

Monroe County Board of Commissioners

Minutes of the April 02, 2024

Regular Commissioners Meeting

6:00 P.M.

Present:

Greg Tapley, Chairman

Eddie Rowland, Vice-Chairman

Lamarcus Davis, District 1

John Ambrose, District 3

George Emami, District 4

Staff:

Natalie Sundeen, County Attorney

Jim Hedges, County Manager

Janet Abbott, County Clerk

Richard Dumas, Public Information Officer

Kelsey Fortner, Community Development Manager

Welcome

Chairman Tapley welcomed everyone in attendance.

Prayer

gave the invocation.

Pledge

Bishop Evans with Straight Street House of Prayer led the Pledge.

Roll Call

County Clerk Janet Abbott called roll.

Call to Order

Chairman Tapley called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M.

New Business

Approve Agenda

Chairman Tapley presented the agenda for approval with the following changes: moving all Planning and Zoning hearings up on the agenda to come immediately after Madden Perry-Eagle Scout project.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the agenda with said changes.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion passed 5-0.

Approve Minutes-BOC Meeting-March 19, 2024, Regular Meeting

Commissioner Emami motioned to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2024, regular meeting with the normal 30 days for changes.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion, and the motion passed 5-0.

Easement Agreement/Water Tap

Dr. Perry Wells owns land at 1031 Pea Ridge Road, approximately 250 acres and back in 2005 or 2006, he made a verbal agreement with then Commissioner Mike Bilderback to grant the County a water easement across his property in exchange for seven (7) free water taps. To date, Dr. Wells has not utilized any of the promised free water taps. Dr. Wells thought he might have a written agreement but was unable to locate the document. He also contacted Mr. Bilderback to see if he had a copy of the agreement; however, that too was unsuccessful. Janet Abbott has searched her records and cannot find anything in the minutes relating to this agreement, and there is nothing in the Water Department files. Dr. Wells is currently building a home on Pea Ridge and wants to utilize one (1) of the promised free water taps.

To date, Janet, Lorri, and myself have discussed this matter with Dr. Wells, and we all believe that there was either a verbal or written agreement back in 2005 or 2006. The County did run a 2,500' water main across the water easement granted by Dr. Wells. As general information, Dr. Wells performs gynecological procedures at the Monroe County Hospital.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve one water tap.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

Madden Perry-Eagle Scout Project

Local Boy Scout Madden Perry requested permission to improve the site of the High Falls Fire Station as a project to earn his Eagle Scout badge. Mr. Perry stated he would like to install an outdoor bench and would provide landscaping and display the names on a board outside with past and future fire chiefs.

Commissioner Emami asked that Mr. Perry meet with the current Fire Chief Matt Jackson and County Manager Jim Hedges on the size and location of the projects.

Chairman Tapley motioned to approve the request.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

P&Z Hearing Presentation

P&Z Hearing-Tafolla-Special Use

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to open a public hearing at 6:14 p.m. for a special use application in an Agricultural-Residential zoned district located on McMullen Road, Map 027 Parcel 027.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a special use application in an Agricultural-Residential zoned district located on McMullen Road, McMullen Road, Map 027 Parcel 027. The property owner/applicant is Lorenza and Doris Tafolla. Ms. Fortner stated the special use is in agriculture-residential zoning for ATV Trails and recreational activities and a special use for a campground/recreational vehicle park. Mrs. Fortner stated there was no quorum at the Planning and Zoning Board, therefore no recommendation. EPD would need to be contacted if approved due to two waterways located on the property.

Steven Rowland with Rowland Engineering spoke on behalf of the applicant. Mr. Rowland stated this is a 380 acre parcel, none of the trails will go north of red creek, there is only a couple of residential properties nearby, they would propose a 100 foot buffer, and a 20 foot wide gravel access road, an all weather access road for EMS purposes, operations will be on weekends only, helmets required, they will possibly hire off duty deputies if needed or private security. Mr. Rowland stated this would be a low impact development compared to subdivision traffic.

Commissioner Davis asked if the onsite welcome center would have restrooms.

Mr. Rowland replied stating it would and would also have vending machines and snacks. The welcome center would also be where the daily fees and check-ins would be handled.

Commissioner Davis asked had the property been perk tested by the health department.

Mr. Rowland responded it had not but that would be one of the next steps if the application is approved.

Ray Knight, resident of 1572 Boxankle Road, spoke in favor of the application stating this is something that is very much needed in this county. Mr. Knight stated there have been two major UTV wrecks in the last couple months and if they had a safe place to ride these wrecks probably would not have happened. He stated, personally, he would rather have 200 acres to ride on than to ride up and down the road. Mr. Knight continued stating the youth of Monroe County need something to do.

Franklin Dubberly, resident of 138 McMullen Road, spoke in opposition. Mr. Dubberly presented a petition with over 100 signatures in opposition to the application. Mr. Dubberly cited the roads being too narrow, it would be impossible to prevent the use of the various routes in place of Johnstonville Road, traffic congestion,

water contamination affecting nearby wells, noise pollution, the impact on wildlife, trespassing on nearby properties by park attendees and a decline in surrounding property values.

Adam Ham resident of 701 English Road spoke in opposition stating he represents the Ham & Watkins family who own a 544-acre family tract nearby. Mr. Ham stated his family enjoys the peace and quiet and is concerned about the crowds and activity the park will bring.

Nicole Ham resident of English Road spoke in opposition stating there are not many ATV parks here in Georgia because they are either closed or have been shut down. Ms. Ham stated this is a risky business and the county would have to spend money on the roads that would be impacted by the traffic. Ms. Ham stated the trails would take someone 30 to 40 minutes maybe to ride and are not sizeable enough to keep people entertained.

Gary Hay, resident of 990 Boxankle Road spoke in opposition stating the noise would be heard miles away. Mr. Hay stated the machines would be brought in on trailers and they would raise hell for a few hours and go home to their peace and quiet, but the residents would have to deal with it every weekend.

Linda Anderson resident of 688 English Road spoke in opposition stating the dirt part of English road can only handle one car at a time and has deep ditches. Ms. Anderson asked if the county was going to pave it.

Steven Rowland responded to the concerns stating the dirt portion of the road is county maintained and is wide enough for school bus traffic and would be wide enough for a truck and trailer. Mr. Rowland stated the park would only have parking for 30 trucks at a time and 30 vehicles would be equivalent of traffic coming from six homes. Mr. Rowland stated in response to the trail size, the trail design was preliminary and could be expanded in the future. Mr. Rowland stated the park would have very little impact on nearby wells.

Commissioner Rowland motioned to close the public hearing at 6:51 p.m.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Rowland motioned to deny the application.

Commissioner Emami recused himself due to a possible conflict.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion for discussion.

Commissioner Davis stated there has been no perk test done, he doesn't feel like this is the right location, a traffic study hasn't been done so we don't know if the road can handle the traffic.

Commissioner Rowland stated he knows this family personally and this is a good family, and they are good stewards of the county. However, he stated he is living proof that noise is an issue because of the park in Culloden and the complaints he receives from it. He stated there was one in south Monroe County that never got approved. Commissioner Rowland stated he counted 100 lots and 77 different families had signed the petition.

Commissioner Rowland stated virtually everyone in that area has a problem with this.

Commissioner Ambrose stated the county went through the same thing years ago with Meadows Gun Club and decided they would operate from daylight to dark. Commissioner Ambrose stated if we turn them down this gentleman has 380 acres he can subdivide and sell homesites. Commissioner Ambrose asked can you imagine the traffic from the number of homes that could be put in. Commissioner Ambrose stated if the property owner decided to use the property for warehouses this would also cause traffic. He stated this will give kids a place to ride. Commissioner Ambrose stated he had visited the horse show on Boxankle twice and it was well maintained and well thought out.

The motion to deny carried 3-1-1 with Commissioner Ambrose opposed and Commissioner Emami recusing himself from the vote.

P&Z Hearing-Nash-Variance

Commissioner Davis motioned to open a public hearing at 7:02 p.m. for a Variance application located on Floyd Road, Map 015 Parcel 026C.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a variance application for a 3-acre tract to be parceled out of 40+ acres for a home site located at 0 Floyd Road, between 749 and 807; Map 015 Parcel 026C. The home site does not have immediate road frontage per section 4.01.02 (1). An easement would lead to this home site. The property owner/applicant is Gary & Stacy Nash.

Mrs. Fortner stated there was quorum at the Planning & Zoning meeting, therefore no recommendation.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to close the public hearing at 7:05 p.m.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the request.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

P&Z Hearing-Rogers-English Road-Variance

Commissioner Emami motioned to enter a public hearing at 7:07 p.m. for a variance application located on English Road, Map 040 Parcel 016F.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner presented a variance application located at 532 English Road, Map 040 Parcel 016F. The property/owner applicants are Gloria Rogers and Michael and Jaimie Rogers. The request is to extend a private road and parcel out at minimum 2-acres for a home site. The home site does not have immediate road frontage per section 4.01.02 (I) and the extension of the private road requires board approval. This is a variance of the subdivision ordinance section 4.01.02 (I).

There was no quorum at the Planning and Zoning Hearing therefore no recommendation.

No one spoke in opposition to the request.

Commissioner Ambrose motioned to close the public hearing at 7:22 p.m.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

Following an extensive Board discussion, Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the request for a minimum two-acre lot size, with a surveyed out private drive to include an easement off the existing driveway allowing access to both properties.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

Commissioner Emami motioned to entertain Item G from the agenda.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

Subdivision Plat-Pine Meadows

At the March 5, 2024, Board of Commissioners meeting Steve Coleman presented a final plat for Pine Meadows Subdivision, located on Giles Road. Mr. Coleman requested at this meeting to withdraw the plat to make necessary changes and bring back to the board at a later date.

Community Development Manager Kelsey Fortner along with Steve Coleman, Surveyor, presented the final plat for Pine Meadows Subdivision on Giles Road for approval. The subdivision will contain 14 lots, all over 5 acres and the creation of one (1) private road.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Emami motioned to approve the Subdivision Plat for Pine Meadows.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

Commissioner Emami asked Attorney Natalie Sundeen to clarify whether 5 acres or more lots on a private road was exempted as a major subdivision and was added to the UDO.

Dan Pitts Drive Extension & Equestrian Facility Grading

Following discussions by the Board of Commissioners to create an alternative exit from the Recreation Department, and the decision to locate the new gymnasium at the site of the current horse arena, advertisement for bids will be opened on March 14, 2024, and presented to the Board on March 19, 2024.

Work will include the extension of Dan Pitts Drive from the Monroe County Recreation Center through property owned by Monroe County to Fairview Church Road, approximately 3,400' of new unpaved road. The work includes grading for the future Equestrian Facility +/- 61,000 cubic yards. Related work includes utility relocation coordination, testing, erosion/sediment control and final stabilization. Supporting documentation will be presented to the Board upon receipt from Triple Point Engineering.

	Dan Pitts Extension	Equestrian Grading	Total Both Projects
Appling Brothers	1,023,823	1,522,934	2,546,757
Buxton Construction	689,100	1,191,206	1,880,306
Helix Grading	1,113,355	1,571,230	2,684,585
Peed Brothers	950,328	1,213,732	2,164,060
Renfroe Construction	1,139,947	2,594,080	3,734,027
Summit CD	1,056,799	1,824,107	2,880,906

Funding-TSPLOST

TSPLOST	689,100	
ARPA		350,000
Recreation-SPLOST		200,000
Reserves		641,206
ACCG-Vehicle Loan	2025	175,000
Energy Savings Loan	2025	<u>500,000</u>
		675,000

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Ambrose motioned to approve the Dan Pitts Drive extension, awarding the bid to Buxton Construction with funds to come from TSPLOST.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

County Manager Jim Hedges stated at the March 19th meeting the Board agreed to temporarily move the existing horse arena to the multi-purpose field to allow for the construction of the new gymnasium. Mr. Hedges stated that since that time Public Works Director Kim Stokes has estimated the cost of moving the arena would be \$250,000. Mr. Hedges stated Commissioner Rowland discussed the move with members of the local equestrian community and learned they were only requesting a roof over the existing arena instead of a full Ag Center.

Chairman Tapley stated the Ag Center previously proposed would cost \$3.75 million dollars and would have been paid for with a grant through the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Chairman Tapley stated last week the county had learned it had been turned down for the grant.

Mr. Hedges stated he proposes putting a roof on the existing arena and building the new gymnasium on the site of the existing basketball courts. Mr. Hedges stated it will cost an additional \$405,000 to change the location due to grading and parking. Mr. Hedges stated the outdoor basketball courts will be moved but the location has

not yet been determined. Mr. Hedges stated the outdoor basketball court surface is needing repairs and the company has already sent a new surface that can be used when a location has been decided upon.

Following a Board discussion, Commissioner Ambrose motioned to authorize moving the location of the new gym to where the outdoor basketball courts are currently located and leaving the horse arena where it is.

Commissioner Davis seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

2003 Caterpillar 140H Motor Grader Repairs

The tandem drive on the 2003 Caterpillar 140H Motor Grader utilized by Public Works needs replacing. This is the drive train that powers the rear axles and the cost for repairs quoted by Yancey is \$31,016.09. This is an unbudgeted repair, and funds will come from the 2024 Budget Contingency. Machine Trader lists similar motor graders for sale with a range of \$90,000 to \$165,000.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the repair of the 2003 Caterpillar 140H Motor Grader in the amount of \$31,016.09.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion, and the motion was carried 5-0.

High Falls Fire Hydrant

The renovations at the new High Falls Fire Station are moving along and occupancy could take place sometime in May. Chief Matt Jackson and Jeff Dorough have surveyed the site for an ideal location for the installation of a fire hydrant to service the facility. That location is the corner of the new bays on the north side. Jeff has obtained a quote from Davis Plumbing Company for the installation of a fire hydrant at a cost of \$36,739; this cost includes labor and materials in running a 6" line approximately 400' from High Falls Road to the corner of the fire station bays. Alternatively, Jeff states the H2O team can run this line at a cost of \$14,100.00 which is the cost of materials only.

County Manager Jim Hedges stated the recommendation is to approve the purchase of materials with ARPA funds for the installation of a fire hydrant at the High Falls Fire Station using H2O labor.

Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the installation of a fire hydrant at the High Falls Fire Station using H2O labor.

Commissioner Emami seconded the motion and the motion carried 5-0.

Public Comments

No public comments

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Lamarcus Davis

Commissioner Davis thanked Triple Point Engineering, Recreation Director Landon Sparks, and County Manager Jim Hedges for their work on the recreation department project.

Commissioner Eddie Rowland

Commissioner Rowland reiterated Commissioner Davis's thanks. He stated he thinks tabling this project two weeks ago was the right thing to do.

Commissioner John Ambrose

Commissioner Ambrose stated the board needed to hold a work session soon.

Chairman Tapley stated there was one coming up on April 12th.

Commissioner George Emami

Commissioner Emami thanked Attorney Natalie Sundeen for attending the meeting and thanked Kim Stokes for how quickly he makes problems go away.

Chairman Greg Tapley

Chairman Tapley thanked Kim Stokes for a great job and stated he is a great asset to the county. Chairman Tapley stated he had a great lunch with Terrell Neal, Monroe County Hospital CEO and they seem to be turning things around.

Executive Session

There was no executive session.

Action from Executive Session.

There was no executive session, therefore no action.

Adjourn

Commissioner Davis motioned to adjourn at 7:55 p.m.

Commissioner Ambrose seconded the motion, and the motion passed 5-0.

Respectively Submitted by:

Janet Abbott, County Clerk