

Habersham County Development Authority
Thursday, April 6, 2023 @ 3:30 pm
Executive Conference Room
130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA 30523

Members Present: Gail Thaxton, Bill Duff, Allen Whitener, Jeff Bruns, Bryan Ferguson, Kelly Woodall (via teleconference), Jim Butterworth (via teleconference)

Members Not Present: None

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

Call to Order and Invocation

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm and invocation given by Gail Thaxton.

Approval of Agenda

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, SECONDED by Jim Butterworth, and voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

Approval of Minutes

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, SECONDED by Bill Duff, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2023 regular meeting and the March 22, 2023 retreat.

Monthly Activity Report

Alicia Vaughn presented the Monthly Activity and Financial report. March YTD represents 75% of the fiscal year. Total revenues equal \$32,843, while current expenditures are \$19,526. Capital outlay expenses total \$30,020 and other revenue sources total \$746,539, which leaves an excess in the amount of \$729,835. Total account balances equal \$1,375,460.63.

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

Old Business

Airport Business Park Update – Charlie Fiveash gave the update. Pad 10 is now under contract. The parcel is about 7.5 buildable acres. The purchaser is a digital company that does bitcoin mining and other digital mining. They are planning to build a 5,000 square foot building and possibly another building. The site will be rough graded and a detention pond built. The buyer will need a pad-ready site for their building. Wade wants to get one grading permit from the City of Baldwin. The permit will include the grading for the building, but the buyer will pay for that portion of the grading. The contract includes two additional 30-day due diligence periods to be used if necessary, because the buyer is still negotiating with the power companies for utilities. Wade also advised that the piece of land that was formerly Windstream is still in the county, so that parcel will need to be annexed. Charlie showed the board a copy of a letter that will be delivered to the tenants of the business park regarding forming a property owners association to cover shared utility and landscaping costs. Dr. Thaxton asked Charlie if there is a timeline for the park tenants taking over the utility costs? Charlie said we could possibly call a meeting in May to get the property owners to the table. Charlie also said the authority needs to be looking at phase 2 (Reed property). Bryan Ferguson said we currently have momentum from the recent

lot sales and that we should move forward with phase 2 and keep the momentum going. Charlie said that James Irvin is working on the site plan, and we will start marketing phase 2 when the site plan is completed. We need to get additional bids to pave the cul-de-sac road. Charlie has reached out to another engineer that was recommended by City of Baldwin so we will have two engineers in case we need a backup. Wade Rhodes stressed the importance of having the road put in before trying to sell lots. Charlie suggested having various lot sizes in phase 2. We are ten miles from the new inland port, and he hopes to get some interest in phase 2 in relation to the inland port.

Courthouse Redevelopment Update – Charlie gave the update. The current RFQ for redevelopment of the courthouse will expire in early May. He is meeting a prospect for a walk-through of the property next week. This prospect would be interested in repurposing the existing building. The hotel group that previously visited the property would be interested in having the old building removed. Charlie said there is also a meeting planned for next week with the City of Clarkesville to discuss plans for the courthouse moving forward. Charlie recommends that the Development Authority issue an RFQ for demolition of the current building, using some of the proceeds from recent pad sales to fund the demolition. Charlie hopes the City of Clarkesville will agree to help share the cost. Jeff Bruns expressed concern that if the Development Authority were forced to choose between tearing down the old courthouse or developing phase 2 of the business park, the business park is the better investment and should be the priority. Alicia Vaughn added that she was not opposed to getting demolition bids, as long as there is a funding source. She cautioned that the Development Authority may not re-coup the cost of demolition. Commission Chairman Ty Akins said he would like to see estimates for demolition. A MOTION was made by Jim Butterworth, SECONDED by Bryan Ferguson, and voted unanimously to recommend issuing an RFP for demolition of the old courthouse to the Board of Commissioners.

Other Property Updates – None

New Business

Confirm/ratify counteroffer to sell Pad 10 – A MOTION was made by Bryan Ferguson, SECONDED by Jeff Bruns, and voted unanimously to approve the contract to sell pad 10 for \$45,000 per buildable acre, with the Development Authority funding rough grading and detention pond.

Other Reports – Dr. Thaxton shared that she, Charlie, Patti, and Alicia met with Alice Venter and Emily Woodmaster with the City of Baldwin to update them on current and future development in the business park. The meeting went well. Dr. Thaxton also reminded the board about the upcoming HC3 meeting on April 19th and the mandatory open records training on April 13th. Charlie added that Phil Sutton Consulting has been helping the EDC with a report on water and sewer infrastructure in the county and municipalities.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting is Thursday, May 4, 2023 @ 3:30 pm, Habersham County Administration Building.

Adjourn

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, SECONDED by Bryan Ferguson, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 4:24 pm.

Bryan Ferguson
~~Bill Duff, Vice Chair~~
Bryan Ferguson, Secretary

Charlie Fiveash
Attest: Charlie Fiveash