

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
WORK SESSION
Monday, February 13, 2023

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Chairman Bill Slaughter
Vice Chairman Scott Orenstein
Commissioner Joyce Evans
Commissioner Demarcus Marshall
Commissioner Clay Griner

Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker was not in attendance.

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of January 23, 2023 and the regular session of January 24, 2023. No changes to the minutes were requested.

PUBLIC HEARING

REZ-2023-02 Thomas Property, Madison Hwy, R-1 to R-A, Well & Septic ~10 acres, County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning for approximately ten (10) acres from R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning to R-A (Residential Agricultural) zoning, in order for the property to be used for agricultural purposes, including the raising of livestock. Mr. Dillard stated this property is located off of Madison Highway and there are no wetlands. Further, Mr. Dillard stated R-A zoning is listed as a recommended zoning within this character area. Mr. Dillard stated both the Planning Commission and the TRC recommended approval of the request.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Wild Adventures Request for Project Approval for Georgia's Tourism Development Act Program, County Manager, Paige Dukes, stated Wild Adventures Theme Park is seeking approval to apply for this program through the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, which would provide 2.5% sales tax relief for this part of the project for a ten-year period. Mrs. Dukes asked Jon Vigue, Vice President and General Manager of Wild Adventures Theme Park, to address the Commission. Mr. Vigue presented the Wild Adventures Master Plan Update. Mr. Vigue stated the Outpost Campground Project is a key turning point in increasing the attendance at the park. Vice Chairman Orenstein commented that this is a great idea and also asked regarding the land ownership, Mr. Vigue answered that Wild Adventures does own the land. Vice Chairman Orenstein asked regarding the infrastructure with the campsites needing water/sewer services, Mr. Vigue stated they've used an engineering company from Atlanta and they have been in contact with the Lowndes County Utilities Department. Chairman Slaughter asked Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey if the infrastructure was in place to serve, Mr. Stalvey answered yes. Commissioner Marshall asked regarding this program, if

the 2.5% refund comes from the state, would it not take away anything from the county, Mrs. Dukes answered that additional clarification was going to be received from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regarding this process. Chairman Slaughter stated this expansion will not only add to the park, but should increase visitation numbers in our community as well as Wild Adventures Theme Park. Mr. Vigue stated he believes in this community and appreciates the support.

Purchase of 215 Webster Street Property, Community Development Director, Rachel Thrasher, presented the item. Mrs. Thrasher stated Lowndes County has an opportunity to purchase property located at 215 Webster Street, Valdosta, Georgia, currently owned by James Council. Mrs. Thrasher stated the appraised value is \$25,000.00 and the acquisition will improve the current development underway.

Assistance to Firefighters Grant Micro Grant for SCBA Air Cylinders, Fire Chief, Lloyd Green, presented the grant application. Chief Green stated the grant funds would be used to replace thirty-two (32) of the needed air cylinders. Chief Green stated this grant is for up to \$50,000.00 for equipment with a county match of ten percent. Chief Green stated the total amount for thirty-two cylinders is \$49,600.00, with a county match of \$4,509.09.

Peterson Road Sewer Main Open Cut, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated the Lake Park Bellville Road widening requires relocation of the water and sewer lines. Mr. Stalvey stated there is an additional conflict between the sewer main and drainage pipes at the intersection of Peterson Road. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) stated this change would not be covered in the contract. GDOT has given a quote of \$40,237.50, which includes all materials, labor, equipment, etc. Chairman Slaughter asked what an open cut involves, Mr. Stalvey responded that it is when you have an excavator dig out the portion of the road and a pipe is laid into an open ditch versus a bored line.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes asked Public Works Director, Robin Cumbus and Emergency Management Director, Ashley Tye, to give the Commission an update regarding the roads with the recent severe weather. Mrs. Cumbus stated all roads will be addressed by the end of the week with five locations being called in over the weekend. Mrs. Cumbus stated three of the five locations were repaired on Saturday night with three large trees being removed which required machines. Mr. Tye stated once the rain stopped, four/five inches were received based on official gauges. The Withlacoochee at Skipper Bridge is at 136.1 and has crested and is starting to level out. Mr. Tye stated there is another rain event through possibly Thursday. Commissioner Marshall asked if Langdale and Naylor Parks were closed, Mr. Tye responded that the Valdosta-Lowndes Parks and Recreation Authority would make that decision and Mr. Tye stated he was in contact with their office. Mrs. Dukes requested an executive session meeting for the purpose of privileged attorney-client communication regarding potential or pending litigation. At 8:51 a.m. Commissioner Griner made a motion to enter into executive session for the purpose of privileged attorney-client communication regarding potential or pending litigation, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:09 a.m. Chairman Slaughter reconvened the work session with no additional information being discussed. Commissioner Griner made a motion to adjourn the work session meeting, Commissioner Evans second. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting.

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, February 14, 2023

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Chairman Bill Slaughter
Vice Chairman Scott Orenstein
Commissioner Joyce Evans
Commissioner Mark Wisenbaker
Commissioner Demarcus Marshall
Commissioner Clay Griner

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and recognized the presence of Leadership Lowndes class members.

INVOCATION

Vice Chairman Orenstein

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Vice Chairman Orenstein

PRESENTATION

GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award, Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated that Lowndes County has received the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the Fiscal year 2023 budget. Ms. Black explained budgets must be rated proficient in all four categories and in fourteen mandatory criteria within those categories to receive the award. Mrs. Blacks stated this is Lowndes County's 17th consecutive year of receiving this award. Chairman Slaughter thanked Mrs. Black and her staff for their ongoing commitment to preparing and presenting financial information in a detail-oriented way.

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session meeting of January 23, 2023 and the regular session meeting of January 24, 2023. No revisions to the minutes were requested. Vice Chairman Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARING

REZ-2023-02 Thomas Property, Madison Hwy, R-1 to R-A, Well & Septic ~10 acres, County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request represents a change in zoning for approximately ten (10) acres from R-1 (Low Density Residential) zoning to R-A (Residential Agricultural) zoning, in order for the property to be used for agricultural purposes, including the raising

of livestock. Mr. Dillard stated this property is located off of Madison Highway and there are no wetlands. Further, Mr. Dillard stated R-A zoning is listed as a recommended zoning within this character area. Mr. Dillard stated both the Planning Commission and the TRC recommended approval of the request. No one spoke for or against this request. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the rezoning request as presented, Commissioner Marshall second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Wild Adventures Request for Project Approval for Georgia's Tourism Development Act Program, Chairman Slaughter presented the item stating the Commission heard from Mr. Jon Vigue, Vice President and General Manager of Wild Adventures Theme Park, during the work session. There being no additional questions, Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Purchase of 215 Webster Street Property, Community Development Director, Rachel Thrasher, presented the item. Mrs. Thrasher stated Lowndes County has an opportunity to purchase property located at 215 Webster Street, Valdosta, Georgia, currently owned by James Council. Mrs. Thrasher stated the appraised value is \$25,000.00 and the acquisition will improve the current development underway. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the purchase in the amount of \$25,000.00, Vice Chairman Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Assistance to Firefighters Grant Micro Grant for SCBA Air Cylinders, Fire Chief, Lloyd Green, presented the grant application. Chief Green stated the grant funds would be used to replace thirty-two (32) of the needed air cylinders. Chief Green stated this grant is up to \$50,000.00, for equipment with a county match of ten percent. Chief Green stated the total amount for thirty-two cylinders is \$49,600.00, with a county match of \$4,509.09. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the grant application, Vice Chairman Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Peterson Road Sewer Main Open Cut, Utilities Director, Steve Stalvey, presented the item. Mr. Stalvey stated the Lake Park Bellville Road widening requires relocation of the water and sewer lines. Mr. Stalvey stated there is an additional conflict between the sewer main and drainage pipes at the intersection of Peterson Road. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) stated this change would not be covered in the contract. GDOT has given a quote of \$40,237.50, which includes all materials, labor, equipment, etc. Commissioner Wisenbaker made a motion to approve the request as presented, Vice Chairman Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Reports - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, stated there has been Active Shooter Training through the Lowndes County Sheriff's Office, who has been hosting and administering this training event. Mrs. Dukes stated this training includes fire departments, EMS and 911. Mrs. Dukes mentioned Josh Dawson was a role player in the active shooter event. Mrs. Dukes stated in the near future there would be a time for the Commissioners to come out and witness the training first hand. Mrs. Dukes mentioned that Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod and herself visited the historic courthouse this morning to meet with the architect and project manager regarding the progress of the courthouse renovation. Mrs. Dukes mentioned Public Information Officer, Meghan Barwick, has been working on

the ACCG Annual Award Nomination for our litter operation. On Thursday evening at 5:30 p.m. the Chamber Annual Awards Ceremony is being held at the James H. Rainwater Conference Center. On Friday, Lowndes County Departments will be participating in the STEM Career Day being held at Pine Grove Middle School. Mrs. Dukes mentioned she will be attending the Moody Air Force Base Professional of the Year Banquet being held Friday evening. In closing, next Tuesday, Mrs. Dukes and Community Development Director, Rachel Thrasher, will be meeting with staff at Quiet Pines Golf Course, at Moody Air Force Base, regarding the transition with a March 31, 2023 turnover.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD - Karen Carlisle, 6012 New Bethel Road, addressed the commission regarding services for the Board of Elections Office coming through the County and the money coming from organizations that may not be verified properly. Ms. Carlisle gave the example of Center for Tech and Civic Life.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice Chairman Orenstein made a motion to adjourn the regular session meeting, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 5:47 p.m.