

LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Commissioner Meeting Minutes
February 16th, 2016
7:00 PM

I. Call to Order

Chairman Charles Glass called the meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. Present for the meeting was Vice-Chairman Nancy Thrash, Commissioner Bennie Horton, Commissioner Robert Heiney, Commissioner Van Baker, County Administrator Robert Zellner, and County Clerk Carlette Davidson. Attorney Scott Mayfield was absent for the meeting.

II. Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation

Everyone said the pledge of allegiance. Mr. Derrick C. Barron from the Georgia Department of Community Health gave the invocation.

III. Recess for Public Hearing

Chairman Glass recessed for a Public Hearing regarding Honeywood Farms/Edward Mitchell to rezone approximately 2.59 acres from A-R (Agricultural-Residential) to C2 (Highway Commercial).

IV. Reconvene Regular Agenda

Chairman Glass reconvened the regular meeting at approximately 7:10 p.m.

V. Agenda Approval

Commissioner Horton made a motion to approve the agenda and Commissioner Heiney Seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Minutes Approval

Vice-Chairman Thrash made a motion to approve the following minutes.

- 1) Workshop Meeting-January 14th, 2016
- 2) Regular Business Meeting-January 19th, 2016

Commissioner Baker requested that on the January 19th, 2016 minutes that Vice-Chairman Thrash be listed as the Vice-Chairman in attendance instead of himself. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion with the change to the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Proclamation-SGES Boys Cross Country State Champs Proclamation

Chairman Glass presented a Proclamation to the St. George's Episcopal School recognizing St. George's Episcopal School Cross Country Team for winning the GISAA

Cross Country State Championship. The team members were only 8th and 9th graders competing against teams with older and more experienced athletes.

VIII. Rezoning App 2015-04 at Honeywood Farms/Edward Mitchell

Commissioner Baker made a motion to approve Resolution 2016-06 granting the approval of Rezoning-Ordinance #2015-04 by Honeywood Farms from A-R (Agricultural-Residential) to C2 (Highway Commercial). Commissioner Heiney seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

IX. Mr. Jason Anderson of ABM Building Solutions

Mr. Jason Anderson did not attend the meeting.

X. Joyce Farmer-Humane Society

Joyce Farmer of 159 Yatesville Road addressed the board saying “I’m here tonight to defend myself against false allegations being made about me. Comments have been posted on Facebook concerning the Humane Society and me by someone who has taken it upon herself to be the righteous savior of Lamar County. Most of this information is incorrect or has been twisted to suit the writer. If this person has a personal problem with me personally I’m willing to meet face to face with them to find out why they feel all of the hostility needs to be continued.” Mrs. Farmer said “It is true there is an ongoing investigation but much of the reports are not correctly presented. The facts are slanted in these reports to look bad about me.” Mrs. Farmer said, “The reports are not about the Humane Society, but about me, personally,” Mrs. Farmer said, “Yes, my yard is strewn and strewed. I live in the country. But, that issue has been addressed and corrected. My husband and I had been gone all day on the 17th of December when they showed up at my house. It is interesting that the agriculture department agent showed up with a warrant with two Sheriff Deputies, an investigator, Lamar County Code Enforcement officer, Lamar County Administrator and a veterinarian and his son.” Mrs. Farmer stated that they broke and entered into her locked house and made pictures. ”In my house lived an old and dying dog, one who needs daily medication, one who can’t walk very far, one who is diabetic. One of the dogs has passed away since the breaking and entering.” Mrs. Farmer said “The furniture for one room was only for the dogs and has since been removed. They are now sleeping on dog beds on the floor. The vet who accompanied this group made a statement to the Lamar Code Enforcement officer and said that the dogs inside and outside were o.k. but they didn’t take any blood or fecal samples from any of my dogs. They did not remove any dog or dogs from my property. The dog shown on Facebook was not my dog and has since been removed from my property.” Mrs. Farmer stated that she has worked daily for over thirty years and anyone that knows her knows that she would be the last person to mistreat or abuse any animal. Mrs. Farmer said “Let me tell you about some of my animals and I consider them mine because I rescued every one of them. Except for one that is over 16 years of age.” Mrs. Farmer went on to say, “I didn’t pick any of the dogs off the side of the road. These animals came to me from other people who came by my house with a sob story or called me with a sob story. I have a pit

bull that is over eighteen years old. My son was eighteen when we got him. He is 36 years old now. I call him MatJac because my sons name is Matt and his friend was named Jacob.” Mrs. Farmer went on to name other dogs that she has had in her possession and how she obtained them and the stories behind them. Mrs. Farmer stated that she does not have 70 plus dogs on her property. Mrs. Farmer stated that if anyone wants to come and walk and love her dogs they are more than welcome. Mrs. Farmer said, “Yes there are pallets in the pen. They are there so my dogs can get off the wet ground.” Mrs. Farmer went on to say that all of the dogs have dog houses. The food bowls are on the pallets. They clean the feces out from under the pallets. They put pine chips in the pens so they won’t smell. They put hay in the dog houses so that they will stay warm. Mrs. Farmer stated that she is willing to give away a dog when people call looking for a particular type of dog as long as they are in a safe environment. Mrs. Farmer said, “The rescued animals at my home are fixed by the humane society. We help people who cannot afford to spay and neuter. We even let people pay on installment plans. People give us donations and we use the money for stray and rescue dogs and cats.” Mrs. Farmer said, “We always have the animals fixed before anyone gets them. We have spayed or neutered thousands of animals in the last thirty years with the Humane Society money although my personal money has been used. This doesn’t include my time, labor and sacrifice.” Mrs. Farmer said that she is adamant about the spay and neuter mission. Mrs. Farmer stated that their agriculture animal shelter license was at the home of Penelope Jenkins located at 173 Peacock Road. Mrs. Farmer said that they have helped spay and neuter sick and abandoned animals for over thirty years and placed animals even before the agriculture license was obtained. Mrs. Farmer said “Most people were so thankful for the wonderful dog that we gave them that they gave us a donation.” Mrs. Farmer stated that they did not plan to renew their agriculture animal shelter license for 2016 even before the harassment began. Mrs. Farmer said, “My passion for the animals remains the same. In all these years of doing what I thought was good work, I didn’t expect to be so viciously attacked.”

XI. Personnel Policy

Vice-Chairman Thrash made a motion to table the discussion on the Personnel Policy until the next workshop. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XII. Administrator’s Report

County Administrator Zellner gave an Administrators Report to the board as follows.

- 1) Received the LMIG money from GDOT for approximately \$282,000.00. This is for the resurfacing of Silver Dollar Road, Fredonia Church Road from 41 Hwy to Johnstonville Road, Abbott and Wilmot Road. We also received a commitment from GDOT for some additional LMIG money up to \$50,000.00 for the rain damage back in December. They are giving this to us for Industrial Drive, Matbeth Road, Willis Road and Turner Bridge road. Administrator Zellner stated

that he has an application to send back in for this. On Industrial Drive, there has been an issue with Jordan trucks coming out and pulling off onto the shoulder of the road and tearing up the shoulder and making a mess with mud. Therefore, the public works department put up big culverts there to block them from pulling off on the shoulders. Then they started parking in the middle of the road to secure their load. Administrator Zellner went and spoke to Jordan about this issue to see if they could fix a place on their property for the trucker, but they will not do it because of the liability. Jordan has agreed to concrete the shoulder on Industrial Drive so that the trucks will have a place to pull off. This will be completed in the next week.

- 2) The internet connectivity problem with the Tax Commissioners Office is back up and running except for the issue with the download speed. There is a switch that they have located that is bad and IT director Dexter Whitlock is going to install the new one. Mr. Whitlock has done a lot of work on the internet in the courthouse. There has also been work going on up Hog Mountain. Currently there is a licensing issue with the tower on Hog Mountain that they are in the process of working on this issue with C3 communication. Also the Sheriff's Office now has a contract with Charter for internet and cable service.

XIII. Public Comments

Susan Williams Hester of 145 Frances Street addressed the board in support of Joyce Farmer. Ms. Hester stated that she and Joyce started the Humane Society and rescued many animals. They also had help from the late veterinarian, Dr. Tuttle. Mrs. Hester stated that Mrs. Farmer cries over animals and that it is not true that she is cruel to animals.

Michelle Barrett of 1079 Veteran Parkway addressed the board stating that she works with the foster unit of the Humane Society. Mrs. Barrett stated that Mrs. Farmer has helped her on several occasions. Mrs. Barrett stated that Mrs. Farmer helped her with an injured pit bull and also an injured cat.

Beverly Eskridge of 130 Holmes Street stated that there is cyber bullying going on and that people in power don't see the importance of animal control. Ms. Eskridge stated that the people in other counties such as Macon, Georgia respect the value of an animal's life and they don't want to be a part of the problem but part of the solution. They stand up for animals in other counties. Ms. Eskridge stated that if anyone feels like the Humane Society needs improvement then they can go with them and help with the adoption process. Ms. Eskridge stated that there is plenty to do. Ms. Eskridge also announced that the bricks are being placed in the city park and that she needs 50 or more bricks to place the next order.

Kishawn Barron of 113 Barnesville Avenue, Thomaston Georgia addressed the board with her support for Mrs. Farmer. Ms. Barron stated that she is a single mother of twins and has limited funds. Ms. Farmer paid for her dog to be taken to Fort Valley and allowed her to pay her back in installments. She also gave her dog food.

Eddie Felix of 290 McCullough Road addressed the board requesting a sign for McCullough Road. Mr. Felix also requested that the pot holes be fixed. Mr. Felix stated that he would like for the Code Red system alert system notify him when prisoners have escaped. Chairman Glass explained to Mr. Felix that the Code Red system that Lamar County utilizes is currently just a weather package.

Jim Granum of Barnesville, Georgia addressed the board and thanked them for the Proclamation that was presented to the St. George's Episcopal School Cross Country Team.

XIV. Round Table

Commissioner Baker stated that he supports the Barnesville Humane Society and stated that the Lamar County Animal Shelter will not replace volunteers such as Joyce Farmer. Commissioner Baker said that he had personally called Joyce Farmer when a stray dog was almost hit by a car and Mrs. Farmer came immediately to rescue the dog. Commissioner Baker stated that the County will always need people like Mrs. Farmer and Ms. Eskridge.

XV. Adjournment and Executive Session

Commissioner Heiney made a motion to adjourn the meeting and go into executive session to discuss litigation and personnel at approximately 7:50 p.m. Vice-Chairman Thrash seconded the motion. The Board returned to the regular business meeting at 8:32 p.m. Vice-Chairman Thrash make a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 p.m. Commissioner Horton seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

THE LAMAR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Charles Glass, Chairman

Nancy Thrash, Vice-Chairman

Bennie Horton, Commissioner

Robert Heiney, Commissioner

Van Baker, Commissioner

Attest: _____

Carlette Davidson, County Clerk