



BANKS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS/DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

CALLED JOINT MEETING

Courthouse Annex Boardroom | 150 Hudson Ridge | Homer, GA 30547

Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 4:00 PM

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ch. Turk called the meeting to order.

PRESENT

Chairman Charles Turk
Vice Chairman Danny Maxwell
Commissioner Chris Ausburn
Commissioner Keith Gardiner
Commissioner Bo Garrison

STAFF

County Clerk Regina Gailey
Assistant County Clerk Erin Decker

DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEMBERS

Chairman Scott Ledford
Huy Nguyen
Jonathon Bennett
Jimmy Morrison
Bill Griffin

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to approve the agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Commissioner Gardiner.

Voting Yea: Chairman Turk, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner,
Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All aye votes and the motion passed.

3. WORKSESSION WITH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

DVA Chairman Scott Ledford began by saying the main purpose of the Development Authority was to acquire property for economic development and to recruit businesses such as restaurants and grocery stores as well as industry while communicating with the Board of Commissioners. He said in retail and development, traffic counts help to promote that type of development especially when it comes to grocery stores and restaurants which have been the most requested development by citizens. He then asked the Commissioners what they would like to see.

Ch. Turk stated he would like to look at Banks Crossing as well as Martin Bridge for development. Commissioner Garrison stated he felt the Martin Bridge area is the hotspot currently as well as the Hwy 59 corridor. He also stated 441 corridor should be reserved for Mom & Pop operations. He said he felt a truck stop would be a good addition to the Martin Bridge area.

Bill Griffin stated that sewer is basically complete to the Martin Bridge area and that he felt when the median comes through at Banks Crossing , the next thing would be to locate a truck stop at Martin Bridge.

Vice Chairman Maxwell said he felt Banks Crossing should remain retail/commercial and Martin Bridge should develop as industrial which would be most productive when dealing with truck traffic.

Commissioner Ausburn stated he felt we should do everything to maximize Banks Crossing and to clean up the area. He also stated the area should not be overloaded with truck traffic. He then asked how much industry do we need? How much is enough? He stated in surrounding counties they increase industry but the result is building more schools due to increased residential. Chairman Ledford stated the most logical way to measure is to look at the tax digest and see if there is a balance between residential, commercial and industrial values. He expressed the importance of a foundational tax base mixture. Commissioner Ausburn stated that finding local workers was a current challenge without bringing them from outside. Chairman Ledford stated we must find workers that have a mindset for the particular job. Chairman Turk also stated that the tax digest needed to be balanced. Chairman Ledford then asked what is the magic wand for balance?

Commissioner Gardiner stated Jackson County was currently over built and Banks County had the lowest tax millage rate in the area. Commissioner Ausburn asked if there were alternatives to adding more traffic. Chairman Ledford stated the county needed zoning in place to help control where certain types of business locate. Such as, they need to be on thoroughfares in concentration to be more cost effective toward services. He also stressed importance of communicating with the cities. Commissioner Ausburn stated work was needed on development strategy and better communication with the community. Commissioner Garrison and Chairman Ledford agreed. Chairman Ledford and Commissioner Ausburn stressed the need for both the Authority and the Commission to be on the same page when it comes to development. Chairman Ledford stated the Authority is looking for direction from the Commission. He stated companies looking to locate usually do not leak information until the permit and zoning process, etc. is complete due to danger of deals being broken if leaked too early.

Commissioner Gardiner stated the Comprehensive Plan Committee can start the process. Chairman Ledford stated if you make it here and ship it out of here – you are building the tax base. He also went on to explain since there had been accusations concerning the transaction, how he had purchased the property from the Authority in the Banks Crossing Industrial Park for a recycling center which was approved through EPA and then presented to the county for approval. He stated he acquired a temporary bond for title and wrote the check to the Authority in the amount of \$300,000+ to purchase 5 acres. He further stated all legal documents were in place. Commissioner Garrison stated he had previously purchased that property before Chairman Ledford with the agreement that he would sell it back to the Authority for an amount under \$100,000 plus the cost of the building he built while owning the property.

Chairman Ledford stated the Authority worked toward the Commissioners vision for the county. He further stated trust must be a factor. Chairman Turk stated since he had been a Commissioner, the Commission and the Authority had always communicated well.

4. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Land Acquisition/Disposal

Motion to enter into executive session to discuss land acquisition/disposal at 5:20 p.m.

Motion made by Chairman Turk, Seconded by Commissioner Garrison.

Voting Yea: Chairman Turk, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All aye votes and the motion passed.

Motion to come out of executive session and reconvene the meeting at 5:41 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Garrison, Seconded by Commissioner Gardiner.

Voting Yea: Chairman Turk, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All aye votes and the motion passed. *(Copy of affidavit filed in Minutes Book 10-5)*

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Motion made by Vice Chairman Maxwell, Seconded by Commissioner Garrison.

Voting Yea: Chairman Turk, Vice Chairman Maxwell, Commissioner Ausburn, Commissioner Gardiner, Commissioner Garrison

Vote: 5:0

All aye votes and the motion passed.

Chairman

County Clerk