

Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
June 27, 2017

The Thomas County Board of Commissioners met on the above date in a regular scheduled meeting at 6:00 p.m. at the Historic Courthouse, Commission Chambers, with the following board members present:

Kenneth E. Hickey, Chairman, Dist. 3	Phillip V. Brown, Vice-Chair, Dist. 7
Merrill E. Baker, Jr., Dist. 1	Moses Gross, Dist. 2
Mark NeSmith, Dist. 4	Hershel P. Ansley, Dist. 5
Wiley E. Grady, Dist. 6	Zippy T. Vonier, Dist. 8

Staff present was Michael J. Stephenson, County Manager, Twink Monahan, County Clerk and Bruce Warren, County Attorney. Media present was Chris Hurst, WPAX Radio and Patti Dozier, Times Enterprise. Other staff present were Tony Bodiford, Public Works Director, Ken Gay, Inspections, Planning and Zoning Director and Donna Holbert, Zoning Administrator.

Chairman Hickey called the meeting to order.

Chairman Hickey recognized County Manager Michael Stephenson who gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Hickey recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to approve the minutes of the 6/13/2017 Board Meeting. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Brown. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Hickey, Vice-Chairman Brown and Commissioners Baker, Gross, Ansley, NeSmith, Grady, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Hickey recognized Shelley Zorn the Executive Director at the Thomasville Thomas County Development Authority. Ms. Zorn requests the board to favorably implement 100% of the three (3) Freeport categories that were approved by referendum August 12, 1986. Mr. Warren explained that the resolution before the board today represents 100% of the three (3) categories that would be effective 1/1/2018 if approved. After a brief update from Ms. Zorn of the interest of companies considering Thomasville for expansion the chairman called for the vote.

Chairman Hickey recognized Commissioner Baker who made a motion to approve the resolution to implement the three categories for 100% Freeport exemption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grady. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Hickey, Vice-Chairman Brown, Commissioners Baker, Gross, NeSmith, Ansley, Grady and Vonier voting aye.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, on August 12, 1986 the voters of Thomas County authorized the Board of Commissioners of Thomas County to implement the "Constitutional Freeport Exemptions"; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Commissioners of Thomas County previously, at its meeting on November 12, 1991 implemented Section 3 of the Freeport Exemption authorized in 1986 at the one hundred percent (100%) level; and

WHEREAS, The Board of Commissioners of Thomas County believes it is in the best interest for Thomas County to implement sections 1, 2, and 3 of the Freeport Exemption to be effective January 1, 2018.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Commissioners of Thomas County hereby exempts from ad valorem taxation, including all such taxes levied for educational purposes and for state purposes, at the one hundred percent (100%) level of the value for the following types of tangible personal property.

1. Inventory of good in process of manufacture or production which shall include all partly finished goods and raw materials held for direct use or consumption in the ordinary course of the taxpayer's manufacturing or production business in the State of Georgia. The exemption provided for herein shall apply only to tangible personal property which is substantially modified, altered, or changed in the ordinary course of the taxpayer's manufacturing, processing, or production operation in the State.

2. Inventory of finished goods manufactured or produced within the State of Georgia in the ordinary course of the taxpayer's manufacturing or production business when held by the original manufacturer or producer of such finished goods. The exemption provided for herein shall be for a period not exceeding twelve (12) months from the date such property is produced or manufactured.

3. Inventory of finished goods which, on the first day of January, are stored in a warehouse, dock or wharf, whether public or private, and which are destined for shipment to a final destination outside the State of Georgia and inventory of finished goods which are shipped into the State of Georgia from outside this State and stored for trans-shipment to a final destination outside this State. The exemption provided for herein shall be for a period not exceeding twelve (12) months from the date such property is stored in this State. All property that is claimed to be exempt under the provisions of this sub-section shall be designated as being "in transit" upon the official books and records of the warehouse, dock, or wharf, whether public or private, where such property is being stored. Such official books and records shall contain a full, true, and accurate inventory of all such property, including the date of the receipt of the property, the date of the withdrawal of the property, the point of the origin of the property, and the point of final destination of the same, if known. The official books and records of any such warehouse, dock, or wharf, whether public or private, pertaining to any such "in transit" property, shall be at all times open to the inspection of all taxing authorities of the State and of any political subdivision of the State.

SO DONE, this the 27th day of June, 2017.

Chairman Hickey recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to approve the "Policies and Procedures Statement for Acquisition of Real Property or easement Associated with Federally Funded Projects" as recommended by Roberson and Associates the CDBG consultant for the 2016 grant. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baker. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Hickey, Vice-Chairman Brown, Commissioners Baker, Gross, NeSmith, Ansley, Grady and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Hickey declared a public hearing to receive input on zoning applications.

Application #17-6-1 – Dusty Engel, Lasseter Equipment Group, agent for property owner, is requesting a conditional use zoning for property located on GA. Hwy 188. This property consists of 188.68 acres, more or less, and is identified on Thomas County tax map 32, parcel 1. The property is owned by William Bryan Bustle and tab a. Bustle, 85 beeline road, Coolidge, GA 31738. The current land use district is identified as AG (agricultural). The request is for a conditional use for a 180 foot GPS tower to guide farm equipment.

Donna Holbert the Zoning Administrator explained the application. The previous tower was replace due to a storm and the company did not get a permit or abide by the zoning regulations. The tower is a GPS type to aid the farmers in planting and harvesting their crops. Mr. Dusty Engel, Lasseter Equipment was present as agent for the property owner. Mr. Engel was informed that the tower is in non-compliance with the ordinances. There is no landscaping or fencing in place and the tower does not comply with the setbacks. After lengthy discussion with the board it was decided since the farmers had already planted, the tower could remain in place until December 15, 2017 after harvest, then it must be moved to the required setbacks. There were no comments from the public in favor or against the request.

Application #17-6-2 –Rodney Bennett, Kearby Farm, LLC property owner is requesting a variance from section 3.216 density, area, and height requirements of the Thomas County land use standards ordinance that requires a minimum road frontage of 50 feet in an agricultural land use district to allow for the construction of his personal residence. Mr. Bennett is requesting acceptance of his recorded quit claim deed of easement in lieu of the required minimum road frontage due to the fact that his property is located on a private road.

Ms. Holbert explained the application and that four (4) of the standards are not met for a variance, road frontage in particular. Rodney Bennett the landowner stated that he wants to build a house on the property. The other landowners on the Hunt Road were all in favor or his request at the Planning and Zoning Board meeting. There was no one speaking in favor or against the petition.

Application #17-6-3 – Steve Chiariello, Inman solar, agent for property owner, requests a conditional use zoning for property located on GA Hwy 3. This property consists of 19.3 acres, more or less, and is identified on Thomas County tax map 73, parcel 39. The property is owned by Oil Dri Corporation of Georgia, P.O. Box 200a, Ochlocknee, GA 31773. The current land use district is identified as AG (agricultural). The request is for a conditional use for a solar facility.

Ms. Holbert explained the request for a variance request; 100' setback rather than 400' from the nearest residence, 9' 5" height variance from the 8' maximum height.

The board members discussed with the county attorney that there is no provision in the solar facility ordinance for a variance. Mr. Stephenson stated there will have to be a text amendment of the code in order to consider and grant variances. Mr. Warren said that the board can consider the same language that is in the cellular/communications tower ordinance for variances. Brian Bellemy, Attorney for Inman Solar, asked the board to grant the variances under special conditions. There was no public input in favor or against the request.

Chairman Hickey closed the Public Hearing on Application #17-6-1 and Application #17-6-2, he continued the hearing on Application #17-6-3 until a text amendment can be considered.

Chairman Hickey recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to approve to approve the variance for Application #17-6-1 with the following conditions; waive the landscaping requirement (in a crop field), allow to remain at the present location until after harvest, 12/15/2017, erect a temporary fence within 2 weeks. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grady. Motion carried unanimously;

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Chairman Hickey, Vice-Chairman Brown, Commissioners Baker, Gross, NeSmith, Ansley, Grady and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Hickey recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to approve application #17-6-2 to allow for a building permit for the construction of a house off of Hunt Road, a private road. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vonier. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Hickey, Vice-Chairman Brown, Commissioners Baker, Gross, NeSmith, Ansley, Grady and Vonier voting aye.

Commissioner NeSmith asked that the board consider the long lasting effect of changing the solar facility ordinance and to take no action tonight. Chairman Hickey stated language for variance consideration needs to be in the ordinance, not all acreage is going to comply with all applications.

Mr. Stephenson reported that the Assessor's Office hope to submit the digest June 26th and Thomas County received a Sales Ratio of 39.6, which is within the state guidelines.

Mr. Stephenson said that he and Tony Bodiford met with Tommy Johnson in Metcalfe concerning a temporary driveway. Mr. Gross expressed concern that he was not invited to attend the meeting since it was in his district. Mr. Warren will do a title search to see if the driveway is public or private.

Mr. Warren reported a survey is need on the land at the river for a sanitation collection site because the ownership is not clear. Thomas County is ready to proceed purchase the land and install the septic tank to man the Riverwood site.

Chairman Hickey recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to approve the purchase of the land from the Chambers Family for \$2,500 and execute the contract contingent upon the completion of the survey. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Ansley. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Hickey, Vice-Chairman Brown, Commissioners Baker, Gross, NeSmith, Ansley, Grady and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Hickey recognized Commissioner NeSmith who made a motion to approve and ratify the acceptance to the Scruggs Co. bid and execute the documents to resurface the Metcalfe-Beachtown Road, CR#302. Hall Road CR#278, Airport Road CR#167 and Harts Mill Road CR#101/103 in the amount of \$1,397,662.31. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Brown. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Hickey, Vice-Chairman Brown, Commissioners Baker, Gross, NeSmith, Ansley, Grady and Vonier voting aye.

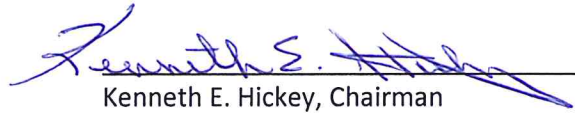
Chairman Hickey recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to ratify the purchase of diesel fuel from Petroleum Products on 2/27/2017 at #1.4457 per gallon. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Brown. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Hickey, Vice-Chairman Brown, Commissioners Baker, Gross, NeSmith, Ansley, Grady and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Hickey recognized Commissioner Gross who made a motion to enter into closed session to discuss a legal matter with the county attorney. The motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Brown. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Hickey, Vice-Chairman Brown, Commissioners Baker, Gross, NeSmith, Ansley, Grady and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Hickey recognized Commissioner Gross who made a motion to reenter open session reporting there is no action to be taken. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Baker. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Hickey, Vice-Chairman Brown, Commissioners Baker, Gross, NeSmith, Ansley, Grady and Vonier voting aye.

Upcoming committee meetings were announced; Personnel 6/28/2017 at 5:30 p.m., Emergency Services 7/17/2017 at 5:00 p.m., Public Property 7/7/2017 at the Prison held at 8:30 a.m.

Chairman Hickey recognized Commissioner Grady who made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Vonier. Motion carried unanimously; Chairman Hickey, Vice-Chairman Brown, Commissioners Baker, Gross, NeSmith, Ansley, Grady and Vonier voting aye.


Kenneth E. Hickey, Chairman

ATTEST:


M. Twink Monahan, County Clerk