

Workshop Meeting  
Lamar County Board of Commissioners  
4-11-2024  
12:30 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at approximately 12:30 p.m. on March 19th-2024. Present for the meeting were Chairman Traylor, Vice-Chair Gilles, Commissioner Fletcher, Commissioner Lovett, Commissioner Thrash, County Administrator Townsend, County Clerk Davidson, and County Attorney Mayfield.

**1) Animal Shelter**

County Administrator Townsend reported that Wright Woodall has been working with the City of Barnesville to obtain a permit for the Animal Shelter. The plan is to start on the Shelter on April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Attorney Mayfield has a contract to review regarding inspecting the concrete.

Tom Wellner of 271 Eady Creek Road addressed the Board. Mr. Wellner presented his initial research findings of selling Naming Rights as a source of funds for the Lamar County Animal Shelter. He said that he started the process as a volunteer for the Animal Shelter but decided to look at the shelter's funding from a taxpayer's standpoint since he is a taxpayer in Lamar County. He said the Lamar County Animal Shelter is the business of animal control for public safety, collaborating with animal rescue groups and selling adoptable dogs and cats out of the facility. Both generate revenues for every animal shelter in the country, including adoption fees, donations, and memorabilia sales. He explained to the Board that a naming rights agreement is a contract between two or more parties that allows one party exclusive right to name a property, location, or event for a set period. These agreements are commonly used for naming stadiums, sporting events, or public facilities. In such an agreement, the party acquiring the naming rights may also gain sponsorship benefits related to the named property or event.

Mr. Wellner went over a sample naming rights agreement, including the naming rights convention, payment and consideration, terms of the agreement, termination, publicity and promotion, and miscellaneous provisions. He stated that 25 specific areas in the animal shelter, from dog and cat runs to the lobby, could be named. He shared a gift agreement with the Cape Coral Animal Shelter they use.

Mr. Wellner requested to continue working on this research. However, he needs a sounding board and a businessperson in the County to assist with putting together a program that would work in Lamar County. Commissioner Lovett stated that he and his wife were sponsors for a golf hole on the Spalding County Golf Course, which was tax revenue for them. This sponsorship contributed to them purchasing the necessary equipment to put in that hole. The Chairman requested that the Naming Rights Research be placed on the Regular Business Meeting agenda. County Attorney Mayfield stated he had concerns about public/private partnerships that would have to be determined once the building starts going up.

**2) The Board Reviewed the Regular Business Meeting Agenda.**

1. Call to Order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Invocation-Pastor Dave George of Graceview Church
4. Approval of Agenda

5. Recess for Public Hearing
6. Public Hearing
7. Fellowship Drive
  - i. Fellowship Drive-Request to Place Manufactured Home on Site Built Only Restricted Property-Tax Map 033, Parcel 122

Planning and Community Development Director Buice stated this property was part of an approved subdivision in 2002. In 2002, subdivision approval did not go to the Board of Commissioners; they went to the Planning Commission. There were several stipulations, one of which was that it be a stick-built home. All houses face Fellowship Drive, and this particular property is behind the houses near a small pond. It was originally two lots and is a little over 9 acres. When the application was received, they said they wanted to place a manufactured home on the property. However, during the Public Hearing last Thursday, it was discovered that it is a modular home rather than a manufactured home that they are asking to place on the property. The Planning Commission recommended approval with the stipulation that it be a modular home placed on a concrete slab, and there will be trees as buffers.

8. Public Comment
9. Veterans Parkway and Yatesville Road
  - i. Veterans Parkway and Yatesville Road-Rezoning from Highway Commercial (C2) to Manufacturing 1 (M1) -Tax Map 049, Parcel 006B

Planning and Community Development Director Buice stated that this property is located on the corner of Veterans Parkway and Yatesville Road. Five to six acres are requested to be rezoned to manufacturing 1 (M1). The stated purpose is a cabinet shop, but all permitted uses with M1 will be allowed. There is a lot of future envisioning for the entire parcel. The Board recommended approval without conditions, and no one showed up with opposition.

Planning and Community Development Director Buice stated that the Board must formally approve the Comprehensive Plan Resolution of Commissioners. Commissioner Thrash thanked Commissioner Gilles for her work on the Comprehensive Plan.

10. Public Comment
11. Reconvene Regular Meeting
12. Minutes Approval
  - i. Workshop Minutes-March 14th, 2024
  - ii. Public Hearing Minutes-March 19th, 2024
  - iii. Regular Business Minutes-March 19th, 2024
  - iv. Special Called Meeting-March 21st, 2024
13. Proclamations
  - i. Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month
  - ii. Confederate History and Heritage Month

Commissioner Lovett requested to know the process of how Proclamations are endorsed.

County Clerk Davidson explained that the person requesting the Proclamation contacts her and said all Proclamations differ. The Child Abuse Prevention Awareness Month has been presented since 2010. There are windmill pins placed at the Courthouse and the Barnesville-Lamar County library and around town that represent the abused children in the Lamar County Division of Family Children Services (DFACS). This is the reason we present them with a Proclamation every year. Proclamations are also done for Black History Month, Confederate History and Heritage Month, or any other Proclamation

upon request. Once the request is received, it is sent to the Board of Commissioners for approval to be placed on the agenda. Typically, the person requesting the Proclamation sends the Proclamation to the County Clerk, which is to be presented to the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners are not obligated to present Proclamations, and the Board of Commissioners maintains the right to decide if the Proclamation is beyond the scope of approval. County Clerk Davidson stated that a Proclamation for Prostate Cancer Month was requested one year, and it was only done once, even though she could have requested to have that Proclamation presented again since her husband also had Prostrate Cancer, but she did not. Proclamations presented represent either groups of people, churches, or particular causes.

County Attorney Mayfield stated that on the Georgia.gov website, the Governor has guidelines for requesting a Proclamation. It states that Proclamations affect a large group of people and should be nothing offensive. They also do Commendations to honor individuals, organizations, or specific events. County Attorney Mayfield stated that the Board of Commissioners could adopt these rules and guidelines for the future.

County Administrator Townsend stated that he and County Clerk Davidson have been working on meeting guidelines and said he would email them to the Board of Commissioners for feedback.

14. Ordinance 2024-03

i. Ordinance 2024-03

15. Resolution 2024-01-Fellowship Drive

i. Resolution 2024-01

16. Resolution 2024-02-Lamar County Comprehensive Plan Adoption

i. Resolution 2024-02

17. Hauling Rock from Vulcan to Turner Bridge Road

Commissioner Gilles stated that Turner Bridge Road is one of the worst Roads in the County. It needs a lot of rock to build the road back up. Some areas cannot be paved and the residents are not asking for the road to be paved, just built back up. There are deep trenches and ditches; if a car goes down in them, it could cause severe damage. Mr. Faulkner is requesting to be put on the Regular Business Meeting agenda so he can address the issues.

Chairman Traylor stated that when Vulcan came on the scene, they gave Lamar County an allotment of rock; almost a million dollars' worth. There was initially a time frame for picking up the rock, and the Public Works were running two trucks picking up the rock on a daily basis. Vulcan has been a good business partner in the community, and they have donated to various organizations. Chairman Traylor said the Regional Director has agreed to no time frame for picking up the rock.

18. Animal Shelter-Naming Rights Research

19. Tax Assessor Update

Jeannie Haddock addressed the Board regarding the increase in property values in Lamar County. Mrs. Haddock said that she thought the sales ratio would be 36, but it is actually 33. They are either going from \$90.00 to \$100.00 or \$90.00 to \$105.00 per square ft. of a home. The sales ratio for 2024 is 32. There is nothing that sold for less than \$200,000.00. They have gone up around 10 percent on commercial property this year. Mrs. Haddock said they probably will go up in value again this year.

Mrs. Haddock explained that they are audited by the Department of Audits every year. The ratio study means that what someone pays for something versus what she has it valued at has to be at what they received between 36 and 42 sales ratio. They look at current sales versus current digest. They look at the last 4 months of 2023 and the first 3 to 4 months of 2024 to get a sales ratio study. They did not re-value houses last year, only land. In the last 2 years, the sales ratio has been around 36, which falls in

line with the Department of Revenue. Ms. Haddock said 2023 is considered her review year, and they will come in and review her policies and procedures. The County next to Lamar County was cited, and they have to pay a \$50,000.00 to \$60,000.00 fine to the Department of Revenue. The Department of Audits is doing a peer review on them as well. They will still have to have a re-value on their property, so they will need to hire a company to do this for them. Ms. Haddock said if they drop below a sales ratio of 38, the utilities, Southern Rivers, Charter, Georgia Railroad, etc., pay at whatever the sales ratio is at, and in the last two years, it was 36, so they will lose money on the utilities. Mrs. Haddock said there was a Supreme Court Case where Bellsouth sued Henry County over the sales ratio.

Chairman Traylor pointed out that just because the values go up does not mean the taxes will go up. The School board and the County have had the lowest millage rate since 2014. The School board is working on additional property tax savings for people over 70.

Ms. Haddock said that in 2008, she worked for Pike County. They did a re-value, and the Board of Commissioners asked her to take it back. She did, and they ended up paying a \$25,000.00 to \$32,000.00 penalty.

Chairman Traylor said they are at a point where property sales are mandated. He said that 10 to 17 years ago, his neighbor wanted his house re-evaluated because he was selling it and wanted to ask for more money. He said it would have affected everyone around them and was an isolated situation. Now, they are seeing this all over the County. Mrs. Haddock said they are seeing older homes selling for a higher price. Some new homes are being resold in Cole Forrest. Some houses in Needleleaf are being sold for \$330,000.00 and were initially sold for \$179,000.00. There are houses on Carletta Street which they are asking for over \$200,000.00, and one sold for over \$300,000.00. The square footage in Lamar County is 90, but the average house that is being sold is over 200 square feet. Commissioner Thrash asked what would happen if they froze the values and did not go up on the values. Vice-Chair Gilles said it is up to local legislation so they would have to petition the State Representatives and Senator to agree to a freeze. Mrs. Haddock said there was a bill in the House and the Senate. She said if they did a moratorium to freeze the values, then she would have two values.

Ms. Haddock said many Commercial properties sold in Barnesville, and the value is still at 38. This will help because the Commercial value last year was in the low 30s. They do take an average of residential, commercial, and agricultural properties. Mrs. Haddock said one acre of agricultural land on Cannafax Road is valued at \$17,000.00 and was sold for \$30,000.00.

20. Administrator's Report

21. Public Comment

22. Round Table

23. Executive Session

i. Real Estate

ii. Litigation

iii. Personnel

24. Adjournment

## **6) Public Comments**

There were no Public Comments

## **7) Round Table**

Chairman Traylor requested for a Commissioner to hold a Tailgate Talk in their District. The Board decided that since the ACCG conference was held at the end of April, they would have one in May with some appetizers.

**8) Adjournment**

Commissioner Thrash made a motion to adjourn the meeting at approximately 1:23 p.m. Commissioner Fletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Lamar County Board of Commissioners

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Ryran Traylor, Chairman

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Ashley Gilles, Vice-Chair

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Jarrod Fletcher, Commissioner

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Jason Lovett, Commissioner

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Nancy Thrash, Commissioner

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ Carlette Davidson, County Clerk