



You Are Why We Are Here

**FRANKLIN COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
October 5, 2020
6:00 P.M.**

- Present: Chairman Thomas Bridges
District 1 Commissioner Robert Franklin
District 2 Commissioner Dr. Jason Macomson
District 3 Commissioner Ryan Swails
District 4 Commissioner Eddie Wester via Zoom
- Media: Shane Scoggins, Franklin County Citizen
MJ Kneiser, *WLHR* via Zoom
- Staff: County Manager, Beth Thomas
Planning Director, Scott DeLozier
County Clerk, Kayla Finger
- Guest: County Attorney, Bubba Samuels via Zoom
- Item 1: Call Meeting to Order** – Chairman Bridges called the September Regular Business Meeting to order at 6:00 pm and welcomed everyone.
- Item 2: Invocation, and Pledge of Allegiance** - Chairman Bridges asked Commissioner Macomson to lead the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag.
- Item 3: Approval of the Agenda** - Commissioner Macomson motioned to approve the agenda and move item * *H. Land Acquisition Subcommittee** under item 3 as item 3-A. Commissioner Swails seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. All were in favor, 5-0.
- Item 3-A: Land Acquisition Subcommittee** – Commissioner Macomson made a motion to rescind the previous motion made at the end of the September 14th meeting after coming out of executive session. The original motion was passed to form a land acquisition subcommittee of Commissioner Macomson, Commissioner Swails, and County Attorney Samuels. The purpose of this subcommittee was to meet with District Attorney Parks White to discuss land acquisition related to the airport authority. Commissioner Macomson explained that upon reflection he felt this was an airport authority matter that should be addressed between the D.A. and the airport authority. Chairman Bridges stopped Commissioner Macomson and asked that a second be made before proceeding into discussion. Commissioner Swails seconded the motion.



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Chairman Bridges opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Macomson stated the airport authority is an autonomous entity and the board of commissioners' control is limited to appointing two members to that board. He further stated his concern that the board was opening themselves up to future litigation by involving themselves in the situation since the board of commissioners has no jurisdiction over them since they are an independent board.

Commissioner Swails agreed with Commissioner Macomson that the airport authority is an independent body and if they want to pursue further discussions, they have the freedom to do that.

Commissioner Macomson made note that the airport authority is basically a brand-new board and now would be an ideal time for them to take a look at address anything that occurred in the past.

Commissioner Wester agreed with the sentiments of Commissioner Macomson & Commissioner Swails.

Chairman Bridges stated he understood where the other commissioners were coming from but felt that the board is responsible since thousands of taxpayer dollars go to the airport authority each year. He felt it would have been educational to have the subcommittee speak to the DA. He also expressed concern over the airport authority changing a 20-year land lease to a fifty-year land lease.

Commissioner Macomson asked if that action (20 - 50-year lease extension) was within their rights to do so.

Chairman Bridges stated they could do it, but referenced the previous letter from the DA to the board that detailed the need to remove the member involved in the conflict of interest and that more communication could be educational. He stated his opposition to rescinding the motion.

Commissioner Swails stated that Chairman Bridges had spoken to the DA who had no intention of speaking to the board.

Chairman Bridges corrected Commissioner Swails stating that the DA would communicate with the board, he just could not release the GBI's findings.

Chairman Bridges asked Commissioner Macomson, Wester, & Swails if they had had any communication with Mr. Addison since forming the subcommittee and the GBI Investigation. Commissioner Macomson stated he had spoken to him after the budget was set. Commissioner Swails & Commissioner Wester stated they had also talked to Mr. Addison, but not recently.



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Commissioner Macomson made it clear he wanted everything to be on the up & up and restated his thoughts that this matter should be handled by the District Attorney and that the board of commissioners does not have control over the actions of the airport authority.

Chairman Bridges stated that there must be accountability when taxpayer dollars are involved.

Commissioner Macomson agreed with that statement but still felt it should be handled by the DA.

Chairman Bridges restated concern with the 20-year lease being changed to a 50-year lease to enrich the individual that was removed from the airport authority. He noted a correction to Mr. Shane Scoggins, Franklin County Citizen: the paper reported that the airport authority individual had paid to 2024, but he actually paid through 2042. Chairman Bridges stated the airport authority is charging less than half of what other surrounding airports are charging for land leases.

Commissioner Wester stated he felt this was the responsibility of the DA and the board should not be involved. He stated the board had done their part with the letter by voting the individual out and the DA could take it to the grand jury if he saw fit to do so. He further stated that if the board felt that the taxpayer dollars were being used in an improper way, the board can cut off those funds and that is where the board of commissioners has control & authority.

Chairman Bridges stated he understood where all the commissioners were coming from, but still disagreed and noted more could be going on beyond the extension of the land lease.

Commissioner Macomson stated if there was more going on it would be up to the DA to pursue it and determine if these actions are right or wrong, and from that standpoint the board should not be involved.

Chairman Bridges asked Commissioner Macomson if he thought it was proper for a person in authority to take public property and trade their private property for their personal enrichment.

Commissioner Macomson stated he would not do that, but he does not have all the details on that situation, but an individual should not enrich themselves and put themselves in a position of a conflict of interest and if some wrongdoing occurred it would be up the DA to pursue that, not the board of commissioners.

Chairman Bridges called for a vote to rescind the previous motion to form the



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land acquisition subcommittee. The vote was 4-1. Commissioner Macomson, Commissioner Swails, Commissioner Wester, & Commissioner Franklin voted in favor of. Chairman Bridges voted in opposition of.

Item 4: Approval of Minutes:

- A. *September 14, 2020 Public Hearing – Occupational Tax*
- B. *September 14, 2020 Public Hearing – Planning & Zoning Items*
- C. *September 14, 2020 Regular Board Meeting*
- D. *September 14, 2020 Executive Session*

Chairman Bridges asked for a motion to approve. Commissioner Macomson asked for clarification on how to properly document the rescinding of the vote in the minutes. Attorney Samuels stated the last set of minutes would stay the same and it would be reflected in this meetings minutes. Manager Thomas asked could an addendum be added to the September 14th minutes to reflect this change. Attorney Samuels stated that would be a great.

Commissioner Macomson made a motion to accept the minutes as presented with the addendum added to reflect the rescinded motion from the September 14, 2020 regular board meeting. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. All were in favor, 5-0.

Item 4: Public Comment – There were no public comments.

Item 5: Items for discussion

- A. **Rezoning Application** - Russell and Lisa Harris, 2735 Old Williamston Rd, Anderson, SC has filed an application to rezone From AI Agriculture Intensive to CG Commercial General on a 3.04-acre tract. The property is located at 16082 Hwy 17, Martin, GA and is further identified as Tax Parcel 052-123.
Commissioner Swails made a motion to approve as presented. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. Commissioner Macomson asked was this business already in operation and would there be any commercial traffic to disturb the neighbors. Mr. Harris stated it would be limited commercial supplies and would not be wholesale. All were in favor, 5-0.
- B. **Conditional Use Permit** - Matthew Jantz, 1196 Casey Rd, Canon, Ga, has filed an application for a Conditional Use Permit to add a poultry house to his existing two-house farm on a 119.35-acre tract. The property is located at 1196 Casey Rd, Canon, GA and is further identified as Tax Parcel 046-081.
Commissioner Macomson motioned to approve as presented. Commissioner Swails seconded the motion. No discussion. All were in favor, 5-0.



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- C. **Conditional Use Permit** - Jeffery Thomas, 2265 Eastanollee Rd, Eastanollee, Ga, has filed an application for a Conditional Use Permit to build a six-house poultry farm on a 100-acre tract. The property is located off of Greater Hope Rd and is further identified as Tax Parcel 033-100.

Director DeLozier reviewed his site visits to the property including a review of the topographical maps and proposed location of the six chicken houses. The planning commission recommended approval with no additional conditions. Chairman Bridges discussed concerns over commercial traffic and any residential driveways with Director DeLozier who stated there would be commercial traffic but when he went on his site visits there were no houses around as far as the Franklin County side is concerned. There was also some discussion concerning the clear-cut vegetative buffer and Director DeLozier told the board it was located on the high side of the elevation.

Commissioner Macomson asked if the existing vegetative buffer would be kept and if the land was zoned ag-intensive. Director DeLozier stated a condition could be added to ensure this and it is ag-intensive. According to the site plan which was prepared by certified surveyors, the nearest residence was 1,280 feet and was not located on the exhaust end of the chicken houses.

Commissioner Macomson made a motion to approve the conditional use permit for the six-house poultry farm with the added condition that the existing vegetation be left on the property lines at least a tenth of a strip. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion.

Commissioner Macomson addressed the citizens stating he understood people's reservations with living near poultry houses, but noted that that is what ag-intensive land is zoned for which includes poultry. He further explained that there is no legal reason to deny applications like this when all rules and regulations are met. Commissioner Franklin seconded these changes.

Manager Thomas noted that a portion of the land is in Stephens County, out of our jurisdiction so this needs to be clarified in the motion.

Commissioner Macomson agreed and moved to amend the motion to include Manager Thomas' clarification of jurisdiction. All were in favor, 5-0.

- D. **Rezoning Application** - Aubery Lunsford, 2234 Careytown Rd, Royston, GA has filed an application to rezone from AI Agriculture Intensive to RS Residential Single Family on a 17.47-acre tract. The



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property is located on Neal Little Rd and is further identified as Tax Parcel 030-024A.

Commissioner Swails made a motion to approve the rezoning application from ag-intensive to residential single family. The planning commission asked that all driveways be in line with Georgia Department of Transportation standards off of Neal Little Road as to not cause any issues with any county-maintained roads. Commissioner Wester seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor, 5-0.

- E. **Subdivision Proposal** - Aubery Lunsford, 2234 Careytown Rd, Royston, GA has filed an application for a proposed subdivision of land of a 17.47-acre tract located on Neal Little Rd and is further identified as Tax Parcel 030-024A.

Director DeLozier stated the recommendation from the planning commission is to approve the plat with the condition that Mr. Lunsford does a waterline extension off of Highway 106 or Highway 51 to ensure all lots off of Neal Little Road are serviced by county water.

Commissioner Franklin made a motion to accept with condition of county waterline extension. Commissioner Swails seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor, 5-0.

- F. **Variance Application** - Aubery Lunsford, 2234 Careytown Rd, Royston, GA has filed an application for a variance to Franklin County's Subdivision Ordinance in regards to a proposed subdivision of land located on Neal Little Rd and is further identified as Tax Parcel 030-024A.

Director DeLozier explained the county's flag lot ordinance. Flag lots are permitted but they cannot have a panhandle greater than 200ft. Mr. Lunsford's two panhandles extend 344.56 feet and 303.78 feet. The planning commission recommends to approve the variance with vegetative buffers planted in accordance with the new vegetative buffer amendment being proposed tonight for approval. The buffer would be planted along the 140-foot-long strip of property line in between lots 7 and 4 to prevent them looking directly into lots 5 & 6.

Commissioner Swails asked what type of driveways would be in the subdivision.

Mr. Lunsford stated most would be paved, including lots 7 & lot 4.

Commissioner Macomson asked how wide they would be.



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Director DeLozier stated they would have 30 feet of road frontage.

Commissioner Macomson made a motion to accept the variance with the condition that the vegetative buffer be planted as presented by the planning commission. Commissioner Franklin seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor, 5-0.

- G. **Proposed Zoning Text Amendment- Vegetative Buffer Requirements** Director DeLozier explained that this amendment would enforce the initial intent of vegetative buffer requirements. Vegetative buffers would need to not only be planted, but maintained. There would also be stipulations about planting out of the way of powerlines.

Commissioner Wester motioned to approve the vegetative buffer vegetative text amendment as presented. Commissioner Swails seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor, 5-0.

- H. **911 Telecommunications Officers Resolution:** Manager Thomas stated the proposed resolution would recognize 911 telecommunications officers as first responders. Other counties have done this not only for recognition, but also grant applications. Everyone agreed that this was a great thing since the 911 officers are the first voices people come in contact with when an emergency happens.

Commissioner Macomson motioned to accept the resolution as presented. Commissioner Swails seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All were in favor, 5-0.

- Item 6: Announcements** - Chairman Bridges reminded everyone to complete their census. Manager Thomas reiterated the importance of completing the census and our representation. Manager Thomas mentioned the "Red & Blue Day" for Superintendent Chris Forrer and encouraged the county to participate. Clerk Finger noted the census deadline has been extended to October 31st and the current self-response rate was at 55.8%.

Commissioner Swails commended Scott DeLozier and the planning commission team for strengthening the vegetative buffer ordinance.

Chairman Bridges thanked Commissioner Wester for zooming in to the meeting.

Commissioner Macomson inquired about the CARES Act projects list.



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Manager Thomas stated that the list had already been given and she planned on discussing it further during the retreat.

Commissioner Franklin asked if the water materials had been received. Manager Thomas stated they had and work should be starting on Shackelford Road. The company honored their original PVC pricing. Commissioner Franklin hoped it was better quality than the pipe used on Prospect Road. Manager Thomas stated they thought it was a bad batch of pipe and they have explored valve options to relieve pressure on the pipes.

Item 8: **Adjourn** - Chairman Bridges thanked everyone for attending & called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Macomson motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Swails seconded the motion. All were in favor, 5-0.

Signed on the _____ day of _____, 2020

Chairman J. Thomas Bridges

Robert L. Franklin, District 1 Commissioner

Dr. Jason Macomson, District 2 Commissioner

Ryan Swails, District 3 Commissioner

Eddie Wester, District 4 Commissioner

Kayla Finger, Clerk