the gravel if we will spread it. Vice Chairman King told the caller they should not have to pay for the gravel since they were paying taxes. Another gentleman called about a short road that is off a newly asphalt paved road and if they could pay to have it asphalted since the other road was completed. Vice Chairman King told the man he could not do work on the County Road due to liability. Vice Chairman King thanked the man and stated this saddens him. The other caller asked if he could purchase millings and have the County grade the road and spread the millings. Vice Chairman King stated he is frustrated and tired of the calls of having no gravel. There are callers who express thanks. There are citizens out there that are begging and wanting to pay out of their own pocket. There are roads that have ditches cut out and graded but have no gravel. It is time to put gravel on the roads after they are worked. Interim Administrator Gay stated we will be opening some bids this Friday on the first of our repairs to dirt roads and he explained what the County would be doing. At the next meeting we should have an idea of how much this will cost and that will give us an idea about moving on to some other roads. There was additional discussion by Commissioner Worsley of on demand, getting additional resources, etc. to help with the road issues. Vice Chairman King stated the work on Luthersville Road should be finish in a few weeks and it is looking good. Vice Chairman King asked Commissioner Collins about the culverts that were just finished in his District and said they are looking good. Interim Administrator Gay stated many have said we are not repaving when we replace a culvert. We are trying to allow for the section to settle and compact before we go back to pave.

Chairman Bryan Threadgill: asked if we had sent out the RFP's for Beulah Evans Road. Interim Administrator Gay stated he would try and get them in the newspaper next week.

Commissioner Rosla Plant: signage has been installed on the bridge on LaGrange Street in Greenville. Small vehicles can bypass this road within the City. This will be an inconvenience for big trucks and they will be re-routed. There was additional discussion of future detours, road conditions due to the detours, and the need to ask GDOT for assistance. Interim Administrator Gay stated we are tracking the expenses associated with repairs to these roads that are being used

as detours. Vice Chairman King stated there are homeowners on Forrest Road and Goldmine Road who said they have semitrucks and concrete trucks using their roads as a back road to miss the weigh scales. Interim Administrator Gay stated we could contact the State Enforcement Group regarding this issue.

Commissioner Emmett Collins: Thanked County employees for doing a good job and for the work on the roads and grading. Commissioner Collins also thanked the Commissioners.

XVI. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY

County Attorney stated Executive Session would be needed for Litigation and Real Estate.

XVII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Gene King and seconded by Emmett Collins to go into Executive Session for Litigation and Real Estate at 6:58 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Adam Worsley and seconded by Emmett Collins to go out of Executive Session at 7:32 p.m. All were in favor.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Gene King and seconded by Adam Worsley to go back into Regular Session at 7:34 p.m. All were in favor.

There was no action taken in Executive Session.

XVIII. FUTURE MEETINGS & NOTICES

Chairman Bryan Threadgill announced future Meetings and Notices prior to Executive Session.

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, motion was made by Emmett Collins and seconded by Adam Worsley to adjourn at 7:34 p.m. All were in favor.

Approved by: Majority vote of the Board of Commissioners

Attest: Beverly Thomas, County Clerk

Date: October 10, 2023