



MINUTES
OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING
Workshop Meeting
September 18, 2010

MEMBERS, OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL

Mr. Reg Dexter, District V, Council Chairman
Mr. Joel Thrift, District IV, Vice Chairman
Mr. Wayne McCall, District II, Chairman Pro Tem
Mr. Paul Corbeil, District I
Mr. Mario Suarez, District III

Oconee County Council met on Saturday, September 18, 2010 at 9:00 AM in Council Chambers, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC with all Council Members [except Mr. McCall], County Administrator Scott Moulder and Clerk to Council, Elizabeth G. Hulse present.

Press: Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, notice of the meeting, date, time, place of meeting and agenda were posted on the bulletin board at the County Administrative Offices, 415 South Pine Street, Walhalla, SC, and the County Council website [www.oconeese.com/council]. In addition it was made available [upon request] to the newspapers, radio stations, television stations and concerned citizens.

Member of the press present: Dick Mangrum – WGOG Radio, Ray Chandler – Anderson Independent & Carlos Galarza - Daily Journal.

Call to Order: Mr. Dexter called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Workshop Discussion & Possible Action regarding plans and/or uses or the Project North Property:

John's Creek Technology Park Model / Mr. George Eichler

Prior to Council beginning discussion, Mr. Corbeil introduced Mr. George Eichler who gave a brief PowerPoint presentation [copy filed with these minutes] regarding the John's Creek Technology Park Model outside of Atlanta, GA. Mr. Corbeil noted that Mr. Eichler is a resident of Oconee County and that as part of his business he was affiliated with the Technology Park and the Technology Park at John's Creek. Mr. Eichler highlighted the benefits of the mixed use model noting that the park had industrial, commercial and recreational areas throughout. He stated that the John's Creek park was a private development but that based on the current economy developers are looking for public/private partnership when developing this kind of park. Discussion followed.

Council voiced concerns regarding access to Highway 11 from the Project North property not wanting to jeopardize the state's scenic highway designation. Council also noted that as a comparison using the John's Creek model that approximately 5 jobs were created for every acre in that park. If that model held for Project North with 400+ acres it could create 2,000 new jobs in Oconee County.

Council thanked Mr. Eichler for his thoughtful presentation and time in attending the meeting.

Council Member McCall's Statement for Record

The Clerk to Council read into the record at the request of Mr. McCall a short statement [copy filed with these minutes] outlining his proposals for use of the Project North property and the Golden Corner Commerce Park [GCCP]. Key points to his statement include:

- Give one half of the GCCP to the McPhail's for the Carolina Foothills Heritage Fair.
- Utilize the other half of the GCCP for recreational functions that have been suggested for Project North
- Utilize the Project North property for industrial development as infrastructure is already in place

Council Discussion regarding Project North

Mr. Dexter commented that Mr. McCall states that money spent for recreational facilities is a waste of the tax payer's money. He disagreed noting that tourism and recreation dollars help to support Oconee County and that any money spent of quality of life for the citizens of the County was a benefit. He noted that all internal and external studies stated that industrial development is best suited to the GCCP with its proximity to I-85. He concluded by stating that his concerns with Mr. McCall's position are as follow:

- Placing recreation facilities at the southern end of the county will not service all residents
- Project North is almost center of the county and would be easily accessible for all citizens
- Oconee County's student population is stagnate as many youth leave the area to seek employment outside of the county
- Growth must be planned; zoning and quality of life are both draws for companies when making decisions to locate in a community

Mr. Suarez noted that Mr. McCall's position is not consistent with the county's Comprehensive Plan. He stated that he is in favor of mixed development on the Project North property.

Mr. Harold Gibson [Economic Development Commission member], speaking as a private citizen, addressed Council as a business owner and stated that mixed use for this property would be consistent with other development through out the southeast.

Mr. Thrift stated that his opinion was to use the Project North property for mixed use to include industrial and recreational. He stated that the topography of the land lent it to both industry on the flat land and walking/hiking trails into the wetlands. Lastly, he noted that the property has multiple access points so that Highway 11 would not be the only access to the property for business and the citizens.

B. P. Barber / Mr. Dan Estaban

Mr. Jim Alexander, Economic Development Director, introduced Mr. Dan Estaban with B. P. Barber. He stated that Phase I analysis has been completed. Phase II work for this project will include the following:

- Wetland assessment
- Threatened and/or endangered species survey
- Archeological assessment
- Cultural assessment
- Identification of existing infrastructure
- Proposed Site and Master Plan
- Preliminary options for funding
- Site & Engineering evaluation report

Mr. Estaban stated that if at any time during these assessments an issue arises that he will notify the County immediately. He stated that his primary need at present was to obtain clear direction from Council regarding components to be included in any design. Discussion followed.

Mr. Estaban stated that he is hearing consensus on Council to design the Project North property for mixed use. He stated that the next step will be for a conceptual plan to be developed and then reviewed by Council. He stated that this could be provided in approximately 3 weeks after some additional field testing is complete. Mr. Moulder noted that he had talks with YMCA representatives who are interested in partnering with the county on a project. In addition, Mr. Moulder requested that B. P. Barber include in their plan both passive and aggressive recreational areas.

Ordinance 2010-31

Mr. Dexter questioned the Administrator if Council could take second reading of **Ordinance 2010-31** at the October 5th meeting. Mr. Moulder stated that was appropriate noting that a few things would still need to be done prior to the public hearing to include a survey of the property.

Mr. Dexter stated that the second reading of **Ordinance 2010-31** “AN ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE OF CERTAIN OCONEE COUNTY REAL PROPERTY, CONTINGENT ON THE SATISFACTORY COMPLETION OF ALL DUE DILIGENCE AND CONTRACTUAL REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY OCONEE COUNTY, TO THE SATISFACTION OF OCONEE COUNTY COUNCIL; AUTHORIZING THE COMPLETION OF SUCH DUE DILIGENCE AND CONTRACTS; AUTHORIZING THE RECEIPT OF ALL LAWFUL FUNDS AUTHORIZED FOR SUCH PURCHASE; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF ALL CONTRACTS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS, AND OTHER DOCUMENTS RELATED TO SUCH PURCHASE; AUTHORIZING THE AMENDMENT OF THE CURRENT OCONEE COUNTY BUDGET ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE ACCOUNTING AND FUNDING FOR THE TOTAL COST OF CONTRACTING FOR AND PURCHASING SUCH PROPERTY; AND OTHER MATTERS RELATED THERETO” will be scheduled for Tuesday, October 5, 2010 and that the Public Hearing will be scheduled for Tuesday, October 19, 2010.

Other Business:

Old Courthouse

Mr. Moulder requested direction from Council regarding architectural plans for renovation of part of the old courthouse. Discussion followed. The Council directed the administrator to bring back for review and discussion plans and cost estimates to return the front portion of the building to usable space.

Motion to Amend the Agenda:

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. Suarez, approved 4 – 0 to amend the agenda for inclusion of an Executive Session for the purpose of discussion of a contractual matter related to the acquisition of land.

Executive Session:

Mr. Thrift made a motion, seconded by Mr. Corbel, approved 4 – 0 to enter into Executive Session for the reason stated above.

Council entered into Executive Session at 10:38 a.m.

Council returned from Executive Session at 10:56 a.m.

Mr. Dexter noted that no action was taken during Executive Session and that no action would not be taken on the matter discussed in Executive Session.

Adjourn:

Mr. Thrift made a motion at 10:57 a.m. to adjourn the meeting. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted:

Elizabeth G. Hulse
Clerk to Council