

MINUTES OF THE HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION

APRIL 27, 2010

PRESENT: Chairman Mark S. Culver, Commissioner Curtis Harvey, Commissioner Bobby R. Snellgrove, Commissioner Frances M Cook, Gary Sherrer, Attorney, Mark Pool, Engineer, and William J. Dempsey, Chief Administrative Officer

ABSENT: Commissioner Phillip L. Forrester

Chairman Mark S. Culver called the 10:00 A.M. meeting to order, declared a quorum was present, and welcomed everyone. Rev. Laurie Williams, Pastor, Triumphant Cross Lutheran Church, gave the invocation. Commissioner Harvey led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Commissioner Cook seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.

Announcements and Public Comments from Chairman and Commissioners

Chairman Culver reported the commission wanted to remember the life of Mr. Earl Durden, "Railroad Durden", who passed away over the weekend. He stated he lived here for many years and was a vibrant part of our community. He helped the commission significantly in locating the property for a new jail, in that he donated the property where the jail currently sits. The chairman extended the commission's sympathy to his family and friends.

He reminded everyone the Census is ongoing. The chairman reported the last time he checked Houston County was at some 60 odd percent and he stated they hoped to go even higher. Chairman Culver encouraged everyone to be aware of locations where the census forms are available for anyone who has not filled one out. He reported in May, the census workers would begin going to the homes and he reminded everyone that the workers should have proper identification. He stated citizens should not be afraid of them because they would not be asking any harmful information in that they are trying to get an accurate count of the 100,000 plus citizens living in Houston County.

Chairman Culver reported that Judge Cooley had informed him that poll workers were needed down at Hodgesville. He stated there are no poll workers at this time, and he reported without poll workers there cannot be an election there. Chairman Culver encouraged anyone interested to contact the Probate Office at 677-4792.

The chairman reported Saturday, May 1st, is the busiest day in Houston County that he could recall in many years. He stated there would be a Homecoming and Marker Dedication in the Town of Cowarts at 10:30 A.M., the Town of Columbia was celebrating its 190th Anniversary all day. He reported their parade would be at 10:00 A.M. along with other activities including entertainment. The chairman reported the Town of Cottonwood was having its Down Home Festival with a parade at 9:00 A.M. and other activities all day. Chairman Culver reported in addition, the City of Dothan was having its Mural Festival all day Saturday. He pointed out there will also be a dedication at 1:00 P.M. He encouraged everyone to go out and participate in these events.

Awards and Presentations

1. Proclamation – “Small Business Week” – Ms. Rona Miller, Chairperson, Small Business Week

Chairman Culver asked Ms. Rona Miller and those with her to come forward. Commissioner Harvey made a motion to approve the Proclamation proclaiming May 3rd-7th as “Small Business Week.” Commissioner Cook seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Ms. Miller. Ms. Miller stated she was Chairman of the Membership Events Taskforce, and it was an honor to be able to recognize the small businesses in the community, who make up the majority of the chamber’s membership. She introduced Mrs. Joanne McGhee, a member of her committee, and who is President of the Houston County Republic Women. She pointed out in the audience were Ms. Caroline Shippey, Chamber Membership Director, and Mrs. Melea McKean, Chamber Communications Director. She introduced Dr. Steve Turkoski, Chamber Project Manager, who stated the commission does a great job of writing the proclamation and it covers the topics they like to highlight. He reported small business is the backbone of the community. Dr. Turkoski reported if history is any indicator of what is going to happen now coming out of the recession, it will be led by small business. He pointed out 82% of the businesses in the chamber have less than 25 employees. Dr. Turkoski reported the chamber of commerce appreciated all small business owners and next week would be all about small business. Chairman Culver thanked them for attending.

2. Proclamation – “National Volunteer Week” – Mrs. Diane Marshburn, Executive Director, RSVP

Chairman Culver reported Mrs. Marshburn was unable to attend, but Mr. Sam Crawford would be representing her. He asked Mr. Crawford and his guests to come forward. Commissioner Snellgrove made a motion to approve the Proclamation proclaiming April 25th-April 30th as “National Volunteer Week.” Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion; and it carried unanimously. Chairman Culver then read the Proclamation and presented it to Mr. Crawford. He thanked Mr. Crawford for the hard work he has done since his retirement. Mr. Crawford thanked the commission. He reported the Wiregrass RSVP has satellite offices in Henry, Houston, and Geneva counties totaling 400 volunteers and 50 worksites. He stated the cost of the volunteer services to the employer is approximately fifty one cents an hour which he stated he felt was a bargain. Mr. Crawford asked that businesses help support volunteerism by using them in their respective businesses. He stated they are facing challenging times because so many of the volunteers have had to try to go back to work in these tough economic times. Mr. Crawford reported they have a very strong and committed force. He then introduced Ms. Gloria Marble and Ms. Martha Dixon Brown.

Ms. Marble reported she volunteers in the RSVP office and also at the Rose Hill Senior Center in the craft and sewing room. She stated they keep her very busy at the RSVP office. Ms. Marble stated more volunteers are needed and she urged people to give a few hours a week doing something they enjoy. She stated it is a real pleasure for her to volunteer.

Ms. Brown reported she volunteers at her church, Parks Chapel, A.M.E., and also in the Juvenile Court System. She stated they work very hard to keep the juveniles from having to go before the judge. Ms. Brown reported it was very rewarding when they help a young person to clear their record without having to go before a judge.

Chairman Culver thanked both Ms. Marble and Ms. Brown, and he stated it was appropriate that they attend after Spirit of Service Day on April 24th even though some of it was rained out. He stated volunteerism is extremely important to our area, and he thanked them for all they do.

3. Annual Veterans Affairs Update – Mr. Sean Law, Veterans Service Officer, and Dave Daughtry, Assistant Veterans Service Officer

Chairman Culver reported Mr. Sean Law was unable to attend and he asked Mr. Dave Daughtry, Assistant Veterans Service Officer, to come forward. Mr. Daughtry thanked the commission for everything they do to assist them. He reported he and Mr. Law were the only ones in their office due to some cutbacks, and they were unable to keep the office open during lunch due to the short staffing. He stated their hours are Monday thru Friday from 7:30 A.M. until 12:00 Noon and from 1:00 P.M. until 4:00 P.M. Mr. Daughtry pointed out they are in the office until 4:30 P.M. answering the telephone. He reported the Veterans Department just broke ground on a 4th Veterans Nursing Home in Pell City, and they hope to have it completed by 2011. He stated they hope if they do a field home, it will be located in this area due to the way Dothan and Houston County have grown. Mr. Daughtry thanked the commission for their support. Chairman Culver thanked Mr. Daughtry for everything he does for a part of the community that is sometimes under appreciated.

Regular Agenda

1. Request from Sheriff to approve 050 – Retail Beer (Off Premises Only) and a 070 – Retail Table Wine (Off Premises Only) License for I and N COUSINS INVESTMENT OF LA INC. d/b/a RACEWAY 988, 15809 Highway #231 South, Slocomb, AL (Houston County)

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the Sheriff's request to grant a Retail Beer (Off Premises Only) and a Retail Table Wine (Off Premises Only) license for I and N COUSINS INVESTMENT OF LA INC. d/b/a RACEWAY 988, 15809 Highway #231 South, Slocomb, AL (Houston County). Commissioner Snellgrove seconded the motion. Chairman Culver asked if anyone was present in opposition to the request? There being no opposition, he called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Request to sell spare parts off herbicide truck that was purchased from the State Yard.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request to sell the spare parts off the herbicide truck that was purchased from the State Yard. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Chairman Culver reported this is a herbicide truck that will be turned into a water truck. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Request to sell old GPS System to Butler County for \$1,000.00.

Commissioner Cook made a motion to approve the request to sell an old GPS System to Butler County for \$1,000.00. Commissioner Harvey seconded the motion. Commissioner Cook asked Mr. Pool if he had stated the system was about 10 years old? Mr. Pool stated it was 11 years old. Chairman Culver called for the question; and the motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports:

Chief Administrative Officer – there was no report

County Engineer

Mr. Pool reported they hoped to open up East Cook bridge on Tuesday, May 4th. He reported 15 years ago, they started with 52 bridges that an empty school bus, garbage trucks, and dump trucks could not cross. He reported this will be the last one. He stated this will save the school system a lot of money and there will be no bridges with timber pilings. He stated these bridges have been built with concrete and steel at a cost of \$13.5 million. Mr. Pool pointed out they did not patch any of the bridges; they built all new ones. He stated over 50% of them are pre-cast bridges and if there is a problem, it can be taken apart and put back together. Chairman Culver stated the commission has worked toward getting this completed for a long time. He thanked the engineer for the update.

Chairman Culver reported with the legislation that was just passed, and if the citizens of the state approve it in November, the county will be getting approximately \$400,000 every year for 10 years that a lot of counties will be using to repair bridges where Houston County will have bridges completed and it can be used on resurfacing or maintenance or other things. Mr. Pool pointed out all of the future federal funds will have to be spent on resurfacing.

County Attorney – there was no report

Commissioner Snellgrove asked Mr. Pool the life expectancy of a new bridge? Mr. Pool stated around 100 years. Mr. Pool reported the problem with the old bridges was they were built with timber pilings and when the water touches the pilings it caused them to rot. He pointed out the bridges built with timber pilings last from 40 -50 years.

Mr. Snellgrove stated he had received a compliment from an individual about striping the roads. This person wanted to know if the county would ever go back and stripe the edge of the roads? Mr. Pool stated they did not have the money to do that. He pointed out the National Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices requires roads with 3,000 cars traveling per day to put edging. He reported in Houston County, they put down the edging on roads with 2,000 cars traveling per day. Chairman Culver reported it is required on certain roads but the commission agreed to take that requirement to a further extent. He stated there are more roads with edge lines than are required but the county cannot afford to do them all. Mr. Pool stated they do not have any problem doing them. Commissioner Snellgrove asked Mr. Pool if he was saying the current policy is to stripe edge lines on roads with 2,000 cars travelling daily, and they could do otherwise if monies are available? Mr. Pool stated that was correct. Commissioner Snellgrove stated it was certainly a safety feature for people driving out in the rural areas

at night. Mr. Pool stated the striping they are currently doing is saving \$1,000 a mile because the county is doing it as opposed to a contractor. The chairman reported the delineators also add a lot of safety.

Commissioner Snellgrove asked how the striping project was going with the other counties? He stated it was going well. He stated they had saved \$1,000 per mile and they had done 400 miles. Mr. Pool pointed out they only invested \$142,000 into the program. Commissioner Snellgrove stated it sounded like it was paying for itself. Mr. Pool stated yes, very quickly.

Adjourn.

Commissioner Harvey made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Snellgrove seconded; and the motion carried unanimously.