

**MINUTES
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
CITY OF DOUGLAS
FEBRUARY 22, 2010**

A Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held on Monday, February 22, 2010, at 7:00P.M. in the Council Chambers of City Hall with Mayor Jackie L. Wilson presiding and Mayor Pro Tem Ronnie Anderson, Commissioners Johnnie Lee Roper, Robert Moore, Dennis Josey, Marty Swain and Olivia Pearson present.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Rev. Rudolph Porter, member of Young's Chapel Baptist Church.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag was led by Coffee County School Navy JROTC Cadet Mora.

MINUTE ADOPTION

The following minutes were unanimously approved:

**Work Session.....February 8, 2010
Commission Meeting.....February 8, 2010**

Commissioner Bob Moore made the motion for approval and Commissioner Dennis Josey seconded the motion.

APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF THE AGENDA

The Commission unanimously approved to accept the order of the agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Ronnie Anderson made the motion for approval and Commissioner Dennis Josey seconded the motion.

RECOGNITION OF LOCAL CITIZENS TRAVELING TO HAITI TO ASSIST WITH EARTHQUAKE CRISES

Mayor Jackie L. Wilson and Commissioner Marty Swain recognized local citizens, Dr. Dawn T. Jones, Debbie Rock, Kent Paulk and Pastor Kenneth Glover, for traveling to Haiti to assist the victims that were affected by the earthquake.

SECOND READING/PUBLIC HEARING OF REZONING OF PROPERTY AT 718 SHIRLEY AVENUE

Following the second reading and the public hearing the Mayor and Commission unanimously approved: **AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DOUGLAS, GEORGIA. CHANGING THE ZONING ON CERTAIN PROPERTY IN THE CITY OF DOUGLAS GEORGIA LOCATED AT 718 SHIRLEY AVE FROM I, INSTITUTIONAL**

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TO B-2, GENERAL BUSINESS LANDS OF PEARLINE NORTHCUTT.

Commissioner Johnnie Roper made the motion for approval and Commissioner Olivia Pearson seconded the motion.

SECOND READING OF REZONING OF PROPERTY AT 1605/1613 HWY 32 E

Following the second reading of; **AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF DOUGLAS, GEORGIA. CHANGING THE ZONING ON CERTAIN PROPERTY IN THE CITY OF DOUGLAS GEORGIA LOCATED AT 1605/1613 HWY 32 E FROM R-1, RESIDENTIAL TO B-2, GENERAL BUSINESS, AND LAND OF WILSON ESTATE** a public hearing was held.

City Attorney Adams stated that before any comments from the audience were recognized, Mr. Emanuel Zanders, City Planner from Southern Georgia Regional Commission, would be allowed to comment on the rezoning. Mr. Zanders stated that this rezoning item was recommended for approval by the Planning Commission on January 21, 2010 with condition of no access to/from W. Forest Drive. The existing land is vacant other than trees and the landowners would like to rezone for commercial usage. The major concerns from other property owners in the area are the increase in traffic and aesthetics of the area and we will recommend that traffic from W. Forest Drive be limited to residents and to provide a stucco wall with a landscape buffer. We recommend that the wall be 8 ft. to 10 ft. tall and the landscape would consist of shade trees that would grow to about 15 ft. to 20 ft. in height. The staff have reviewed this petition for rezoning and determined that it is in compliance with the standards for the exercising zoning powers and therefore recommend its approval by the petition of Eagle Mark Properties, agent of Wilson Estates, from R-1, Residential to B-2. There were also questions about whether rezoning would lead to an overload of public facilities which is not an issue; the values of surrounding properties decreasing which is not an issue as long as the conditions are met.

Mr. Bryan Preston, a resident of 1713 Bo Jo Ella, spoke on behalf of citizens in his community that were against the rezoning of property located at 1605/1613 Hwy 32E and also presented a petition signed by residents. The Petition was read as follows:

Re: Rezoning of property located at 1605/1613, Highway 32E, from R-1 Residential to B-2 General Business.

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We, the residents of the Bo Jo Ella and West Forest Drive community, including all surrounding areas (known as the “Old Wilson Sub-Division”), appeal to the City of Douglas, the Douglas City Commission, Mayor, and all others who may be involved in the decision making to rezone above said property, to reject the application made to rezone.

Our community is a quiet, peaceful, residential area. The decision to rezone would allow a business or more businesses to alter this type of environment, due to the increase of traffic, noise, etc., eventually leading to the decrease in the value of the homes in the area. Since the above said property is within 400 feet of several homes, this would put the businesses almost at their front door. We, the residents, ask that you reject this proposal.

Mr. Preston also had several concerns about Item 3 from the staff report as stated: **Whether the proposed zoning will adversely affect the existing use or usability of adjacent and nearby property. Staff report stated the proposed use should have no adverse affects on the surrounding properties.** Mr. Preston inquired about similar development adjacent to an established neighborhood and does it have a negative or positive impact on the neighborhoods and lastly on the conditions that were set forth from the planner’s comments concerning the wall, the buffer zone and no traffic increase due to this rezoning would this be in our covenant as a guarantee and increased traffic from future construction be able to enter from Hwy 32 only.

Chris Dills, resident of 202 North Drive, stated that he recently purchased a home in this area because it was a quiet and peaceful neighborhood and the buffer zone between Forest Drive and Hwy 32 gave enough privacy and such a barrier for the noise that it was suitable for them. Mr. Dills further stated that if he had any idea that someone was planning on rezoning that property for commercial use he probably would not have purchased the home. Mr. Dills had concerns about the property values in the area decreasing and the stucco wall across from his property. Mr. Dills inquired as to the intended use of the property and City Attorney stated this is just an opportunity for citizens to voice their concerns on property rezoning but whatever is planned for the property after rezoning has to be within the regulations of B-2, General Business. Mr. Dills requested the Mayor and Commission to deny this rezoning because of the affect that it would have on increase of traffic and decreasing of property values.

After further discussion, it was consensus to have the buffer plans submitted with site plans to be approved/disapproved by Zoning Department and Mayor and Commission before construction is begun. Buffer plans would include, but not limited to, a stucco wall 8 ft. in height, set back 15 ft. from rear property line and

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utilize as much existing landscape as possible with additional landscaping to run the length of the property parameters and no access to W. Forest Drive.

Ms. Julie Shewchuk, AICP, Southern Georgia Regional Commission, stated that they had recommended a buffer similar to this one in other jurisdictions when commercial property was adjacent to residential property and the appearance of the buffer would be determined by the Mayor and Commission.

Upon recommendation from Ray Parker, Planning Division, the Mayor and Commission approved the rezoning of property at 1605/1613 Highway 32 E from R-1, Residential to B-2 General Business.

Mayor Pro Tem Ronnie Anderson made the motion for approval conditional upon a stucco wall 8 ft. in height; set back 15 ft. from rear property line and utilize as much existing landscape as possible with additional landscaping to run the length of the property parameters and no access to W. Forest Drive. Commissioner Dennis Josey seconded the motion. Commissioners Marty Swain, Johnnie L. Roper, Olivia Pearson voted for the motion.

Commissioner Bob Moore voted against the motion.

**APPROVAL OF THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
APPOINTMENTS**

Upon recommendation from Dale Batten, Community Development Director, the Mayor and Commission unanimously approved to appoint Ms. Gwendolyn Reliford as a new appointee and reappoint Ms. Norma Preston, Mr. Luke Morgan and Corey Carver to serve on the Historic Preservation Commission with their terms being retroactive to January 1, 2010 and expiring on December 31, 2012. It is also recommended that Kim Arnett and Mary Lou Gillespie continue to serve out their remaining terms on the Historic Preservation Committee.

Mayor Pro Tem Ronnie Anderson made the motion for approval and Commissioner Dennis Josey seconded the motion.

**APPROVAL OF THE 2010 GEORGIA HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT
APPLICATION**

Upon recommendation from Dale Batten, Community Development Director, the Mayor and Commission unanimously approved a resolution ratifying the submittal of the 2010 Georgia Homeland Security Grant with the Georgia Emergency Management Agency in the amount of \$661,050 for non-dig check-valve inserts to be installed on each of the city's fire hydrants to prevent contamination and

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authorized Mayor Jackie L. Wilson to execute the application and grant documents upon approval.

Mayor Pro Tem Ronnie Anderson made the motion for approval and Commissioner Dennis Josey seconded the motion.

APPROVAL OF THE HOUSING BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Upon recommendation from Mayor Jackie L. Wilson, the Mayor and Commission unanimously approved the reappointment of Ed Voyles to serve as a member of the Housing Authority Board for a five-year term retroactive to January 20, 2010 and expiring on January 20, 2015. Also, Mayor Jackie Wilson also recommended Ms. Ernestine Thomas-Clark who is currently serving as the appointed resident to serve on the Housing Authority Board. According to O.C.G.A. (Official Code of Georgia Annotated) State Law, a resident of the Housing Authority must be appointed annually to serve on the Housing Authority Board. Therefore Ms. Clark would be reappointed for 2010.

Mayor Pro Tem Ronnie Anderson made the motion for approval and Commissioner Dennis Josey seconded the motion.

APPROVAL OF THE WATER/WASTEWATER RATE INCREASE

Upon recommendation from Ernie Crussel, Water & Wastewater Director, the Mayor and Commission approved the proposed 12% water/sewer rate increase effective March 1, 2010 and to implement an annual CPI + 1% (never to be below 0%) water/sewer rate increase on March 1 of every year to be effective March 01, 2011.

Commissioner Dennis Josey made a motion for approval and Mayor Pro Tem Ronnie Anderson seconded the motion with Commissioners Marty Swain and Bob Moore voting in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Johnnie L. Roper voted against the motion.

Commissioner Olivia C. Pearson abstained.

**APPROVAL OF THE DIRECTION FOR THE USAGE OR TEMPORARY
CLOSURE OF THE CITY POOL FOR SUMMER 2010**

Upon recommendation from Roger Johnson, Parks & Recreation Director the Mayor and Commission approved to open the City Pool for the summer of 2010 and the admission fees be changed to \$3.00 for adults; \$2.00 for children and the family pass be increased by \$10.00 depending on the number of family members.

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Mayor Pro Tem Ronnie Anderson made the motion for approval and Commissioner Dennis Josey seconded the motion.

APPROVAL OF THE JOINT CITY/COUNTY APPOINTMENT TO RECREATION BOARD

Upon recommendation from Roger Johnson the Mayor and Commission approved to appoint Rob Brunell, South Georgia College Athletic Director, as the Joint City/County appointee to the Douglas-Coffee Parks & Recreation Commission Board for a three (3) year term retroactive to January 2010 and expiring December 2012.

Commissioner Bob Moore made a motion for approval and Mayor Pro Tem Ronnie Anderson seconded the motion with Commissioners Marty Swain, Dennis Josey, Johnnie L. Roper in favor of the motion.

Commissioner Olivia Pearson opposed the motion and recommended Terry Suggs as previously nominated.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Ms. Pearlina Northcutt expressed appreciation to the Mayor and Commission for approving the rezoning at 718 Shirley Avenue.

City Manager Terrell Jacobs made the following announcements:

- The District II Boys Basketball Tournament will be held in Douglas on February 27 & 28 at Central Square Gym A and Ninth Grade Academy Gym also.
- Mr. Clifton Sheffield and Mr. Gaskin are sponsoring an event at Roundtree Park on Saturday March 6 from 1PM til 5PM for children ages 5-13 to get better acquainted with the different public safety entities in our community.
- The Second Annual Home and Garden Show will be held on March 13 at Central Square from 10AM – 6PM.
- City Manager also thanked the Citizens Academy Group for attending the Commission Meeting.
- City Manager expressed appreciation to the citizens that came to the “Heritage & Harmony: The Descendence of Spirit & Soul” on February

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18th at the Martin Centre and also the local talent that entertained and to the Central Services Department for coordinating the event.

Mr. Hans Nilsen thanked the Mayor and Commission for the opportunity to attend the Citizens Academy Class to gain more knowledge about the operations of the City of Douglas.

Mayor Pro Tem Ronnie Anderson congratulated the Coffee High Boys & Girls on their accomplishments in the regional and state playoffs.

ADJOURNMENT

With there being no further business to discuss in the regular meeting, a motion was made by Commissioner Bob Moore and seconded by Commissioner Dennis Josey to adjourn to the Regular Meeting at 8:10 p.m.

Jackie L. Wilson, Mayor

Pat A. Baker, Deputy City Clerk