

THE HONORABLE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, MADISON, GEORGIA, MET THIS DAY IN REGULAR SESSION.

MEETING WAS HELD ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.

PRESENT: Chairman Bill Kurtz, Vice-Chair Blake McCormack, Commissioners Donald Harris, Ben Riden, Jr., and Philipp von Hanstein

STAFF: County Manager Adam Mestres, Assistant County Manager Mark Williams, County Attorney Christian Henry, and County Clerk Kim Cox

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Commissioner Riden, seconded by Commissioner McCormack, to approve the agenda with the following modification: to add Advantage Behavior Health Lease under New Business. Motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES

September 3, 2024, BOC Meeting

Motion by Commissioner McCormack, Seconded by Commissioner Riden to approve the minutes as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

WES BANCROFT, ON BEHALF OF TOWERS, LLC, REQUESTED CONDITIONAL USE APPROVAL FOR A TELECOMMUNICATIONS TOWER ON 149.6 ACRES LOCATED ON PAXON DAIRY ROAD (TAX PARCEL 007-026)

On July 2, 2024, the Board of Commissioners tabled the request from Wes Bancroft, on behalf of Towers, LLC, for a new cell tower on 149.6 acres located on Paxon Dairy Road (Tax Parcel 007-026). Neither the applicant nor the opposition was at the BOC meeting.

On June 27, 2024, the Planning Commission heard the application request for the subject property. The staff presented a report to the Planning Commission and noted that the application was almost identical to one approved in 2020. The 2020 approved tower was not constructed within the time frame allowed by the ordinance, and the approval expired.

The applicant's representative spoke in favor of the request and agreed to the staff conditions that an engineered analysis and landscaping plan be submitted with the building permit and its application.

John and Tricia Bostwick opposed the application, stating that the proposed tower location would be adjacent to their future home place, in which they have already invested.

The Planning Commission recommended denying the application in an 8-0 vote. They suggested the tower be relocated across Paxson Dairy Road or elsewhere on the property.

On August 6, 2024, the applicant requested a deferral of the item until September 3, 2024.

On August 28, 2024, Chuck Jarrell, the director of Planning and Zoning, received notice from the applicant's attorney stating they needed more time to gather the requested information. He asked for the item to be deferred until October 1, 2024, BOC meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Riden, Seconded by Commissioner McCormack to table their request until the October 1, 2024, meeting to give them time to address the information requested.

APPEAL OF THE PLANNING DIRECTOR'S DENIAL OF THE LANFORD & COMPANY, INC. SIGN APPLICATION

Mr. Lanford submitted a sign application on July 9, 2024, for a digital billboard installed on the Ace Hardware property on Eatonton Highway. The application was reviewed by Tara Cooner, Senior Planner, for compliance with the Morgan County Zoning Ordinance as it applies to "Signs." Ms. Cooner recommended denial of the application based on the following criteria:

1. The sign application was for a digital billboard. Section 17.3 number 2 prohibits digital signs.
2. The application for a billboard did not meet the criteria under Section 17.6 number 4. d, e, g, and k.

Planning Director Chuck Jarrell recommends denying the sign application based on the ordinance's language.

Mr. Ellison, the attorney for Lanford & Company, Inc., spoke on behalf of Mr. Landford's application. He stated that denying this application would unlawfully restrict Mr. Landford's speech in violation of the United States and Georgia Constitution.

Motion was made Commissioner Riden, Seconded by Commissioner Harris to deny the appeal of the application filed by Mr. Landford's attorney, Mr. Ellison. The motion was based on the language of the signed ordinance.

Commissioner von Hanstein and Commissioner McCormack were not in favor. The vote was 2-2, and Chairman Kurtz voted in favor of the motion to deny the request. Motion passed 3-2.

Approval of Title VI and the ADA Plans for Transit

Stephanie Martin, director of Transit, proposed that we update the Title VI and ADA plan every three years as a condition for receiving the 5311 Grant. Title VI prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating based on race, color, or national origin, and the ADA prohibits recipients of federal financial assistance from discriminating based on disabilities.

Motion was approved by Commissioner McCormack, Seconded by Commissioner Von Hanstein to approve Title VI and the ADA plans. Motion passed Unanimously.

Advantage Behavior Health Lease

Advantage Behavioral Health serves as the Community Service Board for Morgan County. Mrs. Frusanna Hayes is the BOC's appointed representative on the board. Under the Georgia code, CSBs administer, operate, and provide disability and health services in the areas they serve.

County Manager Adam Mestres has worked closely with the CEO and Board Member, Frusanna Hayes, for several years to secure a clinician position at Morgan County. Morgan County currently has over 150 residents who receive health services (mental health and addiction) from offices in Greene, Athens, or Walton County. He received a call from Fru Hayes last month that the CSB added a clinician to serve Morgan County full-time and that they were looking for space.

The space at the FSA building has been vacant for over six years and has recently been used for document storage. The lease provides the space at no rental costs, considering the much-needed mental health services here in Morgan County. Advantage Behavioral will cover its portion of the utilities' costs and supply all furnishing and equipment for the space.

Motion to approve the Advantage Behavior Health Services lease agreement as presented by Commissioner Harris, Seconded by Commissioner McCormack. Motion passed unanimously.

COUNTY MANAGER REPORT

County Manager Adam Mestres presented a monthly overview of Morgan County government's current projects and issues.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

No public comments were made.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioners made comments and gave updates on liaison assignments.

MOTION by Commissioner McCormack, seconded by Commissioner Riden to exit the regular session and adjourn at 11:07 a.m. Motion Passed Unanimously.

Bill Kurtz, Chairman

ATTEST:

Kim Cox, County Clerk

Morgan County Agriculture Authority Planning Meeting

On September 3, 2024, at 11: 30 a.m., following the BOC Meeting, the Commissioners, County Manager, and Assistant County Manager attended the Morgan County AG Authority Planning Meeting @ 2380 Athens Hwy., Madison, GA 30650.

The following items were discussed on the Meeting Agenda:

1. Review Bids
 - Stalls
2. GDOT Potential
3. SPLOST Money
 - Time Frame
4. Expansion Plan
5. Potential Employee
6. Overall Plan and End Goal

No action was taken.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m. on September 3, 2024.