Oconee County Board of Commissioners Meeting
Administrative Building Commission Chambers
March 4, 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 Director
Melissa Braswell, Finance Director
Donna Norton, Budget Officer
Lisa Davol Parks and Recreation 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:
Commissioner Chuck Horton led the Pledge after a moment of silence.

Approval of Agenda:
ACTION:

Motion:	Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the March 4, 2025 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:
Commissioner Amrey Harden thanked the county employees and citizen groups who put on a very successful 150th Birthday Celebration for Oconee County.

Chairman Daniell announced the State of the County Address will be on March 12, 2025 at 11:30am at the Civic Center with registration through the Chamber of Commerce website through tomorrow.

Approval of Minutes:
Minutes of February 4, 2025 Regular Meeting and February 25, 2025 Agenda Meeting:
ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Thomas made a motion to approve the February 4, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes and the February 25, 2025 Agenda 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.**

Proclamation Presentation for Russ Page Day:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman

Commissioner Chuck Horton presented a proclamation for Russ Page Day in Oconee County for Mr. Page's years of service toward the support of agriculture, preservation, and greenspace.

Rezone No. P24-0036:

Applicants:	Frank Bishop
Owners:	Epps Bridge Centre II, LLC
Location:	6000 Parkway Blvd.
Acreage:	±2.494
Zoning:	B-2 (Highway Business District)
Request:	Change conditions of previous rezone #6812 to modify the previous conditions and the concept plan.

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/owners request a change of conditions of previous rezone #6812 to modify previous conditions and the concept plan. The requested changes are: amend the concept plan to allow construction of an Automotive Oil Change and Lubrication Shop and a Car Wash; amend the allowed uses on the property to include Automotive Oil Change and Lubrication Shops; Automotive Parts, Accessories, and Tire Stores; Automotive Repair and Maintenance, except Car Washes; General Automotive Repair; and Car Washes. The Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval of this request with five conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

<u>*Patrick Bishop, applicant,*</u> representing Epps Bridge Centre II, agreed with the staff report.

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

<u>ACTION:</u>

Motion:	Chuck Horton made a motion to approve Rezone No. P24-0036 for Epps Bridge Centre II, LLC, ±2.494 acres, 6000 Parkway Blvd, with five conditions.
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 approve Rezone #P24-0036 with five conditions.** *(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)*

Rezone No. P24-0254:

Applicants:	Pittman & Greer Engineering
Owners:	Rhino Mini Storage, LLC
Location:	1052 Moreland Heights Road
Acreage:	±8.37
Zoning:	OIP (Office-Institutional Professional)
Request:	Modify previous rezone P23-0157 to increase the maximum office area allowed, number of buildings allowed, and remove the Assisted Living Facility from the concept plan.

Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning & Code Enforcement Director

Discussion: Mr. Herring briefed the Board regarding the request for the property, which is currently zoned OIP (Office-Institutional Professional) in the Civic Center Character Area. The applicant/owners request a modification of previously approved rezoning P23-0157 to increase the maximum allowed office area from 23,400 SF to 73,800 SF, increase the number of buildings from four to ten, and remove the previously approved Assisted Living Facility from the concept plan. Staff recommend approval of this request with six conditions. The Planning Commission added seventh condition for a four-foot opaque fence along Moreland Heights Road. Staff would suggest the seventh condition be amended to a four-foot imitation wood fence.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Justin Greer, Pittman and Greer Engineering, applicant, gave a brief history of the property and the plan, explaining that current interest is in more office space rather than assisted living. He expressed a concern about the additional condition for opaque fencing. His concern with the opaque fencing is lights shining into the residences, and would like the condition for fencing removed.

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

Commissioner Harden suggested a berm with vegetation in place of fencing.
Mr. Greer was in agreement with a berm, stating it would look nicer and be less expensive than a fence.

ACTION:

Motion: Amrey Harden made a motion to approve the Rezone No. P24-0254 for Rhino Mini Storage, LLC, modification of previous zoning P23-0157, ±8.37 acres, 1052 Moreland Heights Road with the six original conditions and adding a seventh condition for a 2-foot berm with vegetation.

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 approve Rezone #P24-0254 with seven conditions.**
(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)

Rezone No. P24-0257:

Applicants:	Carter Engineering Consultants
Owners:	Severn, LLC
Location:	1901 Epps Bridge Parkway
Acreage:	±3.14
Zoning:	AG (Agricultural)
Request:	Rezone 3.14 acres of the 28.16-acre parcel to 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 AG(Agricultural) in the Regional Center Character Area. The applicant/owners request a rezone of 3.14 acres to B-2 (Highway Business District). The Planning Commission and Staff recommend approval of this request with five conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Mark Campbell, Carter Engineering Consultants, applicant, explained the request for a proposed hotel.

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

Chairman Daniell asked if there was access from Jordan Drive to Parkway Boulevard.
Mr. Campbell explained this parcel does not and will not have access from Jordan Drive.

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the Rezone No. P24-0257 for Severn, LLC, AG to B-2, ±3.14 acres, 1901 Epps Bridge Parkway with five 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 #P24-0257 with five conditions.** *(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)*

Variance No. P24-0259:

Applicants:	W & A Engineering
Owners:	D. R. Horton
Location:	1308 Westland Court
Acreage:	±0.227
Zoning:	R-1 (Single Family Residential District)/Westland-MPD (Master Planned Development)
Request:	Reduction in Setback Variance from 10 feet to 9 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 R-1 (Single Family Residential District) in the Suburban Neighborhood Character Area. The applicant/owner requests a special exception variance from UDC Section 409.091 and Table 4.1 to reduce the minimum required side setbacks from 10 feet to 9 feet for an existing single-family dwelling. Staff recommends approval with two conditions.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Bryce Hix, W & A Engineering, applicant, explained the request would have no visual impact.

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

Commissioner Horton questioned if the owner built the two houses.
Mr. Hicks explained there was a mistake made on the initial survey.

Commissioner Thomas asked if both surveyors did their survey from the foundation or the eave.
Mr. Hicks explained it was from the foundation and agreed the eave would extend further.

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Thomas made a motion to approve Variance No. P24-0259 for D. R. Horton, reduction in required setbacks, ±0.227 acres, 1308 Westland Court with two 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 P24-0259 with two conditions.** *(See documentation in Ordinance and Resolutions Book No. 25.)*

Discuss and Consider the Re-adoption of the Official Zoning Map of Oconee County:
Presented by: Guy Herring, Planning and Code Enforcement Director

Discussion: Mr. Herring explained the proposal is to change all of the previously approved Agri-Tourism sites that were zoned B-1 or OIP (between 2013 and 2018) to AG (Agricultural). The current UDC of Oconee County allows Agri-Tourism as a permitted use in the AG zoning district, and thus the B-1 and OIP zone is no longer required.

County Attorney Daniel Haygood requested the Planning Department make the adjustment on Rezone #24-0257 approved earlier in this meeting to the official map.

Chairman Daniell asked if contact has been made with all property owners affected. Mr. Herring responded that had been done.

Commissioner Thomas asked if future approved changes could be automatically updated. Mr. Herring responded that the Planning Department makes the change after every action.

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

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Saxon made a motion to approve the amendment and the re-adoption of the Official Zoning Map of Oconee County.
Second:	Chuck Horton
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	None
Final Action:	**Motion Passed.**

Consider Appointment to the Oconee County Board of Tax Assessors:

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Thomas made a motion to appoint Sidney Bell to a term to begin April 1, 2025 and expire March 31, 2031.
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 Design Services Contract for Dawson Park:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman

Discussion: Chairman John Daniell requested a postponement of this item until there is more information.

Discuss RFP for Health Insurance Broker Services to Explorer Self-Funded Coverage:

Presented by: John Daniell, Chairman

Discussion: Chairman Daniell explained that an RFP was issued with six responses. A review by a selection committee resulted in Gallagher Benefits Services at a price not to exceed $141,000 as the top selected firm. He explained that since this did not take effect January 1, 2025, there will be pro-rated fees with the incumbent and Gallagher.

ACTION:

Motion:	Mark Thomas made a motion to approve the award of the RFP for Health Insurance Broker Services to explore self-funded coverage to Gallagher Benefits Services for a contract price not to exceed $141,000 and approval to work with both Gallagher and the incumbent for a smooth transition and separation of fees.
Second:	Amrey Harden
Voted in Favor of Motion:	Mark Thomas, Chuck Horton, Amrey Harden, Mark Saxon
Voted Against Motion:	None
Final Action:	**Motion Passed.**

Consent Agenda:
Chairman Daniell requested Item 4 be removed from the Consent Agenda for further discussion.

1) Approval of Updates to the Fiscal Ordinance.

2) Approval of the Final Budget for Utility Relocation at SR53 and Snows Mill/Rocky Branch Road.

3) Approval of the Reallocation of Funds for the Clotfelter Bridge at Barber Creek Project.

4) Approval of SPLOST Farmland Preservation Funding.

ACTION

Motion:	Mark Saxon made a motion to approve Items 1, 2 and 3 as presented on the Consent Agenda.
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 Consent Item 4 - SPLOST Farmland Funding:

Presented by:	Daniel Haygood, County Attorney
Discussion:	County Attorney Daniel Haygood asked the motion be amended to allow the Chairman to approve certain changes with the conservation easement.

ACTION

Motion:	Chuck Horton made a motion to approve the SPLOST Farmland Preservation Funding contingent upon legal approval and authorizing the Chairman to sign the easement documents.
Second:	Mark Saxon
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:	6:36 p.m.

John Daniell
Chairman John Daniell

Holly Stephenson
Holly Stephenson, County Clerk

4-1-25
Date