

**Oconee County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Administrative Building Commission Chambers
November 5, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.
Minutes**

Members Present:

Chairman John Daniell
Commissioner Mark Thomas
Commissioner Chuck Horton
Commissioner Amrey Harden
Commissioner Mark Saxon

Staff Present:

Daniel Haygood, County Attorney
Justin Kirouac, County Administrator
Holly Stephenson, County Clerk
Diane Baggett, Communications Manager
Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Jill Faulkner, Human Resources Director
Whitney Sperlik, Parks and Recreation Deputy Director
Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director
David Webb, Senior Planner
Kyle Stephens, Planner
Ethan Perry, Planner

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

Chairman John Daniell called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance:

County Commissioner Chuck Horton led the Pledge after a moment of silence.

Approval of Agenda:

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the November 5, 2024 Agenda.
Second:	Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	None
Final Action:	Motion Passed.

Statements and Remarks from Citizens:

None.

Statements and Remarks from Commissioners:

Chairman Daniell announced the next volunteer day for Invasive Species Removal Day is November 19th at Heritage Park.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of October 1, 2024 Regular Meeting, October 8, 2024 Town Hall Meeting, and October 29, 2024 Agenda Meeting:

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Thomas made a motion to approve the October 1, 2024 Regular Meeting minutes, October 8, 2024 Town Hall Meeting minutes, and the October 29, 2024 Agenda Meeting minutes.
Second:	Amrey Harden

Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider a Resolution Approving the Contract with the Upper Oconee Basin Water Authority:

Presented by: Jim Woodward, Gray, Pannell & Woodward, LLP
Discussion: Jim Woodward, bond counsel, discussed the expansion of Bear Creek Water Treatment Plant. The Authority approved a bond transaction of up to \$140 million in two offerings secured by the revenues of the Authority. There will be a contract with each of Oconee, Barrow and Jackson counties. The request is to approve the contract between Oconee County and the Authority, extend the Reservoir Contract, and amend the Water Treatment Contract.

The Public Comment Period was opened and there was no Public Comment.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the Resolution for a contract with the Authority, extend the Reservoir Contract, and amend the Water Treatment Contract.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss Updates to the Alcohol Ordinance:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman
Discussion: Chairman John Daniell reviewed again the updates to the Alcohol Ordinance including the updated map. County Attorney Daniel Haygood will work to simplify the revisions, along with clarification that any new or renewal licenses will be processed under the new ordinance. Commissioner Harden confirmed the draft would be posted on the website, and the readings will be at the November 26, 2024 meeting and the December 3, 2024 meeting.

Rezone No. P24-0116:

Applicants:	Robert Scott
Owners:	Sapphire Property Rentals, LLC
Location:	2880 Monroe Highway
Acreage:	±17.387
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	R-1 (Single-Family Residential District)

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director
Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned AG (Agricultural District) in the Suburban Neighborhood Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a rezone to R-1 (Single-Family Residential District). The Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval of the request with seven conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Rob Scott, applicant, spoke in favor of the request.

Adam Kirk, landscape architect for the project, spoke in favor of the rezone.

*There were no further comments in favor of the request and no comments against the request.
The Public Hearing was closed.*

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Rezone No. P24-0116 for Robert Scott and Sapphire Properties, LLC with seven conditions.

Second: Arney Harden

Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Rezone #P24-0116 with seven conditions.**

Special Use No. P24-0155:

Applicants:	Christopher Terrell
Owners:	Christopher Terrell
Location:	1600 Black Ike Road
Acreage:	±16.267 acres in Oconee County (Total ±174.9)
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	Change of conditions of previous Special Use #2636

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director

Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned AG (Agricultural District) in the Agricultural Preservation Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a change of conditions of the previous Special Use approval #2636 to allow the creation of two lots on an unpaved road. The Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval of the request with two conditions. Commissioner Harden confirmed the owner has adjoining property in Greene County who would control zoning in their county.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Christopher Terrell, applicant, spoke in favor of the request.

There were no further comments in favor of the request and no comments against the request.

The Public Hearing was closed.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve Special Use No. P24-0155 for Christopher Terrell, change of conditions, ±16.267 acres, 1600 Black Ike Road, with two conditions.

Second: Amrey Harden

Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Special Use #P24-0155 with two conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 24.)

Special Use No. P24-0166:

Applicants:	Charles and Jane Hillsman
Owners:	Charles and Jane Hillsman
Location:	2791 Oliver Bridge Road
Acreage:	±32.665
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	Special Use Permit for a manufactured home

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director

Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned AG (Agricultural District) in the Agricultural Preservation Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a Special Use Permit to allow a manufactured home to be placed on a lot as an Accessory Farm Tenant Dwelling. The Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval of the request with one condition.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Abe Abouhamdan, agent for the applicant, spoke in favor of the request to allow housing for the applicants' daughter to live and help on their farm.

There were no further comments in favor of the request and no comments against the request.

The Public Hearing was closed.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Special Use No. P24-0166 for Charles and Jane Hillsman, special use approval, ±32.665 acres, 2791 Oliver Bridge Road, with one condition.

Second: Chuck Horton

Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Special Use #P24-0166 with one condition.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 24.)

Rezone No. P23-0287:

Applicants:	Stanton Porter
Owners:	Kristen and Phillip Gibson
Location:	1030 Garrett Road
Acreage:	±2.48
Zoning:	AR (Agricultural Residential District)
Request:	Change of conditions of previous zoning P20-0143

Presented by: Chairman John Daniell

Discussion: Chairman Daniell explained this was a continuation of a previous hearing and asked if the applicant had further information to add.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Stanton Porter, attorney for the owner, gave an update on the attempts to relocate the driveway to the guesthouse, along with costs involved, stating this option does not seem feasible.

There were no further comments in favor of the request and no comments against the request.

The Public Hearing was closed.

The Commissioners discussed the hardship of the current owner in relocating a driveway to the guest house. Commissioner Horton visited the property and reminded others that the current owners did nothing wrong other than purchase the unpermitted property. Chairman Daniell added access is still available through the existing driveway.

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the Rezone No. P23-0287 for Kristen and Phillip Gibson, change in conditions of previous zoning, ±2.48 acres, 1030 Garrett Road.

Second: Amrey Harden

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Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Rezone #P23-0287.**

Variance No. P23-0288:

Applicants:	Stanton Porter
Owners:	Kristen and Phillip Gibson
Location:	1030 Garrett Road
Acreage:	±2.48
Zoning:	AR (Agricultural Residential District)
Request:	Reduction in required setback from 15 feet to 12.5 feet

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director
Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned AR (Agricultural Residential District) in the Suburban Neighborhood Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a special exception variance to reduce the setback from 15 feet to 12.5 feet to construct a carport adjacent to an unpermitted residential structure. Staff recommends denial of the request.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Stanton Porter, attorney for the owner, spoke in favor of the variance request for a carport.

*There were no further comments in favor of the request and no comments against the request.
The Public Hearing was closed.*

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve Variance No. P23-0288 for Kristen and Phillip Gibson, reduction in required setback, ±2.48 acres, 1030 Garrett Road.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Variance P23-0288.**

Variance No. P23-0289:

Applicants:	Stanton Porter
Owners:	Kristen and Phillip Gibson
Location:	1030 Garrett Road
Acreage:	±2.48
Zoning:	AR (Agricultural Residential District)
Request:	Allow a guest house to have a separate driveway from the principal dwelling

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director
Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned AR (Agricultural Residential District) in the Suburban Neighborhood Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a special exception variance to allow a guest house to have a separate driveway from the principal dwelling. Staff recommends denial of the request.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Stanton Porter, attorney for the owner, spoke in favor of the variance request.

*There were no further comments in favor of the request and no comments against the request.
The Public Hearing was closed.*

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Variance No. P23-0289 for Kristen and Phillip Gibson, allowing a separate driveway for the guest house, ±2.48 acres, 1030 Garrett Road.

Second: Chuck Horton

Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Variance P23-0289.**

Variance No. P24-0160:

Applicants:	Hunter Hargrave
Owners:	Debra B. Hargrave
Location:	1230 Oconee Forest Drive
Acreage:	±0.67
Zoning:	R-1 (Single Family Residential District)
Request:	Allow an accessory building constructed without permits

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director

Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential District) in the Suburban Neighborhood Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a special exception variance to allow an accessory metal building constructed without permits that is 1,218 square feet to remain that is in violation of the accessory structure allowance of 1,000 square feet of gross floor area if a lot is less than three acres in size. Staff recommends denial of the request.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Hunter Hargrave, applicant, spoke in favor of the variance request and explained the building is for personal storage.

James Griffith, neighbor, spoke in favor of the request.

Kaylee Cooper, next door neighbor, spoke in favor of the request.

Chris Mobley, friend, spoke in favor of the request.

There were no further comments in favor of the request.

John Branson Parker, 1040 Oconee Forest, has been in neighborhood since 1996 and spoke of the respect for his neighbors. Spoke against the request due to traffic concerns, the scale of the building, and the concern there is commercial use.

Paula Sisler, neighbor, spoke against the variance due to the size of the structure and commercial use.

Armando Rodriguez, neighbor, spoke against the variance request.

Mary Fletcher, neighbor, spoke against the variance request due to the requirement to follow rules.

Josh Welsh, neighbor, spoke against the request.

There were no further comments against the request.

Rebuttal:

Hunter Hargrave, explained his intent for this building was for personal storage, not for any business or equipment storage use.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Horton asked if there was a homeowner's association which there are not.
Commissioner Horton asked about parking vehicles on the street. Mr. Herring responded parking on the street is not permitted.
Commissioner Harden asked about the permitting if storage trailers. Mr. Herring responded those are permitted.
Commissioner Harden clarified the maximum permissible building would be 1000 square feet.
Discussions continued about the size of the building, the possibility of removing a side garage to get the structure under the permissible 1,000 square feet, and parking vehicles in the roadway.
Commissioner Thomas advised the owner there is a driveway permit required.
Commissioner Saxon questioned the fines. Mr. Herring responded that triple fees would apply.

ACTION:

Motion: Amrey Harden made a motion to deny Variance No. P24-0160 for Hunter Hargrave, reduction in required setbacks, ±0.67 acres, 1230 Oconee Forest Drive.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: Mark Thomas
Final Action: **Motion Passed 3-1 to Deny Variance P24-0160.**

Variance No. P24-0161:

Applicants:	Hunter Hargrave
Owners:	Debra B. Hargrave
Location:	1230 Oconee Forest Drive
Acreage:	±0.67
Zoning:	R-1 (Single Family Residential District)
Request:	Reduction in required rear and side setbacks

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director
Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential District) in the Suburban Neighborhood Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a special exception variance to allow an accessory metal building constructed without permits to encroach 12.85 feet into the rear 40-foot setback and 0.55 feet into the 10-foot side setback. Staff recommends denial of the request.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Hunter Hargrave, applicant, spoke in favor of the variance request due to septic system location.

Kaylee Cooper, neighbor in the rear of the property, spoke in favor of the variance.

There were no further comments in favor of the request.

John Branson Parker, asked his previous comments be considered.

Paula Sisler, asked his previous comments be considered.

Armando Rodriguez, spoke against the request.

Mary Fletcher, spoke against the request as it was not permitted.

Josh Welsh, spoke against the request.

*There were no further comments against the request.
The Public Hearing was closed.*

Commissioner Thomas clarified the owner must now apply for a permit for 1,000 square foot building. Discussion continued about tabling the Variance until the next meeting to see what plans are submitted.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to postpone Variance No. P24-0161 for Hunter Hargrave, reduction in required setbacks, ±0.67 acres, 1230 Oconee Forest Drive until December 3, 2024 BOC Meeting.
Second: Mark Saxon
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to Postpone Variance P24-0161 until December 3, 2024.**

Confirmation of Civic Center Director Appointment:

Presented by: Justin Kirouac, County Administrator
Discussion: County Administrator Justin Kirouac recommended for confirmation Whitney Sperlik as the new Civic Center Director upon the retirement of the current director.

The Public Comment Period was opened and there was no Public Comment.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to ratify the appointment of Whitney Sperlik as the new Civic Center Director.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider a Benefit Program Consultant Bid Award:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman
Discussion: Chairman John Daniell explained the bid process with Gallagher being the highest scoring bidder of six applicants. The request is to approve awarding the benefit program consultant to Gallagher.

Commissioner Horton asked about the first consultant who evaluated our program for the possibility of going self-insured. Discussions continued about the current broker and the first consultant's scope of work. Chairman Daniell explained the first consultant was retained to see whether self-insured would be an advantage or not in the near future. This requested award will be for a new broker/consultant to do further analysis and assist in any transitions. County Administrator Justin Kirouac explained there is no current contract with the current broker, but a professional services agreement. The county first retained an independent consultant to provide an independent look to go self-funded or not. This request is in response to an RFP for broker/consultant to actually take the county forward with benefits and making any transitions. The goal is cost containment and expanded benefit offerings to provide a richer program for the employees.

Discussions and questions continued between the Commissioners and the County Administrator in regards to the evaluation committee and bid award.

ACTION:

Motion: Amrey Harden made a motion to table the item until the Commission has more time to review the information.

Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden
Voted Against Motion: Mark Thomas, Mark Saxon, John Daniell
Final Action: **Motion Failed 2-3.**

Discussions ended when no further motions were made.

Discuss and Consider Amendments to the Sewer Policy as Related to CCRC:

Presented by: County Attorney Daniel Haygood
Discussion: County Attorney Daniel Haygood explained two proposed changes. First, CCRCs are being changed to Life Plan Communities so all amendments and references are being changed in accordance with State law. The second change is a proposed policy change that Life Plan Communities can be operated in multiple communities as long as operated by the same operator. For sewer, there is a limit of 30% capacity at any treatment facility, with 16% that can be allocated to Life Plan Communities.

The Public Comment Period was opened and there was no Public Comment.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the amendments to the Sewer Policy as Related to CCRC.
Second: Amrey Harden
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider the Granting of Sanitary Sewer Easements off Jimmy Daniel Road:

Presented by: County Attorney Daniel Haygood
Discussion: County Attorney Daniel Haygood explained this grant will provide sewer access behind the fire station on Jimmy Daniel Road to some new customers.

The Public Comment Period was opened and there was no Public Comment.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve granting of the Sanitary Sewer Easements.
Second: Amrey Harden
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider the FY26 Law Enforcement Vehicles:

Presented by: Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Discussion: Finance Director Melissa Braswell requests a budget amendment not to exceed \$387,500 for the life of the contract funded through SPLOST to purchase six vehicles and related equipment. The Sheriff's Office requests funding early due to cost savings for vehicles available now as opposed to ordering vehicles next year.

The Public Comment Period was opened and there was no Public Comment.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the budget amendment for FY26 law enforcement vehicles.
Second: Chuck Horton

Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Consent Agenda:

There were no items removed from the Consent Agenda.

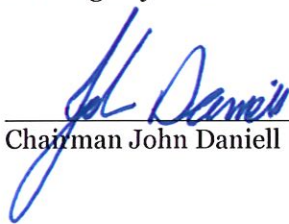
ACTION

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve all items as presented on the Consent Agenda.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

- 1) Approval of an Agreement for Court Collection Services between i3 Vertices and Oconee County Probate Court.
- 2) Approval of the ACTS Building Electrical Renovation Bid Award.
- 3) Approval of the FY25 NEGRC Aging Services Contract.
- 4) Approval of the NEGRC Amended SFT2023 ARPA Contract.
- 5) Approval of the FY24 Year End Budget Amendments.
- 6) Approval of a Budget Amendment for Utility Relocation for GDOT Project 0017185.
- 7) Approval of Acceptance of the GEMA/Homeland Security Cybersecurity Grant.

Adjourned:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to adjourn the meeting.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Action/Motion: **Motion Passed.**
Meeting Adjourned: 8:22 p.m.


Chairman John Daniell


Holly Stephenson, County Clerk

12-3-24
Date