

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of March 18, 2025

Regular Meeting

9:00 A.M.

Present:

Alan Gibbs, Chairman

John Ambrose, Vice-Chairman

Lamarcus Davis, District 1

Eddie Rowland, District 2

Al Turner, District 4

Staff:

Jim Hedges, County Manager

Ben Vaughn, County Attorney

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Welcome

Chairman Gibbs welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Reverend Rufus Whatley gave the invocation.

Pledge

Chairman Gibbs led the Pledge.

Roll Call

County Clerk Janet Abbott called roll.

Call to Order

Chairman Gibbs called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Gibbs presented the agenda for approval with the addition of the installation of Flock Cameras at Fairview Church Road and the Recreation Department and Executive Session for Real Estate.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the agenda with said changes.

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

Approve Minutes-March 4, 2025, Regular Meeting and, March 11, 2025, Called Meeting

Chairman Gibbs presented the minutes of the March 4, 2025, Regular Meeting and the March 11, 2025, Called Meeting for approval.

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

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

Library ADA Modifications

County Manager Jim Hedges presented for informational purposes an ADA audit that was requested by a Library Board member. Based on the inspection of the library, conducted by Charles Abbott Associates, it was determined that the majority of the facility is in compliance with ADA accessibility requirements. However, deficiencies were noted in the exterior accessible routes to the building, and certain elements within the restrooms do not meet current accessibility standards.

The major findings were as follows:

- Handicap parking space
- Handicap parking wheelchair ramp
- Sidewalks
- Bathrooms

Public Works and Building Maintenance are addressing the deficiencies.

MCES Boat Motor Surplus/Trade-In

The 2025 Capital Budget provides for the purchase of a Jet Drive Boat Motor and \$9,000 has been allocated for this purchase by MCES. MCES negotiated with Big Frank's Outdoors in Locust Grove to trade in their existing boat motor, a Beavertail Surface Drive Motor, towards the purchase of a 40 HP Twin Sun Jet Drive Boat Motor. The total negotiated price is \$8,150 including a trade-in value of \$1,500 for the Beavertail Surface Drive Motor.

Beavertail:

- Difficult to maneuver during rescue operations
- No reverse
- Difficult to see over bow when operating in shallow water
- Designed for mud and sand not rock

40 HP Jet Drive

- Easier to maneuver during rescue operations
- Reverse
- Allows better vision over bow
- Designed for rock and river use
- Currently used by DNR

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the action item is to surplus and authorize MCES to trade-in the Beavertail Surface Drive Motor towards the purchase of the 40 HP Twin Sun Jet Drive Motor.

EMS Chief Matt Jackson presented the request to the Board for approval.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the trade-in and to surplus the existing Beavertail motor.

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

Zoning-Special Use-Dial

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a special use request in A-R for amusement and recreational activities located at 1946 Johnstonville Road, Map 015 Parcel 002. The property owners/applicants are Kimberly and Eric Dial. Mrs. Fortner stated the Board of Commissioners in 2024 declined to conduct a Planning & Zoning hearing regarding the application by Kimberly and Eric Dial for a special use pending compliance with the UDO on various issues. Those issues have now been resolved. Mrs. Fortner stated the application has not been modified from the previous entry and has already gone through Planning and Zoning and no new information is being submitted.

The Dial's application came before the Board on March 4, 2025, and was postponed due to several requirements not being completed at the time.

Applicants/Property Owners Eric and Kimberly Dial were present on behalf of the application.

The Board received the approved plans from Georgia Soil and Water that were in question at the March 4, 2025, meeting.

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner reviewed the plans with the Board.

After reviewing the plans and following an extensive Board discussion, Commissioner Rowland motioned to approve the special use with the condition that the county will remove the existing driveway pipes and turn the proposed driveway site back into a ditch. Commissioner Rowland stated a new driveway can be installed subject to inspection and placed in the proper place per the UDO.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion for discussion.

Chairman Gibbs stated he has a little heartburn with the driveway stipulation due to it being an existing driveway.

Commissioner Rowland replied, stating the Dials have been told for months that their driveway must meet the UDO standards.

Commissioner Ambrose stated the driveway is not the main concern, he is more concerned about the runoff onto the neighbor's property and if this is approved, he feels the Board is "trampling all over the neighbor's rights out there."

Commissioner Rowland stated if Georgia Soil and Water signs off on the plans then the Board shouldn't get involved in the runoff. Commissioner Rowland stated the neighbors would have to take that up with the state.

Commissioner Ambrose stated he would like more stipulations to be placed on the baseball facility such as prohibiting field lights, no additional fields, and for the existing field usage to end at a specific time each night.

Commissioner Davis replied stating the county already has a nuisance ordinance they would be required to follow.

The motion carried 4-1 with Commissioner Ambrose opposed.

Following the Board's approval of the special use application, Applicant Eric Dial told the Board he was not going to remove his driveway even if it doesn't meet the county's UDO.

Subdivision Plat-Deer Creek

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner stated Robert Greene is requesting permission to subdivide a 123-acre tract off Deer Creek Drive into five smaller lots. Ms. Fortner stated this subdivision was previously approved by the Board in 2001. Mrs. Fortner stated Mr. Greene would like to change it from 3 tracts into 5 tracts. The total acreage is 123-acres and if the proposal is granted none of the lots will be under 12-acres.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the request.

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

Subdivision Plat-Hopewell Road

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner stated Tony Bernardo is requesting a 51.44-acre tract be subdivided into two lots. Mrs. Fortner stated this is coming before the Board due to this subdivision being previously approved by the Board of Commissioners in 2022. Mrs. Fortner stated the lots will access the private road.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the request.

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

Flock Camera-Fairview Church Road

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to install an additional Flock security camera at the Monroe County Recreation Department at Fairview Church Road.

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

Public Comments

Nipper Bunn, resident of 274 Frank Bunn Drive, thanked the Board for the ADA inspection and modifications at the Monroe County Library.

Eva Bilderback, resident of 251 Sleepy Creek Road, stated she had attended the meeting the Dials had with Judge Wilson and District Attorney Johnathan Adams regarding their zoning application. Ms. Bilderback stated the Dials had completed everything that was required, and she doesn't understand why this is still a problem. Ms. Bilderback thanked Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner for her assistance with the application.

Doug Shelnett, resident of Murrayville, Georgia, stated Wanda Williams is his sister. Ms. Williams is the neighbor to Twin Oaks Fun Farm. Mr. Shellnut stated he lived on the property when he was younger. Mr. Shelnett stated the runoff from Twin Oaks Fun Farm is still running onto his sister's property. Mr. Shelnett thanked Commissioner Rowland for requiring the Dials to move the driveway, stating it is supposed to be 10 feet from the property line, and it is inches. Mr. Shelnett then stated he appreciates Commissioner Ambrose for trying to do something about the water running onto his sister's property.

Eric Dial, resident of 461 Preakness Way, presented a letter dated August 27, 2024, signed by Commissioner Rowland that listed four things that needed to be done on the Twin Oaks Fun Farm property prior to approval and stated he has done what the DA and Judge Wilson asked him to do concerning the driveway. Mr. Dial stated he has a valid CO, his plans are approved through Georgia

Soil and Water, he has a driveway permit and his driveway was previously approved by Kim Stokes and his septic has been approved and installed already. Mr. Dial stated he does not agree with the Board requiring the driveway to be moved, stating he has rights as a property owner as well.

Commissioners' Comments

District 1 Lamarcus Davis

Commissioner Davis stated there is a lot going on in the county right now and the county is growing fast, and he hopes everyone continues to work together as a team.

Commissioner Davis congratulated the public works department on getting the buildings torn down so quickly at the hospital.

Commissioner Davis also thanked the Finance Director and County Manager.

District 2 Eddie Rowland

Commissioner Rowland stated he had no additional comments.

District 3 John Ambrose

Commissioner Ambrose stated the Board should be looking out for property owners and he does not think the Board should have approved the Dial's application. Commissioner Ambrose stated he thinks the Board should place additional restrictions on the property at the next meeting.

County Attorney Ben Vaughn

County Attorney Ben Vaughn addressed the board stating he has recused himself from the Dial's application due to a conflict, but he just received a phone call from Judge Wilson, and he is only parroting what he said. Mr. Vaughn stated, "Judge Wilson said the Board is not to touch that pipe until they speak with District Attorney Johnathan Adams and Judge Wilson."

District 4 Al Turner

Commissioner Turner stated we all as citizens of this county have rights, we as Commissioners have to consider all property owner rights. Commissioner Turner stated the Board has to weigh the property rights of the Dials as well as the neighbor Ms. Williams, and it's impossible to make everyone happy.

Chairman Alan Gibbs

Chairman Gibbs stated Twin Oaks has drawn out far longer than it should have, and he has sympathy for the neighbor as well as for the Dials. Chairman Gibbs stated with the decision the Board made tonight the Dials can start business, and it was also an easy fix for the driveway problem, he continued there has to be a balance. Chairman Gibbs stated this is a tough seat to sit in.

Executive Session-Real Estate

Commissioner Davis motioned to enter Executive Session at 10:01 a.m. for Real Estate.

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

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to come out of Executive Session at 10:20 a.m.

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

Action from Executive Session

County Attorney Ben Vaughn stated the Board discussed a Real Estate matter and no action was needed.

Adjourn

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to adjourn at 10:23 a.m.

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

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk