

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of the April 5, 2022

Regular Commissioners Meeting

6:00 P.M. Meeting

Present:

Greg Tapley, Chairman

Lamarcus Davis, Vice Chairman

Eddie Rowland, District 2

John Ambrose, District 3

George Emami, District 4

Staff:

Jim Hedges, County Manager

Ben Vaughn, County Attorney

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Kelsey Fortner, Zoning Officer

Welcome

Chairman Tapley welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Commissioner Rowland led the invocation.

Pledge

Chairman Tapley led the Pledge.

Roll Call

County Clerk Janet Abbott called roll.

Call to Order

Chairman Tapley called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Tapley presented the agenda for approval with the addition of speaker, Mr. Hugh Cromer.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the agenda with said changes.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Approve Minutes-BOC Meeting-March 15, 2022

Commissioner Emami motioned to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2022, Regular meeting with the usual 30 days for changes.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Recreational Vehicle Survey

Public Information Officer Richard Dumas presented the results of the Monroe County Housing Ordinance Enforcement Survey. The total number of votes case was 867 and the results were as follows:

1. Do you live in what you consider to be a highly populated location (subdivision, residential neighborhood)? Yes-418 (48.49%) No-444 (51.51%)
2. What do you consider blight? Blight refers to physical objects that have a detrimental effect on neighbors or the county at-large. Check all that apply: *Visible means being able to be seen from a public road of public property.
 - a. Visible Large Amounts of Trash-784 (91.80%)
 - b. Abandoned Boarded-up Houses or Mobile Homes-719 (84.19%)
 - c. Visible Hoarding-647 (78.23%)
 - d. Visible Junk Cars-666 (77.99%)
 - e. Visible Construction Debris-464 (54.33%)
 - f. Overgrown Yards-462 (54.10%)
 - g. Visible RVs being used as a residence-281 (32.90%)
 - h. Visible Storage Containers-275 (32.20%)
 - i. Other-111 (13%)
3. The Monroe County government is responsible for the safety, health, and welfare of its citizens. In your opinion, is blight impactful to these three things and should be addressed by the county government? Yes-660 (76.83%) No-199 (23.17%).
4. With regard to RVs, current county law states that they cannot be used as permanent residences other than as a temporary residence through a permitted process while building a home. One cannot legally reside in an RV on his/her own land regardless of acreage or regardless of whether or not the RV is

hooked up to a well or septic system. One cannot stay in an RV park beyond 30 days without physically moving the RV to another location. Having read and understood these factors, should the current law be maintained as is? Yes-278 (32.21%) No-585 (67.79%).

5. Should the current law on RVs be modified to allow indefinite time for residence in conforming RV parks with approved septic? Yes-648 (75.26%) No-213 (24.74%).
6. Should the current law on RVs be modified to allow placement of and residence within a single RV on an agriculturally zoned tract (3 acres or more with approved septic? Yes-643 (74.51%) No-220 (25.49%)
7. Should the current law on RVs be modified to allow for existing documented hardship cases (related to financial, medical, temporary employment, etc.) for residence for a maximum period of one year in RVs with approved septic? Yes-669 (77.97%) No-189 (22.03%).
8. Should the current law on RVs be modified to allow a single RV to be used as an accessory residence for an immediate family member on an agriculturally zoned tract (3 acres or more) with approved septic? Yes-640 (74.16%) No-223 (25.84%).
9. Should the current law on RVs be modified to allow a single RV to be used as an accessory residence for rental purposes on agriculturally zoned tract (3 acres or more) with approved septic? Yes-375 (43.5%) No-487 (56.50%).
10. Should the current law on RVs be abolished altogether and RVs be allowed anywhere as a permanent residence? Yes -320 (36.99%) No-545 (63.01%).

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to place a moratorium on RV evictions unless there is a health hazard until the Board can finish reviewing the ordinance and make necessary changes if needed.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion for discussion.

County Attorney advised the Board to remain on the 90-day timeline and allow him to bring back to the board at the next meeting an official recommendation.

Commissioner Ambrose withdrew his motion until the next meeting.

Commissioner Emami withdrew his second.

Hugh Cromer spoke stating the Health Department has regulations through the Environmental Services that regulates raw sewage.

Water & Building Projects

County Manager Jim Hedges stated based on the numerous sources of funds including the 2020 Bonds, SPLOST, and grants and backing out known expenditures for the Juliette Water Project, Divisions I, II, III, and the District Attorney/Public Defender Building and funding for an ambulance and the SCBA gear, an excess of

\$10 million remains that can only be applied to water projects and buildings. Mr. Hedges stated a list of potential projects are as follows:

1. Water Projects
 - a. Wind Clan Road to Roseberry Shoal
 - b. Turkey Run Road
 - c. Rum Creek Road
 - d. North to South
 - e. Pumping Station
 - f. Water Tower
2. Buildings
 - a. High Falls Fire Station
 - b. Smarr Fire Station
 - c. Bolingbroke Fire Station-Living Quarters
 - d. Storage Building
 - e. Animal Control-Build Out
 - f. Sheriff's Training Building

Mr. Hedges stated the way forward is for any additions or deletions to the list, develop cost estimates and the Board review the final projects on May 3rd or May 17th for action.

Commissioner Ambrose stated he would like to see another 12-16 feet for the Animal Control build out.

Commissioner Emami stated he would also like add water lines to Brushy Creek Subdivision.

Commissioner Davis said fire hydrants in Cabiness needed to be added.

Commissioner Rowland stated the projects need to be looked at regarding money and population and choose the projects that the county gets the most bang for our buck.

McCowan Road ROW

County Attorney Ben Vaughn presented the next item stating the remaining rights-of-way for McCowan Road have been negotiated and the agreement needs to be considered by the Board of Commissioners. The contract for this project has expired and will need to be advertised for bids.

Commissioner Rowland motioned to purchase the property at the \$3500 price and complete the project.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion.

Following a Board discussion regarding the county has always had a policy to not purchase rights-of-ways, the motion carried 4-1 with Commissioner Ambrose opposed.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to allow County Manager Jim Hedges to accept the deed.

Chairman Tapley seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

P & Z Hearing-Sidney-Variance

Commissioner Davis motioned to enter a public hearing at 7:09 P.M. for a variance request for a flag lot creation on family-owned property located at 1643 Hwy 83 North.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Zoning Officer Kelsey Fortner presented a variance request for a flag lot creation on family-owned property. The road frontage will only equal to approximately 50' on Highway 83 North, which is currently existing. The property owner is Christine and Gloria Buckner and the applicant is Detterrious Sidney and Breanna Collier Sidney. The map is 052 0026 and 052 002H, LL 198, 219, LD 6, Parcel 1A, 1B, 2A, 4A, and 4B.

Ms. Fortner stated the Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval.

No one was present in opposition to the request.

Commissioner Ambrose asked if anyone had surveyed the easement coming in and how wide the property is.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated the easement is 60ft.

Commissioner Emami motioned to close the public hearing at 7:22 P.M.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0

Commissioner Emami motion to approve the application

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Alcohol License (Ownership Change) Khan

Zoning Officer Kelsey Fortner presented an alcohol license/ownership change located at Hwy 87 Food Mart, 12376 Ga Hwy 87, Juliette, Georgia. The new owner is Ashsaque Khan. Ms. Fortner stated the license is for a retail license for Malt Beverage and Wine and the ad and background check has been completed and now requires board approval for a new owner.

Commissioner Emami motioned to approve the alcohol license ownership change.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Alcohol License (Ownership Change) Patel

Zoning Officer Kelsey Fortner presented an alcohol license/ownership change located at 4917 High Falls Road, Jackson. The new owner is Chetnaben Patel. Ms. Fortner stated the license is for a retail license for Malt Beverage and Wine and the ad and background check has been completed and now requires board approval for a new owner.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the alcohol license ownership change.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Speaker-Hugh Cromer

Hugh Cromer discussed the quad fields at the recreation department. Mr. Cromer stated he was out during a tournament and asked Mr. Sparks about the nets on the fields not being there. He stated he was hit with a foul ball during the tournament. He stated Landon had told him the nets were ordered but after inquiring further they have not been ordered. He stated the ball park is an unsafe environment. He stated he doesn't think ball can be played out there safely without some safety measures put in place. He stated the nets have also been taken off the batting cages and the cages have been locked.

Landon Sparks Recreation Director spoke stating he reached out to three companies last year and never heard back. He stated he has reached out to four more companies previously and have not received any quotes back yet.

Commissioner Emami stated he would like County Attorney Ben Vaughn to research this and to punt this back to the appointed board to get their input on this subject.

John Cromer doesn't think the games should be cancelled but protective measures should be taken.

Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Davis motioned to use \$1000 of his discretionary funds to donate to Rob's Place, a disability services and support organization, located in Forsyth.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Commissioner Ambrose discussed a possible fine for individuals for driveway pipe violations.

Commissioner Ambrose discussed the grading of Towaliga Road, Terrace Oak Drive, and Tommy's Trail.

Commissioner Ambrose stated the county used to maintain these roads but they are private and the county at one time had looked into taking the roads over but there are no county specs for dirt roads.

Public Comments

Bronwen Morgan 159 Towaliga Lake Drive has a petition with 300 citizen signatures asking the board to amend the ordinance to allow residents to reside in RVs. Ms. Morgan stated she wants to encourage the board to break out of the box with the housing code.

Kristal Smith 243 Gregory Road thanked the board for several of the discussions tonight and for listening to the community about affordable housing.

Code Enforcement Officer Jeff Wilson stated he needs clarification on the way forward for ticketing the RV owners. Deputy Wilson asked if there is no permitted septic tank or legal electrical, does he still write tickets? The Board directed Deputy Wilson to move forward with tickets for those types of situations.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Action from Executive Session

There was no action from executive session.

Adjourn

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to adjourn at 8:02 p.m.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Respectively Submitted by:

County Clerk, Janet Abbott