

Habersham County Development Authority
Wednesday, March 1, 2023 @ 1:00 pm
Executive Conference Room
130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA 30523

Members Present: Gail Thaxton, Bill Duff, Allen Whitener, Jeff Bruns

Members Not Present: Bryan Ferguson, Kelly Woodall

Others Present: County staff, Members of the Public and Media

Call to Order and Invocation

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm and invocation given by Gail Thaxton.

Approval of Agenda

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, SECONDED by Bill Duff, and voted unanimously to amend the agenda to add "Approval of Minutes from February 15, 2023 Special Called Meeting". A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Bill Duff, and voted unanimously to amend the agenda to add "Executive Session". The amended agenda was approved by consensus.

Approval of Minutes

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, SECONDED by Bill Duff, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 2, 2023 regular meeting.

A MOTION was made by Allen Whitener, SECONDED by Jeff Bruns, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 15, 2023 Special Called Meeting.

Monthly Activity Report

Alicia Vaughn presented the Monthly Activity and Financial report. February YTD represents 66.7% of the Fiscal Year. Current revenues are 149% and expenditures are 8.6%. Total account balances equal \$1,393,415. The balance includes funds received from the recent sales of pads 3, 5 and 7.

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, SECONDED by Bill Duff, and voted unanimously to approve the monthly financial report as presented.

Old Business

Airport Business Park Update – Charlie introduced James Irvin, engineer, who made a presentation of preliminary plans for grading pad 10, which was previously pads 10 and 11 but were later combined. The plans include contours to allow for drainage. There is excess dirt on the pad. The airport was originally planning to use this excess dirt but only took a small amount. There are about 10 acres of usable land on pad 10. It has steep slopes around the parcel as well as a detention pond. The detention pond is larger than was originally planned. He said one issue is that the road is much lower than the elevation of the pad. Mr. Irvin said that the interested party of pad 10 only needs a portion of the pad, so he suggested that the parcel be split back into two parcels. The excess dirt at the site could be utilized by making the elevation of the top pad higher than the bottom pad with a slope to split the two. Georgia Power also has new guidelines that storm ponds are not allowed in their easement areas. If divided into 2 lots, the elevation of one pad will be higher than the other. We would need to add an additional storm

drain line at the higher elevation, but it would drain into the existing pond. Jeff Bruns asked how much usable land we would lose by splitting the parcel, and Dr. Thaxton asked how splitting the parcel would affect possible building size. Mr. Irvin said there would be more usable area around the perimeter, but we would lose some area by adding the slope between the parcels. He said the earth work would be more efficient if the pads were split. Mike Beecham said he thought we had given part of the pad to Windstream. Mr. Irvin explained that Windstream formerly owned a “triangle” that came into the property that was used as a ball field. The county acquired that piece of the property from Windstream in exchange for a similar sized area on the north end of pad 10. It was a “like for like” exchange. Jeff Bruns asked if this property is graded and ready for sale? Mr. Irvin said it is not currently graded for any kind of use. He then asked if we would make more money if we sold the property as one larger parcel that was ungraded? Charlie Fiveash said it would depend on the demand and that frequently 2 smaller parcels will bring a higher price than one larger parcel. Mr. Irvin said that the property could be sold ungraded, and that if the buyer or developer are in a hurry to start construction, it would probably be better if the property was raw because otherwise the county would have to get a land disturbance permit and approval from Baldwin, and the buyer would also have to get a land disturbance permit from Baldwin, which would double the permitting time. Wade Rhodes said he has a potential buyer for “pad 11” but that prospect only needs about 4 acres. The price per acre that Wade gave the potential buyer of \$59,500 included rough grading and retention, so that price would be less if the property was sold ungraded. Mr. Irvin said some of the grading work would still need to be done by the county. Mr. Irvin also discussed Phase 2 (Reed property). He provided a preliminary layout of the property with a mix of building and pad sizes. The drawing included 3 roads – the main road would be off Duncan Bridge Road, a second road would come off Industrial Park Road to access parcels with an elevation difference, and a third road connecting to Pyratich Drive. Steelcell could be approached to cover part of the cost of the third road since it would also be accessible to their new proposed building. Charlie added that there is a huge elevation difference between two of the pads in that area so the additional road would be necessary. Mr. Irvin designed phase 2 to be “fluid” for various potential buyers’ needs. Mr. Irvin asked Charlie if he still needs a pricing plan for the cul-de-sac road. Charlie suggested building out the roads in phases. Jeff Bruns asked which area should be done first? Mr. Irvin said because Steelcell will need to build their road for construction of their new building, the Pyratich Drive area may be the best area to start first by tying into their road. We need to have a discussion with Steelcell regarding their timeline and their plans for the road. Commissioner Bruce Palmer said that the cost of building the lower road off Industrial Drive would be more expensive because the road will cross the creek and will need a culvert and/or bridge. Dr. Thaxton said the discussion with Steelcell needs to happen soon, before the Development Authority makes any firm decisions to move forward.

Charlie visited Mr. Higgins last week in lieu of sending a letter. Charlie spoke with D. Higgins about the progress of the building. D. said they are waiting on electrical panels as well as asphalt/concrete for the truck court and parking areas. The construction has passed the one-year deadline. Charlie asked the board if they wanted to have a letter sent to Mr. Higgins. Bill Duff said it would be a good thing to document the situation by sending a letter. Jeff Bruns agreed with Bill. Charlie said he will work with Janney on getting a letter drafted. Charlie has a letter in hand to be hand-delivered to owners and occupants of the business park to inform them that we are putting in place a management agreement for maintenance and common area usage costs. The letter will also inform the owners that they need to put together their own management group and form an association among themselves.

Courthouse Redevelopment Update – The RFQ deadline has been extended to allow other prospects time to submit proposals. Two representatives each from the Development Authority, County, and City of Clarksville met last week and had a good meeting and cleared up some misunderstandings.

Clarkesville was concerned that a developer would want to put apartments on the old courthouse property, and they don't feel like their infrastructure could handle more apartments. Clarkesville currently has a moratorium on apartments. Charlie feels like the three entities will be able to work together toward a common goal. Alicia Vaughn added that there needs to be more discussion with Clarkesville regarding their infrastructure needs. There could be economic development/infrastructure grants available that the county and Clarkesville could apply for jointly to help pay for upgrading the infrastructure. Dr. Thaxton asked how long the moratorium on apartments will be in place? Alicia said that question should be answered after the follow-up meeting with Clarkesville. If they plan to keep the moratorium in place, the RFQ will need to be amended to remove that potential use. It wouldn't be fair to have prospects spending a lot of time developing a proposal for apartments if they won't be allowed. Charlie asked if the DA should accept bids for demolition of the existing building? He feels that would be the most prudent plan. Alicia said that decision would need to be made by the BOC.

Other Property Updates – None

New Business

Consider/Approve Second Amendment and Second Supplemental Bond Resolution to extend the deadline for the Piedmont University 2013 bond for 90 days – Benjamin Brooks from the law firm SGR representing Piedmont University and Brant Wright, Senior VP of Administration and Finance for Piedmont University were in attendance. Mr. Wright explained the background of the original \$10 million bond issued in 2013. The money helped build the new Student Commons area which includes the bookstore. Mr. Brooks said that Piedmont University and SGR are currently working on refinancing the loan with South State Bank, but they need another 90 days to complete that process. The current bond expires today, March 1. The bond is held with South State Bank and has a current balance of approximately \$5.6 million. They are wanting to do a long-term loan to finance the balance. They plan to attend the April 6th Development Authority meeting to present new documents for the bond agreement on the long-term debt. Once the bond is validated, Piedmont University is prepared to close as soon as possible. Alicia Vaughn asked if they are refinancing only the remaining balance of the bond, or if they are borrowing additional money? Mr. Brooks said they are only refinancing the balance of the existing loan. He said they currently have two other loans with South State Bank that they are considering rolling into the new loan, but no final decisions have been made. Alicia mentioned that the Development Authority did not previously charge the standard 1/8 of 1% for the bond issuance. Janney Sanders responded that the fee is usually waived for non-profits. The Development Authority does not have a current policy in place to charge the fee, and Dr. Thaxton said that is something that needs to be discussed.

A MOTION was made by Bill Duff, seconded by Jeff Bruns, and voted unanimously to approve the Second Amendment and Second Supplemental Bond Resolution to extend the deadline for the Piedmont University 2013 bond for a term of 90 days.

Other Reports - None

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Bill Duff, and voted unanimously to enter executive session at 2:09 p.m.

Executive Session

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Bill Duff, and voted unanimously to exit executive session at 2:37 p.m.

Next Meeting

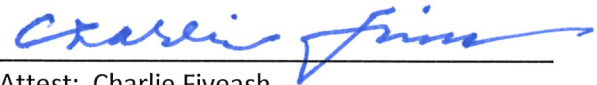
The next regular meeting is Thursday, April 6, 2023 @ 3:30 pm, Habersham County Administration Building.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 2:38 p.m.



Bill Duff, Vice Chair



Attest: Charlie Fiveash