

**GORDON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
WORK SESSION MINUTES
OCTOBER 19, 2021 AT 5:45 P.M.**

MEMBERS PRESENT

**BECKY HOOD, CHAIRMAN
CHAD STEWARD, VICE CHAIRMAN
BRUCE POTTS, COMMISSIONER
KEVIN CUNNINGHAM, COMMISSIONER
M. L. BUD OWENS, COMMISSIONER**

OTHERS PRESENT

**JIM LEDBETTER, COUNTY ADMINIST
ANNETTE BERRY, COUNTY CLERK
MEDIA
APPROXIMATELY 40 GUESTS**

The Board of Commissioners met for the Work Session in the Conference Room of the Administration Building at 5:45 p.m.

Chairman Hood called the meeting to order.

County Administrator Ledbetter explained each of the zoning issues and other New Business items on the Agenda for the Regular Meeting. One item on the Work Session regarding the cost of radar equipment for the State Patrol was commented on by Commissioner Cunningham and discussed by the Board. Following discussion there was a consensus of the Board to add this item to the Regular Meeting Agenda as a budget amendment to purchase radar equipment for the State Patrol. This is a need by the State Patrol right now.

Commissioner Potts made a motion to close the Work Session. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion and all voted aye.

There being no further business, the Work Session adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

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Annette Berry, County Clerk

Becky Hood, Chairman

**GORDON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 19, 2021**

The Gordon County Board of Commissioners held their Regular Meeting on October 19, 2021 beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Administration Building.

MEMBERS PRESENT

**BECKY HOOD, CHAIRMAN
CHAD STEWARD, VICE CHAIRMAN
M. L. BUD OWENS, COMMISSIONER
KEVIN CUNNINGHAM, COMMISSIONER
BRUCE POTTS, COMMISSIONER**

OTHERS PRESENT

**JIM LEDBETTER, ADMINISTRATOR
ANNETTE BERRY, COUNTY CLERK
MEDIA
APPROXIMATELY 50 GUESTS**

Chairman Hood called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Invocation was led by Commissioner Owens. Chairman Hood led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Commissioner Cunningham made a motion to go into the Public Hearing for the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update. Commissioner Potts seconded the motion and all voted aye. Motion passed.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE 2021 HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE

Administrator Ledbetter advised that no one has signed up to speak. He called on Emergency Management Director, Courtney Taylor to come forward to speak to the Board and explain the update to the Hazard Mitigation Plan. Mr. Taylor advised that the County has to do the update every five years. Once the County has completed the update it goes to GEMA and FEMA for approval. The main thing this does is preparing a list of hazard mitigation actions that we came together as a county with all municipalities and listed those actions. This keeps us all eligible for grants. It has to be approved by FEMA to be eligible for grants, and it opens up those actions to be financed by grants.

Commissioner Potts made a motion to close the Public Hearing. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion and all voted aye.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Hood asked if there are any additions, omissions, or deletions to the Minutes for the Work Session and Regular Meeting of October 5, 2021, 2021. Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve the Minutes. Commissioner Steward seconded the motion and Commissioners Owens, Potts, Steward, and Cunningham voted aye. Motion passed.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Ledbetter read the report. (copy attached).

COMMISSIONERS' REPORT

Commissioner Potts commented that he attended a meet and greet for Butch Miller, a meeting with Mayor Palmer, met with Jim Ledbetter, had a phone conference with Board of Health, met with poultry folks, government leaders and community organizations, attended Airport Authority meeting, toured the Judicial Building, and met with Matt Barton. He showed some pictures of Pittman Road, and the new dump trucks, and reported on the departments that are

on his Public Works Committee.

Chairman Hood advised that she attended the Covid Task Force meeting.

Commissioner Cunningham made a motion to open the Public Hearing for Zoning. Commissioner Steward seconded the motion and all voted aye. Motion passed.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR ZONING

Appl. #Z21-28 OWR, LLC's Request to Rezone from A-1 to I-2 Heavy Industrial

Attorney Terry Brumlow spoke to the Board asking to table this rezoning application until the December 7, 2021 meeting of the Board. Administrator Ledbetter advised that there is no one signed to speak regarding this rezoning application.

Commissioner Potts made a motion to table Application #Z21-28 OWR, LLC's request to rezone from A-1 to I-2 heavy industrial until December 7th meeting. Commissioner Steward seconded the motion and Commissioners Potts, Steward, Owens, and Cunningham voted aye. Motion passed.

Appl. #Z21-23 Darryl Edwards' Request to Rezone from A-1 to R-4 High Density Residential

Administrator Ledbetter read application #Z21-23 Darryl Edwards' request to rezone from A-1 to R-4 high density residential. This is a request for 131 acres to construct a multi-priced, single-family and town home development for 525 homes. There has been an Impact Study on the property; there has been an environmental review, and a traffic impact study. This comes to the Board of Commissioners from the Planning Commission with their recommendations for denial. Administrator Ledbetter advised that there are several people signed up to speak regarding this rezoning application and called on attorney Terry Brumlow as the first speaker.

Attorney Terry Brumlow came before the Board to speak about the rezoning. This is to be 525 units, not 525 new families. Some will be families wanting out of an apartment or rental house, not new nuclear families moving in. There is a dire need for housing in Gordon County. The best place to start with these projects for the Board of Education would be to stay in the County and the County BOE does get their share of the taxes. You get a quality development in the County, and on sewer.

Mr. Darin Hardin and Darrell Edwards spoke to the Board explaining more details of the project. This is the first opportunity that there is for a sewer option for a development that is in the County. This project fits within the Comprehensive Plan that was put together and specifically mentions Highway 53 in that Plan. Highway 53 is the best road to handle traffic and is 1.3 miles to a very desirable school system. This project will have all the necessary utilities, pedestrian sidewalks, green space and recreation. Starlight Homes will actually do the vertical construction. We will be working with the department heads for the county, the state and the city to get all these plans approved so that everyone is satisfied that we have the safest and best development that we can. The first home would be able to be purchased in April or May of 2023 and the project ending in late 2028.

Mr. Bill Thompson spoke in opposition to the rezoning on behalf of Mr. and Mrs. Prather, this project is located right next to them. This is the first DRI project you have in Gordon County. If you allow this project, that community will never be the same. Starlight Homes is down in Bartow County. If you look them up, comments from the Better Business Bureau says cheapest of the cheap. Also, you have one way in to the project and one way out.

Mr. Jim Perkins spoke in favor of the project and advised that of the 262 people that work for him, 65% do not live in this county. The people with the highest paying jobs are living in other areas because there is not affordable housing available in Gordon County. If Sonoraville has 15

students per teacher, it can certainly handle the capacity of the students that this would introduce into that school system.

Renva Watterson spoke in opposition to the project. Asked the Board to please don't hurt the vibrant life of this community with unsupported home development. Don't make life more difficult for an already stretched educational system.

Todd Harrison spoke in favor of the rezoning and the project. He advised that he is here representing Hamilton Health Care System. We think investment in Gordon County is a prudent thing to do in a lot of ways. Between the real estate investment and the technology we will bring in we will have \$30 million in Gordon County. Housing is something that comes up every day at all levels of need. We will have at least 50 health care workers, so housing is important for us as a business.

Mr. Gerry Weaver spoke in opposition to the rezoning. He lives within ½ mile of this property. There is no way to run that sewer out unless you pump it out. How much room do the roads take up? All the units' occupants will come out on to Hwy. 53 to go to work, there will be a lot of problems getting out on to Hwy. 53 due to traffic going both ways.

Nathan Roberts spoke in opposition to the rezoning. It will affect the value of my client's adjacent parcel, the Harmon family. The intense use in an agricultural area, it's almost spot zoning. Let's encourage it into a less intense and less dense use. This need for housing, it doesn't have to be out here.

Mr. Terry Brumlow came back before the Board and spoke, we all want what is best for the County. We are not opposed to a restriction on the zoning. We have done that in the past, made recommendations to approve zoning based on limitations.

Mr. Ledbetter brought up the matter of one access into the property. He said that the Fire Chief mentioned to him the one entrance situation, what is the ability to have more than one entrance. Mr. Harden advised that there is the ability to provide a secondary access for emergency services, to be controlled by a lock box.

Commissioner Steward advised that his concern is the capacity of Sonoraville High School. I think the capacity is maybe eleven or twelve hundred. They will have to wait another six years for an E-SPLOST to build on to the school.

Commissioner Potts asked about needing a comment from the school's perspective. There is a contingency for growth at Sonoraville High School. There is a 20-year plan for growth and there is a pad built for 18 additional classrooms. Growth in a community should not be an issue. Tax dollars do help schools.

Commissioner Steward advised that he has a concern about the numbers mentioned regarding the capacity of Sonoraville High School. Commissioner Potts asked if there is anything in the application that doesn't meet what the County requires. Mr. Ledbetter said it does meet the requirements in the code, the right boxes have been checked. Commissioner Owens asked several questions of Mr. Hardin and Mr. Edwards and commented that growth is challenging, we understand that as our community grows we have to have additional housing. The issue the Board faces is – do we approve zoning for this particular type of development. Is there any way to look at having more than one public access into the development? Mr. Hardin stated that the developers would bear the cost and he is willing to look at it and talk to the State about another entrance off Hwy 53.

Attorney Brumlow advised that the Board does have an option to make a motion that the zoning be approved subject to the limitation of X number of units.

Chairman Hood spoke and asked questions and stated her reasons for opposition to the project. One question to Mr. Hardin was about the sewer, do they already have permission to hook into

the sewer. Mr. Hardin stated he has a letter from the City stating that sewer is available to the project, we will not get final approval until we have gone through the development plans and submitted to the City and the City of Calhoun has accepted those. Chairman Hood asked about a turning lane into the development and Mr. Hardin answered that there would be a required turning lane into this development; they will have to widen the highway to do that. There is sufficient right of way now for this. We will have to design this and present to DOT. We will create a turn lane in the middle of Highway 53. Attorney Brumlow said that could be a condition of the rezoning, conditioned upon DOT approving a left hand turn lane. There would not have to be any acquisition of property, there is sufficient right of way there.

Chairman Hood commented that she is not saying we do not need housing, there is a lot of homes and a lot of land and it is very rural, but taking in the integrity of Sonoraville and that culture its not good to put this project there. Also, I don't think that your student ratio is correct; I will ask the Superintendent, I think the classes are a little bigger. I don't think that stretch of Hwy. 53 can take that traffic because we are already well backed up with traffic with the new bypass on to Hwy. 53. The sewer was built out there for the school. You cannot change the integrity or the culture of that area with high density homes.

Owens made a motion to table rezoning application Z21-23 until the November 2, 2021 Board meeting until the Board can get additional information about what the facts are with the school and the road system. Commissioner Potts seconded the motion and Commissioners Owens, Potts, Cunningham, and Steward voted aye. Motion passed.

Appl. #Z21-27 Damian & Johnna Liker's Request to Rezone from A-1 to RA-1 Residential Agricultural District.

Administrator Ledbetter read application #Z21-27 Damian and Johnna Liker's request to rezone from A-1 to RA-1 residential agricultural district. The Liker's are requesting to rezone a 4.0 acre tract that they have purchased that was subdivided from a larger tract and they would like to build a house there. This comes to the Board of Commissioners from the Planning Commission with their recommendations for approval. No one signed to speak for or against the rezoning application.

Commissioner Steward made a motion to approve rezoning application number Z21-27 from A-1 to RA-1. Commissioner Cunningham seconded the motion and Commissioners Steward, Cunningham, Owens, and Potts voted aye. Motion passed.

Commissioner Cunningham made a motion to close the Public Hearing for Zoning. Commissioner Potts seconded the motion and all voted aye. Motion passed.

CONSIDERATION OF UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE 2021 HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

Administrator Ledbetter advised that this item is the resolution for the adoption of the County's 2021 Hazard Mitigation Plan. We have to update this plan and we have already had the required meetings for the Plan.

Commissioner Cunningham made a motion to approve the Resolution for the adoption of the

Hazard Mitigation Plan. Commissioner Potts seconded the motion and Commissioners Steward, Cunningham, Potts and Owens voted aye. Motion passed.

BUDGET AMENDMENT TO PURCHASE RADAR EQUIPMENT FOR THE STATE PATROL

Administrator Ledbetter advised that this is for Board approval for a budget amendment for the purchase of radar equipment in the amount of \$16,910 for the State Patrol.

Commissioner Cunningham made a motion to approve the budget amendment to purchase radar equipment for the State Patrol. Commissioner Potts seconded the motion and Commissioners Owens, Steward, Cunningham, and Potts voted aye. Motion passed.

AJOURNMENT

Commissioner Cunningham made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting. Commissioner Potts seconded the motion and all voted aye.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Annette Berry, County Clerk

Becky Hood, Chairman