

Minutes
Historic Courthouse, Board Chambers, 3rd Floor
225 North Board Street
August 27, 2024

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:

Wiley Grady, Chairman Dist. 6

Rev. Jeremy G. Rich, Dist. 1
Kenneth E. Hickey, District 3
Phillip V. Brown, Dist. 7

Donnie L. Baggett, Vice-Chair Dist. 5

Moses Gross, Dist. 2
Mark NeSmith, Dist. 4 (absent)
Zippy T. Vonier, Dist. 8

Staff present was County Manager Michael J. Stephenson, County Attorney Bruce Warren, Zoning Administrator Donna Holbert, Planning Director Ken Gay, Sheriff Carlton Powell, and County Clerk Celeste Tyler.

News/Media present: none

Chairman Grady called the meeting to order, and Commissioner Brown gave the invocation.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Vonier who made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2024 Board Meeting. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the agenda for the August 27, 2024 Board Meeting. Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Hickey who welcomed the Student Ambassadors under the direction of Mr. Josh Nishwonger.

Chairman Grady introduced a proclamation that would observe the month of September 2024 as National Recovery Month. The Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, The Georgia Council for Recovery, and the Georgia General Assembly Working Group on Addiction and Recovery, invite all residents of the State of Georgia to participate in National Recovery Month.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the proclamation as presented. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady declared a Public Hearing at 6:03 p.m. Planning Director Ken Gay introduced Application #24-8-1 Jim Rech, Blue Sky Towers IV, LLC, agent for the property owner, The Ray and Jeanette Luke Family Trust, has applied for a conditional use zoning. The property is located on Ga. Hwy. 202, (Map 042, Parcel 024) consisting of 452.85 acres, more or less, and is zoned AG (Agricultural.) The request is for a

conditional use to allow for the installation of a cell tower 199 feet in height to be located on a 100' x 100' leased area portion of the subject property. The Planning Department staff recommends approval of the application.

Chairman Grady recognized Thomas Buchanan of 215 2nd Avenue East, Oneonta, Alabama, attorney for the applicant. The original application included a landscape waiver. Mr. Buchanan stated that after viewing the property, he wished to withdraw the waiver request. He also added that Dish Network will be the anchor tenant, who currently has no coverage in the area.

Chairman Grady recognized Mr. Fondren Rigsby of 1792 Fox Meadow Lane, Thomasville, Georgia who asked to see on the map where among the 452 acres the tower would be located. He also confirmed that the cell tower will have no lights. He had no objection.

Chairman Grady asked if there was anyone present in opposition of the application. Hearing none, he once again recognized Planning Director Ken Gay to introduce Application #24-8-2. Sydney Poe, Gen 7 Engineering, LLC, agent for the property owners, Johnny Jean Johnson, D. Joiner, and R.T. Godfrey has applied for a conditional use zoning. The property is located on N. Pinetree Blvd., known as Gemini Mobile Home Park (Map 055, Parcel 040) consisting of 10.82 acres, more or less, and is zoned MHP (Manufactured Home Park.) The request is for a conditional use to allow for the installation of a cell tower 112 feet in height to be located on a 75' x 75' leased area portion of the subject property. The Planning Department staff recommends approval of the application.

Chairman Grady recognized Clark Davidson, ComSite, LLC and Wireless Consultant, Decatur, Georgia representing the applicant. Mr. Davidson stated that the request meets all regulations. The tower will not have lights, and it will be fenced in. Access to the location already exists.

Chairman Grady asked if there was anyone present in opposition of the application. He recognized Carol Biggs of 1604 Bluebird Avenue, Thomasville, Georgia. She expressed concern over the location of the proposed tower and its high density of population including schools. She presented information on possible health effects of electromagnetic field radiation and stated children and teens should not be near towers. Her research disclosed there are 80 cell towers already in Thomas County. She also asked that if the application was approved, the applicant should be required to acquire insurance for future health claims. Insurance and/ or bonds to compensate homeowners for their devalued property was also mentioned. Chairman Grady recognized John Moon of 402 East Clay Street, Thomasville, Georgia who stated that he is in opposition of the location, not the tower. Chairman Grady recognized Victoria Poss of 805 N. Pinetree Boulevard, Thomasville Georgia. She stated that she lives across the street from the proposed cell tower location and her property would depreciate by 20%. She also expressed that school systems ask counties and cities not to locate towers near schools airing on the side of caution of possible health risks.

Chairman Grady recognized Clark Davidson for rebuttal. Mr. Davidson stated that AT&T needed better coverage in the area. He added that a search was done on multiple properties, and it is not always easy to find areas that meet all required components. This property does.

Chairman Grady closed the Public Hearing at 6:27 p.m.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Hickey who made a motion to approve Application #24-8-1. Commissioner Baggett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7-0 with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve Application #24-8-2. Commissioner Hickey seconded the motion. The motion passed 4-3 with Commissioners Baggett, Gross, Hickey, and Vonier voting aye and Commissioners Brown, Grady, and Rich voting nay.

Open Meeting to Citizens: Chairman Grady recognized Carol Jones of 500 Nestegg Farm Lane, Thomasville, Georgia; Ruth Pfaff of 118 Young Street, Thomasville, Georgia; and Carol Burges of 725 N. Mitchell, Thomasville Georgia. All three citizens shared concerns over the Animal Services Department—lack of resources and inadequate staffing hours. They asked the Board to please consider forming a citizens advisory committee. Carol Burgess lost another cat to a stray dog. She stated that the dogs in the area near MacIntyre Park are fast moving and slip in and out at all hours of the day and night. Commissioner Rich responded by saying he hears their concerns and shares in their compassion.

Committee Reports

Chairman Grady recognized Mandie Sherman of 318 Timber Ridge Drive, Thomasville, Georgia who requested a Special Events Permit for September 7, 2024. As the organizer for Thomasville Brewfest, Mandie answered questions from County Attorney Bruce Warren. The event will be held at the Deep South Fairgrounds from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Security for the event has been obtained through the Thomas County Sheriff's Office. Proceeds from the fundraiser will go to Stepping Stones Autism Academy.

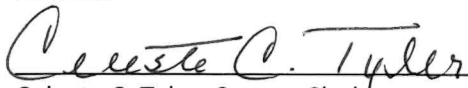
Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to approve the one-day special event permit for Mandie Sherman/Thomasville Brewfest. Commissioner Vonier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, Rich and Vonier voting aye.

Chairman Grady recognized Commissioner Baggett who made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Chairman Grady, Commissioners Baggett, Brown, Gross, Hickey, Rich, and Vonier voting aye. The meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.



Wiley Grady, Chairman

ATTEST:



Celeste C. Tyler, County Clerk