

HABERSHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
6:00 P.M., MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2025
HABERSHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE
JURY ASSEMBLY ROOM
295 LLEWELLYN ST, CLARKESVILLE, GA 30523

The Habersham County Board of Commissioners held a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, December 15, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Jury Assembly Room of the Habersham County Courthouse located at 295 Llewellyn St, Clarkesville, GA 30523.

Present was Chairman Jimmy Tench, Vice Chairman Bruce Harkness, Commissioner Dustin Mealor, Commissioner Ty Akins, Commissioner Kelly Woodall, County Manager Tim Sims, County Attorney Angela Davis, County Clerk Brandalin Carnes, staff, members of the media and the public.

Commissioner Tench called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Commissioner Woodall led the Invocation.

Commissioner Akins led the Pledge of Allegiance

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Akins, seconded by Commissioner Mealor, and voted unanimously (5-0) to adopt the agenda as presented.

PRESENTATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- a. Employee Spotlight: Patty Lee (Fleet Maintenance)
- b. County Offices Closed December 24th, 25th and 26th for Christmas Holiday. Landfill Open from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on December 24th and Closed December 25th.
- c. County Offices and Landfill Closed January 1st for New Year's Day
- d. County Offices and Landfill Closed January 19th for Martin Luther King Day
- e. The next Board of Commissioners meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 20th due to the Martin Luther King Day Holiday.

PUBLIC HEARING:

- a. CU-25-05: Application by Greenworks Solutions, LLC for Conditional Use of 29.52 Acres Located at 1022 Alto Mud Creek Rd (Parcel 055 043) for Purpose of a C&D Transfer Station and Recycling Center

Planning Director Mike Beecham addressed the Commission. He presented the application submitted by Greenworks Solutions, LLC for conditional use of 29.52 acres located at 1022 Alto Mud Creek Road (Parcel 055 043). The applicant, represented by Joey Cox, seeks approval to operate a construction and demolition (C&D) waste transfer station and recycling center on property currently owned by T&S Hardwoods. The parcel has most recently been used as a utility storage site and was previously utilized by T&S Hardwoods to process logs into mulch.

Mr. Beecham explained that the proposed facility would consist of a 10,000 square-foot-enclosed building where all C&D materials would be brought in by truck, dumped inside, sorted, and separated. Recyclable materials such as wood, metal, glass, and concrete would be set aside for later transport, while non-recyclable

materials would be compacted and hauled away daily to a landfill in Ball Ground, Georgia. He emphasized that municipal solid waste would not be accepted at this facility. All operations would occur within the building and in compliance with Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) regulations, including quarterly tonnage reporting and water sampling performed by a third-party environmental consultant. Trucks entering and exiting the site would be weighed, and fees would be calculated based on weight.

The property is located in a rural area surrounded by single-family residences and agricultural land but is also in close proximity (approximately 450 feet) to Highway 365. Mr. Beecham noted that adjacent and nearby properties have recently been rezoned for high-intensity and industrial use. The property directly across the road was rezoned to High Intensity District roughly one year ago, and the land to the north was annexed into the City of Baldwin in 2021 and zoned as industrial. This part of the county is expected to continue seeing industrial and commercial growth, consistent with the county's long-range plans.

Mr. Beecham explained that the application was previously reviewed by the Planning Commission. At that meeting, several citizens spoke in opposition to the proposal, citing concerns about truck traffic, potential noise, dust, water runoff, and the environmental impact on the nearby stream. In response, the applicant explained that overall truck traffic would be significantly less than when the site was operated by T&S Hardwoods. They also expressed willingness to pave portions of the drive to reduce dust, follow all EPD requirements for water quality, and ensure that trash is not stored overnight on-site. The applicant also agreed to standard operating hours and to maintain a vegetative buffer. Despite this, the Planning Commission ultimately recommended denial of the request, primarily due to concerns about trucks having to make U-turns to head south from the right-in/right-out intersection.

Following Mr. Beecham's presentation, Commissioner Woodall asked whether the trucks would be full tractor-trailers. Mr. Beecham responded that trucks leaving the facility would generally be full-size tractor-trailers, while inbound trucks would vary in size. Chairman Tench expressed concern about potential discrepancies in the property lines shown on qPublic maps. Mr. Beecham clarified that those maps are only general representations and that final boundary determinations would be the responsibility of the surveyor and title attorney.

County Attorney Angela Davis invited the applicant's representative, Mr. Derek Corbitt of Atlanta, Georgia, to address the Commission.

Mr. Corbitt began by stating that the proposed facility was conceived in response to a need in the community. He explained that they were informed by residents and business owners that the county landfill no longer accepts C&D waste, and that there is currently no local solution. Greenworks Solutions has over 35 years of experience in the recycling and transfer station industry. He acknowledged that not every company in the industry has operated responsibly, but stated that Greenworks intends to prove its commitment to doing things properly. He noted that they had already purchased the land and plan to invest in the community. Mr. Corbitt used the example of the Shell station currently being demolished in the area, explaining that the project would likely generate 15 to 20 tons of C&D waste, which currently must be hauled out of the county. This increases costs for local businesses and residents. He emphasized that all waste would be brought into the facility, separated inside the building, and that no trash would be stored overnight. The recyclable materials would be stored in commodity piles while compacted waste would be hauled away each day. All of their facilities operate under Georgia EPD guidelines, and they employ independent environmental consultants to ensure compliance. He also addressed traffic concerns, stating that past use by T&S Hardwoods involved 40 or more log trucks per day. In contrast, the proposed operation would see only four or five large trucks hauling waste out per day, which he argued would be a significant reduction in traffic impact. He added that hours of operation would be consistent with those of the county landfill and that their goal is to be a good neighbor.

Attorney Davis opened the floor to anyone else who wished to speak in support of the application. There were no others who wished to come forward to speak in favor.

Attorney Davis opened the floor to those who wished to speak in opposition of the application.

Mr. John Benfield, who owns properties at 1140 and 922 Alto Mud Creek Road, spoke in opposition to the application. He stated that past activities on the site included overnight operations and the removal of a tree buffer, though some of the trees have since grown back. He expressed concern about the staff report's conclusion that nearby property values would not be negatively affected. He strongly disagreed with that assessment and noted that selling his two homes next to a recycling center would be extremely difficult. He also described traffic challenges in the area and stated that heavy truck traffic would worsen the situation, especially given the right-turn-only exit onto Highway 365. He noted that previous discussions about alternate traffic routes involved detouring to a traffic light near Duncan Bridge Road, which is already heavily congested and sometimes backed up to the BC Grant intersection.

David McCord, who resides at 363 Canyon Point in Demorest, also spoke in opposition. Drawing from his experience working in recycling facilities as a law enforcement officer supervising inmates, Mr. McCord described the odor and poor conditions in such environments. He argued that this project would bring increased crime and safety issues and warned the Commission against viewing the matter solely as a business decision. He emphasized that the people living in the area call it home, not a business venture. He called on the Commissioners to act as gatekeepers for the county and questioned whether runoff could truly be contained if waste was being dumped and processed on a concrete slab.

Clance Scroggs, a retired Fieldale employee and owner of a nearby property at 516 Alto Mud Creek Rd, spoke about the environmental sensitivity of the stream near the site. He said there was no way to prevent eventual contamination, no matter how many precautions were taken. He was particularly concerned about the proximity of the project to the stream and warned that buffers would not be sufficient. He also anticipated increased traffic despite the applicant's assertions to the contrary. He predicted that if approved, the use of the property would likely shift toward industrial zoning in the future, and he urged the Commission to consider the long-term impact of placing this type of facility near residential areas.

Kimberly Daily, resident of nearby property at 160 Luthi Rd, shared similar concerns. She said that property taxes and home values in the area had already been negatively affected by surrounding development and that the introduction of a recycling facility would worsen the problem. She hears frequent accidents along the corridor and believes this facility would only increase the danger. She also mentioned the environmental impact, citing a stream running behind her property and concerns about habitat loss for deer and other wildlife.

Attorney Davis provided the representative of the applicant, Mr. Corbitt, an opportunity to offer a rebuttal. Mr. Corbitt reiterated that traffic would be lighter than during the property's previous use. He emphasized that this is a recycling center, not a landfill, and that the waste handled would be dry construction and demolition materials—not municipal garbage. He stated that concerns about crime were unfounded and explained again that the operation would be enclosed, regulated, and professionally managed. He also reaffirmed that Greenworks intends to be a good neighbor and that they chose this site because it is located within the county's industrial/commercial growth area as outlined in the comprehensive plan.

Commissioner Akins asked Mr. Corbitt whether the facility would have a concrete floor and whether it would include provisions for spill containment. Mr. Corbitt confirmed that the facility would include a built-in containment area. Commissioner Akins also asked for confirmation of the proposed hours of operation, and Mr. Corbitt agreed to the standard hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on weekdays and 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays, with no Sunday operations. Mr. Corbitt also agreed to install a vegetative buffer on the property.

Commissioner Harkness inquired about liability and insurance. Mr. Corbitt stated that their operations are bonded and insured and that contracted haulers would also be required to carry adequate insurance. He assured the Commission that Greenworks would be liable for any issues caused by third-party haulers. Commissioner Harkness also asked whether they planned to take steps to preserve the stream. Mr. Corbitt responded that once they closed on the property, they would bring in their environmental consultants to assess the stream and ensure compliance with EPD requirements, including quarterly water sampling. When asked about traffic flow, he noted that although U-turns might be necessary for southbound haulers, the number of trucks making those turns would be limited to approximately four per day.

Commissioner Woodall asked how many similar operations the company currently runs. Mr. Corbitt responded that they operate several facilities in the metro Atlanta area, with the closest located in Hall County. He noted that they regularly inspect trucks before they leave their facilities to ensure that no hazardous materials have been accidentally picked up.

Chairman Tench expressed concern about the environmental impact, particularly related to the stream and wetlands that run behind the property and near his own land.

Motion by Commissioner Akins, seconded by Commissioner Mealor, to approve with the following conditions:

- 1) Hours of operations shall be limited to the following:
 - 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday
 - 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday
 - Closed on Sunday
- 2) Requirement of 25-foot undisturbed vegetative buffer on the southeast portion of the property along the border of property owned by John Benfield. The undisturbed vegetative buffer may be disturbed for the sole purpose of adding additional screening, which must include trees at least 6 feet high upon planting for visual screening and which shall be spaced to be impervious to sight or a 6-foot-high privacy fence.
- 3) Undisturbed 50-foot buffer from all streams, and compliance with all County and EPD water and drainage requirements.

Motion carried 4-1 with Commissioner Tench dissenting.

- b. Reading and Adoption of a Fireworks Permit Ordinance Regulating the Public Exhibition or Display of Fireworks in Habersham County; to Establish Prohibited Locations of Fireworks; and for Other Purposes

Emergency Services Director Jeff Adams addressed the Commission to present a proposed ordinance regulating the public exhibition or display of fireworks in Habersham County. He explained that the purpose of the ordinance is to establish a permitting process for fireworks used in public, commercial displays. This process would provide Habersham County Emergency Services with advance notice of fireworks events, allowing for appropriate planning and preparedness to ensure public safety.

Director Adams clarified that this ordinance would apply only to public fireworks displays and would not affect personal, private use of fireworks by individuals. Under Georgia law, specifically O.C.G.A. § 25-10-4(a), local governments are permitted to regulate public fireworks displays and to require permits for such events. The ordinance also outlines prohibited locations for displays in order to protect the health and safety of the public and emergency responders.

Adams noted that the State Insurance Commissioner requires companies providing pyrotechnic displays to be licensed, and this local ordinance would complement that requirement by ensuring that public displays within Habersham County are appropriately permitted and staffed.

Commissioner Harkness asked whether the cities within the county already had their own ordinances addressing fireworks. Director Adams responded that most of the cities do not, and that his department is currently working with the City of Demorest to coordinate planning for their next Fourth of July event. Harkness followed up by asking whether municipalities could adopt this county ordinance for their own use, to which Adams replied that they could.

Commissioner Harkness also inquired about the financial impact on citizens and event organizers. Adams stated that the cost would be minimal. There would be a \$100 application fee for the permit, and any additional costs for staffing by fire personnel would be kept reasonable. Commissioner Woodall asked whether there are currently any fireworks displays held in the unincorporated areas of the county. Adams replied that there are not, but that this ordinance would lay the groundwork for regulating any future displays that may arise.

County Attorney Angela Davis invited those who were in favor of the ordinance to address the Commission. There were none.

County Attorney Angela Davis invited those who were in opposition to the ordinance to address the Commission. There were none.

Motion by Commissioner Mealor, seconded by Commissioner Woodall, and voted 5-0 to approve.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mr. David McCord, residing at 363 Canyon Point in Demorest, addressed the Board with concerns regarding the future development of Habersham County. He began by reminding the Commission of their role as “gatekeepers” of the county and emphasized the importance of preserving the county’s character rather than pursuing revenue at the expense of long-term community well-being. Quoting scripture, he noted that “the love of money is the root of all evil” and urged the Board not to prioritize financial gain over residents’ quality of life. Mr. McCord expressed disappointment in the Commission’s decision earlier in the meeting to approve a conditional use permit despite significant public opposition. He questioned whether the proposed development could truly prevent environmental harm, particularly with regard to potential runoff. He spoke about the unique nature of Habersham County, calling it a “sleeper county” where people from all backgrounds—including those seeking a peaceful life—choose to raise families. He concluded by encouraging the Commission to act with vigilance and integrity, warning against inaction in the face of possible harm to the community.

In response, Commissioner Bruce Harkness expressed appreciation for Mr. McCord’s remarks and shared his personal connection to Habersham County, noting that his family has lived in the area since 1783. He recounted that his seventh great-grandfather was granted land in the region and that a family member was killed by Creek Indians and buried along the Tallulah River. Commissioner Harkness used this personal history to underscore his deep commitment to the county and affirmed that he and his fellow commissioners serve with seriousness and care.

Commissioner Kelly Woodall echoed this sentiment and remarked that the Commission had recently met to discuss the county’s Unified Development Code. He noted that the Board continually works to balance individual property rights with the broader interest of preserving Habersham County’s rural character. He emphasized that the county benefits from a diverse population, and while the Commission is mindful of

individual freedoms, it is also responsible for making decisions that serve the long-term interests of the community.

Mr. Mack Palmer, residing at 11150 Mack Eller Road, also addressed the Board. A sixth-generation resident of Habersham County, Mr. Palmer expressed concern about proposed revisions to the Development Code that would require larger minimum lot sizes in certain areas. Specifically, he opposed dividing the county into northern and southern zoning areas with differing requirements, such as two-acre or ten-acre minimum lots. Mr. Palmer explained that he and his fiancée had intended to purchase land in the northern part of the county to divide into five-acre parcels for their children, a plan that would be precluded under the proposed changes. He also cited the case of a neighbor who would similarly be affected. Mr. Palmer argued that such requirements would not deter growth but would instead make it more difficult for long-term residents and working families to remain in the county. He warned that this would ultimately turn Habersham County into a “retreat for the wealthy,” forcing out local families who can no longer afford to live there.

Commissioner Ty Akins thanked Mr. Palmer for his comments and clarified that the intent of the proposed Development Code revisions was not to target residents like Mr. Palmer. Rather, the goal was to discourage dense subdivision development by outside developers and to maintain the rural character of the county. Commissioner Akins emphasized that the Board is working to strike a fair balance between individual property rights and responsible land use planning.

Mr. Bruce Palmer, residing at 1615 Blair Road in Mt. Airy, also addressed the Board, reinforcing the concerns expressed by the previous speaker. Mr. Palmer shared that his family had lived in Habersham County since before it was officially formed, when the area was still Indian territory. He strongly opposed proposals to increase minimum lot sizes, arguing that a shift from one-acre to two-acre lots could raise housing prices by approximately 25 percent, making homeownership increasingly out of reach for local residents. He also expressed concern over proposals for ten-acre minimums, stating that such restrictions would severely limit housing affordability and accessibility. Mr. Palmer referenced a national magazine naming Clarkesville one of the top retirement destinations, and while he acknowledged that newcomers have added value to the community, he argued that many place a strain on public resources while contributing less to the local workforce. He took issue with the term “gatekeepers,” stating that this mindset did not reflect the inclusive community in which he was raised. Mr. Palmer urged the Board to consider how their decisions would impact not only current residents but also future generations, emphasizing that many families—including the families of those currently serving on the Commission—might not have been able to afford ten-acre lots under the proposed

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motion by Commissioner Woodall, seconded by Commissioner Harkness, and voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the consent agenda as presented

- a. Consider/Approve Minutes of November 17, 2025 Regular Meeting
- b. Consider/Approve Minutes of November 17, 2025 Executive Session
- c. Consider/Approve Resolution 2025-12-001 Setting 2026 Qualifying Fees
- d. Consider/Approve Resolution 2025-12-002 Establishing Fees for Services Performed by the Fire Department in Connection to Firework Ordinance

- e. Consider/Approve Georgia DHS Coordinated Transportation Services Agreement for FY 2026 with Verida, Inc.
- f. Consider/Approve FY 2026 Contract with Legacy Link for Nutrition, Wellness and Transportation Services for Senior Center
- g. Consider/Approve Tyler Technologies Contract Amendment and Addendum to Include RMS and JMS for Public Safety and Authorize Chairman to Sign all Necessary Documents
- h. Consider/Approve Standardized Fairgrounds Rental Agreement Template as to Form
- i. Consider/Approve Applications for Alcohol License Issuance/Renewals for:
 - 1. AATV 2017 LLC (dba Cool Springs Exxon) Located at 2059 Cool Springs Rd in Clarkesville for Malt Beverage and Wine Package Sales
 - 2. Clarkesville 1384 LLC (dba Chevron Food Mart) Located at 1384 Tom Born Rd in Clarkesville for Malt Beverage and Wine Package Sales
 - 3. Smitnick 4221 LLC (dba Duncan Bridge Market) Located at 4221 Level Grove Rd in Cornelia for Malt Beverage and Wine Package Sales
 - 4. Demorest Business LLC Located at 2368 Hwy 115 in Demorest for Malt Beverage and Wine Package Sales
 - 5. Batesville Junction Store Located at 13440 Hwy 197 N in Clarkesville for Malt Beverage and Wine Package Sales
 - 6. D and G 2024 Inc (dba Riverbend Store) Located at 1941 Hwy 105 in Demorest for Malt Beverage and Wine Package Sales

REPORTS:

- a. County Manager's Report: Tim Sims, County Manager
- b. Update on New Radio System: Melanie Bellinger, Interim E911/EMA Director and Tom Priddy, Radio System Administrator

APPOINTMENTS:

Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities Region 1 Advisory Council

3- Year Term Ending 11/30/2027

- 1. Jeremy Noles (Resignation- Term Expires 11/30/2027) At-Large Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Akins, seconded by Commissioner Mealor, and voted unanimously (5-0) to appoint Crystal Gibbs to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Region 1 Advisory Council.

Library Board

Remainder of 3- Year Term Ending 06/30/2027

1. Bridget Enfinger (Resignation- Term Expires 06/30/2027) At-Large Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Woodall, seconded by Commissioner Harkness, and voted unanimously (5-0) to appoint Tina Cheek (Tanner) to the Habersham County Library Board.

Planning Commission

3- Year Term Ending 12/31/2028

1. Jason Smith (Term Expiration) Commissioner Mealor's Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Melor, seconded by Commissioner Akins, and voted unanimously (5-0) to reappoint Jason Smith to the Planning Commission.

2. Richard Thornton (Term Expiration) Commissioner Woodall's Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Woodall, seconded by Commissioner Tench, and voted unanimously (5-0) to appoint Paul "Mike" Roberts to the Planning Commission.

3. Jim Kiger (Term Expiration) Commissioner Tench's Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Tench, seconded by Commissioner Harkness, and voted unanimously (5-0) to appoint Ronald Lewallen to the Planning Commission.

Recreation Advisory Board

3- Year Term Ending 12/31/2028

1. Peggy Fortson (Term Expiration) Commissioner Akins' Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Akins, seconded by Commissioner Mealor, and voted unanimously (5-0) to reappoint Peggy Fortson to the Recreation Advisory Board.

2. Keith Deyton (Term Expiration) At-Large Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Mealor, seconded by Commissioner Woodall, and voted unanimously (5-0) to reappoint Keith Deyton to the Recreation Advisory Board.

3. Jonathan Long (Term Expiration) At-Large Appointment (Need Nomination from School Board)

Motion by Commissioner Akins, seconded by Commissioner Harkness, and voted unanimously (5-0) to reappoint Jonathan Long to the Recreation Advisory Board.

Chestatee-Chattahoochee Resource & Conservation Development Council

1- Year Term Ending 12/31/2026

1. Bruce Palmer (Term Expiration)- At-Large Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Akins, seconded by Commissioner Mealor, to reappoint Bruce Palmer to the Chestatee-Chattahoochee Resource & Conservation Development Council. Motion carried 4-1 with Commissioner Tench dissenting.

2. Lynne Dockery (Term Expiration)- At-Large Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Harkness, seconded by Commissioner Akins, and voted unanimously (5-0) to appoint John Hagardorn to the Chestatee-Chattahoochee Resource & Conservation Development Council.

Board of Tax Assessors

3- Year Term Ending 12/31/2028

1. Anne (Denise) Schuler York (Term Expiration)- Commissioner Woodall's Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Woodall, seconded by Commissioner Harkness, and voted unanimously (5-0) to appoint Kenneth Berry to the Board of Tax Assessors.

2. Bill Terry (Term Expiration)- Commissioner Akin's Appointment

Motion by Commissioner Akins, seconded by Commissioner Harkness, to reappoint Bill Terry to the Board of Tax Assessors. Motion carried 4-1 with Commissioner Tench dissenting.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

- a. Consider/Approve Resolution 2025-12-003 Authorizing Annual Pay Supplement of \$20,000 for Sheriff Robin Krockum

Sheriff Robin Krockum addressed the Commission. The Board of Commissioners is authorized under O.C.G.A 15-16-20 to supplement the state mandated compensation for the Sheriff and other elected officials. Sheriff Krockum is requesting a \$20,000 annual supplement in consideration of compensation levels, retirement plan options, departmental responsibilities, and the statutory structure that governs compensation for elected sheriffs in Georgia.

Commissioner Woodall inquired whether it was included in the budget. Sheriff Krockum indicated it was not but believed it could be absorbed.

Commissioner Tench asked whether this might set precedent for other officers. Commissioner Harkness noted that other constitutional officers, including the Tax Commissioner and Probate Judge, had already received similar supplements this year.

Motion by Commissioner Akins, seconded by Commissioner Woodall, and voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the \$20,000 salary supplement for Sheriff Robin Krockum.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Commissioner Dustin Mealor began by urging everyone in the community to check in on their friends and family during the winter season, particularly around the holidays. He shared a deeply personal story about a close friend who took his own life during this time of year, noting that seasonal depression can often go

unnoticed. He encouraged citizens to stay connected and make sure their loved ones are doing okay, emphasizing that a simple check-in can make a major difference in someone's life.

Commissioner Ty Akins wished everyone a Merry Christmas and said he looked forward to spending time with his family, especially his grandchildren. He also addressed comments and concerns raised earlier in the meeting regarding the construction and demolition (C&D) waste facility and the County's comprehensive plan. He clarified that Habersham County had a C&D facility for many years, but the county eventually discontinued the service because C&D materials were taking up valuable space in the landfill designated for municipal solid waste (MSW). Akins noted that the Board had previously explored bringing in a third party to provide C&D services, but those efforts had not materialized. He emphasized that decisions like the one made earlier that evening are grounded in the county's comprehensive plan, which was shaped by input from citizens. Akins stated that the community has consistently voiced support for preserving the rural nature of the county, especially in the northern areas, and has expressed a desire for cities to absorb most of the growth. He added that the comprehensive plan identifies the Highway 365 corridor as the appropriate location for future industrial and commercial development. He acknowledged that such decisions are difficult but reiterated that the Commission is committed to following the long-term vision established by the community.

Commissioner Bruce Harkness followed by expressing his appreciation for his fellow commissioners and their service over the past year. He reflected on the nature of public service and shared a spiritual perspective, referencing that Jesus Christ never traveled more than 30 miles from Bethlehem during his life, yet had the greatest impact in human history. He likened this to the power of local service and the importance of caring for one's community. Harkness stated that what makes Habersham County special is its people, and he considers it a privilege to serve them. He closed by aligning himself with Commissioner Akins' comments, saying that when he was re-elected the previous year, many constituents from Mount Airy, Demorest, and northern Habersham County urged the Board to protect the rural character and cultural heritage of the area. He emphasized the need to safeguard that identity for future generations.

Commissioner Kelly Woodall added his own personal reflections, saying that although he only moved to Habersham County in 2005, he has strong family roots in the area. He shared that he is a father to two young boys, ages 10 and 12, and that seeing Christmas through their eyes brings back the wonder and joy of the holiday season. Woodall also spoke about the motivations behind public service, encouraging others to always act out of love. He said that love means being willing to do anything to change the ending of someone else's story, and he encouraged both the public and his fellow commissioners to check their motives regularly and ensure their actions are guided by compassion and care for others.

~~EXECUTIVE SESSION (IF NEEDED)~~ There was no executive session held at this meeting as none was needed.

ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Akins, seconded by Commissioner Mealor, and voted unanimously (5-0) to adjourn the meeting at 8:02 a.m..

Respectfully Submitted,

By: _____
Jimmy Tench, Commission Chairman

Attest: _____
Brandalin Carnes, County Clerk