

**Houston County Commissioners Meeting**  
**July 5, 2016**  
**Perry, Georgia**

The Houston County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, July 5, 2016 at the Houston County Courthouse in Perry, Georgia with Chairman Stalnaker presiding and Commissioners Walker, McMichael, Robinson and Thomson present. Also present were Director of Administration Barry Holland, County Attorney Tom Hall, Director of Operations Robbie Dunbar, Personnel Director Ken Carter, Fire/HEMA Chief Jimmy Williams, Director of Purchasing Mark Baker, Director of MIS Gail O'Quinn, Chief Assistant District Attorney Erikka Williams, Administrative Secretary Rebecca Kidd, James Faulkner, Senior Programmer Wilbur Greene, Mike Greathouse, Carl Veline, Walton Wood.

Commissioner McMichael led the audience in the Invocation.

Lt. Col John LaBuda, USAF (ret.) led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and detailed his 26-year military career. Early in his career he flew tankers for the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and then spent eleven years flying F-4's for the Idaho Air National Guard. After serving in such places as England, Germany, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and several stateside locations, he came to Robins Air Force Base in 1996 as the 116<sup>th</sup> Air Control Wing (B-1) public affairs officer. These days he runs his own consulting business and enjoys playing golf. He commented that there is no better place to live than Houston County.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve the minutes for the June 21, 2016 meeting.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson to approve the minutes of the special-called meeting of June 28, 2016. Upon voting, Mr. McMichael, Mr. Thomson, and Mr. Walker voted yes Ms. Robinson abstained. Motion carried.

Mr. McMichael presented Re-Zoning application #1980 submitted by Merganser Enterprises, Inc. at the intersection of SR96 and SR247.

Chairman Stalnaker explained that a public hearing was held at the June 7<sup>th</sup> Board meeting with no opposition heard at the time, but then the applicant requested the application to be tabled.

Chairman Stalnaker opened a Public Hearing on Re-Zoning application #1980.

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Merg Hoffman, applicant and President of Merganser Enterprises, spoke in favor of the rezoning.

There being no opposition the meeting was continued.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve Re-Zoning Application #1980 submitted by Merganser Enterprises, Inc. subject to Ammons Road being improved to handle an increase in traffic if an entrance is added.

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. These restrictive covenants are superior to any action taken by the Board of Commissioners. The actions taken by the Board will not change any provision within the covenant that prohibits any commercial or business activity.

Building Inspection Administrative Secretary Rebecca Kidd presented Special Exception Applications #1983 thru #1989 for home occupation businesses. Ms. Kidd explained that Application #1983 was recommended for unanimous approval; Application #1984 was recommended for unanimous approval with the condition to allow the storage of a 5.5 foot by 14 foot trailer on the property; Application #1985 was recommended to be tabled in order for the Board to receive a legal opinion for the County Attorney on what County requirements could be placed on gun sales without conflicting with Georgia law; Application #1986 was recommended for denial by the Zoning & Appeals Board because the applicant failed to prove to the Board at the Zoning & Appeals hearing that the personal and commercial vehicles currently on the property would not be used for the business; Application #1987 was recommended for unanimous approval; Application #1988 was recommended to be tabled in order for the sign to be properly posted on the property and, finally, Application #1989 was recommended for unanimous approval.

Chairman Stalnaker opened a Public Hearing for Special Exception Applications #1983 thru #1989.

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Applicant for # 1983 was present with nothing further to add.

There was no opposition.

Applicant for #1984 was present with nothing further to add.

There was no opposition.

Applicant for #1985 was not present.

There was no opposition.

Applicant for #1986 was present and stated that he has one Dodge 3500 dually truck with a lift that he plans to use in the business and that the other vehicles currently on his lot are his personal vehicles.

Mr. McMichael asked the applicant where he plans to store the vehicles that he recovers.

Mr. Livingston indicated that he has several commercial lots available to him such as the Easy Title Pawn lot.

Mr. Thomson asked if there were other vehicles at the house now.

Mr. Livingston indicated that he had one other rollback tow truck with a blown motor and five other personal vehicles.

Ms. Robinson asked how big the lot was.

Mr. Livingston replied that it was approximately one acre.

Walton Wood, 426 Sandefur Road, Kathleen stated that there were over ten vehicles in the yard currently and have been as many as fourteen in the recent past. He also stated that there were two semi-trucks, less the trailers, parked in the yard. He affirmed that in general the yard was very messy and also that there has been at least one shooting incident on the property in the past.

Marvin Leverette, 500 Lake Joy Road, Kathleen spoke of the debris and clutter in the yard and presented the Board with pictures of multiple vehicles in the yard. He complained of cars on tow trucks that were parked on the lot overnight and of the general unsafe conditions present.

Applicants for #1987 were present with nothing further to add other than to thank the Board for their consideration.

There was no opposition.

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Applicant for #1988 was not present.

There was no opposition.

Applicant for #1989 was present with nothing further to add.

There was no opposition.

There being no further comments the meeting was continued.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve Special Exception Application #1983 submitted by Mortimer K. Floyd to include any and all stipulation as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendation and Section 95 Requirements staff report.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Michael and carried unanimously by all to approve Special Exception Application #1984 submitted by James Askew to include any and all stipulations as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendation and Section 95 Requirements staff report.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to table Special Exception Application #1985 submitted by Jeffrey Sohler and to send it back to Zoning & Appeals for reconsideration.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to deny Special Exception Application #1986 submitted by Thomas Livingston.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve Special Exception Application #1987 submitted by Melissa Kitsko and Cynthia Anderson to include any and all stipulation as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendation and Section 95 Requirements staff report.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to table Special Exception Application #1988 submitted by Frank Gray and to send it back to Zoning & Appeals for reconsideration.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve Special Exception Application #1989 submitted by Georgia Kelly to include any and all stipulations as noted on the Zoning & Appeals recommendation and Section 95 Requirements staff report.

Chairman Stalnaker then gave each applicant approved for a home occupation instruction on the next step of the process which is obtaining their occupational business license from the Commissioner's office.

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Mr. McMichael presented a request for annexation into the City of Warner Robins by Mr. Keith Newton (Alexis Investments, LLC), on property located on the southwest corner of Woodard Road and Old Perry Road containing 114.2 acres. The property is currently zoned County R-AG, proposed zoning and land use upon annexation is City of Warner Robins R-3 General Residential District. Applicant would like to leave the remaining acreage of the parcel as County R-AG at this time. This property is not contiguous.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to deny a City of Warner Robins annexation request for a portion of that property known as Tax Parcel #001040 22A000 being Tract 3A comprising 108.76 acres and Tract 3B comprising 5.44 acres as the property is not contiguous.

Mr. Walker presented a request from Judge Lumsden to hire Ms. Katie Barrs as the Mental Health Accountability Court Administrator to fill that upcoming vacancy. Ms. Barrs does have the necessary experience to qualify for the B-Step.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously by all to approve the hiring of Ms. Katie Barrs as the Mental Health Accountability Court Administrator at the Grade 20-B effective July 19, 2016.

Mr. Walker presented a request by District Attorney George Hartwig to hire Mr. Rodrigo Silva as Assistant District Attorney to fill a recent vacancy. Mr. Silva does have the necessary experience to qualify for the B-Step.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the hiring of Mr. Rodrigo Silva as Assistant District Attorney as a Grade 27-B effective on or after July 6, 2016.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Chief Assistant District Attorney Erikka Williams who thanked the Board for their consideration and support.

Ms. Robinson presented a request from all three Superior Court judges for approval on employment contracts for court reporters that will supersede the current contracts that were approved March 15, 2016. The court reporters function as independent contractors and serve at the pleasure of the court.

Motion by Ms. Robinson, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all to approve Chairman Stalnaker signing the Superior Court employment

contracts for court reporters Wendy Nelson, Connie Montgomery, and Angela Busch for terms ending June 30, 2017.

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Mr. Thomson presented an Option to Purchase for a Water System well-site property near the intersection of SR96 and SR247. The purchase is contingent upon the test well proving suitable for the County's needs.

Motion by Mr. Thomson, second by Mr. McMichael and carried unanimously by all to authorize Chairman Stalnaker to enter into an option to purchase the following described land:

All that tract or parcel of land situate, lying and being in Land Lot 21 of the Eleventh Land District of Houston County, Georgia, being known and designated at Tract 14, comprising 6.12 acres according to a plat of survey designated "Survey for Thomas L. Mason, Inc." prepared by Brent Cunningham, Surveyor on July 11, 1996, a copy of said plat being of record in Plat Book 49, Page 46, Clerk's Office, Houston Superior Court. Said plat and the recorded copy thereof are hereby made a part of this description by reference thereto.

LESS AND EXCEPT the additional right of way for State Route 96 conveyed at Deed Book 6148, Page 197, Clerk's Office, Houston Superior Court.

This land would be purchased from Deborah C. Mason for a purchase price of \$218,000, contingent upon the site being suitable for a well.

Chairman Stalnaker mentioned that this option was based on an appraised price.

Mr. Thomson thanked Robbie Dunbar for his efforts in finding the land and helping to negotiate the contract.

Motion by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to approve the payment of the bills totaling \$2,084,786.73.

Personnel Director Ken Carter presented for the County on an appeal hearing request. He explained that Mr. Mike Greathouse was suspended pending termination on June 17<sup>th</sup> after receiving his second Group II offense within the last twelve months. The first offense occurred on February 11<sup>th</sup> when his supervisor, MIS Director Gail O'Quinn, received a complaint from the Sheriff's office that he smelled of alcohol and she subsequently suspended him for the rest of the day. His second offense came on June 17<sup>th</sup> when an individual from Sentinel Probation reported to Mr. Carter that he smelled of alcohol. Subsequent blood alcohol testing at the Sheriff's office revealed Mr. Greathouse to have a blood alcohol of .05 on the first reading and .046 on

the second. Mr. Carter instructed Mr. Greathouse to return on June 22<sup>nd</sup> for the determination of his possible termination.

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Mr. Greathouse did not show up for the meeting; however, he did drop off an appeal letter for Director of Administration Barry Holland about an hour before the scheduled meeting. Mr. Holland reviewed the letter and upheld the termination on that day. We were subsequently informed that Mr. Greathouse was represented in this matter by local attorney Carl Veline.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized Gail O'Quinn who described in detail the first incident from February 11<sup>th</sup> that arose from a complaint received from the Sheriff's Office Radio Room. After the incident Ms. O'Quinn discussed the action with Mr. Holland and documented the incident with a memo to Mr. Greathouse's personnel file.

Mr. Carter read into the record Article X Disciplinary Policy - Section 5 Group II Offenses from the County's personnel manual.

There ensued a brief discussion concerning Mr. Greathouse of another alcohol-related incident from 2008. This incident did not factor into the current decision. The current decision was based solely on the latest two incidents from February and June.

Chairman Stalnaker recognized local attorney Carl Veline representing Mr. Greathouse in this appeal.

Mr. Veline called Mr. Greathouse to speak to the Board. Mr. Greathouse said that he appreciated the opportunity to speak to the Board and gave a brief history of his 26-year employment with the County. He apologized for his actions and accepted responsibility for them. Mr. Greathouse gave some details about the 2008 incident and about the more recent incidents. He acknowledged that the tests showed that he was at work with alcohol in his system on June 17<sup>th</sup> but he was not aware that he was still under the influence from alcohol that he had consumed the night before. Mr. Greathouse stated that this was his eleventh day without alcohol and that, although he had not yet found a program, he was actively seeking treatment.

Mr. Veline stated that Mr. Greathouse was sincere in accepting responsibility for these incidents, that he understood the ramifications and asked the Board to take into consideration Mr. Greathouse's past performance on the job.

Chairman Stalnaker then asked County Attorney Tom Hall if it would be proper to enter into an Executive Session to deliberate the matter.

Mr. Hall confirmed that only the Board of Commissioners and the attorney could enter into Executive Session for that limited reason.

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Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Mr. Thomson and carried unanimously by all to enter into Executive Session for Personnel matters per O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(2).

Upon returning, Chairman Stalnaker reconvened the regular Board meeting.

Motion by Mr. Walker, second by Ms. Robinson and carried unanimously to uphold the termination of J. Michael (Mike) Greathouse.

Chairman Stalnaker opened the meeting for Public Comments.

Ms. Christine Johnson, Georgia Area Sales Manager for Williams Communications, 840 Hillcrest Industrial Blvd., Macon, thanked the Chairman, Commissioner Thomson and staff for meeting with her and another company representative concerning the recent E911 MHz upgrade RFP.

There being no more comments the meeting continued.

Chairman Stalnaker announced that there would be a ceremony held for the new traffic signal installation at the intersection of SR127 and Moody Road in front of Matt Arthur Elementary School on Wednesday, July 6<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. The State of Georgia issued the permit for the signal and Houston County is paying for it. Chairman Stalnaker felt that this would enhance the traffic flow in this area particularly in the mornings.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. McMichael, second by Mr. Walker and carried unanimously by all.

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Barry Holland  
Director of Administration

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Chairman

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Commissioner

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Commissioner

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Commissioner

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Commissioner