

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of March 17, 2026

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:

Lorri Byrd, County Manager

Jessica Haygood, County Attorney

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Kelsey Fortner, Community Development Director

Welcome

Chairman Gibbs welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Chairman Gibbs gave the invocation.

Pledge

Rod Callahan 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.

Proclamation-Government Finance Professionals Week

The Monroe County Board of Commissioners issued a proclamation designating March 16–20, 2026 as Government Finance Professionals Week, recognizing the essential role government finance professionals play in ensuring the effective, transparent, and responsible management of public funds.

The proclamation highlights the broad scope of financial responsibilities carried out by these professionals, including budgeting, accounting, treasury management, procurement, debt administration, auditing, fiscal reporting, and long-range financial planning—all of which support the efficient and lawful operation of state and local government.

It further acknowledges the high standards of ethics, integrity, accuracy, and accountability upheld by these individuals, emphasizing their contribution to public trust and the fiscal stability of Georgia’s local governments. The proclamation also recognizes the Georgia Government Finance Officers Association (GGFOA) for its leadership in professional development and its sponsorship of this statewide observance.

The Board encourages all residents, officials, and community organizations to join in appreciating the dedication and service of government finance professionals throughout Monroe County and the State of Georgia.

Chairman Gibbs read the proclamation into record.

Chairman Gibbs presented the proclamation to County Manager Lorri Byrd on behalf of all the finance office employees and admins with the county.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Gibbs presented the agenda for approval with the following change:

- Executive Session personnel

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the agenda with said change.

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

Minutes-March 03, 2026, Regular Meeting

Chairman Gibbs presented the minutes of the March 03, 2026, Regular Meeting for approval.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the minutes of the March 03, 2026 Regular meeting with the normal 30 days for changes.

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

City of Culloden Park Repair and Maintenance

County Manager Lorri Byrd stated Culloden resident Jimmy Pierson has requested to be on the agenda for a discussion regarding Culloden Recreation Park.

Commissioner Rowland's overview is as follows: *"The recreation park in Culloden still belongs to the county as best as they can tell. They have put in excess of \$30,000 into the park in recent years to improve it. They have come to the point that they need some assistance to add new playground equipment and functioning restrooms and concessions. They will ask the county for whatever assistance they may be able to provide. The recreation area in Culloden serves residents in the far southwest corner of our county who would have to travel many miles to use the recreation department in Forsyth. While they are an organized community, they don't have the resources of some of our other outlying areas. Bolingbroke has businesses to pull from, High Falls has the state park, and Juliette has the tourist revenue."*

Culloden Councilmember Jimmy Pierson and Culloden Mayor Lynn Miller spoke regarding the request.

Following a board discussion, Chairman Gibbs motioned for staff to obtain detailed, itemized cost estimates for each repair or upgrade to enable an informed Board decision.

Following a brief discussion, Commissioner Rowland offered a second for discussion.

Chairman Gibbs withdrew the original motion and agreed staff will compile estimates and bring them back for Board consideration.

Monroe County Churches Building Inspection Fees

Commissioner Rowland asked the Board to consider fee relief for churches on building and trade permits. The conversation focused on the county's share of inspection fees versus the portion owed to the third-party provider, Charles Abbott Associates (CAA) while focusing on fairness and consistency.

Commissioner Rowland motioned to discount church inspection fees by waving the county's 40% portion of those fees.

Commissioner Davis seconded for discussion.

Commissioners clarified that CAA's 60% share would remain due in full, ensuring the technical inspection costs are covered. The motion carried 5-0.

Data Center Ordinance Amendment

Chairman Gibbs reminded colleagues of the March 3, 2026, public hearing on proposed data center ordinance amendments. After that hearing, Attorney Brandon Bowen was directed to incorporate Board recommendations.

1. Generator standards & operations

What they agreed to keep or clarify

- **Tier 4 emissions standard (compliant, not necessarily OEM Tier 4 only)**
 - The requirement will stay as: “Tier 4 final emission compliant” generators.
 - They explicitly decided *not* to change this to “Tier 4 generators only.”
 - Rationale:
 - The Board’s legal duty is health, safety, and welfare; if the emissions are Tier 4-equivalent, they consider that goal met.
 - They do not want to adopt a stricter standard *solely* to make data center projects more difficult or expensive.
- **Enclosure requirement**
 - Keep language so that all generators must be fully enclosed:
 - Either within the principal structure, or
 - In a purpose-built enclosure integrated into the building footprint.

Changes/corrections they asked for

- **Testing hours**
 - Fix generator testing hours to:
 - 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m., Monday–Friday, excluding holidays
 - Board noted this must be corrected wherever it appears (Generator Standards #3).
- **Noise limit language & measurement location**
 - Maintain the 65 dB limit, but fix where and how it’s measured:
 - It must be measured at the property line / external property boundary, not just at a “residential dwelling.”
 - The Board explicitly rejected “at the adjacent residential dwelling” and wants it at the property line to prevent a loophole (developer buying the closest house).

- Ensure consistency:
 - The generator-specific noise limit and the overall data center operations noise section should align on the 65 dB at property boundary standard.

- **Noise enforcement text**

Data Center Ordinance Amendment – Board Discussion and Direction to Staff

The Board considered proposed amendments to the Data Center Ordinance and conducted a detailed, section-by-section review. The following directives and clarifications were provided for incorporation into a revised draft to be returned to the Board at a future meeting.

1. Generator Standards and Operations

- Tier 4 Emissions Compliance
 - The Board confirmed that backup generators shall be Tier 4 final emission compliant.
 - The requirement is focused on Tier 4-equivalent emission performance, not exclusively on OEM Tier 4 units.
 - The Board declined to change the standard to “Tier 4 generators only.”
- Enclosure Requirement
 - All generators shall be:
 - Fully enclosed within the principal structure, or
 - Located within a purpose-built enclosure integrated into the building footprint.
 - This language is to be retained and clarified as needed.
- Testing Hours
 - Routine generator testing shall be limited to:
 - 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.
 - Staff shall ensure this schedule is correctly and consistently reflected wherever generator testing is referenced.
- Noise Limits for Generators
 - Generator operations, including testing, shall not cause noise levels to exceed 65 decibels measured at the property line/external property boundary.

- Staff shall ensure alignment between generator-specific provisions and the general noise section so that both clearly rely on 65 dB at the external property boundary.
- Noise Enforcement Language
 - The Board directed staff to:
 - Remove redundant and incomplete sentences currently appearing in the noise-enforcement subsection.
 - Consolidate the enforcement mechanism into a single, clear provision that:
 - Allows the County, within six (6) months of issuance of a certificate of occupancy, to obtain or require a sound study.
 - Authorizes issuance of a notice of violation if non-compliance is found.
 - Provides a 30-day period to correct the violation; and
 - Authorizes enforcement action under the UDO (Section 10-0400 or equivalent) if non-compliance continues.

2. Utilities and Wells

- Public Water and Sewer Requirement
 - The ordinance shall clearly state that:
 - Data center developments must have access to public water and sewer, and
 - Data centers shall not use private wells for water resources.
 - Staff shall verify that the “no wells” provision is present, unambiguous, and consistent throughout.
- Electric Utility and Voltage Standard
 - All operational power shall be provided by a regulated public utility.
 - Electric service shall be provided at the transmission level of at least 115 kV, unless an exemption is granted.
 - The draft shall retain the reference to a County Utility Director (or equivalent designee) authorized to grant an exemption based on system limitations or redundancy requirements, with the understanding that the County may designate or temporarily hire such a role as needed.

3. Setbacks, Buffers, and Interior Subdivision of Data Center Property

- Minimum Lot Size
 - The ordinance shall retain the requirement that a data center development have a minimum lot acreage of 900 acres.
- Setbacks and Buffers
 - Minimum setbacks shall require that data center structures be located a minimum of 500 feet from any external property line.
 - A buffer of at least 200 feet in width shall be maintained within that setback along the external property boundaries.
- Vegetative Buffer vs. Opaque Structures
 - The Board directed that the buffer requirement emphasizes a vegetative (tree) buffer, not solely an “opaque” structural buffer.
 - Staff shall revise the language to:
 - Prefer or require a natural vegetative/evergreen buffer, and
 - Avoid allowing a chain-link fence with slats or similar treatment alone to satisfy the buffer requirement.
- External vs. Internal Boundaries
 - Setback and buffer requirements shall explicitly apply to external property boundaries with properties not part of the data center development.
 - The ordinance shall clarify that subdivided lots internal to a single, contiguous data center development is not subject to these external setback/buffer provisions.
- Subdivided Lots Within a Data Center Development
 - The Board directed staff to strike language that would have exempted subdivided lots within the data center development from minimum lot width and minimum lot acreage requirements, conditioned upon the overall contiguous tract meeting 900 acres.
 - The entire paragraph or clause providing such exemption shall be removed.

4. Lighting Standards

- Lighting Plan Requirement
 - A lighting plan shall be required as part of the land disturbance/site plan process for any data center development.

- The lighting plan must demonstrate:
 - Protection of the nighttime sky, and
 - Prevention of lighting nuisances to surrounding properties and the public right-of-way.
- Review and Approval Process
 - The Board directed staff to:
 - Specify that the lighting plan will be reviewed and approved by appropriate County staff (e.g., Public Works or Planning & Zoning).
 - Provide for a field verification step after installation:
 - All installed lighting may be required to be turned on for inspection.
 - Final approval is contingent upon confirmation that light levels do not create nuisance or glare on adjacent properties or public roads.
- Formatting and Sectioning
 - Staff shall restore and/or clarify any lighting provisions previously shown as struck or partially removed and ensure that section lettering and references (e.g., Q, R, S) are correct and consistent.

5. General Noise Standards (Beyond Generators)

- Measurement Location
 - For ongoing data center operations, not limited to generators, noise shall not exceed 65 decibels at the adjacent external property boundary between the data center development and any property not part of the development.
 - The Board explicitly rejected limiting the standard to “residential dwelling” boundaries and required that it apply at property lines with any external property.
- Post-Occupancy Verification
 - Within six (6) months after the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for each building, the County may:
 - Obtain an independent acoustic noise study, or
 - Request the data center operator to provide such a study, to confirm compliance.

- Enforcement
 - If a study shows non-compliance, the County may issue a notice of violation, direct corrective action within 30 days, and pursue additional enforcement actions under the UDO if violations persist.

6. Previously Approved Data Centers (“Grandfathering”)

- The Board discussed language addressing data centers previously approved within the unincorporated area of the County.
- Intent Clarified
 - Existing approvals for data centers (e.g., zoning classification, approved acreage, previously granted setbacks) are to be recognized to the extent legally vested.
 - However, construction and operational standards (e.g., generator requirements, noise limits, lighting, wells, and related environmental/technical requirements) shall be governed by the newly adopted ordinance standards, even for previously approved projects.
- Directive to Staff
 - Staff, in coordination with the Attorney Brandon Bowen, shall:
 - Reconcile all prior Board-approved changes (including “no wells”) into a single, consolidated ordinance amendment.
 - Correct all section lettering, numbering, and cross-references.
 - Eliminate conflicting or duplicative language so that:
 - All provisions relating to utilities, wells, noise, setbacks, buffers, generators, lighting, and previously approved data centers are internally consistent and reflect the Board’s direction set forth above.

Strickland Woods Phase II Final Plat

Community Development Director Kelsey Fortner presented the final plat for Strickland Woods Phase II off Strickland Loop. Mrs. Fortner stated the final plat is being presented to you with all requirements of the ordinance met.

Mrs. Fortner presented the following staff report:

- The plat is not subject to the moratorium as it was approved prior to the moratorium.
- Interior portion has ingress/egress off Strickland Loop.

- Developer is Brian Wesley, PTW Properties, LLC
- Phase I is already completed with dwellings fronting Sutton Road and Strickland Loop
- Phase II is 18 s/- acres
- Zoned R-2
- 11 New tracts
- 2 new Roads (Cameron Road and Elle Lane)
- Inspections were done by Kimbel Stokes
- After reviewing the plat, Mr. Stokes and Kelsey Fortner confirm that PTW Properties, LLC have done what was asked for and all ordinance requirements were met.

Chairman Gibbs motioned for approval; Commissioner Rowland seconded. The motion carried 4-0-1, with Commissioner Turner temporarily out of the room.

Subdivision Moratorium

Staff Report Summary

- Community Development Director Kelsey Fortner presented a staff report to the Board regarding the Subdivision Moratorium and potential amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).
- The report was presented for informational purposes, and Mrs. Fortner advised that any amendments to the ordinance would require the standard zoning process, including advertisement and two public hearings.
- If the Board chooses to move forward with amendments, the tentative schedule would be:
 - April 27, 2026 – Planning & Zoning Commission review
 - May 5, 2026 – Board of Commissioners consideration

Moratorium Timeline:

- March 4, 2025 – Initial discussion regarding a subdivision moratorium.
- March 11, 2025 – Called meeting held and the Board voted to adopt a 90-day moratorium.
- April 15, 2025 – Moratorium extended until July 1, 2025.
- June 17, 2025 – Moratorium extended until January 1, 2026.
- December 16, 2025 – Moratorium extended until April 1, 2026.
- Mrs. Fortner noted the moratorium had been in place for approximately one year at the time of the report.

Subdivision Overview:

- Mrs. Fortner explained the distinction between Minor and Major Subdivisions under the UDO:
 - Minor Subdivision:
 - Creation of three or fewer lots, or
 - Up to five lots larger than three acres,
 - Does not require installation of streets, utilities, or other public infrastructure.
 - Major Subdivision:
 - Creation of four or more lots,
 - May require roads, utilities, and other infrastructure improvements.
- Mrs. Fortner provided examples of subdivision scenarios to illustrate the difference between minor and major subdivisions.

Subdivision Design Types:

- The UDO currently recognizes several subdivision design approaches, including:
 - Cluster Subdivisions – Smaller individual lot sizes with larger shared green space and common areas.
 - Conservation Subdivisions – Similar to cluster developments but designed to protect open space and environmentally sensitive areas.
 - Conventional Subdivisions – Traditional subdivision layout where all lots meet minimum zoning district dimensional requirements.
- Mrs. Fortner noted that the Board has authority to place conditions on subdivision plats, including requirements related to lot size, buffers, green space, number of lots, and road access.

Citizen Requests:

- Mrs. Fortner reported receiving frequent requests from citizens seeking to subdivide land for family members, such as parents dividing property for children or vice versa.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):

- Current regulations allow one accessory dwelling unit per lot where another dwelling exists, subject to ordinance requirements.

Summary for Section One:

- Agriculture Zoning-Currently 3-acres
 - Decision on the minimum in A-R, 3,5, or 10-acres
 - No matter what decision, all property owners have the right to request a variance or rezoning. Few citizens want 3-acres.
 - Need to decide on whether you'd like to have a rule for family members. This would take some of the variance requests away.
 - If this Board gives us guidelines on the acreage-we can move forward with minor and major subdivisions. The problem isn't in the material-the problem has been that the County doesn't want more citizens.
 - Need to decide whether to change the number of lots per entrance/exits.

Proposed Infrastructure and Ordinance Amendments (Section Two):

Mrs. Fortner discussed potential amendments to Chapter 6 of the UDO related to infrastructure standards, including:

- Road Construction Standards
 - Proposed change to increase road base from 6 inches to 8 inches of graded aggregate.
 - Asphalt surface requirement adjusted to 2 inches of 12.5 mm superpave mix.
- Stopping Sight Distance Standards
 - Recommendation to align the ordinance with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards for safe stopping distances at various speeds.
- Erosion and Sedimentation Compliance
 - Recommendation to remove the exemption for single-family residential construction so that all projects must comply with best management practices, including:
 - Silt fencing
 - Stabilization of disturbed soil
 - Gravel construction entrances
 - Measures to prevent mud from leaving construction sites.

- Drainage Requirements
 - Proposed requirement for drainage topography plans for individual lots to ensure proper stormwater management.

Mrs. Fortner summarized the proposed amendments and requested direction from the Board on whether to proceed with the ordinance amendment process.

Proposed UDO Subdivision Ordinance Amendments from the Board (Staff Direction Only – No Vote):

The Board reviewed and provided direction on potential ordinance updates. These items will move forward for public hearings and Planning & Zoning review.

- All major subdivisions shall require a 5-acre minimum for all zoning districts.
 - Add new “Family Lots” provision:
 - Parent parcel must meet zoning frontage and acreage requirements.
 - Allows three (3) child lots, for a total of four (4) lots including the parent.
 - Lots accessed via 60-foot private easement/driveway not maintained by the County.
 - Plats must state no further subdivision allowed once the family-lot configuration is created.
 - 60’ private road permissible even if under the usual 10-acre private road requirement.
 - Approval required by Community Development Director.
- Add exception in Chapter 6 for private roads only when serving Family Lots.
 - *Guidance requested:* Should these private road approvals be handled by the Board or administratively?
- Amend ADU standards (Chapter 5):
 - Plat must show no more than one ADU allowed on a lot with a principal dwelling.
 - Remove occupancy limit of two adults.
 - Remove 30% size limitation relative to primary dwelling.
 - Remove requirement for two additional parking spaces.
 - Maintain wastewater capacity certification requirement.
- Require subdivisions with 15+ lots to have two ingress/egress points to the existing street system.

- Amend Roadway Standards per Road Department (Chapter 6):
 - Asphalt thickness: 2.5 inches
 - Base construction: 8 inches
 - Right-of-way width: 60 feet
 - Letter of Credit/Bond: 3-year maintenance
- Update stopping sight distance requirements to match MUTCD:
 - 40 mph: 305 ft
 - 45 mph: 360 ft
 - 50 mph: 425 ft
 - 55 mph: 495 ft
 - 60 mph: 570 ft
- Remove exemption under Section 6.04.01(D) so all land disturbances must follow best management practices (mud control, stabilization, silt fencing, gravel entrances, etc.).
- Add requirement for drainage topographic plan for each lot to ensure adequate drainage.

General Discussion

- Board acknowledged the need to balance growth with infrastructure and community concerns.
- It was noted that subdivision regulations have existed for many years and are not new.
- The Board emphasized that all subdivision plats must still be approved by the Board and can include conditions.

Following an extensive Board discussion regarding the Subdivision Ordinance, Commissioner Ambrose motioned to extend the moratorium until May 6, 2026.

Commissioner Turner seconded the motion; motion carried 3-1-1 with Chairman Gibbs, Commissioner Turner, and Commissioner Ambrose in favor; Commissioner Davis opposed; and Commissioner Rowland abstained from voting.

Recreation Fees

The Recreation Fee Schedule Update outlines proposed adjustments to rental rates across several recreational facilities. The recommendations maintain most existing fees, introduce new rental options, and align pricing with current operational needs.

Recreation Director Landon Sparks presented.

Key Highlights

• Pavilion Rentals:

Most pavilion rates remain unchanged at \$25 per day, with the Playground Pavilion continuing at \$100 per day. Pavilion 5 remains unavailable for rental. No rate increases were proposed.

• Field Rentals:

Fees for non-recreation practices and tournament rentals remain the same. A new option allows renters to sell their own concessions for \$350 per day.

• Gym Rentals:

Non-recreation practice fees remain unchanged. New offerings include tournament rentals at \$150 per court per day and the option to sell concessions for \$350 per day.

• Flex Room Rentals:

Two new categories are added: recreation team parties at no charge, and all other rentals at \$150 for four hours.

• Arena Rentals:

Key changes include increasing all-day event rentals from \$125 to \$500 per day and adding a new evening event rate of \$200 per day. Private rentals and open ride fees remain unchanged.

Conclusion

The Recreation Department requests approval to adopt the Recreation Board's recommended fee updates. These changes modernize offerings, add flexibility for renters, and maintain affordability for core activities.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the Recreation Board's recommended fee schedule, including:

- Pavilion, field, gym, flex-room, and arena fee structures as presented,
- \$250 half-day arena event rental and \$150 per hour for open riding,

Commissioner Ambrose seconded for discussion suggesting Mr. Sparks add a cleanup fee/deposit at his discretion.

The Board agreed with Commissioner Ambrose suggestion leaving the cleanup fee to the discretion of the Recreation Director.

The motion was 5-0.

Holiday Schedule 2026

Commissioner Davis has requested that this recommendation be added to the agenda for consideration. Staff members have expressed that requiring the use of personal time off for Good Friday and Juneteenth creates inequity, particularly for new employees who may not have accrued sufficient leave, resulting in unpaid time off.

To address this issue, County Clerk/Human Resource Director Janet Abbott conducted a survey of surrounding municipalities to compare their paid holiday offerings. Based on these findings, the recommendation is to designate Good Friday (April 3, 2026) and Juneteenth Day (June 19, 2026) as paid holidays rather than unpaid closures.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve designating Good Friday and Juneteenth as paid holidays for county employees.

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

Meeting Room Use Request for Political Debate

The Monroe County Republican Party and the Monroe County Reporter are requesting to use the Board of Commissioners meeting room on the evening of Monday, April 20 for a political debate for the two contested Board of Commissioners' seats, the two contested Board of Education seats, and the Superior Court Judge seat.

Public Information Officer Richard Dumas presented the request to the Board on behalf of Noah Harbuck, Monroe County Republican Party Chairman.

Chairman Gibbs motioned to approve.

Commissioner Turner seconded the motion for discussion.

Commissioner Rowland stated that any banners or signs displayed during the debate must be placed below the dais and must not obscure the County seal.

The motion was 5-0.

Public Comment

Rob Law Lassiter Road

- Data Center process
 - Urged the County to require that all key permits for data centers (including land disturbance and construction/improvement permits) be approved by Planning & Zoning and the Board, not just handled administratively.

- Argued that:
 - Developers do zoning first, then spend heavily on engineering and studies.
 - Therefore, major environmental and impact studies should be public and reviewed before permits are issued.
- DRI (Development of Regional Impact)
 - Requested that DRI reviews be:
 - Initiated immediately when an application is filed.
 - Completed and available before Planning & Zoning hearings, so P&Z and the Board can make informed decisions with full regional feedback.
- Subdivisions / rural character
 - Stressed the importance of:
 - Preserving the rural lifestyle (e.g., horse riding, low density).
 - Preventing large subdivisions from eroding that character.
 - Highlighted the need for orderly growth and better protection in existing rural, equestrian areas.
- Quadrant growth
 - Supported Kelsey's quadrant analysis and noted that where public pressure and growth are appearing is predictable based on past investment and geography.

Kerry Osborne

- Reported consulting a lead engineer at a Cummins diesel plant:
 - Said lead times for true Tier 4 generators are currently about three years.
 - Explained that making a Tier 2 generator "Tier 4 compliant":
 - May meet emissions standards, but
 - Does not meet the same noise levels as a true Tier 4 unit.
- Requested the County:
 - Consider requiring actual Tier 4 generators, not just Tier 4-compliant retrofits.
 - Emphasized that Tier 2 retrofits can be 20–40 decibels louder, which is significant for neighboring properties.

Carol Edge 1544 Stokes Store Road

- Addressed the Stokes Store / Blue Ridge School / Jobs Road area:

- Asked the Board to carefully consider:
 - Existing residents' concerns,
 - The rural nature of the area, and
 - The strain on roads, water, and other infrastructure when approving subdivisions.
- Subdivision density:
 - Objected particularly to high-density subdivisions (e.g., ~100+ homes) in rural zones.
 - Noted such projects can:
 - Change the appearance of the area,
 - Create infrastructure demands that \$500,000 houses alone may not fully pay for.
- Requested:
 - That the Board factor in current residents' input and community character when deciding rezones and variances.
 - More cautious approval of large subdivisions in rural districts.

Harry Edge 1544 Stokes Store Road

- Raised concerns about setbacks and grading on specific properties:
 - Mentioned new houses built lower than the road, posing drainage and safety issues.
 - Stated that some driveways lack proper pipes and silt fencing, causing water to:
 - Run down across multiple lots,
 - Concentrate in ditches below.
- Safety concern:
 - Worried about houses being too close to elevated roads, potentially at risk if a car leaves the roadway.
- Requested:
 - Better enforcement of silt fencing and basic erosion controls.
 - Closer review of drainage and elevation (road vs. house pad) at the permitting stage.

Carol Edge 1544 Stokes Store Road (additional comment)

- Noted that residents in her district had:
 - Held a community meeting at the Stokes Store fire station.
 - Had 20+ people attend.
 - Compiled written suggestions on subdivision and UDO changes.
 - Submitted those notes to Kelsey.
- Emphasized:
 - Her community is highly engaged and deeply concerned about subdivision impacts.
 - Asked the Board to seriously consider their written recommendations when amending the subdivision rules.

Holly Wangerin 701 Reedy Creek Road

- Transparency / documentation
 - Requested that the County:
 - Post all supporting documents for agenda items on the county website in advance, not just the agenda.
 - Examples: PowerPoints, staff reports, draft ordinance text.
 - Said she would have liked to review Kelsey's subdivision PowerPoint beforehand.
- Vegetative buffers / tree species
 - For data center tree buffers:
 - Recommended specifying non-invasive species.
 - Urged using a variety of evergreens so a single blight cannot destroy the entire buffer at once.
- AG lot sizes vs. small farms
 - Cautioned that increasing AG minimums too high could:
 - Discourage small flower/produce farms, which can function well on 2–3 acres.
 - Suggested:
 - Considering policies that support small-scale agriculture.
- Growth vs. rural preservation

- Stated she values the county's rural nature and wants it preserved.
- Acknowledged:
 - The Board has to walk a fine line between:
 - Providing housing options (for new families, older residents downsizing), and
 - Protecting rural character.
- Noted many families start on very small lots in town and later move outwards as circumstances allow.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Lamarcus Davis – District 1

- Thanks and recognition
 - Thanked citizens for their input on data centers and subdivisions.
 - Expressed appreciation for county staff, especially Finance teams and all employees involved in responding to recent severe weather events (EMS, road department, etc.).
- Data centers / land disturbance
 - Clarified that data center land disturbance is heavily regulated:
 - They must obtain land disturbance permits.
 - Plans must be reviewed and approved, including by UGA and, where applicable, state agencies.
- Subdivisions and growth
 - Acknowledged that more people move to the county every day and that new housing is inevitable.
 - Wants to get the rules right, including lot sizes, but prefers:
 - Continuous amendment and improvement of the UDO,
 - Rather than relying on repeated moratoriums.
- Moratorium stance
 - Reiterated he voted against the subdivision moratorium originally and against extending it:
 - Not because he opposes fixing the UDO,

- But because he believes the Board should do the work via amendments, not moratoriums.
- Board cooperation
 - Asked citizens to continue trusting that the Board is working to do the right thing for the county.

Commissioner Eddie Rowland – District 2

- Technical/regulatory clarification
 - On soil and erosion control (ESPCP):
 - Stated that these are handled by community development staff (e.g., Kelsey) under state technical requirements.
 - Expressed confidence that staff will not let developers “get away” with non-compliance.
 - DRI process:
 - Noted that DRI is a state/regional function (DCA and regional commission), not purely a county tool, and timing/triggering is not solely the Board’s choice.
- Tier 4 discussion
 - Acknowledged hearing conflicting timelines (2–6 years) for obtaining Tier 4 generators.
 - Reiterated that the Board’s focus is on:
 - Emissions (Tier 4-equivalent),
 - Noise at the property line (65 dB),
 - Rather than mandating a more expensive solution merely to discourage data centers.
- Buffering & drainage
 - Noted that ESPCP and drainage plans should address issues like those raised by Mr. Edge about water running across lots.
- Public feedback
 - Stated he reviewed and discussed all of Ms. Edge’s written comments on subdivisions/UDO with staff, even if they did not agree on every point.

- AG lot size and variances
 - Open to the idea that 5 acres may be appropriate in some AG areas, but believes:
 - Variances must remain available as a relief valve, especially for seniors and special situations.

Commissioner John Ambrose – District 3

- Website transparency
 - Stated that, starting last Monday, the County is working to:
 - Place not only the agenda, but also relevant documents (presentations, etc.) on the website.
 - Goal: be more transparent and give the public access to detailed information ahead of meetings.
- Public comment time limits
 - Suggested revisiting the 3-minute limit for public comment:
 - Recommended 5 minutes, especially on complex, high-impact items such as the UDO, subdivisions, and data centers.
- Interactive Q&A
 - Expressed desire for a format where:
 - Citizens can ask questions during comment,
 - Commissioners can respond directly rather than only listening.
- Solar fields
 - Warned that stricter subdivision rules could unintentionally push more land into solar field use.
 - Suggested the county consider placing limits or a ban on large solar fields, perhaps more than one per district or county.
- Mailboxes and liability
 - Raised concern about non-breakaway, massive mailboxes along county roads:
 - Noted a major lawsuit and state cases where such mailboxes created liability.
 - Recommended the County consider addressing mailbox standards for safety and legal reasons.

- Thanks and acknowledgements
 - Thanked:
 - Citizens for their participation and reporting of issues (e.g., water leaks, speeding, safety).
 - County staff and the county attorney for their work.
- Subdivisions & UDO
 - Emphasized:
 - The Board worked “tirelessly” on the UDO at its creation.
 - They always knew it would need ongoing amendments as issues surfaced.
 - Supports:
 - Larger lot sizes in major subdivisions,
 - Quality standards to ensure new subdivisions don’t overburden services.

Commissioner Al Turner – District 4

- Constituent service
 - Assured citizens he does listen and works “behind the scenes,” even if it doesn’t always appear visible in meetings.
 - Mentioned following up with the road department on:
 - Road signs,
 - Other district-level issues.
- Signs and materials
 - Noted delay in posting some signs due to switch in materials/suppliers, but said:
 - New signs will be installed; it will just take some time.
- Data center generators
 - Stated that as long as generators:
 - Meet the Tier 4 emission standard, and
 - Do not exceed 65 dB at the property line, the County has achieved its goal.
- Storm response
 - Joined others by thanking crews and staff for their work during recent weather events.

Chairman Alan Gibbs

- Moratorium and keeping one's word
 - Admitted he had publicly said he would not extend the subdivision moratorium and struggled with going back on that statement.
 - Ultimately voted to extend the moratorium, stating:
 - While it was personally difficult, he believed extension was best for the community, to ensure legally solid and well-considered rule changes.
- Housing and land affordability
 - Recognized:
 - There is a housing shortage in Monroe County.
 - His own children are struggling to find land or homes.
 - Emphasized:
 - The Board's job is not to simply give people land, but to set fair rules under which people can work hard and find opportunities.
- Fine line on lot sizes
 - Acknowledged the tension between:
 - Larger lots for rural preservation, and
 - Affordability and accessibility for younger families and seniors.
- Tier 4 noise issue
 - Responded to the comment that Tier 4-compliant generators may be louder:
 - Stressed that the key measure is 65 dB at the property line.
 - The county is less concerned with the noise level at the generator itself than with the impact at the boundary.
- Subdivisions, schools, and timing
 - Reiterated that the original moratorium had value:
 - Helped the school system get a chance to catch up by slowing major subdivision approvals.
 - Recognized the moratorium has gone on longer than intended and stressed the need to:
 - Prioritize finishing the UDO/subdivision changes,
 - Treat resolving this as a top priority for staff.

- Thanks to public and staff
 - Thanked:
 - Citizens for their patience and participation.
 - Staff (especially Planning & Zoning and Finance) for their work on complex issues such as the moratorium, data centers, and budget management.

Community Development Director Kelsey Fortner asked to address the Board regarding the Providence Ridge Subdivision located on Stokes Store Road.

Mrs. Fortner stated:

- There had been a previously signed plat where the lots were later split again, beyond what had been approved.
- She informed the applicant that this was not allowed and held her ground despite back-and-forth and the applicant saying they might appeal to the commissioners.
- She stated that the applicant has now combined that last lot back into a single lot, bringing the plat back into compliance.

Executive Session-Personnel

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to enter into executive session for personnel at 11:55 a.m.

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

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to close executive session at 12:07 p.m.

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

Action from Executive Session

County Attorney Jessica Haygood stated the board discussed a personnel matter during executive session and no action was needed.

Adjourn

Commissioner motioned to adjourn at 12:09 p.m.

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

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk