

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
REGULAR SESSION
Tuesday, April 11, 2023

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Chairman Bill Slaughter
Vice Chairman Mark Wisenbaker
Commissioner Joyce Evans
Commissioner Scott Orenstein
Commissioner Demarcus Marshall
Commissioner Clay Griner

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Marshall

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG

Commissioner Marshall

MINUTES

The minutes were presented for the work session of March 27, 2023, and the regular session of March 28, 2023. No changes to the minutes were requested. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

APPOINTMENTS

Lowndes County Board of Health

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Dr. Randy Smith's term has expired and he has not expressed a desire to continue to serve. Mrs. Dukes stated Ms. Brenda Mims has been recommended for the seat. Commissioner Evans nominated Mrs. Brenda Mims for appointment. There being no other nominations, Mrs. Brenda Mims was appointed by acclamation.

Valdosta-Lowndes County Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBOA)

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item. Mrs. Dukes stated there are two County Zoning Board of Appeals members whose terms are expiring on May 7, 2023. Mr. Marion Ramsey and Ms. Victoria Copeland have both expressed a desire to continue to serve. Commissioner Orenstein stated he spoke with Mac McCall yesterday and he recommended them highly. Commissioner Orenstein nominated Mr. Ramsey and Ms. Copeland for reappointment. There being no other nominations, Mr. Ramsey and Ms. Copeland were reappointed by acclamation.

South Georgia Regional Library Board

County Manager, Paige Dukes, presented the item, Mrs. Dukes stated Dr. Darlene Ridley has stated she will no longer be able to serve on the board. Ms. Jane Peeples would like to be appointed to fill the unexpired term and has expressed a desire to serve on this board. Commissioner Griner nominated Ms. Jane Peeples for appointment. There being no other nominations, Ms. Jane Peeples was appointed by acclamation.

PUBLIC HEARING

REZ-2022-10 The Campus Transitional Care Facility, 2193 Howell Road, E-A to P-D, Well & Septic, ~23 acres

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request is for E-A to P-D zoning on Howell Road in an agricultural-character area, with some wetlands on the northend of the property. Mr. Dillard stated that it is currently heavily wooded and there is one house on the front left of the property located at 2193 Howell Road. Mr. Dillard stated the request for P-D is for the site plan for a recovery residence or sober living facility, as stated in the letter of intent. Mr. Dillard stated the Planning Commission recommended denial. Chairman Slaughter explained each side will get ten minutes and following after both sides are heard, each side will get two minutes to rebuttal.

Savannah Baker, 4046 Old Naylor Road, spoke against the request. Ms. Baker stated this request should be denied due to spot zoning. Ms. Baker gave the definition of spot zoning and gave examples of court cases regarding spot zoning. Ms. Baker stated at the last commission meeting held on March 28, 2023 the vote was tabled until the April 11, 2023 commission meeting. Ms. Baker stated there was no new public notice that was published for today's meeting in the newspaper or new signage at the property for today's meeting. Ms. Baker believes this was insufficient notice for the public and the community has expressed concerns with over 500 letters in opposition and many facts and statistics cited. Ms. Baker stated this rezoning would be unlawful and a complete disregard for the voice of the people represented. James Walker, 4060 Boring Pond Road, spoke against the request. Mr. Walker stated he has lived on Boring Pond Road for twenty-eight years and he is concerned there will be more traffic, growth with the water and sewer, and asks that the rezoning request be denied. Blake Howell, 3417 Boring Pond Road, spoke against the request. Mr. Howell stated he has lived on Boring Pond Road for thirty-eight years and this rezoning goes against the wishes of the community. Mr. Howell stated he has spoken to many citizens within Districts 3 and 5 and this facility goes against the wishes of the community. Mr. Howell stated the Planning Commission denied rezoning due to going against the character area. Mr. Howell asked the Commission to please deny this rezoning request. Mr. Howell stated Redeemed Living could find a more suitable location and respect the wishes of the community, citing do unto others as you would have done unto you. Brent Moore, 3850 C L Moore Road, spoke in favor of the request as the applicant and owner of Redeemed Living. Mr. Moore stated he would like to address a few concerns presented to him within the last twelve months. Mr. Moore stated there are concerns with this facility not being regulated and Mr. Moore stated they are GARR certified (Georgia Association of Recovery Residences), meaning their procedures and guidelines would be followed including passing inspections and offering a suitable living for someone in the program. Mr. Moore stated as part of the GARR certification there is a requirement to drug test for those who will be staying in the facility. Mr. Moore stated he met with Sheriff Paulk and the Sheriff's Deputies will be allowed to access the property with drug dogs at random. Mr. Moore stated all residents will submit a background check and no one will be allowed with a felony charge or sexually related charges. Mr. Moore stated there was a person who spoke in favor of this request one of the previous meetings and he was charged with a battery charge, but not convicted. Further, Mr. Moore stated this individual went through the program, works for a local business and is now working with

the City of Valdosta Fire Department. Mr. Moore mentioned he was given a second chance and he would like to help and give others hope.

Opposition - Rebuttal:

Savannah Baker, 4046 Old Naylor Road, stated it's not that their community is against helping people, the request is that it be in a different location in Lowndes County. Ms. Baker stated this is not the best location for this facility since there are no local, state or federal regulations. Ms. Baker stated GARR is a membership program and there are no on-site visits. Regarding allowing violent people into their program, there have been people allowed in the program with a violent history.

Blake Howell, 3417 Boring Pond Road, stated their community is not villains, they are worried about safety and protecting investments. Mr. Howell stated that these residents could come invest and purchase property to build homes and he would support them.

In Favor - Rebuttal:

Brent Moore, 3850 C L Moore Road, stated there may have been someone in the past before the background checks were implemented with a violent history.

Joseph Lelonek, 603 West Park Avenue, spoke as a current resident living in the Redeemed Living House. Mr. Lelonek stated this house gave him an opportunity, he came from Tennessee, homeless, living on the street, with no money. Mr. Lelonek stated he now has a job due to the help of Redeemed Living. Mr. Lelonek stated he did not come through the system, he came on his own to get help.

Commissioner Orenstein asked about the history and the "what if's", the facts surrounding where they came from, currently at 603 West Park Avenue, how many calls for emergency 911 calls. Mr. Brent Moore responded there has been one instance at 603 West Park Avenue in which the administrators initiated the 911 call due to the resident being intoxicated. The Valdosta Police Department dispatched two police officers to be on scene, since the resident was asked to leave the facility. Commissioner Orenstein asked how long has the house on Park Avenue been occupied, Mr. Moore responded almost three years. Mr. Moore stated previously there was a house located at 401 Danube Circle in Schroer Estates, same issue, resident was drunk, the police were called and he was asked to leave. Commissioner Marshall asked to verify the legal meeting requirements regarding the notice/signage which someone mentioned earlier, County Attorney, Walter Elliott responded notice was given of your prior meeting and at that meeting notice was given to those in attendance that the meeting was tabled. Chairman Slaughter stated the meeting was given at the proper time, the hearing was tabled, no point in readvertising due to tabling. Commissioner Marshall asked, based on the current zoning now, what could not be achieved in their proposal, Mr. Dillard responded based on the current zoning the overall density of the houses shown on their site plan, it is allowed for single family dwellings on E-A zoning, possible accessory dwelling for family members and with the property being twenty-three acres could be subdivided into four, five acre tracts and a house on each property. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the rezoning request as presented, Vice Chairman Wisenbaker second. Commissioners Orenstein, Griner and Vice Chairman Wisenbaker voted in favor of the request, Commissioners Evans and Marshall opposed. Motion carried.

FOR CONSIDERATION

Probation Department Service Agreement

Probation Director, Ferlisha Rountree, presented the Probation Department's Service Agreement required by the Misdemeanor Probation Oversight Unit (MPOU) for probation service provided by Lowndes County Probation. Mrs. Rountree stated the Probation Service Agreement is valid for a five-year period. Mrs. Rountree stated there are two changes in the agreement; the effective date is July 1, 2023 and regarding the number of defendants supervised, it has been changed from 350 to 250. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the request as presented, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Amend 2015 Solid Waste Ordinance

Human Resources Director, Kevin Beals, presented the item. Mr. Beals stated recently the 2023-2024 Residential Solid Waste Franchise Renewal process, both franchisees requested amendments and/or adjustments to the Solid Waste Ordinance. Mr. Beals stated Advanced Disposal Services and Deep South Sanitation have both asked regarding the below franchisee's proposed changes: Increase the basic service not to exceed fee from \$20.00 per month to \$25.00 per month. (Solid Waste Ordinance Section 3.1.(c)) & (Franchise Agreement -Item Number 14 (Pricing for Basic Service)). Adjust Hours of Operation of Collection Centers from 42 hours per week to 35 hours per week. (Change schedule from Friday, Saturday, and Monday 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. and Sundays from 1:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.). Solid Waste Ordinance Section 3.6. & Franchise Agreement - Item Number 23 (Hours of Operation of Collection Center). Commissioner Griner asked regarding section 3.6 states "if a franchisee operates a collection center or centers" Commissioner Griner stated he thought they were required to operate at least one center, Mr. Beals responded if they were not collecting those items on the curbside, they had an option to operate a center. County Attorney, Walter Elliott, stated it is written this way because operating a collection center is an alternative to curbside. Commissioner Griner wanted to verify that it was not an option. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the request as presented, Vice Chairman Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

BIDS

Brookridge Drive Grading, Drainage, Base, and Paving

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated that Brookridge Drive is located south of Hahira and is approximately 0.42 miles long. Mr. McLeod stated staff received two bids, the Scruggs Company in the amount of \$647,831.28 and Reames and Son Construction in the amount of \$768,703.15. Commissioner Orenstein made a motion to award the bid to the Scruggs Company in the amount of \$647,831.28, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

Bid for a Crop Sprayer for the Utilities Department

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the item. Ms. Black stated bids were solicited for a new crop sprayer for the Utilities Department, to be used at the Land Application System (LAS). Ms. Black stated one bid was received that met specifications from Flint Equipment Company in the amount of \$36,750.00. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to award the bid to Flint Equipment Company in the amount of \$36,750.00, Vice Chairman Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

REPORTS - County Manager

County Manager, Paige Dukes, reminded everyone this week is National Animal Control Officer Appreciation Week and National Public Safety Telecommunications Week and thanked the Commission for their support of these departments. Mrs. Dukes stated Public Information Officer, Meghan Barwick, will be attending an active shooter training; the Lowndes County Sheriff's Office was able to get in a large class that is supported by the FBI and used nationwide to train on active shooters with training being held today, tomorrow and Thursday. Mrs. Dukes commended Public Works Director, Robin Cumbus and her staff for the set up at the Lowndes County Civic Center due to a change of venue with this training. Mrs. Dukes stated there is pipe being installed next door and that project is progressing. Next Thursday, Leadership Lowndes will hold their Economic Development Day. This Saturday at 7:00 a.m. Chairman Slaughter, Commissioner Evans and Paige Dukes will be attending the Spring Run with the Girls on the Run program being held at Wiregrass Georgia Technical College. This program empowers young girls in our community.

CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD

There were no citizens wishing to be heard.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Marshall invited everyone to attend the City of Valdosta's Bluesberry Festival being held this weekend at Unity Park. Vice Chairman Wisenbaker made a motion to adjourn the regular session meeting, Commissioner Orenstein second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 6:15 p.m.