

Monroe County Board of Commissioners
Minutes of April 1, 2025
Regular Meeting
6:00 P.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
Kelsey Fortner, Community Development Manager
Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Welcome

Chairman Gibbs welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Commissioner Davis

Pledge

Everyone

Roll Call

Kelsey Fortner

Call to Order

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

Guest

Proclamation commemorating April 1, 2025, as Mary Persons Future Farmers of America Appreciation Day. Chairman Gibbs read the FFA proclamation regarding the clubs' achievements.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Gibbs presented the agenda for approval with the addition of the Item G, ACCG CVV. Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the agenda with said changes. Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion, and the motion was passed 5-0.

Approve Minutes—March 18, 2025, Regular Meeting

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the minutes with the normal 30 days for changes. Commissioner Turner seconded the motion, and the motion carried 5-0.

Annexation-Robert Bryson—Smith Road

Chairman Gibbs stated that he wishes to move through this and vote. Commissioner Ambrose agreed and made the motion to approve. Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion, and the motion carried 5-0.

Planning and Zoning Board Appointment—District 3

Commissioner Ambrose appointed Chris Patterson to the Planning and Zoning Board to replace Richard Ezelle who resigned, leaving a vacant spot.

Planning and Zoning Public Hearing—HWY 42 N, Logwall Church Road

Chairman Gibbs Motioned to open the public hearing seconded by Commissioner Ambrose for the application. Motion Carried 5-0.

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a PowerPoint with the applications information for rezoning at map 051 parcel 010C at the corner of HWY 42 North and Logwall Church Road. The request is from property owner James Roush to rezone the 5.23-acre tract from A-R to R-1. R-1 will give the lot a minimum of 2-acres and 200' of road frontage for the lot to be split in half. Ending project—both lots will have one stick-built home with its own individual water and septic.

An applicant was present and no one was in opposition. Commissioner Ambrose motioned to close the public hearing. Commissioner Ambrose made a motion to approve with no further discussion.

Approved 5-0

Planning and Zoning Public Hearing—HWY 18/Dames Ferry Road

Chairman Gibbs motioned to open the public hearing seconded by Commissioner Ambrose for the application. Motion Carried 5-0.

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a PowerPoint with the applications information for rezoning with a special use. Map 078 parcel 026F, is requesting rezoning to C-2

from A-R with a Special Use for a repair garage servicing the property owner's diesel trucks with AAS Transport, Inc.

Property Owner/Applicant Scott Edwards at 2415 spoke for his application. Mr. Edwards stated that he pulled the building permits as he should have several years ago. He proved he built what his plans stated with a 3-car bay garage. Originally didn't have septic or water but they decided to do so. At the previous planning and zoning public hearing, people in opposition brought up points that Mr. Edwards wanted to discuss with the board.

Mr. Edwards stated that he had records of trucks coming to and from the property through his GPS system. He had records for the past 30 days, with 1.6 trucks in this time period. Mr. Edwards said that trucks do not park overnight unless they're broken and need service for more than one day. They keep the trucks at the hatchery/mill in Forsyth or the Forsyth Truck Parking lot. Mr. Edwards stated that he would plant trees for noise. He doesn't have three businesses and is not sure why Google shows that. He said the hours of 7am to 5pm are when he services his business trucks, and the public does not come to this. If there is a wrecker, it is only because a truck breaks down. The oldest truck is a 2019 and the business holds quarterly safety meetings. Mr. Edwards says they have seventeen trucks, three mechanics (including himself), and a secretary. No business outside of driving for Perdue is handled. They've hired two different engineers to draw plans up for the Department of Transportation to review for improvements. Billy Gay that works for AAS, stated they don't park overnight unless the truck is broken down. Mr. Gay and Mr. Edwards stated that no one has ever complained to them about noise or anything.

Angel Latch, who lives on E. Main Street in Forsyth, Ga 31029, stated that AAS has great mechanics and are respectful of others.

Opposition of this application spoke next. Steve Speir lives next door and stated he doesn't understand why he was granted permission to build an enclosed shed. Mr. Speir stated that the neighborhood has been complaining to the County for years. They stated that they had not gone to them personally but why would they.

Cornelia Speir stated that zoning's purpose is to save the integrity of the county. Mrs. Speir states that she felt he pulled the permits incorrectly and she hears noises all the time. She stated he can do anything in C-2 if he is approved and this will affect traffic, neighbors and everyone.

Commissioner Rowland made a motion to move into discussion, seconded by Commissioner Davis. Chairman Gibbs stated he went and looked at the property and didn't feel it had a good entrance. He hesitated to spot zone but also didn't want to hurt the Edwards' business.

Commissioner Davis recommended tabling the application until the board discusses possibly finding special use in the U.D.O for A-R.

Commissioner Davis wants to recommend we table it and talk to these people and look in your udo find special use in AG. Commissioner Ambrose suggested changing it to a special use in A-R and Commissioner Rowland suggested the opposition speak with the Edwards.

Commissioner Davis rescinded his motion and made a new motion to place this application on the next agenda after they've reviewed the U.D.O. for the application to be allowed in A-R. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Ambrose and approved 5-0. The application was reassigned to Tuesday, April 15, 2025, regularly scheduled meeting.

Forsyth Convention & Visitors Bureau

Monroe County Commissioners unanimously approved on Tuesday, April 1 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Forsyth Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) that allows the CVB to direct \$20,000 of Commissioners' discretionary funds toward future community events. Former Monroe County Commission Chairman Greg Tapley, a current CVB board member, requested that \$20,000 of his remaining discretionary funds be divided four ways (\$5,000 each) to High Falls, Culloden, Bolingbroke, and Juliette to be used for annual festivals or other events that promote tourism in Monroe County. While Tapley privately expressed his desire for the \$20,000 to be allocated for this purpose prior to his leaving office in December, Commissioners did not take an actual vote on the request until after Feb. 4, more than a month after Tapley left office.

Nevertheless, current Commission Chairman Alan Gibbs reiterated on Tuesday previous comments expressing full support of Tapley's desire to donate \$20,000 for the CVB to direct for events that promote tourism.

"That's what Chairman Tapley wanted to spend the money on before he left," Chairman Gibbs said. "I read this (MOU). I agree with it 100 percent. If it was my money to give today, I'd have done the same thing."

District 3 Commissioner John Ambrose immediately motioned to accept the MOU with the Forsyth CVB enabling Monroe County to proceed with directing \$20,000 to the CVB to be divided into four ways to assist with funding for annual tourism events. District 1 Commissioner Lamarcus Davis then seconded Commissioner Ambrose's motion, which passed 5-0.

Public Comments:

Carol Edge 1544 Stokes Store Road. Since the board considered looking at the UDO for subdivisions. She asked, "would you have public comments?"

Rob Lowe, of Lassiter Road. He would like to contribute several items to the UDO before the 90 days is up.

Commissioner's Comments:

Commissioner Davis: District 1 Commissioner Lamarcus Davis urged his fellow Commissioners on Tuesday, April 1 to refrain from revealing publicly what the Board discusses in closed session.

Commissioner Davis read aloud the instances cited by the Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) in which the Board can lawfully enter Executive (or closed) Session, which include 1.) discussions regarding pending or potential litigation with the county's attorney, 2.)

settlements to lawsuits and claims involving the county, 3.) confidential tax matters, 4.) real estate decisions by the county, 5.) certain personnel issues, 6.) investment securities trading or investment portfolio positions and other composition matters as part of a public retirement system meeting, 7.) exempt records, or 8.) cybersecurity services.

Commissioner Davis said that the executive session is closed to the public for one or more of those aforementioned reasons and said Board members could incur legal ramifications if they do not honor executive session confidentiality.

Commissioner Davis said, "Before we get ourselves into trouble, I want to reel this back in and make sure that when we go into executive session that it stays in executive session."

Commissioner Rowland: On a lighter note, BRECC Trip to Washington D.C., with Tammy Selman, Richard Dumas, Lamarcus Davis, Mark Dye, presented a great presentation. We were very confident. The county is looking for federal opportunities. Bids will be open April 18, 2025, for safety construction on Rumble Road. District 2 Commissioner Eddie Rowland told Commissioners on Tuesday, April 1 that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) intends to open bids for work associated with improvements to the intersection of Hwy. 41 South and Rumble Road on Friday, April 18.

Commissioner Rowland said work on enhancing safety at the Hwy. 41 South/Rumble Road intersection, which includes straightening out the angle of the slanted intersection, will likely begin about 45 days after bids are opened, which would be early June. Slated improvements include relocation, safety warnings, paving, and sign updates.

In addition, Commissioner Rowland said GDOT is beginning project development on future improvements at the intersection of Hwy. 41 South and Hwy. 18 (Harold G. Clarke Pkwy.) in front of the old Monroe Academy campus. This would include straightening out the angle of the slanted Hwy. 41 South/Hwy. 18 intersection and the addition of turn lanes on Hwy. 18 to be used for turning onto Hwy. 41 South.

Citizens who would like to provide input or ask questions regarding improvements at the Hwy. 41 South and Hwy. 18 intersection are encouraged to contact Paige Green by phone at 404-631-1000 or by e-mail at PGreen@dot.ga.gov or Darrius Lee by phone at 404-618-6368 or by e-mail at DLee@dot.ga.gov.

Commissioner Ambrose: Spoke on appointing Chris Patterson. Stating he has lived here all his life. Employed at the Bibb County Sheriff's Office and is happy to have him as new zoning member. Mr. Patterson has a vested interest in Monroe County.

Commissioner Turner: No comment.

Chairman Gibbs: Any comments or ideas on the UDO, please email or call us. Chairman Gibbs also gave a shout out to the Monroe County Sheriff's Office, we take it for it granted and they do

a great job. He also said that he's been reviewing the old ordinance along with the UDO and does believe we need a workshop. Thank you all for coming to the meeting.

Executive Session:(Real Estate) 7:50 pm

Commissioner Ambrose made a motion to go into the executive session to discuss real estate. Seconded by Commissioner Davis, 5-0.

Action from Executive Session: 7:59 pm

Attorney Natalie Fears-Sundeen stated real estate was discussed and no action was taken. Commissioner Davis made a motion to adjourn seconded by Commissioner Ambrose passed 5-0.

Meeting adjourned: 8:01 pm