



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

T. PAGE THARP GOVERNMENTAL BUILDING
102 STARKSVILLE AVENUE NORTH, LEESBURG, GEORGIA 31763

TUESDAY, JULY 25, 2023 6:00 P.M.
T. PAGE THARP BUILDING
OPAL CANNON AUDITORIUM
WWW.LEE.GA.US

MEETING MINUTES
VOTING SESSION

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Billy Mathis, Chairman	District 3
Luke Singletary, Vice-Chairman	District 2
Dennis Roland, Commissioner	District 1
Chris Guarnieri, Commissioner	District 4
George Walls, Commissioner	District 5

COUNTY STAFF

Christi Dockery, County Manager
Kaitlyn Good, County Clerk
Jimmy Skipper, County Attorney

The Lee County Board of Commissioners met in a voting session on Tuesday, July 25, 2023. The meeting was held in the Opal Cannon Auditorium of the Lee County T. Page Tharp Governmental Building in Leesburg, Georgia. Those present were Chairman Billy Mathis, Vice-Chairman Luke Singletary, Commissioner Dennis Roland, Commissioner Chris Guarnieri, and Commissioner George Walls. Staff in attendance was County Manager Christi Dockery, County Attorney Jimmy Skipper, and County Clerk Kaitlyn Good. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook Live. Chairman Mathis called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

INVOCATION

Pastor David Postlewaite, First Free Will Baptist Church, led the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board and the audience said the Pledge of Allegiance in unison.

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- (A) Consideration to approve the Board of Commissioners meeting minutes for July 11, 2023.
Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to approve the Board of Commissioners meeting minutes for July 11, 2023. Commissioner Walls seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Singletary voting yea.

CONSENT AGENDA

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

- (A) Recognition of employees' years of service.
Chairman Mathis recognized the following employees for their years of service to Lee County:
5 years – Courtney Wingfield – County Extension Office
5 years – Danny Alday – Sheriff's Office
5 years – William Gurley – Public Safety
15 years – David (Alan) Kidd – Fire & EMS
20 years – Carla Brown – Magistrate Court Judge
20 years – William McCalvin – Parks and Recreation
25 years – Douglas Denmark – Public Works

(B) **Dr. Emmett Griswold, President of Albany Technical College, to address the Board to give his formal introduction and provide Albany Technical College workforce updates.**

Dr. Griswold formally introduced himself as the President of Albany Technical College (ATC), following the passing of longtime President Dr. Anthony Parker. Dr. Griswold has been at ATC for 18 years and served as the warden at Lee State Prison for approximately seven (7) years prior to his employment at ATC. Dr. Griswold expressed his desire to continue supporting Lee County and presented on the Workforce Academy, which will provide nightly and weekend classes to better accommodate individuals' daily/work schedules. The capacity in the nursing program is also expanding to allow for more students.

In addition to offering the Dual Enrollment Program in which current high school students may enroll and gain credit for college courses, ATC now has introduced a Dual Achievement Program in which individuals aged 16 to 21 who have withdrawn from high school can attend classes and receive their high school diploma alongside their ATC academic program. ATC has received the accreditation necessary to award high school diplomas. Chairman Mathis and the Board thanked Dr. Griswold and voiced appreciation for ATC and the services the college provides to the community.

(C) **Hospital Authority Chairman Rick Muggridge to address the Board regarding next steps for the Hospital Authority and the hospital project.**

Chairman Mathis thanked Hospital Authority Chairman Muggridge and the rest of the Authority for their work and wished to emphasize that they are unpaid volunteer public servants. Mr. Muggridge voiced appreciation on his and fellow members' appointment to serve on the Hospital Authority.

Mr. Muggridge stated that there was still a need for this project and emphasized how the past conditions still exist for a feasible hospital. There is consensus among the Hospital Authority members to move forward with the project so as to enhance the healthcare options and opportunities for the citizens of the County. Depending on the CON law, if the CON still exists, the Authority wishes to pursue it. There are currently 187 hospitals of varying sizes in the State of Georgia, so the Authority believes it can be done.

At the July 10, 2023 meeting of the Hospital Authority, the members motioned to authorize the Chairman to do the following: (1) Notify the Lee County Board of Commissioners of the Lee County Hospital Authority's desire to pursue a CON, design, finance (via HA Bonds), build and manage a 60-bed hospital within Lee County; (2) request the endorsement of the Lee County Board of Commissioners for same; (3) develop an RFP for Hospital Management/ Consulting Groups for proposals for Management Consultation from current status through CON process, design, build and 12 months operation; and (4) solicit partnerships and/or management contracts and/or consulting from existing Hospital Systems in Georgia, Florida, and Alabama from current status through CON process, design, build and 12 months operation.

At the same meeting, Hospital Authority members also motioned to request the Lee County Board of Commissioners change the by-laws of the Lee County Hospital Authority to allow for Electronic/Digital attendance of meetings by board members as long as the Chairman (or Vice-Chairman) is in an announced location within Lee County and the public can hear all meeting business. Mr. Muggridge asked the Board to consider the above items and get back with the Hospital Authority soon to discuss next steps, stating he would come back to the Board when ready. Chairman Mathis asked County Attorney Skipper to bring something to the Board regarding the by-law change for their consideration at a future meeting. Chairman Mathis added that he thinks it to be the will of the Board to advise the Hospital Authority to move forward with pursuing a partner as the first step, moving from there as necessary. With no objection from the Board, Mr. Muggridge stated that he would be back with findings.

PUBLIC HEARING

NONE

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS

Building Inspection/ Business Licensing

- (A) **Consideration to approve an application for an alcohol license from Mr. Devanshukumar Patel for the retail sale of off-premise consumption of liquor, wine and beer. This will be a Package Store named "The Spirits" proposed to be located at 1425 US Hwy 82 West.**

Package stores must be in standalone buildings and located not less than 500 yards from another package store.

Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to approve an application for an alcohol license from Mr. Devanshukumar Patel for the retail sale of off-premise consumption of liquor, wine and beer at a Package Store named "The Spirits", proposed to be located at 1425 US Hwy 82 West. Commissioner Singletary seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

Planning, Zoning & Engineering

- (B) **Review of the minutes from the July 6, 2023 meeting of the Planning Commission.**

The minutes were reviewed as presented.

- (C) **Consideration to approve an application from Brittany Land Company, LLC (Z23-006) rezone two (2) lots at a total of 49.297 acres from AG to R-1. This property lies in Parcels 025 044 & 026 016 in Land Lot 71 of the Second Land District of Lee County, Georgia. Planning Commission recommends approval, with the following condition, as presented on the staff report: The proposed development must reduce impacts on floodplains (and wetlands, if identified) to the extent possible. Public Hearing held July 11, 2023**

Applicant George McIntosh was present and summarized the project, stating it would be similar to the first phase of Brittany Plantation, with lots at a minimum of 5 acres.

Commissioner Singletary made the **MOTION** to approve an application from Brittany Land Company, LLC (Z23-006) rezone two (2) lots at a total of 49.297 acres from AG to R-1L (correct zoning is R-1L, a recognized typo on the agenda item). This property lies in Parcels 025 044 & 026 016 in Land Lot 71 of the Second Land District of Lee County, Georgia, without the following condition, as presented on the staff report: The proposed development must reduce impacts on floodplains (and wetlands, if identified) to the extent possible. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

- (D) **Consideration to approve a variance application from Oakland Plantation Partners, LLC (Z23-007) to allow the following setbacks: 18' front, 10' rear, and 5' side for each lot. This is currently zoned R-2. The total number of acres is 39.316. This property is located off of Oakland Parkway in Parcel 017D 004. Planning Commission recommends approval with a 3 – 2 vote. Public Hearing held July 11, 2023**

Commissioner Singletary made the **MOTION** to approve a variance application from Oakland Plantation Partners, LLC (Z23-007) to allow the following setbacks: 18' front, 10' rear, and 5' side for each lot. This property is located off Oakland Parkway in Parcel 017D 004. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

- (E) **Consideration to adopt an ordinance to amend Chapter 70 of the Code of Ordinances of Lee County (the Lee County Zoning Code) so as to amend definitions as required by 2022 Georgia Laws Act 881 (HB 1405). Planning Commission recommends approval. Public Hearing held July 11, 2023**

Commissioner Guarnieri made the **MOTION** to adopt an ordinance to amend Chapter 70 of the Code of Ordinances of Lee County (the Lee County Zoning Code) so as to amend definitions as required by 2022 Georgia Laws Act 881 (HB 1405). Commissioner Singletary seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

- (F) **Consideration to adopt an ordinance to amend Section 70-6 of the Code of Ordinances of Lee County relating to definitions under the Lee County Zoning Code so as to revise the definition of "home occupation, residential". Planning Commission recommends denial with a 4 – 1 vote. Public Hearing held July 11, 2023**

Commissioner Singletary made the **MOTION** to adopt an ordinance to amend Section 70-6 of the Code of Ordinances of Lee County relating to definitions under the Lee County Zoning Code so as to revise the definition of "home occupation, residential". Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

- (G) **Consideration to adopt an ordinance to amend Chapter 70, Article III, Section 70-94 of the Code of Ordinances of Lee County relating to greenspace, so as to establish the process to determine unbuildable land and undevelopable land. Planning Commission recommends approval, with the following amendment: A minimum of twenty-five percent (25%) of the remaining developable land shall be preserved as greenspace regardless of service level. Public Hearing held July 11, 2023**

Commissioner Singletary made the **MOTION** to table this item to allow County Attorney Skipper more time for review, per County Attorney Skipper's request. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Roland and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS & GOVERNMENTAL BOARDS/AUTHORITIES

- (A) **Elections and Registration – Consideration to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Secretary of State's Office.**

Commissioner Roland made the **MOTION** to approve an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Secretary of State's Office for the purpose of temporary storage of voting equipment. Commissioner Guarnieri seconded the **MOTION**. The **MOTION** was unanimous with Commissioner Singletary and Commissioner Walls voting yea.

COUNTY MANAGER'S MATTERS

- (A) **Updates on County projects.**

County Manager Christi Dockery discussed ongoing projects in the County: (1) SPLOST VIII proposed projects will be brought to the Board on August 8 for discussion; (2) the Hwy 32 tower was recently struck by lightning, but the necessary replacement part has been ordered and will be installed in approximately nine weeks; (3) Motorola representatives will be on site soon for the new northern tower, which should be built and operational by early 2024; and (4) staff is working to compile LMIG project list based on the wishes of the Board. Commissioner Guarnieri asked County Manager Dockery to look into adding Springlake Drive to his district list for LMIG. Chairman Mathis asked County Manager Christi Dockery to look into what would need to happen in order to find a new location for a tower so as to move our equipment from the current tower on Hwy 32 E.

COMMISSIONER'S MATTERS

- (A) **Discussion of the 100-acre park. HANDOUT**

Commissioner Singletary began the discussion by stating he and Parks and Recreation Director Jeremy Morey had looked into an existing park in Dublin that contains many of the activity spaces desired for the 100 acre property. Mr. Morey has also reached out to the company who designed the park and is awaiting a reply. Mr. Morey stated that the park is very well designed and laid out very well, adding that his desired concept plan for the 100 acre property would be similar to this plan, and would include multipurpose fields, baseball fields, and a multipurpose building with changeable flooring so it may also be used as basketball courts during the season and be able to remove the flooring to accommodate car shows, agricultural shows, etc.

Mr. Morey stated that currently the Parks & Recreation department utilizes gyms at the schools, however, scheduling and other factors can sometimes make it difficult to use those spaces. Once a multipurpose building is constructed, the program could put it to use as soon as it is built, especially for basketball season. Commissioner Walls asked if the gyms at the schools were being used, to which Mr. Morey replied that they were. There has also been several requests for pickleball courts and staff is looking into that possibility as well. The next step is to determine the usable space on the 100 acres and create a design plan from there.

Mr. Morey also provided an update on the neighborhood parks stating that since his previous presentation to the Board, he has been working to put numbers together and is awaiting quotes.

Commissioner Roland asked about Chehaw Park and Zoo project that was discussed at a previous meeting, inquiring as to if the County was going to pay the proposed amount of \$400,000.00, as requested. Commissioner Singletary stated he believed it to be a quality project and is worth discussing. Chairman Mathis added that Chehaw Park is 75% in Lee County and asked staff to find out if the other parties previously discussed have committed to paying their proposed portions.

(B) **Discussion of potential road projects.**

This item was discussed with the updates on County projects item.

(C) **Discussion of bid process. HANDOUT**

Chairman Mathis opened the discussion by stating that there needs to be two different bid processes, one for the larger projects and one for the smaller projects. Commissioner Singletary agreed, adding that the current insurance and bond requirements are not appropriate for some of the smaller projects, resulting in smaller companies not feeling able to submit a bid. Commissioner Singletary suggested a policy in which any project under \$100,000 did not require bonds, adjusting insurance requirements, and adding an acknowledgement of the workers compensation requirements per Georgia law to bid documents. County Manager Christi Dockery agreed, yet added that it is not always known what a particular project will cost until bids are received as what is received could be much different than what is original budgeted or estimated. Staff and County Attorney Skipper will evaluate the bid process.

(D) **Discussion of generators. HANDOUT**

There are approximately 13 County buildings that do not have a generator. Chairman Mathis stated that it may not be necessary to have a large and/or expensive generator at every building, but asked staff to acquire quotes for generators and bring them back to the Board. Commissioner Singletary also suggested staff look into the possibility of installing switches on some buildings and having mobile generators.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S MATTERS

NONE

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NONE

PUBLIC FORUM

Citizens will be allowed to address the Board of Commissioners regarding any issues or complaints. Individuals should sign up prior to the start of the meeting.

No citizens took part in the Public Forum.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(A) The next regularly scheduled County Commission Meeting is **Tuesday, August 8, 2023 at 6:00pm.**

(B) The **Lee County Rivers Alive** annual clean-up event will be this **Saturday, July 29, 2023 from 9:00am to 1:00pm.** There will both be on water and on land opportunities to volunteer. A waiver must be signed for participation. Please contact the Lee County Chamber of Commerce at (229) 759-2422 for more information.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:38 PM.

Facebook video link: <https://www.facebook.com/leecountyga/videos/282548957799957>

Lee County is a thriving vibrant community celebrated for its value of tradition encompassing a safe family oriented community, schools of excellence, and life long opportunities for prosperity and happiness without sacrificing the rural agricultural tapestry.

Persons with special needs relating to handicapped accessibility or foreign language interpretation should contact the ADA Coordinator at (229) 759-6000 or through the Georgia Relay Service (800) 255-0056 (TDD) or (800) 355-0135 (voice). This person can be contacted at the T. Page Tharp Building in Leesburg, Georgia between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays, and will assist citizens with special needs given proper notice of seven (7) working days. The meeting rooms and buildings are handicap accessible.

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