

MACON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

December 9th, 2003

A meeting of the Macon County Planning Board was held on December 9th, 2003 at the Macon County Courthouse. The meeting was called to order at 11:30 am.

CALL TO ORDER:

Planning Board members present included Ronnie Beale, Lamar Sprinkle, Richard Baldwin, Susan Ervin, and Byron McClure. Future members Evelyn Southard, Jimmy Goodman, Mike Decker, and Larry Stenger were present as well. Rick Moorefield, staff attorney for Macon County, was also present. Members of the press as well as a few interested citizens were also in attendance.

REVISION OF AGENDA; SPECIAL ITEM:

As the first order of business, Ronnie Beale introduced Rick Moorefield to the Board. The chairman asked Mr. Moorefield for his comments on the recent discovery that the Planning Board and its newest members might contradict the terms of the 1972 ordinance that originally established the Planning Board. Mr. Moorefield stated he had recently reviewed the 1972 ordinance and found that it provided for five members. He also stated that, to his knowledge, there have been no other legitimate changes to the composition of the Board since that time. Mr. Moorefield also added, however, that this was a technical issue of no consequence to the current Board because they have taken no formal action in the form of policy recommendation. Moorefield added that he expects the problem to be rectified at the January meeting of the Commissioners.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

As the next order of business, Richard Baldwin made the motion to adopt the minutes from the November 18th meeting. Lamar Sprinkle seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS:

Byron McClure presented Board members with a complimentary notebook to be used for keeping Planning Board documents. As the next item, McClure discussed the issue of Board By-Laws. As discussed, McClure was expected to prepare a set of by-laws for review. McClure informed the Board that he had indeed prepared a set of proposed by-laws with the help of Mike Decker for review. However, due to the circumstances surrounding the Planning Board ordinance, the Board should wait to review those at a future meeting. Moving on with the next item, McClure informed the Board that he had been working on setting up a date for a January Planning Board training session with the Division of Community Assistance. McClure assured Chairman Beale that he would let Board members know as soon as possible when the exact date was.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

At the last meeting, Chairman Beale had asked members to prepare a mission statement and be ready to discuss future objectives. Byron McClure briefly discussed with the Board the importance of mission statements and offered a handout detailing their importance within an organization. Chairman Beale next asked Board members to share their mission statements.

Board members discussed their ideas on the issue of what would be the most appropriate statement. After lengthy debate, Chairman Beale asked McClure to merge the offerings of Mike Decker and Evelyn Southard. McClure agreed to have the mission statement ready for review by the next meeting.

The Board next began a lengthy discussion concerning their priorities. Chairman Beale expressed his thoughts on what he believed was the most eminent threat to the quality of life in Macon County. In his opinion, high impact regulations represented something that the Board could deal with effectively in the near future. Each member was given the opportunity to express his or her opinion as well. In principal, the Board agreed that working on high impact use standards was a good idea at the present time. At the suggestion of Lamar Sprinkle, Byron McClure agreed to combine information from the 1992 Land Use Plan and the High Impact Use component of the Visions 2025 Committee zoning ordinance prepared in 2001.

NEW BUSINESS:

As the final order of business, Susan Ervin gave a presentation on behalf of concerned resident Ben Brown. Both Mr. Brown and Ms. Ervin made a case for the Board's need to gather public input during any future planning process. She urged the entire Board to devise a system to involve the public initially in order to solicit input. A lengthy debate ensued. A number of Board members felt that the Planning Board should wait for the time when they had a specific issue such as high impact uses to present to the public. At least one member was fearful that going to the public without an item to discuss would look like the Board had an agenda. In the end, many members agreed that it would be acceptable for Ms. Ervin to spearhead a committee effort to consult and collect information about public meetings and bring those recommendations to the Planning Board as a whole. Chairman Beale added that Susan could appoint members from within as well as outside the membership of the Board.

With no further business, Chairman Beale adjourned the meeting.

Clerk/Secretary

Chairman Ronnie Beale