

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of May 05, 2026

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:

Lorri Byrd, County Manager

Ben Vaughn, County Attorney

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Kim Stokes, Public Works Director

Kelsey Fortner, Community Development Director

Welcome

Chairman Gibbs welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

Josh Hill led 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 6:00 P.M.

Proclamation for former District 1 Commissioner Larry Evans

- The Board unanimously approved (April 7, 2026) the renaming of the Monroe County Workforce Development Center and Old Hubbard Teacher's Cottage in honor of former District 1 Commissioner Larry C. Evans.
- Commissioner Evans served Monroe County for 33 years, the longest tenure in county history.
- He was the first African American commissioner in the county, elected in 1987.
- A 1967 graduate of Hubbard High School, he was also a founding member and first president of the Hubbard Alumni Association.
 - Evans played a key role in preservation and restoration of the historic Hubbard complex, including the dormitory and teacher's cottage.
- He contributed to numerous major county initiatives, including development of the water system, landfill, commission districts, county administration building, county manager government structure, recreation department expansion, Tift College property transition, and courthouse renovation.
- He was recognized for his dedicated service marked by passion, dignity, and respect.
- The Board extended congratulations to his family and directed that a copy of the resolution be sent to his wife, Annie Evans.
- Chairman Alan Gibbs formally proclaimed the renaming on May 5, 2026.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Gibbs presented the agenda for approval.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the agenda.

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

Minutes-April 21, 2026, Regular Meeting and April 21, 2026, City/County Meeting

Chairman Gibbs presented the minutes of the April 21, 2026, Regular Meeting and the April 21, 2026, City/County meeting for approval.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the minutes of April 21, 2026, Regular meeting and the April 21, 2026, City/County meeting with the normal 30 days for changes.

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

Variance-Public Hearing Joe Chambers Road

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to open a public hearing at 6:07 p.m. for a Variance request located at 124 Joe Chambers Road.

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

Community Development Director Kelsey Fortner stated application 2026-06 is being presented for a Variance request located at 124 Joe Chambers Road, map 065 parcel 037. The request is to divide out one acre of the property with an existing manufactured home that will be used for a dwelling. The property is four acres with approximately 500' of road frontage. The property owner/applicant is Edward A. Willoughby.

Ms. Fortner stated the reason for the variance instead of the rezoning is due to the property being zoned AR with a mobile home.

The Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval.

Edward Willoughby was present on behalf of the application.

No one was present in opposition.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to close the public hearing at 6:10 p.m.

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

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to go with the Zoning Boards recommendation for approval.

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

Timeline Amendment-Public Hearing

Commissioner Davis motioned to open a public hearing at 6:11 p.m. for UDO amendment to the timeline for Variances and Special Uses.

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

Community Development Director Kelsey Fortner stated the Zoning Procedure Law has changed the timeline for advertising to no less than 15 days and no more than 45 days. Mrs. Fortner presented a resolution to amend the UDO timeline for housekeeping purposes to match the State of Georgia requirements.

The Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to close the public hearing at 6:13 p.m.

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

Chairman Gibbs motioned to approve the timeline.

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

Draft Subdivision Amendment and Moratorium-Public Hearing

Commissioner Davis motioned to open a public hearing at 6:13 p.m. for the draft subdivision ordinance amendment and moratorium.

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

Community Development Director Kelsey Fortner presented the following:

1. Minimum Lot Size (Agricultural-Residential)

- Old: Smaller minimum lot size allowed (less restrictive; permitted denser subdivision).
- New: Minimum lot size increased to 5 acres.
- Exclude O1-M3

2. Family Lots (New Provision)

- Old: No provision for family-based subdivision exceptions.
- New: Creates “Family Lots” option:
 - Up to 4 total lots (1 parent + 3 child lots).
 - Allows reduced lot sizes under specific conditions.
 - Requires parent parcel eligibility.
 - Limits further subdivision after creation.
 - Allows private road (60-ft easement) access.
 - Private road not maintained by county (must be noted on plat).
 - P&Z recommended removing parent lot (family lots).

3. Private Road Standards

- Old: Subdivisions generally required public road standards, 10-acre minimums.
- New: Allows private roads specifically for Family Lots as an exception.

4. Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

- Old: Less clearly defined or silent on limits.
- New:
 - Maximum of 1 ADU per lot with a primary residence.
 - Must be noted on plat.

- Requires wastewater capacity verification.

5. Subdivision Access (Ingress/Egress)

- Old: Fewer or less defined access requirements.
- New:
 - Subdivisions with 15+ lots must have two access points.

6. Road Construction Standards

- Old: Less detailed or lower construction specifications.
- New: amended suggestions
 - 2.5-inch asphalt binder course.
 - 8-inch base.
 - 60-ft right-of-way.
 - Requires bond/letter of credit.
 - Adds 3-year maintenance period.

7. Stopping Sight Distance

- Old: Did not clearly align with modern standards.
- New: Adopts MUTCD-based requirements:
 - 40 MPH → 305 ft
 - 45 MPH → 360 ft
 - 50 MPH → 425 ft
 - 55 MPH → 495 ft
 - 60 MPH → 570 ft

8. Land Disturbance / Erosion Control

- Old: Included exemptions or less stringent requirements.
- New:
 - Removes exemptions.
 - Requires BMPs for all land disturbance.
 - Emphasizes:
 - Erosion control
 - Mud/runoff prevention
 - Soil stabilization

9. Overall Regulatory Approach

- Old: More flexible, less infrastructure focused.
- New: More structured with emphasis on:
 - Growth control
 - Infrastructure standards
 - Environmental protection
 - Public safety

Rob (Speaker 16 – District 4 resident)

- Lot size in AR (agricultural residential):
 - Supports larger lots than 5 acres in AR; recommended 7-acre minimum for AR.
 - Wants no “remnant” parcels smaller than 7 acres (referenced an issue on Stokes Road).
- Road frontage / house siting:
 - Suggested 350 ft minimum frontage.
 - Proposed setback standard: front setback = lesser of 400 ft or 1/3 of depth from road to rear property line.
 - Rationale: most genuine rural owners set houses farther back; only developers push 100-ft setbacks, which make the area look “urban/ugly.”
- Minor subdivisions (“minor subs”):
 - Recommended capping minor subdivisions at 3 lots with no exceptions.
 - Goal: force more projects to come before the BOC as major subdivisions, rather than being done piecemeal and having to “chase them after the fact.”
- Family lots:
 - Intention should be small family house sites, not mini mansions.
 - Proposed 1-acre child lots off a larger parent tract; five acres for a child lot is “crazy.”
 - Suggested:
 - Allow one 1-acre family lot per 10 acres, up to a maximum of 5 family lots.
 - Create a specific exception in the lot-size table for family lots (so minimum can drop to 1 acre in that use).

- Strongly argued that child lots must not be independently saleable:
 - Child lots should not be sold separately from the parent tract.
 - Concerned about family disputes and access issues if a child lot is sold and access via private road is cut off.
 - Wants deed encumbrances so child lots stay tied to the parent parcel.

Howard Dorr-1291 Rock Quarry Rd

- Spoke specifically on Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs):
 - Agreed with the concern that removing the 30% of primary dwelling size cap could be a “can of worms.”
 - Supported the Planning & Zoning (P&Z) recommendation:
 - Set maximum ADU size at 1,000 sq ft.
 - Pointed out a math problem with 30%:
 - Example: 1,500 sq ft primary house $\times$ 30% = 450 sq ft ADU.
 - That’s too small and below a reasonable minimum; 1,000 sq ft cap is more practical.
 - Position: keep a firm 1,000 sq ft max to prevent very large second homes, without using the awkward 30% formula.

Josh Hill-City council

- Spoke as a Forsyth City Council member and business owner.
- Focused on BMPs (Best Management Practices) and erosion control:
 - Emphasized that BMPs must be in place on every project, regardless of topography.
 - Gave examples from his own business (“the Fox Den”):
 - Had issues with curb cuts and sediment from a city subdivision washing into the creek at his property.
 - Said a contractor cut his curb to reach city sewer via a county road, leaving sewage and damage he had personally paid to install.
 - Message: Mandatory BMPs and proper enforcement are critical; otherwise, downstream neighbors suffer.

Carrie Swearingen-412 Reed Road

- Opposed to a blanket 5-acre minimum lot size.

- Private property rights & rural roads:
 - Example: owner of a couple hundred acres on a gravel road with two children.
 - Under the proposal, if she deeds land to her kids she fears she might be forced to bring that gravel road up to county standards, even where the county provides no water or other services.
 - Sees this as a serious unintended consequence of the five-acre and road-improvement rules.
- Property rights / fairness:
 - Stressed that people bought and paid for their land and should retain flexibility.
 - Asked commissioners:
 - How many of them live on less than 5 acres?
 - How many have subdivided land for children/family without these restrictions?
 - Her point: previous generations had opportunities to split land easily; the board shouldn't "close the door" behind them now.
- Housing affordability / workforce housing:
 - A 5-acre minimum will raise the cost of entry for homeownership.
 - Worried about young families and local workers:
 - Sheriff's deputies, firefighters, county employees, etc.
 - With average county salaries and normal debt-to-income ratios, 5-acre minimums will push housing out of reach.
- Sprawl & service costs:
 - Argued 5-acre minimums don't stop growth; they just spread it out further:
 - Higher infrastructure costs.
 - More strain on county services.
 - Less efficient land use patterns.
- Comparisons to other counties:
 - Said very few Georgia counties use a flat 5-acre minimum.
 - Mentioned Lee and Worth Counties as examples that do, but:
 - They don't have I-75 and are much more rural.

- Their geography and development pressures aren't comparable to Monroe County.
- Parent-child lot concept:
 - Strongly skeptical of parent/child restrictions:
 - Works "until somebody gets divorced or somebody dies."
 - After that, survivors will want/need to sell, and the county can't realistically police whether a transfer is truly "family."
 - Concerned, it creates more government layers and an unmanageable enforcement burden.

Nipper Bunn-274 Frank Bunn Dr

- Also opposed to the 5-acre minimum.
- Perception of unfairness / "got ours" problem:
 - Said it "smacks of":
 - "We've got ours, now we're changing it for everybody else."
 - Believes this especially impacts families with closely held family land who rely on subdividing to help children.
- Affordability & family land:
 - Argues 5 acres is too restrictive and will:
 - Make housing less affordable.
 - Make it harder for families to keep children on family land.
 - Cited his own experience of receiving land from parents as a younger adult and wants others to have that same opportunity.
- When asked how else to slow growth:
 - Acknowledged it's a "conundrum" and difficult.
 - Still feels 5 acres is "overboard" and not the right tool.

Sarah Brown Lassiter Road-rural resident, horse trainer/stay-at-home mom

- Supports the 5-acre minimum (and is comfortable with more than 5 acres) despite being a young family with modest income.
- Rural character & safety:
 - Moved to Monroe County precisely because it is not like McDonough:
 - Doesn't want a house "every time you turn around."

- Wants a place where her kids can ride horses and bikes along the road safely.
- Feels small-lot development would:
 - Bring heavy traffic.
 - Lead to more Dollar Generals, gas stations, warehouses, etc.
 - Erode the rural, open feel that drew them here.
- Agricultural viability:
 - From a farm perspective:
 - Five acres is barely enough for meaningful agriculture (horses, cattle).
 - If you truly want agriculture, you often need more than 5 acres.
 - So, she sees 5 acres as a reasonable minimum rural residential lot, not a luxury.
- Interstate / proximity argument:
 - Cited their 100-acre property in Griffin:
 - Originally 5 miles off the interstate and rural.
 - Now surrounded by warehouses; an adjacent 8-acre lot is under contract for \$850,000.
 - They're moving away from that property because of how quickly it urbanized.
 - Uses this as a warning: even land "a few miles off" an interstate will be pressured into commercial/industrial uses if small-lot growth is allowed.
- Consistency of standard:
 - When asked if 5 acres should also apply near the interstate, not just out in AG:
 - Answered yes; still favors a 5-acre minimum.
 - Argues that even near I-75, allowing smaller lots pushes the county toward McDonough-style sprawl, which she opposes.

Chad Tyler-River Overlook-Former P&Z Board member

- Framed current debates as "musical chairs – and if the music stops and you don't have a chair, you don't get a seat" and referenced "shut the door behind you."
- Critiques:
 - Family-lot concept:
 - Finds "parent/child" rules unworkable:
 - Real life includes in-laws, best friends, and non-blood "family."

- Law can't fairly distinguish which relationships are valid for special treatment.
- Predicts conflicts and legal trouble if deeds restrict who can buy/sell or who uses a private road.
- Five-acre minimum & zoning tables:
 - Points out that 5-acre residential is essentially functioning as agricultural anyway.
 - Doesn't see why 3 acres is such a problem when road frontage standards already exist.
 - Notes current table: same 200 ft frontage for 3-acre and 5-acre lots means going from 3 to 5 acres doesn't actually change frontage pattern if lot is "skinny and deep."
- Curb-cut / subdivision pattern:
 - Argues the real problem is:
 - Using up all road frontage with shallow lots, forcing future density to go "inward" behind them.
 - That interior one-acre "infill" pattern is what leads to Henry County-type density, not just lot-size numbers.
 - Suggests:
 - Revisit the curb-cut ordinance.
 - Allow more individual driveway access along main roads earlier, rather than packing subdivisions behind thin frontage strips.
- Flexibility vs. over-regulation:
 - Believes existing ordinances could work if the board would stop changing them for every scenario and simply say "no" more often.
 - Concerned, the county is layering too many complex rules (family lots, 5-acre minimum) instead of enforcing what's already there.

Commissioner Davis motioned to come out of the public hearing at 6:53 p.m.

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

District 1 Commissioner Lamarcus Davis said he's worried that requiring a 5-acre minimum lot size will hurt affordability in the local housing market. Commissioner Davis said it would inhibit

people without a high income from being able to move to Monroe County. Commissioner Davis said Monroe County's location along I-75 makes it a more attractive destination than other more rural Middle Georgia counties. Commissioner Davis added that he doesn't live on five acres himself so he would be a hypocrite to require other Monroe County citizens to have at least five acres.

Commission Chairman Alan Gibbs said he wants to increase the minimum required acreage in A-R from three acres to five acres but said he wants to leave the other zoning district minimum lot size requirements as written in the UDO.

Commissioner Davis then urged Commissioners to hold off on changing the minimum lot size requirements until a professional land use development firm can evaluate Monroe County's entire land use map and recommend changes. As part of the next comprehensive land use plan, District 2 Commissioner Eddie Rowland suggested creating multiple A-R districts with different minimum lot sizes that increase the farther away a tract is from I-75 and the City of Forsyth. In response to Commissioner Davis and Commissioner Rowland's comments, District 3

Commissioner John Ambrose then recommended extending the major subdivision moratorium until the county can update its comprehensive land use plan. But all four other Commissioners immediately shot down a moratorium extension.

Commissioners then discussed the proposed creation of family lots and changes to ADUs.

Chairman Gibbs said he wants to eliminate family lots altogether.

Commissioner Rowland said he agrees with having a 1,000 square-foot maximum size for ADUs and allowing no more than one ADU per main dwelling. Stokes said the UDO currently requires that roads for any new development must be brought up to county specifications.

Monroe County Attorney Ben Vaughn said that the UDO needs to better define what constitutes a "development" so that Stokes has clarity to govern when road improvements are necessary.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to require 5-acre minimum lot sizes in all county zoning districts.

Commissioner Rowland then seconded Commissioner Ambrose's motion for discussion but said he was completely opposed to the idea. Commissioner Rowland said he agreed with Chairman Gibbs that the minimum lot size in A-R should increase from 3 acres to 5 acres but said he wanted to leave the other zoning districts as is.

Commissioner Ambrose's motion failed by a 1-4 margin with Commissioner Ambrose in favor and Chairman Gibbs, Commissioner Davis, Commissioner Rowland and Commissioner Turner opposed.

Chairman Gibbs motioned to increase the minimum lot size in A-R from three acres to five acres while leaving all minimum lot size requirements in all other zoning districts as currently written in the UDO.

Commissioner Davis then seconded Chairman Gibbs' motion for discussion.

Commissioner Ambrose said he wants instead to increase the A-R minimum lot size requirement from three acres to 10 acres.

District 4 Commissioner Al Turner was the only other commissioner who agreed to a 10-acre minimum requirement.

Chairman Gibbs motion for a five-acre minimum in A-R passed 3-2 with Chairman Gibbs, Commissioner Davis and Commissioner Rowland in favor and Commissioners Ambrose and Turner opposed.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve a maximum of one ADU per main dwelling with a maximum square footage of 1,000 square feet for the ADU.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion, and the motion was approved 5-0.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve a mandate of two or more points of ingress/egress for any development with 15 or more lots.

Commissioner Ambrose's motion was then seconded by Chairman Gibbs seconded the motion, and the motion was approved 5-0.

Commissioner Rowland motioned to approve the subdivision street roadway standards proposed by Mrs. Fortner and Mr. Stokes.

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

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the stopping sight distances proposed by Mrs. Fortner and Mr. Stokes.

Commissioner Rowland seconded the motion, and the motion was approved 5-0.

Commissioner Rowland then motioned to approve a recommendation by County Attorney Ben Vaughn to remove exemptions within the current UDO that allow individual single-family residential units and additions or modifications to existing single-family or duplex residential structures to be exempt from required drainage and stormwater management requirements.

Commissioner Rowland's motion continued to exempt agricultural and silvicultural land management activities within the A-R district from required drainage and stormwater management requirements.

Chairman Gibbs seconded the motion, and the motion passed 5-0.

Following an extensive board discussion, Commissioner Davis motioned to require a topography map for all lots being developed as proposed by the P&Z Board.

Commissioner Turner seconded the motion, and the motion was approved 5-0.

Comprehensive Land Use Plan

County Manager Lorri Byrd stated County staff, along with county commissioners, have been searching for a Land Use Planner to help with Monroe County in preparation of a comprehensive land use plan. Goodwyn Mills Cawood (GMC) is present to do a presentation on their proposal for helping Monroe County with its comprehensive plan. Mrs. Byrd stated she has provided the Board the firm's brochure that indicates that their team is experienced with Georgia's growing communities. They worked with Bryan County on their Comprehensive Plan, and it was a unique challenge due to the fact that the Hyundai Meta Plant was announced while they were in the middle of the planning process. Other recent comprehensive plan experiences have been with the City of Albany, Dougherty County, Fulton County, and the City of Griffin, just to name a few.

Commissioner Rowland led the initial discussion with some points of introductions, population projections, and housing needs.

Glenn Coyne with GMC introduced the company and described the comprehensive planning process and who is involved in the comprehensive plan.

The Board agreed the county needs a robust comprehensive land use plan to:

- Manage growth tied to I-75 and population increases.
- Support legally defensible zoning and subdivision decisions.

The Board agreed GMS is a viable candidate, but additional proposals should be obtained from other qualified planning firms if possible.

Commissioner Ambrose stated on larger capital projects, the county needs to start bringing in engineers/architects to avoid repeated change orders and design issues.

No formal vote was taken; the discussion was informational.

LMIG/LRA Full Depth Reclamation of Various Roads/Bid Results

Public Works Director Kim Stokes presented bid results for the LMIG/LRA Full Depth Reclamation of Various Roads.

2026 Road Improvement Program

District	Road	Begin	End	Miles
1	Landfill Entrance	SR-83N	Station 60+60	1.15
2	Sanders	US-41	Estes	1.87
2	Montpelier	US-41	Forsyth City Limit	4.02
2	Riatta SD	Eng Study	Hydr, Pave Eval	
2	Bunn	SR-18	50+00	0.95
3	Pea Ridge	SR-87	Paving Joint	2.8
3	Edge	Lee King	Jenkins	2.75
3	Old Popes Ferry	Klopfer	Pate	1.12
4	Boxankle	HF Rd 93+90	203+60	2.08
4	Craig	SR-42N	Freeman Rd	1.1
4	Old Cabiness	Giles Road	29+00	0.55
1 & 4	Mayfield	Weldon	Boxankle	1.12
Total	Projects			19.51

2026 Road Improvement Program Bids

Monroe County						
2026 Road Improvement Program						
Full Depth Reclamation RFP						
May 1, 2026						
			Blount			E. R. Snell
	Quantity	Unit	Unit \$	Total \$	Unit \$	Total \$
Mobilization	1	LS	\$26,059.50	\$ 26,059.50	\$586,400.00	\$ 586,400.00
Job Mobilization	8	Each	\$29,377.23	\$ 235,017.84	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 8,000.00
Full Depth Reclamation	233,000	SY	\$ 3.41	\$ 794,530.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 1,398,000.00
Portland Cement	5,800	TN	\$ 232.31	\$ 1,347,398.00	\$ 240.00	\$ 1,392,000.00
Sing surf Treat	225,000	SY	\$ 1.27	\$ 285,750.00	\$ 1.30	\$ 292,500.00
Bids Total				\$ 2,688,755.34		\$ 3,676,900.00
Estimate				\$ 3,784,320.00		\$ 3,784,320.00
Under Estimate				\$ 1,095,564.66		\$ 107,420.00

Mr. Stokes stated his recommendation was to award Blount Construction Company the Full Depth Reclamation contract in the amount of \$2,688,755 with funds to come from TSPLOST.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve Mr. Stokes' recommendation.

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

Horse Arena Flooring Change Order

Public Works Director Kim Stokes presented a change order for the flooring to the Horse Arena Contract.

Equestrian Covered Arena						
Surface & Drainage						
Quotes						
				ProForm	Buxton	Preston
Arena Base, Grading, Subgrade, M10, Sand Covering				\$ 59,000	\$ 136,337	\$ 142,800
Storm Drain				\$ 110,000	\$ 111,022	
Perimeter Drain				\$ 9,200	\$ 34,349	
Sprinkler System				\$ 21,522		
Arena Kickboard				\$ 14,364		
Admin & Management				\$ 34,226		
Total Change Order Amount				\$ 248,312	\$ 281,708	\$ 142,800
Previous Contract Amount				\$ 1,094,957		
Revised Contract Amount				\$ 1,343,269		
SPLOST Funding						

The change order presented for approval by ProForm Construction is to construct the Storm Drainage, Horse Footing, and Sprinkler System for the Monroe County Recreation Department Covered Horse Arena for the estimated budget of \$215,923.77. Pricing is based off plans designed by Triple Point Engineering dated April 2026 as well as Quantity Takeoff provided by Triple Point Engineering.

Mr. Stokes stated his recommendation is to authorize an Addendum to the Contract to ProForm Construction in the amount of \$248,312.00 for the Arena Surface and Drainage.

Commissioner Rowland motioned to approve Mr. Stokes' recommendation.

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

Public Comment

Candy Mountain-582 Bar None Road

- Lives at the dead end of Bar No Road and owns ~300 acres.
- Her house has no road frontage; her property ends where the road ends.
- Concern:

- If she wants to give 25 acres to her children to build on, she fears the county will require her to pave Bar No Road and meet new road-frontage rules.
- Asked directly:
 - Whether, under the new subdivision and road standards, she would be forced to pave the road or be blocked from creating those child lots.

Rob Law-Lassiter Road

- Thanked District 4 residents for attending and the Board for earlier efforts, but expressed frustration:
 - Said District 4 residents put in substantial effort on materials and input at the chairman's request but feel the county has largely ignored it.
- Concerned that:
 - The county is coming out of the subdivision moratorium while facing one or two new subdivisions in District 4.
 - Asked how the Board is going to "keep these developers out", given that earlier concerns were not fully addressed.
- On the horse arena:
 - Said the arena is not set up for largescale or serious competition.
 - Characterized the additional \$248k+ for footing/drainage as "wasting money" and making the Board "look stupid in the public."
 - Argued, other counties operate successful arenas with simpler, cheaper setups (e.g., water trucks instead of sprinkler systems).
 - Suggested SPLOST recreation funds could be better spent on other projects (livestock/fair/ag facilities).

Sarah Brown– Horse Trainer / Stay-at-Home Mom

Spoke again specifically on the horse arena:

- Noted she competes frequently at multiple arenas (Perry, Newton County, Barnesville, etc.).
- Key points:
 - Parking capacity at the current site is inadequate for modern horse trailers:
 - Her smaller rig is a 6-horse trailer; her main show rig (truck + trailer) is about 82 feet long.

- At typical barrel races and shows, many attendees have similarly large rigs.
- Current parking at the recreation site has already struggled to fit trailers when the arena was uncovered and smaller.
- With a “high-caliber” covered arena, she believes larger events will not be feasible due to limited trailer parking.
- Concerned about lost opportunities:
- Because the arena has not yet opened, Monroe County has missed hosting:
 - NBHA shows,
 - IVRA events,
 - Her own planned show series (SPRA),
 - 4-H shows and saddle club events.
 - Argues that delays and over-design have already cost revenue and usage.

Commissioner’s Comments

Commissioner Lamarcus Davis – District 1

- Responded to Rob’s statement that the Board “looks stupid,” calling it unacceptable, given the time commissioners spend away from their families working on county issues.
- Emphasized that Monroe County is not just District 4:
 - He represents all of District 1 and must also consider the entire county, not only one area or one group.
 - Stated that most constituents he hears from are generally supportive and appreciate the Board’s work.
- On the horse arena and SPLOST funds:
 - Noted SPLOST recreation funds must be used for recreation projects and cannot be diverted to general needs.
 - Argued that if funds are earmarked for recreation and not used in time, they risk being returned to the state.
 - Said improving the arena is a positive and eligible use of those funds, even if some residents disagree.

Commissioner Eddie Rowland – District 2

- Recounted that in 2012 a previous Board promised voters a significant agricultural/recreation project (horse arena and related facilities) in the SPLOST.
- In 2018, after being elected, he was asked when that promise would be delivered; he has since invested substantial time at the recreation department to move projects forward.
- On the horse arena:
 - Stated this Board intends to finish the arena properly, even if some feel it is “overbuilt.”
 - Outlined a sequence of projects:
 1. Complete the covered arena correctly and safely.
 2. Build an Ag & Natural Resources facility.
 3. Construct new ball fields on the additional recreation property that has long sat unused.
 4. Address repairs and upgrades to existing recreation facilities.
- Characterized the current Board as the one that will finally complete long-promised projects, even if criticized for doing so.

Commissioner Rowland left the meeting at 9:19 p.m.

Commissioner John Ambrose – District 3

- acknowledged the meeting had been heated and apologized if some remarks “went a little bit too much,” stressing that the Board is trying to do what’s right.
- Clarified rec property history, noting the additional recreation land was not bought in 2010, but after he came on the Board (around 2015).
- Addressed Candy Mountain’s concern:
 - Confirmed her property is at the dead end of the county road.
 - Stated that much of the subdivision action taken that night will not force her to pave the road or pay large sums just to give land to her son.
- On the horse arena:
 - Admitted he is not a regular user of horse arenas and had asked questions earlier because he wanted to know if the planned work would truly suffice.

- Noted that SPLOST recreation funds cannot be redirected to other purposes (like land acquisition); if they aren't spent on eligible recreation projects (such as the arena), the county risks having to return them.
- Thanked Rob and other residents for their input, acknowledging that emotions ran high because not all desired changes could be made, but said their comments are still valuable for future decisions.
- Expressed appreciation to everyone who stayed through the long meeting, including many from Commissioner Davis's city-heavy district, and joked that District 1 can "keep those problems," while confirming he still hears from those constituents too.
- Reiterated his opposition to wasting money, and said he hates spending a dime, but:
 - Wants to ensure future spending, especially on the comprehensive land use plan hopes to get multiple competitive bids, not just a single proposal.
 - Emphasized that a strong comprehensive plan will mean a lot to the county's future and how it manages growth.

Commissioner Al Turner – District 4

- Noted he is still relatively new to the Board (about two years in) and is learning through active participation.
- Said he is doing what he believes is best for both his district and the county as a whole.
- Took issue with the suggestion that the Board looks "stupid," stating:
 - He and the other commissioners are trying to do what's right for Monroe County.
 - If citizens believe someone can do better, elections are coming up, and they are free to run; he would not be offended if voters choose differently.
- Expressed appreciation for District 4 residents who attended and participated, noting he values their input.

Chairman Alan Gibbs

- Addressed Candy Mountain's concern (dead-end gravel road and giving land to children):
 - Stated the Board will not ignore those issues and intends to "figure out a way" for long-time rural owners like her to handle family splits without unreasonable road-paving burdens.
- On the "stupid" comment:

- Said he has “been called worse” and is not mad at Rob but stressed that the Board is working in good faith.
- On the horse arena:
 - Acknowledged the project has been drawn out too long and hit unexpected issues.
 - Committed to fixing the remaining problems so it opens safe and functional, rather than rushing an unsafe facility into use.
- On future project management:
 - Announced his intention that, for large and complex county projects, the county should:
 - Hire engineers and architects from the outset (point A to point B).
 - Avoid relying solely on internal design and then patching with repeated change orders.
 - Stated that this may cost more up front but will save money and problems long-term.
- On the comprehensive land use plan:
 - Reiterated that a strong, professionally informed comprehensive plan is critical for:
 - Managing growth.
 - Giving the county attorney a solid foundation when defending land-use decisions in court.
 - Said he found GMC’s presentation impressive, but:
 - He wants to seek additional proposals from other firms before making a final selection.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Action from Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Adjourn

Commissioner Turner motioned to adjourn at 9:28 p.m.

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

MCBOC draft Minutes of May 05, 2026, meeting
MCBOC approved.

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk