

**Oconee County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Administrative Building Commission Chambers
December 3, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.
Minutes**

Members Present:

Chairman John Daniell
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
Kari Giddens, Assistant Finance Director
Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director
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 Mark Saxon led the Pledge after a moment of silence.

Approval of Agenda:

ACTION:

Motion:	Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the December 3, 2024 Agenda.
Second:	Mark Saxon
Voted in Favor of Motion:	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 this is the last BOC meeting of 2024.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of November 5, 2024 Regular Meeting and November 26, 2024 Agenda Meeting:

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the November 5, 2024 Regular Meeting minutes and the November 26, 2024 Agenda Meeting minutes.
Second:	Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	None
Final Action:	Motion Passed.

Presentation of the FY24 Audit Report by Rushton:

Presented by: Clay Pilgrim, Audit Partner, Ruston & Company
Discussion: Rushton Accounting and Business Advisors presented their independent auditor report and provided an unmodified opinion of the County's financial records, thanking the Oconee County employees for their cooperation during this process. Mr. Pilgrim announced an unmodified or clean opinion for the FY24 financial statements. He presented to the Board a three-year Statement of Net Position; General Funds revenues, expenditures and unrestricted fund balance; Water and Sewer Fund revenues and expenditures; SPLOST expenditures; and TSPLOST expenditures. The full report includes a report on internal control, compliance and other matters with no material weaknesses, one significant deficiency in an agency office, and no material non-compliance or other matters. The final item is a report on compliance and internal controls compliance for major programs with no material weaknesses, no insufficiencies, and no non-compliance issues. He also discussed with the Commissioners current and future report changes.

Second Reading and Public Hearing of the Proposed Updates to the Alcohol Ordinance:

Presented by: Daniell Haygood, County Attorney
Discussion: County Attorney Daniel Haygood explained minor revisions were made since the first reading of the Oconee County Alcohol Policy and re-capped the proposed changes already discussed. The updates include revision to the Service Map and amending the FY25 Fee Schedule.

*The Public Hearing was opened and there was no Public Comment.
The Public Hearing was Closed.*

ACTION:

Motion: Amrey Harden made a motion to approve the Proposed Updates to the Alcohol Ordinance and amending the FY25 Fee Schedule.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Rezone No. P24-0115:

Applicants:	White Oak Development Partners
Owners:	St. Mary's Highland Hills, Inc.
Location:	1660 Jennings Mill Road
Acreage:	±14.33
Zoning:	R-3 (Multi-Family Residential District)
Request:	B-2 (Highway Business 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 R-3 (Multi-Family Residential District) in the Regional Center Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a rezone to B-2 (Highway Business District). The Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval of the request with eight conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Justin Greer, Pittman and Greer Engineering, representing the owner, spoke in favor of the request for a hotel and health fitness club on the property. He requested a sports medicine massage therapist as part of the health club, thus changing the conditions.

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

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Horton asked the number of hotel rooms.
Mr. Herring responded there are 90 proposed rooms.

Commissioner Harden confirmed there are no existing driveways in the easement.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Rezone No. P24-0115 for St. Mary's Highland Hills, Inc; R-3 to B-2; ±14.33 acres, 1660 Jennings Mill Road, with eight conditions.

Second: Chuck Horton

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

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Rezone #P24-0115 with eight conditions.**

Rezone No. P24-0187:

Applicants:	Carter Engineering Consultants
Owners:	Brenda H. Dupree, Trustee
Location:	1001 Ruth Jackson Road
Acreage:	±0.68
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	OIP (Office-Institutional-Professional 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 Community Village Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a rezone to OIP (Office-Institutional-Professional District). The Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval of the request with three conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Brian Kimsey, Carter Engineering Consultants, applicant, spoke in favor of the request for Armor Homes, a local construction company, to have a 4,000 square front store front to include a garage to store equipment.

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

The Public Hearing was closed.

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve Rezone No. P24-0187 for Brenda H. Dupree; AG to OIP; ±0.68 acres, 1001 Ruth Jackson Road, with three conditions.

Second: Amrey Harden

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

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Rezone #P24-0187 with three conditions.**

Variance No. P24-0144:

Applicants:	The Elizabeth Price Dolvin Foundation, LLC
Owners:	The Elizabeth Price Dolvin Foundation, LLC
Location:	3470 Greensboro Highway
Acreage:	±56.10
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	Allow an off-site property manager for the requested Short-Term Rental

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 hardship variance from Sec. 352.c (6) to allow an off-site property manager for the requested Short-Term Rental with no on-site occupancy. Staff recommends denial of the request as the request would change the use.

The Public Hearing was opened.

John Constantino, attorney for the owner, spoke in favor of the variance request requesting the short-term rental be managed by an on-site manager in place of an owner, which is a private non-profit organization.

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

Commissioner Horton asked why an Ordinance change was not requested.
Commissioner Harden questioned if this Ordinance limitation affected all zoning types.
Mr. Herring confirmed this Ordinance limitation affects all zoning in the County.
Discussions continued about the caretaker not being the owner and where the caretaker lives.

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to deny Hardship Variance No. P24-0144 for The Elizabeth Price Dolvin Foundation, LLC, ±56.10 acres, 3470 Greensboro Highway.
Second: Mark Saxon
Voted in Favor of Motion: Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to deny Variance P24-0144.**

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 from UDC 410.01.c(1) and Table 4.1 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 has met with the owner, who will agree to remove a portion of the structure to get under the 1000 square foot limit. The septic lines restrict the location of the structure, and Environmental health has approved this location. Staff agrees once a building permit is received.
The public hearing was completed at the November 5, 2024 meeting.

Commissioner Harden confirmed with Mr. Herring that adjacent property owners had sent letters with no concerns over the encroachment. The owner will be assessed a triple permit fee as a penalty.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Variance No. P24-0161 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: None
 Final Action: **Motion Passed to Approve Variance P24-0161.**

Commissioner Horton recused himself from the discussion and the vote, leaving the room.

Variance No. P24-0164:

Applicants:	Kaylin Kittle – SPG Planners + Engineers
Owners:	Michael and Theresa Heath
Location:	1381 Hickory Hills Dr.
Acreage:	±1.076
Zoning:	AR (Agricultural Residential District)
Request:	Reduction in required setback from 40 feet to 29.5 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 Country Estates Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a special exception variance from UDC 410.01 and Table 4.1 to reduce the rear accessory building setback from 40 feet to 29.5 feet for an accessory structure (guest house). Staff recommends approval of the request with one condition.

Variance No. P24-0213:

Applicants:	Kaylin Kittle – SPG Planners + Engineers
Owners:	Michael and Theresa Heath
Location:	1381 Hickory Hills Dr.
Acreage:	±1.076
Zoning:	AR (Agricultural Residential District)
Request:	Allow a guest house to be placed in the side yard

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 Country Estates Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a special exception variance from UDC 351.02 for a guest house to be placed in the side yard. Staff recommends approval of the request with one condition.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Kaylin Kittle, SPG Planners + Engineers, applicant, spoke in favor of the variance request for placement of a guest house due to the existing location of the main house and a steep side yard.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Amrey Harden made a motion to approve Variance No. P24-0164 for Michael and Theresa Heath, reduction in required setback, ±1.076 acres, 1381 Hickory Hills Drive, with one condition.
 Second: Mark Saxon
 Voted in Favor of Motion: Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
 Voted Against Motion: None
 Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Variance P24-0164 with one condition.**

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Variance No. P24-0213 for Michael and Theresa Heath, allow a guest house in the side yard, ±1.076 acres, 1381 Hickory Hills Drive with one condition.
 Second: Amrey Harden
 Voted in Favor of Motion: Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon

Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Variance P24-0213 with one condition.**

Commissioner Horton re-joined the meeting.

Consider Appointments to the Oconee County Library Board:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to appoint Angela Moss-Hill, Frederick Lutz, Daphne Norton, and Kelly Hansford to five-year terms to begin January 1, 2025 and expire December 31, 2029.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Consider Appointment to the Oconee County Library Board:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to appoint Wanda Stitt Gohdes to a vacated term to begin immediately and expire December 31, 2026.
Second: Amrey Harden
Voted in Favor of Motion: Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Consider Appointments to the Farmland Preservation Ranking Committee:

ACTION:

Motion: Amrey Harden made a motion to appoint James Thad Padgett and Hunter Grayson to three-year terms to begin January 1, 2025 and expire December 31, 2027.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Consider Appointments to the Oconee County Board of Health:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to appoint Michael Martin to a six-year term to begin January 1, 2025 and expire December 31, 2030, and Amy Mistretta to a term to begin immediately and expire on December 31, 2026.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Consider Appointment to the MACORTS Policy Committee:

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to appoint Kirk Shook to a term to begin immediately.
Second: Amrey Harden
Voted in Favor of Motion: Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

1st Quarter FY25 Financial Update:

Presented by: Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Discussion: Finance Director Melissa Braswell presented the financial update for the 1st quarter of FY25 which is through September 30, 2024:

- General Fund revenues and expenditures as compared to budget
- General Fund Capital Fund Projects updates to date
- LOST, SPLOST, and TSPLOST distributions as compared to prior fiscal year along with Project updates to date
- Multi-year Projects updates
- Water Resource Department revenues and expenses as compared to budget, along with multi-year projects

Discuss and Consider a New Alcohol License for Catch 22 Garage:

Presented by: Holly Stephenson, County Clerk
Discussion: The Planning Department requests approval of a new alcohol license for Catch 22 Garage for the retail consumption on premises for beer, wine, and distilled spirits. Catch 22 Garage will be located at 2131 Hog Mountain Road in the current Dickey's location. The registered agent, Mr. Richard Miley, has completed the RASS Training, and the application is complete aside from closing documents and a business license once the sale is complete.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve a new alcohol license for Catch 22 Garage.
Second: Mark Saxon
Voted in Favor of Motion: 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: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve all items as presented on the Consent Agenda.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

- 1) Approval of the BSC Quad Protective Netting Project.
- 2) Approval of the 2025 Employee Health Insurance Plan Renewal.
- 3) Approval of the ACCG-IRMA Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Coverages for 2025.
- 4) Approval of the 2025 Alcohol License Renewal Applications.
- 5) Approval of the Annual Flyover 3 Year Agreement.
- 6) Approval of the Oconee County Water Resources Collection Services Agreement.

- 7) Approval of the FY25 Coordinated Transportation Agreement Amendment.
- 8) Approval of the Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule for 2025.
- 9) Approval of the Board of Commissioners Vice-Chairman Schedule for 2025-2028.

Adjourned:

Motion:

Second:

Voted in Favor of Motion:

Voted Against Motion:

Action/Motion:

Meeting Adjourned:

Mark Saxon made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

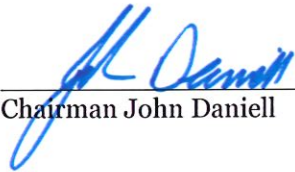
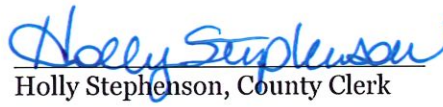
Chuck Horton

Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon

None

Motion Passed.

7:28 p.m.


Chairman John Daniell
Holly Stephenson, County Clerk

1-7-25
Date