

After Agenda

Board of Commissioners of Spalding County
Work Session
Monday, September 15, 2014
8:00 AM
119 E. Solomon St., Meeting Room 108

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session in Room 108 of the Courthouse Annex, Monday, September 15, 2014, beginning at 8:00 a.m. with Chairman Samuel Gardner presiding. Commissioners Raymond Ray, Rita Johnson, and Bart Miller were present. Commissioner Flowers-Taylor joined the meeting at 8:08 a.m. Also present were County Manager William P. Wilson Jr., Chad Jacobs, Community Development Director, T.J. Imberger, Parks Superintendent, Jinna Garrison, Administrative Services Director and Kathy Gibson, Executive Secretary to record the minutes.

- I. **OPENING (CALL TO ORDER)** led by Chairman Samuel Gardner.
- II. **INVOCATION** – led by Chairman Samuel Gardner.
- III. **PLEDGE TO FLAG** – led by Commissioner Raymond Ray.
- IV. **AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Discussion and review of the 2014 Capital Improvements Element (CIE) and Short Term Work Program (STWP).

William Wilson, County Manager, advised that Chad Jacobs, Community Development Director, prepares the annual County STWP for submission to Three Rivers. As you know, this item was on the last agenda and was tabled at the request of Commissioner Flowers-Taylor for additional information. Mr. Wilson stated that since most of the projects currently being considered are Parks and Recreation projects, Chad and T.J. Imberger, Parks Superintendent, have put together a presentation.

Mr. Wilson stated that Mr. Jacobs would begin with an overview of the CIE/STWP for the Commissioners who may be unfamiliar with the process.

Chad Jacobs, Community Services Director, stated that CIE is a Capital Improvement Element and STWP is the Short Term Work Program. These items are required by State Law in the implementation of an Impact Fee Ordinance. There are annual filing requirements with the Regional Development Commission (RDC) and the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) for their approval in order for the County to maintain a QLG or a Qualified Local Government status. Without the QLG we cannot qualify for state funding.

Mr. Jacobs then introduced Kayla Smith who is the intern working with the Community Development Department. Ms. Smith is majoring in Public Policy at Georgia State, specializing in planning and economic development. Ms. Smith is

currently working on an internship as part of her studies and requirements for graduation.

Mr. Jacobs advised that for a number of years the County has simply been addressing the projects on the Annual STWP by moving projects into future years. Mr. Jacobs stated that the projects left to be completed are very expensive projects to fund either partially or totally through Impact Fee funds. Expenditure of these funds have to be reported to the State annually. Mr. Jacobs further stated that some of the projects show as completed or on-going items, the State likes for these projects to remain on the list to show that there is progress being made from year to year.

Mr. Jacobs stated that the funds generated have been lower than estimated due to the economy and the down turn in building permits. He stated that the projects that are remaining on the CIE are the big ticket projects, these are projects that range in the neighborhood of \$1.3 to \$1.5 million and those projections were based on 2009 dollars, the cost of the projects today could be inflated another 10-15% to get a more accurate cost today.

Mr. Jacobs explained that Impact Fees are collected on every building permit issued by Spalding County. These fees are then divided between the Library, Parks and Recreation, Fire Department, Jail, Homeland Security and E911. The division of funds are based on an LOS or Level Of Service provided by the groups. This is predicated out of a methodology report and has to be approved by the State of Georgia based on state statutes. Mr. Jacobs then listed out the funds currently available to each of the groups.

Mr. Jacobs stated that in reviewing the list of projects with T.J. Imberger, Parks Superintendent and the County Manager it was determined that significant funding was available within the Parks and Recreation subset to start one of the CIE projects this year.

Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Imberger then presented a proposal for the Spalding County Rails to Trails Project. The trail would begin across from the UGA Campus at Dundee Park, runs up Experiment then continues up the old Roosevelt Railroad rail bed by Camp Stephens Park, Dundee Lake, and Sun City Peachtree on up to Heron Bay and could eventually connect to a trail that Henry County has built. There is enough money available to fund the first one-third of the project then we can look to continue the project through public and private partnerships.

The Rails to Trails Project would be a multifaceted project in that it is a transportation project, Parks and Recreation project, economic redevelopment project as well as an industrial development project. This project would establish a place for walking, biking and roller blading. Mr. Jacobs advised that the County currently has a number walking tracks and trails, but there is nothing available for the biking or roller blading community.

Commissioner Johnson asked for more information on the vision for the Rails to Trails Project and Mr. Jacobs then provided a copy of 2011 Roosevelt Railroad Rails with Trails Multiuse Study.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor stated that she felt this is a good vision; however, she would like to see more on the big picture for the community involved. She wanted to know the possibility of redevelopment for the area.

Discussion regarding fee simple ownership and redevelopment funding that could be available once the project has started along with possible grants that could be available to the community for improving and redevelopment

Concerns over lighting areas of the trail and security for individuals who will be utilizing the trail were expressed and discussion was held regarding the concerns. Signs will be posted that the trail will be closed at night and additional signage will be available warning that people should use the trail with a partner or in a group.

Mr. Jacobs stated that site assessments will be performed along the trail and lighting needs can be determined during that phase of the project. Mr. Imberger stated that in addition to the solar lighting there are wireless call stations that could be installed along the trail that contains panic buttons that can be pushed should there be a problem. These items can be discussed during the development of the project. The first part of this project will be to get the basic trail established, then as funding is available, we can add benches and other items to the trail.

Mr. Imberger stated that the Parks and Recreation department has property that is already owned by the county and they have come up with some innovative ideas that would utilize the property the county owns without having to spend a lot of money.

- The old Rock Quarry property could be made useable quite easily with very little funding for activities like:
 - A mountain bike trail.
 - Utilize the quarry area for repelling and other forms of recreation – there are state parks up north that are based around fire departments and boy scout troops using this type of terrain, this would be more of an adventure type park.

Mr. Imberger also stated that Commissioner Flowers-Taylor had asked that the Parks and Recreation Department look for a bigger Parks and Rec project that can be phased in as funds would allow. We looked at what we already have in the system, the County owns and came up with the following:

- We have been called upon on several occasions to do adult softball and youth softball so the one thing that was considered is to continue softball fields at Dundee Park with a dual usage for adult and youth softball. The proposed bathrooms that would be used for the trail head would also be utilized for the future expansion of the softball complex.
- The next part of that plan would be to go to Volunteer Park where we currently have four youth softball fields, we could then expand our

football program at Volunteer Park by converting those fields into two football fields with the existing buildings being utilized for storage and for offices by the athletic association. This would give the county an actual football complex.

This would take an investment of \$250,000 to \$500,000 per year for 4 to 5 years, but in the end we would actually have two complexes. The unique opportunity at Dundee Park is that we can leverage money related to trails to assist us with other expenses.

Mr. Jacobs added that since the Rails to Trails project can be categorized as not only a Parks and Recreation project, but also as a transportation project, the ARC could assist us with funding. Mr. Jacobs believes that the Rails to Trails Project could be a good starting point to revive the area and lead to more funding and opportunities for the future.

Mr. Jacobs did state that we are on a time pinch at this time to get the documentation into the State and requested that the board vote this evening to go ahead with CIE – STWP so that he can get the documentation prepared submitted.

Commissioner Flowers-Taylor then asked how some of the projects on the list could be considered Short Term Work Program projects when they appear to be long term projects.

Mr. Jacobs stated that the CIE (Capital Improvement Element) was for the larger projects and the STWP (Short Term Work Program) encompassed the smaller projects that could be joint with the City or in corporation with the Cooperative Extension, the Board of Education or the Fire Department and completed within a year.

Mr. Jacobs proposed that in the future the board have an annual CIE STWP workshop prior to the time that the documentation needs to be prepared for submission. He stated that what has happened, is that over the last 5 to 7 years we have basically been submitting the same projects. This year, we are changing the pattern to see how amenable the state will be to changing the projects for consideration. Mr. Jacobs stated that he had talked with the RDC and that other people are also going in and adjusting their projects due to the economy and the funds not materializing like they were anticipated.

Commissioner Miller wanted to know how much property would have to be purchased, will we have to hire additional employees, how are we going to safeguard the bathroom facilities to prevent vandalism. What is this going to cost after everything is completed.

Mr. Jacobs stated that all of the funds would be impact fee funds and not county funds to begin. Any property that would need to be purchased would come out of those funds.

Mr. Imberger stated that the only property owner in the phase that we are talking about would be Roosevelt railroad and there are no problems

foreseen in obtaining easement rights to the rail bed.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

***Motion/Second by Flowers-Taylor/Miller to adjourn at 9:11 a.m.
Motion carried unanimously by all.***