

**Oconee County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Administrative Building Commission Chambers
January 7, 2025 – 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
Donna Norton, Budget Officer
Jody Woodall, Public Works Director
Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director
Justin Milligan, IT Director
Sharon Gregg, Elections Director
Jill Faulkner, Human Resource Director
Lisa Davol, Parks and Recreation Director
David Webb, Senior Planner
Kyle Stephens, Planner
Tristen Thomas, Management Analyst

Call to Order: 6:00 p.m.

Chairman John Daniell called the meeting to order.

Pledge of Allegiance:

County Clerk Holly Stephenson led the Pledge after a moment of silence.

Approval of Agenda:

ACTION:

Motion:	Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the January 7, 2025 Agenda.
Second:	Mark Saxon
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 first Town Hall Meeting has been moved to Wednesday, January 29 at 6pm at the Administrative Building due to a scheduling conflict.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes of December 3, 2024 Regular Meeting:

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the December 3, 2024 Regular Meeting minutes.
Second: Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Rezone No. P24-0217:

Applicants:	Carter Engineering Consultants
Owners:	Townley Family Partnership
Location:	Hog Mountain Road; Rocky Branch Road; Hodges Mill Road
Acreage:	±299.94
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	AR (Agricultural 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 AR (Agricultural Residential District) for ±194.46 acres. Staff recommends approval of the request with seven conditions. The Planning Commission recommended denial.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Jeff Carter, Carter Engineering Consultants, applicant, presented maps of the current location, zoning, and neighborhoods. The proposed site plan is for 120 lots, with the request to rezone 88 of these lots to AR. Mr. Carter proposed a change to Condition #6, presenting three options for a variety of buffering. Mr. Carter also addressed Condition #7, asking the multi-use path not be required in the event there is no connecting road. Mr. Carter pointed out how unusual Condition #5 is, noting that his client agrees to not build on the property for ten years.

Russell Wills, on behalf of the Family Partnership, spoke in favor of the rezone to eliminate the split zoning on the property.

There were no further comments in favor of the request.

Suzannah Heime, spoke against the rezone, asking the Commissioners to not look at increasing tax revenue, but to preserving farmland.

Carolyn Elster, spoke against the rezone as a resident in an adjoining neighborhood and expressed concerns over traffic and infrastructure.

Pam Hendrix, spoke against the rezone due to density issues.

There were no further comments against the request.

Rebuttal:

Jeff Carter, Carter Engineering Consultants, explained the proposal was for two acre lots and a ten-year moratorium. There are no variance requests, and all follows the UDC of Oconee County.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Horton clarified with Mr. Herring that the current zoning would allow approximately 80 building permits on the property now. The rezone would delay any permits for ten years. Discussions continued between the Commissioners and Mr. Carter in regards to the value and size of the proposed homes, housing density concerns, and zoning regulations in Oconee County since 1968. It was confirmed that Planning Staff agrees with the two condition changes proposed by the applicant.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve Rezone No. P24-0217 for Townley Family Partnership; ±299.94; Hog Mountain Road; AG to AR; with seven modified conditions.

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 Rezone #P24-0217 with seven conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Special Use No. P24-0216:

Applicants:	Carter Engineering Consultants
Owners:	Prince Avenue Baptist Church
Location:	2201 Ruth Jackson Road
Acreage:	±74.41 acres
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	Change of conditions of previous Special Use #P23-0116

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 change of conditions of the previous Special Use approval #P23-0116 to allow the construction of a 60,000 square foot event facility and associated parking. Staff recommends approval of the request with four conditions. The Planning Commission recommended approval with one condition change to condition #4 which Staff agrees to.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Jeff Carter, Carter Engineering Consultants, applicant, spoke in favor of the request, requesting a change to Condition #4 to allow parking spaces prior to construction of the building.

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

Commissioner Harden confirmed that Planning Staff agreed with the proposed condition change.

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Special Use No. P24-0216 for Prince Avenue Baptist Church, change of conditions, ±74.41 acres, 2201 Ruth Jackson Road, with four modified conditions.

Second: Mark Thomas

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 #P24-0216 with four conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Special Use No. P24-0210:

Applicants:	SPG Planners + Engineers
Owners:	Dixon Family Trust of 2012
Location:	6011 Hog Mountain Road and 1170 Lane Creek Road
Acreage:	±356.05
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	Special Use Approval for Recreational (Overnight) Camps

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 and Country Estates Character Area. The applicant/owner requests Special Use Approval for the construction of 10 recreational cabins for overnight rentals along with converting an existing dwelling to use for overnight rentals. Staff recommends approval of the request with six conditions. The Planning Commission recommended approval with two condition changes to increase the total number of conditions to seven.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Mick Kittle, SPG Planners + Engineers, agent for the applicant, spoke in favor of the request, presenting maps of the proposal and explaining how it fits the current UDC for the area.

Tracie Hedges, owner, spoke in favor of the request as a way to preserve family land while generating some revenue. Her family currently lives on the property and wishes to maintain the beauty of the property.

There were no further comments in favor of the request.

Kyle Setzer, neighbor of the property, spoke against the request due to concerns of overnight guests, the number of cabins, and buffering.

Dennis Zullo, spoke against the request due to the proximity of his house and pool with little buffering.

Suzannah Heime, spoke against the rezone, opposing high-density rentals.

Pam Hendrix, spoke against the rezone, asking the county not to set a precedent. She mentioned potential use violations at the existing Pine Lake Campground site.

There were no further comments against the request.

Rebuttal:

Mick Kittle, SPG Planners + Engineers, addressed the buffering and distance from other homes.

The Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Horton asked the owner if she had spoken to the neighbors about her proposal. Ms. Hedges explained the neighbor closest to the development wrote a letter in favor of the special use. Commissioner Harden asked Mr. Herring to explain the planted buffer along the neighbor's property line. Chairman Daniell confirmed there is no limit currently on length of stay. The owner agreed to conditioning the length of stay for the cabins to under 30 days.

ACTION:

Motion: Amrey Harden made a motion to approve Special Use No. P24-0210 for Dixon Family Trust of 2012, special use approval, ±356.05 acres, 6011 Hog

Mountain Road and 1170 Lane Creek Road, with seven conditions presented and an additional condition to limit length of stay to no more than 30 days.

Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: Chuck Horton
Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Special Use #P24-0210 with eight conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Variance No. P24-0211:

Applicants:	SPG Planners + Engineers
Owners:	Dixon Family Trust of 2012
Location:	6011 Hog Mountain Road and 1170 Lane Creek Road
Acreage:	±356.05
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural District)
Request:	Allow gravel drive and parking without curb and gutter requirement

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 and Country Estates Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a special exception variance from Section 609.1 to allow a portion of an existing gravel drive to remain as a service drive and remove the requirement for a paved commercial drive; remove the requirement for curb and gutter to allow the commercial access road to have vegetated ditches; and allow gravel parking in lieu of paved parking for the spaces next to the rental units. Staff recommends approval of the request with three conditions except for the portion to allow a gravel drive and remove the requirement for a paved drive. Staff recommends denial of that portion for public safety purposes.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Mick Kittle, SPG Planners + Engineers, agent for the applicant, spoke in favor of the request and to allow the gravel drive to remain for the owner to use while all other traffic would use a paved drive off Lane Creek Road. Additionally, they request all gravel parking areas other than ADA spaces and no curb and gutter requirements.

There were no further comments in favor of the request.

Kyle Setzer, neighbor of the property, spoke against the request due to concerns of erosion over time.

The Public Hearing was closed.

The Commissioners discussed with Mr. Herring and Mr. Kittle concerns about the gravel drive, the possibility of a gate, and the terrain of the property. Mr. Herring reviewed the Staff recommendations again: allow the removal of the requirement for curb and gutters; allow gravel parking; and denial of the portion allowing the gravel drive to remain.

ACTION:

Motion: Amrey Harden made a motion to approve Variance No. P24-0211 for Dixon Family Trust of 2012, ±356.05 acres, 6011 Hog Mountain Road and 1170 Lane Creek Road, approving the request to remove curb and gutters, approving gravel parking, but denying the gravel drive with three conditions.
Second: Mark Thomas
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed to approve Variance #P24-0211, but denying the gravel drive portion with three conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Variance No. P24-0226:

Applicants:	Beall & Company, LLC
Owners:	Burgess Jennings Mill Land, LLC & J.G. Griffeth Investments, LLC
Location:	1100 Research Parkway
Acreage:	±1.47
Zoning:	B-2 (Highway Business District)
Request:	Allow a variance for a 6' decorative metal picket fence and 3' hedge

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director

Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned B-2 (Highway Business District) in the Regional Center Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a special exception variance to allow for a 6' decorative metal picket fence and a 3' hedge rather than 6' hedge, wall, or imitation wood vinyl fence. Staff recommends approval of the request with three conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Ken Beal, Beall & Company, LLC, applicant, spoke in favor of the variance requesting a more expensive decorative fence as opposed to the privacy fence.

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. P24-0226 for Burgess Jennings Mill Land, LLC & J.G. Griffeth Investments, LLC, allow 6' decorative metal fence and 3' hedge, ±1.47 acres, 1100 Research Parkway, with three conditions.

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 #P24-0226 with three conditions.**

(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Ratification for Waiver Request from Buffer Requirements on Site Development Plan P23-0174 (QuikTrip):

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director

Discussion: Quik Trip Corporation requests a waiver from buffer requirements as it also owns the adjoining property. UDC Article 8 allows this waiver process when adjacent property owners are not affected. Staff recommends approval.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to ratify the waiver request from buffer requirements on the Quik Trip Site Development Plan.

Second: Amrey Harden

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

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Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider Pay Matrix Adjustments effective January 5, 2025:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman
Discussion: Chairman John Daniell explained proposed salary adjustments which would include a \$5,000 increase for public safety grade 10 and above, and a \$2,500 increase for all the other employees. He requested approval for adjustments to the pay matrix and necessary budget amendments to cover the costs.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the pay matrix adjustments as presented effective January 5, 2025.
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 IT Managed Service Provider RFP:

Presented by: Justin Milligan, IT Director
Discussion: IT Director Justin Milligan explained an RFP was issued for an IT Managed Services Provider as the current contract with Athens Micro is expiring. After receiving 14 responses, the recommendation is to award the contract to Athens Micro for Tier 1 level of service at \$16,871 per month for FY25, with the ability to explore the value of increasing to Tier 2 or 3 in FY26.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to award the IT Managed Services Provider RFP to Athens Micro.
Second: Mark Thomas
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 Budget Amendment for FY26 Law Enforcement Vehicles:

Presented by: Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Discussion: Finance Director Melissa Braswell requests acceptance of a donation and a revenue neutral budget amendment in the amount of the donation to purchase two 2024 Ford F-150's and equipment. The donated funds are from the Oconee County Sheriff's Office Foundation.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the budget amendment for FY26 law enforcement vehicles.
Second: Mark Saxon
Voted in Favor of Motion: Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion: None
Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider FY26 Budget Submittal Plan:

Presented by: Melisa Braswell, Finance Director

Discussion: FY26 Budget Submittal Plan is as follows:

- January 7, 2025: FY26 Budget Submittal Plan Adoption by Board of Commissioners.
- January 8, 2025: Budget Request to Offices and Departments
- February 14, 2025: Budget Request Deadline
- March 3-14, 2025: Recommendation Back to Departments
- March 17-19, 2025: Recommendation Review Meeting as Requested
- March 20-April 11, 2025: Budget Consolidation
- April 14-18, 2025: Commissioner Review of Recommendations
- May 6, 2025: First Public Hearing
- May 20, 2025: Second Public Hearing
- June 3, 2025: Budget Adoption

ACTION:

Motion to Confirm: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the FY26 Budget Submittal Plan.

Second: Mark Thomas

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

Voted Against Motion: None

Action/Motion: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider a Traffic Signal Application from GDOT for SR10/US78 as part of the Shops at Oconee:

Presented by: Jody Woodall, Public Works Director

Discussion: Public Works requests approval of a traffic signal application with GDOT for SR10/US 78 as part of the development of the Shops at Oconee. Installation is paid for by the developer.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the application with GDOT for a traffic signal for the Shops at Oconee.

Second: Mark Saxon

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

Voted Against Motion: None

Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider 2023-2028 Storm Water Management Plan Revision:

Presented by: Jody Woodall, Public Works Director

Discussion: Public Works requests approval of a minor revision to the 2023-2028 Storm Water Management Plan to allow website information to be reviewed and updated as needed instead of twice per year.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the revision to the 2023-2028 Storm Water Management Plan.

Second: Amrey Harden

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

Voted Against Motion: None

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Final Action: **Motion Passed.**

Discuss and Consider the FY25 VOCA Grant Award Allowance:

Presented by: Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Discussion: Finance Director Melissa Braswell explained that the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council has approved the FY25 VOCA continuation funding application and Oconee County has been selected to receive grant funds for victim advocate positions on behalf of the Western Judicial Circuit DA's office. The request is for approval of the VOCA continuation grant, C23-8-249, in the amount of \$143,475 for the grant period October 1, 2024 – September 30, 2025, with the 25% match being waived.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Thomas made a motion to approve the FY25 VOCA Grant Award Allowance.
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 Law Enforcement Mobile Data Terminals:

Presented by: Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Discussion: Finance Director Melissa Braswell requests contract approval for replacement of 55 Mobile Data Terminals with Prologic for \$201,150.80 with necessary budget amendments for the life of the project not to exceed the contract amount, along with the Chairman to execute the contract.
Commissioner Thomas asked if there was a phase replacement.
Chairman Daniell explained the current MDT's are past their life cycle.

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

ACTION:

Motion: Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the Law Enforcement Mobile Data Terminals.
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 the Purchase of 1650 Gallon Tanker Truck:

Presented by: Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Discussion: Oconee County Fire Rescue requests approval of the purchase of a Tanker Truck for Station 5 from 2021 SPLOST funds to include all necessary budget amendments for the life of the project not to exceed the contract amount up to the purchase price of \$215,000.

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

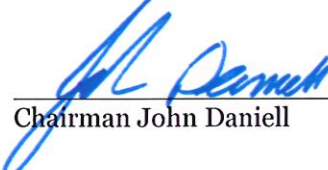
ACTION:

Motion: Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the purchase of a 1650-gallon Tanker Truck not to exceed \$215,000.
Second: Mark Thomas

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

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: 8:02 p.m.


Chairman John Daniell


Holly Stephenson, County Clerk

2-4-25
Date