

MACON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MAY 17, 2011 – 6 P.M.
CONTINUED SESSION
MINUTES

Chairman McClellan convened the meeting at 6 p.m. in the Commissioners' Boardroom on the third floor of the courthouse as recessed from the May 13th meeting. All Board Members, the County Manager, Deputy Clerk, County Attorney, members of the news media and interested citizens were present.

Due to the large number of people in attendance, Chairman McClellan informed the group that the meeting would be moved to Courtroom A on the fourth floor of the courthouse following the invocation and the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

INVOCATION: Commissioner Beale gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: The pledge to the flag was recited.

Chairman McClellan recessed the meeting and the board reconvened in Courtroom A.

PUBLIC HEARING ON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: Chairman McClellan opened the public hearing on the proposed Macon County Comprehensive Plan by explaining that 13 individuals had signed up to speak, and that each would be granted five minutes for comments. He reminded the speakers to be respectful, to keep their comments specific to the plan and that the board members "were not here to enter into debate." He also noted that the board would meet on May 31st to discuss the plan, but would not entertain public comment at that meeting.

Loretta Newton expressed her concerns with parts of the plan, asking the board to strike all references to zoning and steep slopes, as she was opposed to those types of regulations.

Bill Crawford, representing the Western North Carolina Alliance, said that the plan is moderate and described it as a thoughtful look at the future, adding that he supports and commends the plan.

Margaret Ramsey urged the board to adopt the plan, saying that there has to be some private sacrifice for public good and that the plan will provide a roadmap for the future.

Don Swanson noted that people are very protective of their property rights and that 164 pages (the length of the plan) is overdoing it, and suggested that the county can do better. He also expressed his concern that a plan mystically turns into an ordinance.

Vic Drummond asked the board not to rush the approval process, and said Jackson County's plan offered a stark contrast to Macon's in that it did not provide specific recommendations. He said that Macon's has too many goals and objectives and he also questioned some of the data and projections.

Alan Allman questioned the requirement for having to approve the plan, and he also debated the issue of the comprehensive plan being tied directly to a comprehensive transportation plan in terms of receiving state funding for roads, saying he could not find that requirement in the general statutes.

Kathy Tinsley praised the foresight and responsibility shown in the development of the plan and urged the board to adopt it, calling it a strong, brave step in the right direction.

Bill Vernon told the board that while he supports planning, this plan contains pages and pages of recommendations that he believes are chock full of hidden agendas, and he asked the board to do a bare bones plan, stating that the last thing we need is a bunch more regulations.

Sharon Taylor, who served on one of the subcommittees that helped develop the plan, said she supported all of the work that went into its creation and asked the board to adopt the plan and let it serve as a guideline.

Paul Carlson said the plan offers a framework, that it is neither obligatory nor regulatory, but instead is a vision based on values, and urged the board to adopt it.

Dwight Vinson said that in reading the plan, he found some things that were good and some that were troubling, and that we don't need any help in limiting development. He also said that the data used in the plan was skewed and urged the board to send the plan back for review.

Stacy Guffey expressed his thanks to all those involved in the process and noted that a comprehensive plan brings many things together. He encouraged the board to honor the will of the majority and to adopt the plan.

Al Slagle said that he had served on the planning board during the plan's development, and that the plan contained no mention of zoning, had no regulatory authority, but mapped out where we hope to be tomorrow. Noting he was skeptical at first, he said he now viewed the plan as the right thing to do and asked the board to adopt it.

Chairman McClellan thanked everyone for attending and said the board would recess until May 31st at 6 p.m. at which time the board would review and consider the plan. He reminded those in attendance that the plan was available on the county's website and at various locations throughout the county. Commissioner Corbin also noted that the county website has a separate document containing only the plan's recommendations.

RECESS: By consensus the board agreed to recess the meeting until May 31, 2011 at 6 p.m. in the Commission Boardroom on the third floor of the Macon County Courthouse.

Jack Horton, County Manager
Clerk to the Board

Brian McClellan
Board Chairman