

Habersham County Development Authority
Thursday, July 13, 2023 @ 3:30 pm
Executive Conference Room
130 Jacob's Way, Clarkesville, GA 30523

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

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 Jim Butterworth, SECONDED by Bryan Ferguson, and voted unanimously to approve the order of business.

Approval of Minutes

A MOTION was made by Bryan Ferguson, SECONDED by Jim Butterworth, and voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2023 regular meeting.

Monthly Activity Report

Tim Sims presented the Monthly Activity and Financial report. June YTD represents 100% of the Fiscal Year. Current revenues are 149% and expenditures are 13%. Total account balances equal \$1,363,492.

A MOTION was made by Jim Butterworth, SECONDED by Kelly Woodall, and voted unanimously to approve the monthly financial report as presented.

Old Business

Airport Business Park Update – Charlie Fiveash gave the update. The Higgins building is 95% complete, but Charlie knows of no prospects, tenants, etc. It still needs paving in the truck court and parking lot. He feels like the paving could be completed in 30-45 days. Mr. Higgins is well past his deadline for completing the building and obtaining a CO. Jeff Bruns asked for the details of the contract for the Higgins building and expressed his opinion that it is past time to deal with the issue with a strongly worded letter to Mr. Higgins regarding the completion of the building. A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Bill Duff, and voted unanimously to send a letter from Development Authority legal counsel to Don Higgins regarding the construction timeline and requiring a Certificate of Occupancy within 45 days for the building on Pad 8, also mentioning the claw-back provision per the contract.

The group from Commerce pulled the project planned for pads 5 and 7, which was already under pre-lease with Wilson Hutchison. Charlie feels like the owners should be allowed some extra time to begin construction on the spec buildings on those lots since much time was spent on a project that fell through. Wade Rhodes disagreed with Charlie. He said the owners agreed to have spec buildings before the prospect from Commerce was found. It has been approximately 6 months since Wilson Hutchison closed on the purchase of the pads. They still have 6 months to begin construction and then another 12

months to complete construction. Dr. Thaxton agreed that we should push them to begin construction as soon as possible, and that if there are extensions needed later, those could be addressed at that time.

Charlie and Wade have scheduled a meeting for next week at SteelCell to meet with the business owners in the park regarding forming an association to pay for streetlights and landscaping. One of the owners has mentioned to Charlie that the streetlights don't go down as far as their company, which is at the north end of the park. Charlie suggested that the Development Authority adding additional lights may be worth considering. Charlie also mentioned that the new association may want to upgrade the signage in the park. Bryan Ferguson asked if the landscaping contract would be taken over by the association? Charlie said it would be best to work toward turning all the common expenses over to the association. A MOTION was made by Jim Butterworth, seconded by Kelly Woodall, and voted unanimously to bill the Airport Business Park owners for all streetlight utility costs and landscaping costs with the following conditions: a) Fees are the responsibility of the property owner, not the tenant; b) Fees will be billed to the owners for costs incurred from July 1, 2023; c) The expenses will be billed to the owners using a formula based on the total acreage of the lot purchased.

Courthouse Redevelopment Update – Charlie explained that the demolition of the courthouse, and therefore the RFP for redevelopment, is on hold due to the county's application for a grant to help pay for the demo. The grant application requires an environmental study, which will take about 6 weeks to complete. Bryan Ferguson asked if the Development Authority paid the estimated \$471,000 to tear the courthouse down, what would a potential prospect pay for the property? Charlie said it would be worth \$250k-\$500k market value. Wade Rhodes thinks it could sell for \$350k to \$550k per acre without the existing building. Jim Butterworth said that the Development Authority has already taken action on what they want to do with the courthouse, but then he read in the paper that it is on hold by the county because of the grant process. In his opinion, until the county commissioners decide what they want to do, the Development Authority has more important things to do and discuss than the courthouse demolition and redevelopment. Allen Whitener asked if the county could tear the old courthouse down itself, using county equipment and employees? That would not be a viable option due to environmental and other factors.

Other Property Updates – None

New Business

None

Other Reports

Charlie said there has been some discussion about the Development Authority meeting schedule and suggestions have been to move the meetings to the second Thursday of each month for the remainder of 2023. A MOTION was made by Kelly Woodall, seconded by Allen Whitener, and voted unanimously to move the remaining 2023 meetings to the second Thursday of each month.

A MOTION was made by Jeff Bruns, seconded by Bryan Ferguson, and voted unanimously to enter Executive Session at 4:22 p.m.

Executive Session

A MOTION was made by Kelly Woodall, seconded by Bill Duff, and voted unanimously to exit Executive Session at 4:59 p.m.

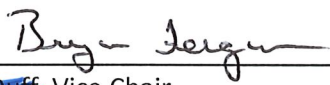
A MOTION was made by Jim Butterworth, seconded by Bryan Ferguson, and voted unanimously to amend the original purchase contract for Pad 10 to reflect the following changes: a) 3.83 acres at \$45,000 per acre; b) Buyer is responsible for permitting and grading; c) Grading cost must be approved by the Development Authority; and d) Development Authority will reimburse the buyer for the approved cost of grading.

Next Meeting

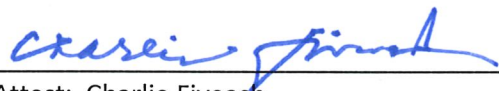
The next regular meeting is Thursday, August 10, 2023 @ 3:30 pm, Habersham County Administration Building.

Adjourn

A MOTION was made by Allen Whitener, SECONDED by Jim Butterworth, and voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 pm.



~~Bill Duff~~, Vice Chair
Bryan Ferguson



Attest: Charlie Fiveash