

CHEROKEE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Pre-meeting Work Session

July 6, 2010

3:00 p.m.

Cherokee Hall

MINUTES

Chairman Ahrens began the Work Session at 3:05 p.m. with a reading from the John Maxwell book "Right to Lead". All board members were present with the exception of Commissioner Good, who had previously said he would be out of pocket today, but if he finished early enough, he would come in.

The Chairman read from the preface of the book saying "What gives a man or woman the right to lead? It isn't gained by election or appointment. And the ability doesn't come automatically with age or experience, either. It can be accurate to say that no one can be given the right to lead. The right to lead can only be earned; and that takes time." After reading several guidelines suggested by the author, Chairman Ahrens finished.

Chairman Ahrens next asked Mr. Cooper to go ahead with the Aquatic Center information first, then discussion of the agenda and finally the SPLOST discussion.

1. Presentation of Sixes Road area aquatics center – Mr. Cooper

Mr. Cooper explained that for the last few weeks, they had been conducting an assessment of the property proposed for the future Aquatic Center off Sixes Road at I-575, rather than the original location on Bells Ferry Road. The recently acquired parcel contains 37.66 acres and is located off Gresham Mill Parkway; bounded on the west and south by U.S. Corps of Engineers property, on the east by I-575 right-of-way, and on the north and northwest by private land holders. Mr. Cooper said that this is merely a concept, using the Mountain Park Aquatic Center in Gwinnett County.

Access for the Aquatic Center site, which sits on the northwest side of a deep valley, will be gained from Gresham Mill Parkway via an access easement which will be required and will be included in the scope of work for the selected firm.

The natatorium or indoor pool will be comprised of a 25 yd. x 50m "L" shaped pool; the facility will also house men's, women's and family locker rooms. The facility will be two levels to facilitate a bleacher type viewing area for competition events. The indoor pool area is planned to have a 30,000 square foot footprint; however this may vary depending on the programming of the selected consultant. The outdoor feature is expected to be a seasonal venue consisting of a walk-in pool and water park type feature. The pool deck area is contemplated to be approximately 25,000 square feet. All access will be controlled through the natatorium; the facility will have approximately 287 parking spaces. The selected consultant will be required to determine if this is adequate for the facility. After some discussion regarding "bubbling" a practice area for competition swimmers, the Chairman asked to go through the agenda next.

2. Discussion of Regular Agenda items

Chairman Ahrens, after going over the announcement regarding Speaker Ralston, said that on the new texting and cell phone usage laws, which went into effect on July 1, he would read some bullet points during the meeting. Next he discussed the public hearing, saying that they had been provided the revisions which finally addressed all the current concerns by Paul Dzikowski and hoped that this would be brought to a conclusion tonight. Geoff Morton came up for the Grantham Park Subdivision item and said that per the memo in their notebooks, his department had been speaking with Lt. Peluso of the Sheriff's Office and who had been in contact with the Homeowners Association and it looked like the issue was going to be worked out between them, without the County having to take any action.

Mrs. Davis said that on the appeal of Mr. Ridings, depending of course on the outcome of the public hearing, since there is a denial on record, it would be best to grant the appeal based on the new standards, if that is the board's directive.

The Chairman talked about the postponement of an appointment to the DFACS board, saying that while that board had recommended Jeff Moon from the City of Woodstock, this board had decided to ask for any other nominations and they had received one. On the next item regarding a replacement appointment for Jeff Watkins on the Lanier Joint Development Board, when the Chairman asked if Mrs. Martin was OK on serving on this board, the County Clerk assured him and the other members that Mrs. Martin already attended the meetings, so she had no problem with accepting the appointment. Next Chairman Ahrens said that he would give a brief re-cap of the meeting held on June 18 later on at the regular meeting.

Chairman Ahrens asked Commissioner Bosch if she had anything, she said that yes, she wanted to announce the second annual memorial run for the Kevin Mahurin Motorcycle Awareness Foundation was coming up this Saturday and she would give more details at the meeting.

Next Commissioner Hubbard said that he would just give a 10 second version right now and elaborate further at the meeting; he said that on this past Saturday, a bunch of the "ham radio" operators set up with no commercial power, telephone or internet and made contacted all over the North American continent as a practice run for what they could do in an emergency or disaster situation.

The Chairman had Mr. Cooper give details for the Consent Agenda, with no questions on any item. On Mr. Cooper's portion, on the first 2 items, Commissioner Bosch asked if all the misunderstandings and miscommunications had been worked through and Mr. Cooper answered that they had. Next, he said that on the Sixes Road property, as he had stated earlier, the final terms of the purchase agreement was still being worked on. There was some discussion about a sign for the Aquatic Center and the necessity of possibly an easement for the sign on the property right on Sixes Road, Mr. Cooper was confident that all could be satisfactorily accomplished. On the last two items, there was no discussion.

3. Detailed discussion of proposed SPLOST renewal to include as a Nov 2010 referendum – Chairman

Chairman Ahrens said that the expiration of our current SPLOST was coming up in July, 2012 and in order to avoid encumbering the referendum with our renewal question, when the Regional Transportation Tax question was going to be on that one and possibly, probably the School Board's renewal of their E-LOST, it was best to work back from a timeline for this November's election. That puts the drop deadline on August 31st when we must have everything to the Board of Elections in order to get it on the referendum for November, 2010.

The Chairman asked Mr. Cooper about inviting the mayors and councils in for a joint meeting before then;

Mr. Cooper said he had already begun discussions with the cities for their input on the renewal, so he thought a joint meeting could be accomplished at the beginning of the Work Session on July 20th. Next the Chairman mentioned the two options given to them where one of a 5-year and one is a 6-year. Commissioner Johnston said he didn't think there was any debate that the 6-year option was preferred.

Chairman Ahrens said at least half of the 6 year figure would go to transportation, with a large portion being for the jail expansion. Commissioner Johnston said that in talks with Chief Deputy West informally, he had mentioned that two 128 bed pods would hold them for 10 years; but he doesn't know what the construction costs would come out to.

Commissioner Good arrived at 4:30 p.m. during a discussion regarding court space begun by Commissioner Johnston. Commissioner Bosch asked about funds for public safety;

Mr. Cooper said on the spreadsheets he had given them, he had apportioned funding for public safety, specifically Fire and EMS, with renovations to existing stations and construction of at least 4 replacement stations in Ball Ground, Bells Ferry, Station 3 and Station 9. This also includes funding for 1 new fire truck, ambulance units, and cars for the Sheriff's Office with enhancements to the training facilities of both Fire and the Sheriff's Office.

Chairman Ahrens asked on Plan B, under transportation Mr. Cooper had put a 5% contingency fund, but this wasn't under Plan A; could it be added to Plan A? Mr. Cooper said yes. The Chairman asked Commissioner Good about the topic under transportation labeled as Towne Lake Parkway Resurfacing; Commissioner Good responded that it should read Towne Lake Parkway Reconstruction because that is what needs to be done, when the funds are available.

When the Chairman asked if there was anything else, Commissioner Good asked to make a statement apologizing to the Board members and the staff members present for the public disclosures made in recent newspaper articles, which had caused him to re-examine his decision to run for re-election. Subsequently he decided to take himself out of the election. He apologized for not having cleared up the mis-information years ago, saying that this was not an example of the standards he set for himself. The Chairman thanked him and then asked if there was anything more.

On hearing none, Commissioner Hubbard made the motion to adjourn to Executive Session at 5:10 p.m. to discuss personnel, pending litigation and property acquisition. Commissioner Bosch seconded and the motion to adjourn was unanimously approved.
