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**Houston County Commissioners Meeting**

**June 2, 2015**

**Perry, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, June 2, 2015 at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Thomson, McMichael, and Walker present. Commissioner Robinson was absent on family vacation. Also present were Director of Administration Barry Holland, Human Resources Director Ken Carter, Purchasing Director Mark Baker, Chief Building Inspector Tim Andrews, Chief Tax Appraiser James Moore, Senior Animal Control Officer Dale Newberry, Animal Control Officer Alan Smith, Director of Houston County Public Library System Sara Paulk, Houston County Library Board members Pam Yates and Robin Engle, Walt and Becky Wood, Senior Vice-President of Flint Energies Jimmy Autry, City of Perry Councilman Randall Walker and County Attorney Tom Hall.

Commissioner Walker led the audience in the Invocation.

MSgt. Clarence Copeland, US Army (ret.) led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and then detailed his military career. He was drafted in 1966 and was sent to Vietnam in January of 1967 as a nineteen year old. He spoke candidly about the brutal realities of war and the struggle of many soldiers such as himself who suffer from PTSD after experiencing the horrors of combat. He thanked God for the freedom that we enjoy in this country and commented that his military experience taught him how to be a good and respectful man. He asked the Board to consider some type of statute or memorial in the County that would be dedicated to the veterans of all wars. He has lived most of his life here in Houston County and for the past nineteen years has run a local bail bondsman business.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Library Board members Pam Yates and Robin Engle, and the Friends of the Library and then read a resolution commending the organization for their support of the Houston County Library system. Chairman Stalnaker commented that the community could be proud of all three branches of the library in Houston County. Ms. Yates was joined by a dozen members of the Friends of the Library. She related that after this year’s annual book sale the total funds raised by the organization for the library system has reached $303,710.17.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried to approve the minutes of May 19, 2015. Upon voting, Mr. McMichael, Mr. Walker and Mr. Thomson voted yes. Motion carried.

County Attorney Tom Hall made a blanket statement for the benefit of all applicants for Special Exceptions for home occupations that even if the Board of Commissioners approves an application, neighborhood covenants may still impose certain restrictions upon or against home occupation businesses. The Board of Commissioners does not enforce these covenants.

Special Exception Applications #1871 for a home occupation business was presented by Tim Andrews. Mr. Andrews stated that application was tabled at the May 5th Board meeting and was sent back to Zoning and Appeals since the applicant was not present at the original Zoning & Appeals hearing. This application was then heard on April 27th and is now recommended for unanimous approval. The applicant wishes to run a family child care business and will have a maximum of six children with two of her own children and four of her client’s children.

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Special Exception Application #1873 for a home occupation business was presented by Tim Andrews. Mr. Andrews explained that this application was also tabled at the May 5th Board meeting and sent back to Zoning & Appeals in order for the County attorney to advise the Zoning & Appeals Board on the use of a detached garage for the business and whether they are allowed to regulate the amount of gunpowder kept on site. He explained that the applicant will be reconditioning or refurbishing brass and then reloading ammunition for sale by internet only.

Special Exception Applications #1879 through #1883 and #1885 through #1888 for home occupation businesses were presented by Tim Andrews. Other than #1880 which was tabled in order for the applicant to be present at the hearing, Mr. Andrews stated that all other applications comply with Section 95 of the Comprehensive Land Development Regulations and that the Board of Zoning & Appeals recommends unanimous approval of each except for Application #1881 which had one abstention.

Chairman Stalnaker explained that the approval of any of these applications for home occupations would not change the zoning of the properties in any way.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened a public hearing on applications #1871, #1873, #1879 through #1883 and #1885 through #1888: With the exception of #1888 for the First Baptist Church of Haynesville, all applicants were present but had no additional information to add. There was no opposition to any of these applications.

There being no public comments, the meeting was continued.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried to approve the following special exception applications to include any and all stipulations as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendation and Section 95 Requirements staff report:

Application #1871 submitted by Sandra Meija; Application #1873 submitted by Barry Duffield; Application #1879 submitted by Sophia Dow; Application #1881 submitted Sarah Barfield; Application #1882 submitted by Lizel Peterson; Application #1883 submitted by Edward English; Application #1885 submitted by WD Images, Inc.; Application #1886 submitted by Ty Odom; Application #1887 submitted by Jesse Quinones; and Application #1888 submitted by the First Baptist Church of Haynesville. Upon voting, Mr. Walker, Mr. Thomson, and Mr. McMichael voted yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. McMichael and carried to table Special Exception Application #1880 submitted by Miranda Rawls Solomon. Upon voting, Commissioners Walker, McMichael and Thomson voted yes to table Application #1880 and send back to the Zoning & Appeals Board for further consideration. Motion carried.

Mr. Andrews presented Rezoning Application #1884 submitted by Merganser Enterprises, Inc. The current use is R-1 residential and vacant land with the proposed use as C-2 commercial retail development. Planning & Zoning has recommended unanimous approval.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened a public hearing on application #1884.

Mr. Merv Hoffman, President of Merganser Enterprises, spoke on behalf of the application stating that it would bring a traditional neighborhood shopping center to the area. Chairman Stalnaker explained that the development would be located near the new Hwy 96 alignment with Hwy 247.

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There was no opposition.

There being no further public comments, the hearing was closed.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried to approve Re-Zoning Application #1884 submitted by Merganser Enterprises, Inc. for that property described as Land Lot 20, 11th Land District of Houston County, Georgia, Parcel “J-RZ” as shown on a plat of survey by Jones Surveying Co. for Janis J. Stewart Estate, consisting of 8.873 acres. Upon voting, Mr. Walker, Mr. Thomson and Mr. McMichael voted yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. McMichael and carried to approve the appointment of Councilman Clifford Holmes, Jr. to another one year term on the Phoenix Center Community Service Board beginning July 1, 2015 and expiring on June 30, 2016. Upon voting, Mr. Walker, Mr. McMichael and Mr. Thomson voted yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried to approve the appointment of Mr. Mike Mathis to another 3 year term on the Region V EMS Board beginning July 1, 2015 and expiring on June 30, 2018. Upon voting, Mr. Thomson, Mr. Walker and Mr. McMichael voted yes. Motion carried.

Senior Animal Control Officer Dale Newberry briefed the Board on an Application submitted by Ms. Gina Boselie for a Waiver to Animal Limitations. Ms. Boselie’s application stated that she wants to increase the number of adult dogs to an unspecified number so that she may continue to run a foster-based rescue operation from her residence at 102 Roxana Court in Warner Robins. He stated that she currently has four personal dogs as well as the rescue animals. He gave a brief history of several past complaints one of which a neighbor was bitten by one of her dogs and another complaint where an individual adopted a dog from her rescue operation and it subsequently had to be euthanized after contracting Parvo. Officer Newberry explained that she has been operating illegally on her small 0.36 acre R-1 zoned lot with no business license since at least 2014 and has also had issues with the Georgia Department of Agriculture concerning her operation.

Mr. Thomson asked when the dog bite incident had occurred. Officer Newberry stated that it occurred in November of 2014 while the neighbor was standing at their common fence.

Mr. McMichael asked if there were any other complaints on file. Officer Newberry stated that there were not.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened a public hearing on the Application for Waiver to Animal Limitations submitted by Ms. Gina Boselie.

The applicant, Gina Boselie, explained that she has four personal dogs at the moment plus her foster dogs. She explained that after a certain period of time she releases her foster animals to several shelters up North in Maine and New York since they can be more easily placed with new owners there. She asserted that the neighbor that was bitten by one of her dogs was leaning over her fence and that the individual whose adopted rescue dog contracted Parvo did so because of that individual’s treatment of the dog after she adopted it. Currently she has 13 foster dogs and each of them is fully vetted. She stated that she is very sensitive to her neighbor’s complaints about noise and that she hopes to move the location of her operation in the next six months to a year to another property owned by her parents.

Chairman Stalnaker asked about the height of the fence. The applicant thought it to be about a four foot chain link fence.

Mr. Thomson asked the applicant to describe her pets. She stated that she has two pit bulls, one Chihuahua, a bulldog, and a Boston Terrier.

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Mr. Walker asked if she had any cats at the residence. The applicant stated that she did not have any cats.

Ms. Regina Brabham, Critical Care for Animal Angels rescue group in Peach County, spoke in favor of the application explaining that Ms. Boselie is performing very important work and is known in the area as one of the best “bottle-feeders” of newborn puppies.

Mr. McMichael asked Ms. Brabham on what type and size of lot she operated her rescue operation. Ms. Brabham responded that it was a commercial property of approximately three acres.

Ms. Allan Carey, 104 Roxana Court, Warner Robins speaking in opposition stated that although she does not object to the efforts of the applicant to foster rescue dogs she felt that their neighborhood was not the right area to do it. She related that they have very small yards and that she has counted up to eleven dogs and one pig in Ms. Boselie’s yard at one time. She had concerns about the noise and the smells that the operation produces.

Mr. Walton Wood, 426 Sandefur Road, Kathleen stated that he has known Officer Newberry for quite some time and that he performs a difficult job in a very compassionate way. He felt that the animal control ordinance was enacted for good reason and that the Board should listen very carefully to those who apply for any type of waiver or exception. He stated that Ms. Boselie had obviously been in violation of the ordinance for a while and that she should be given no more than 30 days in which to comply with the three dog limitation.

There being no further public comments, the hearing was closed.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried to disapprove an application for waiver to animal limitations submitted by Gina Boselie of 102 Roxana Court, Warner Robins and to give applicant 30 days to comply with the maximum number of dogs (3) allowed on a residential lot as specified by the Unified Animal Control Ordinance. Upon voting, Mr. Thomson and Mr. McMichael voted yes. Mr. Walker abstained. Chairman Stalnaker conferred with County attorney Tom Hall as to whether Mr. Walker’s personal relationship with the applicant would create a conflict preventing his voting on this matter. Mr. Hall replied that he thought it would not present a conflict. Mr. Walker stated that he did not feel comfortable participating in the vote due to the fact that he knew the applicant personally. Chairman Stalnaker voted yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried to approve Chairman Stalnaker to sign a contract with the Georgia Department of Corrections to provide the County with nine inmate work details from the McEver Probation Detention Center at a cost of $39,500 per detail; and a contract for one inmate work detail from the Dooly State Prison at a cost of $39,500. The contracts will be effective July 1, 2015 and will expire June 30, 2016. Total cost to the County is $395,000. Upon voting, Mr. Thomson, Mr. McMichael and Mr. Walker voted yes. Motion carried.

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Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. Walker and carried to approve the Fire Department’s proposed 2015 Family Portrait Fundraiser to be held between June 2nd and the first week of November. Chief Williams is authorized to sign all contracts. Upon voting, Mr. Thomson, Mr. Walker and Mr. McMichael voted yes. Motion carried.

Chairman Stalnaker commented that the fundraiser is a very worthy cause undertaken by the Volunteers to help raise money for additional equipment to be used within the Fire Department.

Mr. Walker commented that the individuals going door-to-door are very courteous in their manner.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried to approve the purchase of one new 2015 Ford F-150 pick-up truck for use in the Water Department from Perry Ford in the amount of $19,751 for immediate delivery. Purchase will be funded by Water Department capital funds approved in the FY15 budget. Upon voting, Mr. McMichael, Mr. Thomson and Mr. Walker voted yes. Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried to approve the payment of bills totaling $3,024,990.70. Upon voting, Mr. McMichael, Mr. Thomson and Mr. Walker voted yes. Motion carried.

Chairman Stalnaker then opened the meeting for public comments.

Ansel Peck, 109 Latham Drive, Warner Robins complemented the contractor on the soon to be completed Feagin Mill Road construction project as they appear to be very competent and capable. Chairman Stalnaker remarked that the Feagin Mill Road project has been one of the most difficult and challenging jobs to date. Completion of the project is expected by July 1st. Chairman Stalnaker asked for the continued patience of all motorists as they travel down this road and others like it that are under construction in that the construction workers are laboring in a very dangerous environment and need to remain safe.

Judge Lukemire’s secretary Rebecca Long informed the Board that the judge was doing well after undergoing emergency back surgery and should be released to go home as soon as tomorrow.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized First Presbyterian Day School student 8 year old Kye Kennington and presented him with a Houston County lapel pin to commemorate his attendance of the Commissioner’s meeting.

There being no further public comments, the meeting was continued.

The Chairman then asked for comments from the Commissioners.

Mr. McMichael remarked that he is very happy that the Feagin Mill Road construction project is coming to completion.

Mr. Walker recognized City of Perry Councilman Randall Walker and thanked him for coming to the Board meeting.

There being no further comments, the meeting was continued.

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Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried to adjourn the meeting.

Upon voting, Mr. Walker, Mr. Thomson and Mr. McMichael voted yes. Motion carried.

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Director of Administration

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