

LOWNDES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MINUTES  
REGULAR SESSION  
Tuesday, January 24, 2023

Commissioners Present:

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

Chairman Slaughter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and recognized the presence of Leadership Lowndes class members.

**INVOCATION**

Commissioner Marshall

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

Commissioner Marshall

**MINUTES**

The minutes were presented for the work session and the regular session of January 9, 2023. Vice Chairman Orenstein made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

**APPOINTMENT**

**Valdosta-Lowndes County Development Authority**

County Manager, Paige Dukes presented the appointment. Mrs. Dukes stated the seat currently held by Mr. Brad Folsom expired January 1, 2023. Mrs. Dukes further stated that Mr. Folsom has expressed a desire to continue to serve. Commissioner Wisenbaker nominated Mr. Brad Folsom for reappointment. There being no other nominations, Mr. Brad Folsom was appointed by acclamation.

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**REZ-2022-20 Teramore Development, LLC, ~3 acres at Hwy 122 & Skipper Bridge (Part of 0067 051), EA to C-C, Well and Septic**

County Planner, J.D. Dillard, presented the item. Mr. Dillard stated this request is for three (3) acres from Estate Agricultural (E-A) zoning to Crossroads Commercial (C-C) zoning. Mr. Dillard stated the future land use map does recommend C-C zoning in the rural service area and agriculture/forestry character area. Mr. Dillard stated there are no wetlands depicted on the map according to GIS however, in the applicants overall site plan there are some depicted and if approved would have to be

mitigated through civil engineering phases. Mr. Dillard stated the applicant is open to enhanced facade for the facility, if approved. Mr. Dillard stated the Planning Commission heard this request in November 2022 and recommended denial and the TRC recommended approval of the request with the question now being from Estate Agricultural (E-A) to Crossroads Commercial (C-C) for the three acres. Heath Dawson, 6295 Skipper Bridge Road, spoke against this request as a property owner in the area. Mr. Dawson stated most homeowners in the neighboring community have invested over half a million dollars developing their properties and over thirty homeowners gathered at the Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Dawson stated this is spot zoning and it was denied by the Planning Commission. Mr. Dawson stated there are multiple Dollar General's in the area with trash in the parking lots, dumpsters overflowing and broken down cars in the parking lots. Mr. Dawson stated his property is the adjoining property to this request. Mr. Dawson was disappointed that one of the commissioners did not meet with him personally to hear his concerns. William Cope, 6332 Skipper Bridge Road, spoke against this request as a property owner in the area. Mr. Cope stated his property is 500-600 feet from the proposed Dollar General store. Mr. Cope stated there is a Dollar General in Hahira four miles west and one at Walkers Crossing within six miles and there is no reason for another store location. Mr. Cope stated the land owners have property at Highway 122 and Val Del Road with twenty-seven acres with more road frontage. Mr. Cope stated he had an online petition with 180 signatures in opposition to this request, which was submitted to the clerk for the record. Mr. Cope mentioned the property owners in this area do not want any commercial development. Roxanne Newton, 5550 Skipper Bridge Road, spoke against this request. Ms. Newton stated there are several Dollar General's in our area. Ms. Newton stated these stores are being constructed throughout the rural areas in the south. Ms. Newton stated the developers and engineers are from out-of-town and they are not serving the citizens of this area. Further, Ms. Newton mentioned that it is disrespectful to have this store across the street from the Mt. Olive Baptist Church. Matthew O'Steen, 6544 Skipper Bridge Road, spoke against this request as a property owner in the area. Mr. O'steen asked the commission to consider the environmental impact of the area and with this request not being good for the river. Mr. O'steen stated no property owners in this area want to live near a Dollar General store. Mr. O'steen asked to consider the spot zoning and to follow the Planning Commission recommendation to deny and to listen to the 180 people (that signed the petition against this request) that couldn't be here in person. Duke Groover, 231 Riverside Drive, Macon, Georgia, spoke in favor of the request representing Teramore Development along with Bill Nijem and Mary Harris, who is the owner. There is a three (3) acre parcel, off Highway 122 and Skipper Bridge Road. Mr. Groover stated the buffer surrounding this proposed development, north it is 32 acres west to Scruggs Road it is 1200 feet remaining R-A and south is wetlands, with 700 feet to the nearest residence and east is the Mt. Olive Baptist Church. Mr. Groover stated this is significant due to concerns with this being intrusive to residential areas when it is surrounded by a buffer. Mr. Groover stated a rezoning decision is fundamentally a legal process. Mr. Groover stated the concerns expressed primarily are legitimate personal concerns, but it is not evidence going into a rezoning decision or is not evidence to support keeping this E-A. The Planning and Zoning staff looked at the concerns and ordinances and chose to recommend this rezoning request. The Technical Review Committee (TRC) did not have any objections to rezoning to C-C. Mr. Groover stated the traffic will not be increased, there were no violent crimes in the last year at the two rural locations of Bemiss Road and New Statenville Highway according to information obtained from his open records request from the Sheriff's office. Mr. Groover stated the Comprehensive Plan does allow this zoning and C-C is appropriate, designed to prohibit commercial and to put in small stores. Mr. Groover asked that the Commission listen to the professional recommendation by the Planning and Zoning staff and recommend approval. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to deny this request as presented, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

## **FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Adopt Resolution Accepting Infrastructure for The Landings Phase III**

Director of Engineering Service, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated this resolution is for the Landings Subdivision, phase III located on Val Del Road, north of Sermons Road. Mr. McLeod stated engineering and utilities staff have completed all final inspections. Commissioner Evans made a motion to adopt the resolution, Commissioners Wisenbaker and Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

### **Adopt Resolution Accepting Infrastructure for Ballantyne Subdivision**

Director of Engineering Services, Chad McLeod, presented the item. Mr. McLeod stated this resolution is for the Ballantyne Subdivision located on Clyattstone and Simpson Road. Mr. McLeod stated engineering and utilities staff have completed all final inspections with a punch list of items to be completed before recording. Vice Chairman Orenstein made a motion to approve the resolution, Commissioner Wisenbaker second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

### **Special Assessment Rate for 2023**

Finance Director, Stephanie Black, presented the special assessment rate for 2023, at two percent above prime which is 9.5%. Commissioner Marshall made a motion to approve the special assessment rate as presented, Vice Chairman Orenstein and Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

### **Approval of DA's Federal VOCA Grant Application Renewal**

Chairman Slaughter presented the item stating the Commission heard from Ms. Carla Williams, Victim Services Director with the District Attorney's office, during the work session. No further discussion took place. Commissioner Griner made a motion to approve the renewal request, Commissioner Evans second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

### **Replacement of Server Blades**

IT Director, Aaron Kostyu, presented the item. Mr. Kostyu stated this is a request to replace six server blades currently out of support with six new server blades in two of the data centers. Vice Chairman Orenstein made a motion to approve the purchase in the amount of \$73,788.84, Commissioner Griner second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Motion carried.

## **REPORTS - County Manager**

County Manager, Paige Dukes, mentioned when COVID started Lowndes County was buying supplies, to create opportunities for social distancing and there were some unbudgeted items purchased under the pretense that FEMA would reimburse. As of this week, we have received the last reimbursement in the amount of \$116,000.00 and Mrs. Dukes thanked EMA Director, Ashley Tye for his assistance. The ground breaking on the former Griner property will be held Thursday at 10:45 a.m. on the Webster Street side. Over the next two days, Lowndes County will be participating in a cybersecurity exercise. Tomorrow morning there is a meeting with Moody Air Force Base regarding the golf course and a project that will allow for water service redundancy between Lowndes County and Moody Air Force Base and these are done through intergovernmental service agreements. The Lowndes County Bird Supper will be held next Wednesday, February 1st at 5:00 p.m. at the Georgia Railroad Depot in Atlanta. A meeting with the Home Builders Association stakeholders will be held on February 9th at 1:30 p.m. regarding permits and inspections. Mrs. Dukes asked EMA Director, Ashley Tye, to update the commission regarding the inclement weather coming tomorrow. Mr. Tye stated a

squall line could develop after daybreak tomorrow to the west of Lowndes County, moving from west to east, the estimated time of arrival here in Lowndes County is noon. Mr. Tye stated possible tornados could develop. Commissioner Orenstein asked the time of the event, Mr. Tye answered it is estimated between noon - 2:00 p.m. Chairman Slaughter thanked Mr. Tye for his work as well as all first responders and the Lowndes County Public Works department. Additionally, Mrs. Dukes mentioned that the Public Works department will be clipping shoulders on Ezelle Road.

**CITIZENS WISHING TO BE HEARD**

John Quarterman, 6565 Quarterman Road, addressed the commission to compliment the Lowndes County Fire Rescue and the Moody Air Force Base Fire departments for showing up on his property during a burning event.

John Morris, 4872 Lori Street, addressed the commission regarding the noise ordinance. Mr. Morris mentioned how to determine volume and how loud the sound/volume is during the day is not addressed in this ordinance.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Griner made a motion to adjourn the regular session meeting, Commissioner Marshall second. All voted in favor, no one opposed. Chairman Slaughter adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.