

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of November 4, 2024

Regular Commissioners' Meeting

6:00 P.M.

Present:

Greg Tapley, Chairman

Eddie Rowland, Vice-Chairman

Lamarcus Davis, District 1

John Ambrose, District 3

George Emami, District 4

Staff:

Jim Hedges, County Manager

Ben Vaughn, County Attorney

Brandon Bowen, Attorney

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Lorri Robinson-Byrd, Finance Director/Asst. County Manager

Ariyl Fuentes, Assistant Zoning Officer

Welcome

Chairman Tapley welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Rod Callahan gave 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 moving Dorsey up on agenda and adding executive session for personnel.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the agenda.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion, and the motion passed 5-0.

Approve Minutes-October 15, 2024, Regular Meeting and the October 15, 2024, Public Facilities Authority meeting.

Chairman Tapley presented the minutes of the October 15, 2024, Regular Meeting and the October 15, 2024, Public Facilities Authority meeting for approval.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the minutes with the usual 30 days for changes.

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

P&Z Hearing-Special Use-Jason Dorsey-Johnstonville Road

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to enter a public hearing at 6:05 p.m. for a special use application in C-1.

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

Assistant Zoning Director Ariyl Fuentes presented a special-use application for 2-acres located at 3628 Johnstonville Road, map 026 024. The owner of the property is Jason Dorsey.

The request is for a special use permit in C-1, light commercial. The request is for the construction of a self-storage facility. The self-storage facility may be a combination of non-climate controlled and climate-controlled storage units. The conceptual site plan indicates a storage facility of approximately 15,000 sf.

Steven Rowland, Engineer with Rowland Engineering, stated a space was left on the rear of the property to accommodate a storm water management facility.

No one was present in opposition to the application.

Commissioner Emami asked if a stipulation for downward facing lights could be added to the application.

Mr. Rowland stated he had no opposition to this stipulation.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to come out of the public hearing at 6:11 p.m.

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

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve with the stipulation of downward facing lights.

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

Road Widener Attachment

Public Works Director, Kim Stokes presented two quotes for the Road Widener attachment for the skid steer loader. This equipment is needed for the shoulder building on the LMIG and LRA Grant projects. Mr. Stokes stated the low bid is from Dobbs Equipment for \$63,000. Mr. Stokes stated Dobbs Equipment called back and stated they did not have the equipment available but had another at a significantly higher price.

- Dobbs Equipment \$63,000
- Reynolds-Warren Equipment Company \$64,800

Mr. Stokes' recommendation is to purchase from Reynolds-Warren for \$64,800.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to purchase the road widener from Reynolds-Warren Equipment Company at a cost of \$64,800.

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

UDO Amendment-Data Center

Attorney Brandon Bowen presented a proposed Text Amendment for the Unified Development Ordinance for "Data Center" was presented to the Board.

The proposed Text Amendment reads as follows:

1. Section 1.10.00 of the Monroe County Unified Development Ordinance titled Definitions will be amended to add the following defined term:

Data Center: A facility, or campus of facilities, engaged in the storage, management, processing, hosting or transmission of data and related services, which house computer systems, network equipment, servers, appliances and other associated components and structures customarily incidental or related to such operations.

2. Section 2.02.02 of the Monroe County Unified Development Ordinance titled "Table of Permitted Uses: will be amended as follows:

Uses & Structures	C-1
Data Center	P

3. Section 4.02.00 of the Monroe County Unified Development Ordinance titled "Supplemental Standards for Specific Uses: will be amended to add a new section 4.02.23 as follows:

4.02.23	Data Center
4.02.23.01	Purpose

It is the purpose of this regulation to provide development standards for the siting, development and construction of Data Centers.

1.02.23.02

Development Standards

- A. *Data Center Development.* A Data Center Development shall mean and refer to the entire contiguous tract of land presented for development as a Data Center.
- B. *Height Regulations.* Buildings shall not exceed a height of seventy-five (75) feet, measured from structure pad level. Height limitations shall not apply to accessory structures such as water towers, conveyor belts and other incidental and uninhabited structures.
- C. *Front yard setback:* Fifty (50) feet.
- D. *Side yard setback:* Fifty (50) feet.
- E. *Rear yard setback:* Fifty (50) feet.
- F. *Minimum lot frontage:* One hundred ten (110) feet adjoining a street.
- G. *Minimum lot width at the building line:* One hundred ten (110) feet.
- H. *Minimum lot acreage:* Two Hundred (200) acres
- I. *Minimum buffer requirements:* In addition to required setbacks, a minimum 100-foot-wide buffer, which can include required setback, shall be required along all property lines which abut a residential district or use or an agricultural district or use in order to provide a visual screen.
- J. *Air conditioning units and HVAC systems.* Air conditioning units and HVAC systems shall be thoroughly screened from view from the public right-of-way and from adjacent properties by using buildings, walls, fencing, roof elements, or landscaping. This requirement shall not apply where the equipment is more than 100 feet from adjacent property lines.
- K. *Front building façade.* The front building façade of all principal buildings shall be oriented toward street fronts or adjacent arterial street fronts. This requirement shall not apply if the front of the building is greater than 500 feet from the public right-of-way or not visible from the public right-of-way.
- L. *Security fencing.* Security fencing and walls shall not be located within the required buffer unless it complies with the general regulations pertaining to fencing. Fences and

- walls outside the required setback and buffer provided above shall not be subject to height limitations.
- M. *Accessory Structures.* Accessory structures shall be subject to the general provisions of the UDO, provided that if they are to be located outside of the setbacks and buffers provided above, they shall not be subject to the location requirements of Section 5.02.02. Further, notwithstanding other provisions of the UDO, guard houses and secured entry features shall be permitted at public road entrances.
- N. Required setbacks and buffers shall only apply to external property boundaries with other properties not part of the Data Center Project. Minimum lot frontages, lot width and lot acreage shall not apply to subdivided lots within the Data Center Project, so long as the entirety of the contiguous tract comprising the overall Data Center Project complies with the requirements of this ordinance, and so long as the subdivided lot has adequate frontage on public or private roads to allow service.
- O. Private roads are permitted within the Data Center Project. They shall be designed and built subject to the design guidelines for County public roads.
- P. In the event of any conflict between Section 4.02.23 and other provisions of the UDO, this section shall govern.

The Planning and Zoning Board recommended denial of this amendment, requesting to create a new district labeled at T-1, a technology-based district and requesting Attorney Brandon Bowen to draft and submit.

Attorney Brandon Bowen stated the applicant amended the text amendment to state that crypto currency would not be permitted, 900 acres plus acres would be required, downcast lighting would be required and a sound noise limitation of 65 decibels.

P&Z Hearing-Rezoning-Rumble Technology Campus

Attorney Brandon Bowen presented a rezoning application for 525-acres located on map/parcels 091 013, 091, 005, 091 006. The property owners/applicants are Madura Properties, LLC and Diastole, LLC.

The request is to rezone 525-acres to permit development of data center facilities known as the Rumble Technology Campus. The property is an assemblage owned by Madura Properties, LLC, and Diastole, LLC, and is further identified as tax parcels numbers 091 013, 091 005 and 091 006. The property is within and is part and parcel of a large 948+ acre contiguous tract along I-75 on which applicant seeks to

develop the proposed Rumble Technology Campus. The applicant seeks a rezoning of the subject property that the entirety of the 948-acre tract is consistently zoned to the C-1 zoning classification. The Planning and Zoning Board recommended moving forward with approval of the application with the creation of a T-1 zoning district; this creation to be drafted by the Attorney Brandon Bowen. Commissioner Davis motioned to enter a public hearing at 6:15 p.m. for a UDO text amendment and for a rezoning application.

Commissioner Rowland recused himself from the discussion due to family conflicts and business relations.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion, and the motion carried 4-0-1 with Commissioner Rowland recused.

Kyler Wise with the Law Firm Wilson Brock and Irby along the Developer David Aldridge and Engineer Scott Green presented the application.

Mr. Wise briefly introduced the project.

Mr. Aldridge stated the site will receive water and sewer from the Macon Water Authority and the three power companies are involved in providing electrical services for the facility. He stated about 500 acres of property will remain a green space. Mr. Aldridge stated Rumble Road will be widened from I-75 eastbound to the entrance of the facility to create an additional lane with the cost being covered by the developer. Mr. Aldridge stated the projected start date will be sometime in 2028 with the final building expected to be completed by the end of 2039.

Holly Wangerin resident of Reedy Creek Road asked to see a copy of the Text Amendment re-wording. Barbara Hardigree resident of Pea Ridge Road stated the project directly interferes with her home and her ability to relocate her disabled sister to a home on Rumble Road. Ms. Hardigree stated she has owned her property on Rumble Road for a little over 10 years and it was her goal to make her property commercial and build storage units as her retirement plan and this project interferes. Ms. Hardigree stated there are five families that live on the road, and it is traveled very frequently and very fast.

Matt Weldon, resident of 1608 Rumble Road, asked if there is no issue with noise why a buffer is being built.

Mark Beach 907 Jenkins Road asked how the decibels would be measured. Attorney Brandon Bowen stated they would be measured at the property line and the UDO gives the county the right to enforce the decibel limits if needed. Mr. Beach stated he was ok with the request and supports the project.

David Wright resident of Willow Way stated he is President of the Willow Lakes Subdivision and hopes this project protects the neighborhood from any future development. Mr. Wright stated he was more concerned that the area still doesn't have internet. Attorney Brandon Bowen replied nothing will bring internet faster than a data center.

Candy Mountain resident of Bar None Road asked if other 900-acre tracts around the county would be able to have data centers. Attorney Bowen responded that the parcels would have to be re-zoned.

Kim Stokes, resident of 914 Jenkins Road stated he has lived on Jenkins Road since 2002 and was the first residents in Deer Creek. Mr. Stokes stated he couldn't ask for a better development in this area.

Alan Gibbs, resident of 31 Zellner Road, stated he would approve of this, and this is not going to have a big impact.

Attorney Brandon Bowen stated the amended request includes the following:

- Cryptocurrency processing will not be permitted under the data center definition,
- A minimum lot acreage for data centers will be 900 acres instead of the 200 acres that was previously presented,
- Downcast lighting will be required,
- And 65 decibels will be the maximum noise limit allowable at the property line of nearby residential areas.

Commissioner Davis motioned to come out of the public hearing at 7:20 p.m.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion, and the motion carried 4-0-1 with Commissioner Rowland recusing himself.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Davis motioned to accept the UDO text amendment as written to include the new requirements presented by DataCore Innovations, LLC.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion, and the motion carried 3-1-1 with Commissioner Ambrose opposed and Commissioner Rowland recused.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the request to rezone the three tracts totaling 525.5 acres from A-R to C-1 with the conditions agreed to by Aldridge.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion, and the motion carried 4-0-1 with Commissioner Rowland recusing himself.

Public Comments

Patrick Grove, resident of 203 Lorraine Woods Drive addressed the board regarding the speeding and reckless driving in his neighborhood.

Jan Knect, resident of Boxankle Road, thanked the Board for paving High Falls Road and asked if there were any intentions of coming all the way up Boxankle Road.

Ms. Knect then stated she was happy the data center passed but she was sad it was not in High Falls instead of the warehouses.

Commissioner's Comments

District 1-Lamarcus Davis

Commissioner Davis thanked fellow Commissioner Emami for the last few years and stated he was going to miss him. Commissioner Davis thanked Kim Stokes and the public works department for the paving that had been completed on 23 miles of county roads.

Commissioner Davis stated this past weekend was Monroe County's first annual Fun Day for Kids and next year he would like to get the City of Forsyth involved.

District 2-Eddie Rowland

Commissioner Rowland thanked Commissioner Emami stating he was going to miss him and his Christian ethics.

Commissioner Rowland thanked the BRECC committee for their work in preparing to travel to Washington, D.C., in February to promote Monroe County at an end-of-year capstone event.

District 3-John Ambrose

Commissioner Ambrose stated he appreciated serving with Commissioner Emami and he is still upset with the library. Commissioner Ambrose stated he asked the Board to draw up operating instructions for the library and it had not been done and if the library was shut down after the first of the year it would be a long process. Commissioner Ambrose stated he was not going to permit pornography in the library.

Commissioner Ambrose reminded everyone that Monday, November 11th is Veterans Day.

District 4-George Emami

Commissioner Emami introduced two candidates that were in attendance that are running for the district 4 seat, Al Turner and Larry Stewart, and thanked them for throwing their hat in the ring and being willing to serve.

Commissioner Emami stated he fell in love with this county when he moved here in 2013, and realized the people here were willing to give the new guy a shot.

Commissioner Emami stated he would like to acknowledge Public Information Officer, Richard Dumas, Code Enforcement Officer Jeff Wilson, County Clerk Janet Abbott, County Attorney Ben Vaughn,

Attorney Brandon Bowen, Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner, and Kim Stokes.

Commissioner Emami stated one of the best things we have done is in house paving.

Commissioner Emami addressed Jan Knect stating he is blessed to know her.

Commissioner Emami addressed County Manager Jim Hedges stating he appreciates what he has done and that he has in so many ways he has single handedly leveled up Monroe County. He stated You have made us look really good for seven or eight years. Commissioner Emami stated one of the things I am most proud of is we brought you here when we did.

Commissioner Emami personally thanked each commissioner stating it has been an honor to serve with each of you.

Chairman-Greg Tapley

Chairman Tapley stated Commissioner Emami brings Proverbs 27:17 to mind which reads, “Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another”. Chairman Tapley told Commissioner Emami he has represented his district well and he always comes to the table with a strong heart.

Chairman Tapley reminded everyone of the up coming Fried Green Tomato Festival in Juliette the upcoming weekend.

Chairman Tapley stated he recently met with Kinder Morgan, and they would be expanding the natural gas pipeline through Monroe County.

Executive Session-Personnel

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to enter Executive Session for Personnel at 8:08 p.m.

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

Commissioner Davis motioned to come out of executive session at 8:42 p.m.

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

Action from Executive Session.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated the Board discussed a personnel item and no action was taken or needed at this time.

Adjourn

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to adjourn at 8:43 p.m

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

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk