



LUMPKIN COUNTY Board of Commissioners

Work Session Minutes
99 Courthouse Hill
Dahlonega, GA 30533

March 4, 2025
4:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 pm. Present were Chairman Chris Dockery and Commissioners Tucker Greene, Bobby Mayfield, Rhett Stringer, and Jeff Moran.

MINUTES

1. Board of Commissioners - Work Session - February 4, 2025 4:00 PM
2. Board of Commissioners - Public Hearing - February 18, 2025 4:30 PM
3. Board of Commissioners - Work Session II - February 18, 2025 5:30 PM
4. Board of Commissioners - Regular Meeting - February 18, 2025 6:00 PM

RESOLUTIONS

5. 2025-13 Appoint Member to Veterans Affairs Committee - *Stanley Kelley to Seat 1 with a term expiring 04/14/2029.*
6. 2025-14 Revising Certain Sections of Chapter 26 (Land Development) of the Code of Ordinances of Lumpkin County, Georgia (*Assistant County Manager Rebecca Mincey*)
Section 26-68 Exemptions – The Chairman said he has heard from the citizens in the community, and they are asking for larger lot sizes. How do you encourage larger lot sizes? They discussed making them exempt divides and going with no more than 10 parcels of 5 acres or more. Then you are not making a subdivision, you are dividing land. Chairman Dockery stated his concern would be, do you use the exempt divide just to posturize to come back and divide later? If you do an exempt divide, then the time period needs to increase. He thinks the time period needs to be at least 3 years. The idea is not to allow someone to skirt the subdivision regulations. The 10 parcels on the exempt divide is a good

path, and he asked the BOC to consider at least a 3-year time period. Commissioner Mayfield and Commissioner Moran were in agreement with both the larger lot size and longer time period. Chairman Dockery said the backstop is that they can't further divide and divide. He is comfortable with the 3-year time period because they have the safeguard of the subdivision regulations and road access. Commissioner Stringer asked if there would be a template to follow for road maintenance provisions, so they do not get something different submitted every time. Staff will see what they can develop.

Section 26-70 Residential Subdivision Requirements – Chairman Dockery said he thinks it is a better clean up as you further define those roads. Commissioner Stringer asked for the Class I Subdivision, if you put county and state road access, does the size of the road matter? Ms. Mincey said in our current Land Use regulations, a county or state road is all that it states. If the subdivision development is more than 25 lots, then it triggers an analysis for that developer to look at the road standards. Is that road sufficient to handle your development? That is at 25 lots. The only other item within the subdivision regulations now is saying if the existing right of way is less than 60 ft, the developer on their side must dedicate additional ROW. Those are the only things in our current existing regulations. Ms. Mincey said if there is concern about road width or improving roads, then she would recommend that the 25-lot section of code might need to be looked at. It is rare that they get 25 lots or more. Those are infrequent submissions. Chairman Dockery said he agrees that needs to be looked at. Commissioner Stringer said he sees both sides of it. He understands everyone has a right to build on a one-lane road, but when it becomes four or 5 houses, then it becomes a county problem. It's the county's problem because the county permitted the houses to be built. Commissioner Mayfield said he hears about these issues too, because we have small roads where a development went in with 10 houses and later 10 more houses went in on the other side of the road and now we have 20 houses on a one lane road with a lot of traffic. So, it is an issue. Chairman Dockery said not all county roads are created equally. There have been some roads that, in his opinion, should never have been turned over to the County. That's part of the problem as it relates to this, because it defines it as a county road. So, one way that you could address it is to come up with a definition of a 2-lane county road. Does that require a center line, or does it require a certain driveable surface? If you define county road, then maybe have a different standard based on the size of the subdivision. Maybe some of the smaller roads are adequate for a 5-lot subdivision as opposed to a 25-lot subdivision. He doesn't know that the right-of-way requirement does anything to address the issue if you have to go a mile down a single-lane road to get to the property that has the bigger right-of-way. Chairman Dockery said you have to look at that a little closer. He doesn't know if that should require a center line; he thinks it is the surface width. Ms. Mincey asked if that should be considered at a Class 2 level that has 9 houses? Commissioner Greene agreed with starting at a Class 2 level. Chairman Dockery suggested that a Class 2 could have passable lanes. They discussed the need for a greenspace subdivision, which may need the requirement to have a centerline road. Ms. Mincey said staff can prepare some recommendations and email them to discuss further.

Article 5 Preliminary Plat – Chairman Dockery asked if there were any comments and stated there are three options. Ms. Mincey said right now an applicant goes to the planning commission with a preliminary plat, then they go and do all of their design work, they pull

their land disturbance permit, then they do their site development work, finalize their lot lines, and all of that must be completed in a 12-month time period. It is a struggle at times to complete the required site work and land disturbance requirements. Commissioner Greene commented that option one and option three were the same, minus a step where the applicant would have to request in writing for the extension, and staff would be granting the extension. So, his opinion is why not go ahead and go to option 3, which takes out the steps for staff. They are still maintaining the options for the two extensions afterwards. Ms. Mincey stated those two six-month extensions would still have to go to the planning commission for approval. Chairman Dockery said he is leaning towards option one because there is accountability at the one-year mark. It may be automatic, but if they came back, then you could tell them they knew at the one-year mark that they had an extension, and anything beyond that has to go before the planning commission. He likes that step because it triggers accountability. He said it isn't necessarily our responsibility to babysit and make sure that they complete everything. Commissioner Mayfield is ok with allowing an automatic extension because there are things that occur that are not their fault. Chairman Dockery does think there should be a requirement for a level of accountability.

Article 6 Final Plat Procedure - Ms. Mincey said when the developer comes with a final plat, it will be approved, letter B, they will just review that in conjunction with their preliminary plat and other code of ordinances, and it shall be approved. Therefore, there is no wiggle room at a staff level. If it complies, then it should be approved. Commissioner Stringer asked if the language had changed in this. Mrs. Mincey said the current code basically says you call for final plat when your road and infrastructure are in place. Then it goes before the planning commission. Chairman Dockery said from a developer's standpoint, his concern would be how much leeway does the planning commission have? If he has a preliminary plat that is approved, and he does everything that is on the preliminary plat, he supports the planning commission reviewing what staff does along with the staff recommendation. He said the only function of the planning commission is not "I don't like the way you put that curve in there," their job is to make sure that the plat conforms with the way it was initially approved. It needs to have a staff recommendation that it meets the requirements, but the planning commission needs to look at it and say if it meets the requirements of the preliminary plat and nothing more. That way, there is a second check that what was submitted was correct. Commissioner Mayfield asked what the difference was in the level of detail between a preliminary plat and final plat. Ms. Mincey said the final plat has more detail and will be recorded. She said if you have your preliminary plat and you go out and begin the subdivision development, you may need to change a lot's line configuration because of site considerations. The final plat is what is recorded and shows what may have needed to be changed since it was initially proposed. Ms. Mincey said it seems like the commissioners' feedback is the process of final plat approval at a staff level is not ideal. They would like for the process to be clarified so that the planning commission and applicants understand their roles better.

7. 2025-15 Revising Certain Sections of Chapter 27 (Land Use) of the Code of Ordinances of Lumpkin County, Georgia (*Assistant County Manager Rebecca Mincey*)

Regarding Compute Centers, Chairman Dockery said the chart of performance standards as drafted says a compute center must be located on an arterial road within the General Development area. Additionally, it requires at least ten acres within an industrial area. Is there an area today in Lumpkin County that currently meets those criteria? Ms. Mincey responded that there might be some land in the Red Oak Flats area. Commissioner Stringer said that he is concerned about the wording of arterial road. They discussed what is defined as an arterial road and what those roads are in the county. Commissioner Greene asked how many of those are in the general development areas. Ms. Mincey responded that the general development areas are around primary intersections. Industrial character areas are where Chestatee Ford is and Red Oak Flats. Chairman Dockery reiterated the only location that he could think of that would meet the criteria and be allowed would be in the Red Oak Flats area, which is currently an industrial park. Ms. Mincey confirmed and pointed out Burnt Stand and Chestatee Industrial Park, but there is not currently enough land there.

Commissioner Stringer said that the code needs to specify compute centers are only allowable in the industrial character area. Commissioner Greene stated from the feedback they have heard this is something that no one wants in the county, so why don't we restrict them all together? Commissioner Mayfield agreed. Chairman Dockery said that his concern is, if we ban compute centers under a particular definition, what if the technology changes and the definition is obsolete? Commissioner Mayfield suggested changing the document if needed later down the road and Commissioner Moran agreed because it is a live document that can be changed at any time. Commissioner Stringer and Chairman Dockery didn't want to restrict it all altogether because property could change owners and be sold to meet requirements at any time, so they could have options. Commissioner Stringer and Chairman Dockery were in agreement with option 1 because they feel it meets the intent. Commissioner Greene said he sees something slipping through the cracks or future Boards missing something if a change was made in the future and it was allowed. Chairman Dockery expressed his concern with taking people's property rights altogether. We aren't telling people they can't do it, we are telling them they have to meet these standards if they want to do it.

Regarding homeless/transitional housing and treatment centers, Chairman Dockery discussed the two options as presented. There was discussion about where addiction treatment facilities are allowed and if they wanted to change that policy to align with the proposed performance standards. Chairman Dockery said he was fine with doing away with both in restricted character areas. Commissioner Stringer agreed. Commissioner Mayfield suggested looking at all three separately. Ms. Mincey said regardless of what you want to do, whether it is a homeless shelter or homeless services, it would fall into that conditional Land Use. We don't currently have a proposal that separates each one. She confirmed their recommendation for the addiction treatment facility, transitional housing, and homeless shelter services to have the same performance standards and to not be allowed in restricted development. Commissioner Stringer suggested matching the restricted setbacks and buffers for all of them and doing away with the restricted area. Chairman Dockery said to go to the chart and look at the addiction treatment facility under restricted areas, take those performance standards, and apply them to both the addiction treatment facility and homeless shelters in the general one. Chairman Dockery suggested changing option 1 from not exceeding 6 persons to 8. Homeless personal history is too restrictive. The consensus

was to go with the option that is presented. Commissioner Mayfield suggested having the last line say completed rehabilitation or enrolled in a program. Chairman Dockery said to take out the active requirement for substance abuse treatment if you have completed or enrolled.

8. 2025-16 Replace the Senior Center's Facility Rental Policy with the Facility Reservation Policy (*Senior Center Manager, Marc Bottoms*)
9. 2025-17 Resolution Consenting to the Deannexation of CHP Parcels (*County Attorney Joy Edelberg*)

CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS

10. 2025-020 Contract Renewal for ESRI for ArcGIS Products (*GIS Administrator Martin Durand*)
11. 2025-021 Bluebeam Studio Subscription Service Renewal Agreement (*GIS Administrator Martin Durand*)
12. 2025-022 Investment Grade Audit Agreement - Schneider Electric Buildings Americas, Inc. (*County Manager Alan Ours*)
13. 2025-023 Disaster Debris Removal and Disposal Contract - Southern Disaster Recovery (*Roads Superintendent David Robinson*)
14. 2025-024 Disaster Debris Removal & Disposal Contract - Ceres Environmental (*Roads Superintendent David Robinson*)
15. 2025-025 Disaster Debris Monitoring Contract - Thompson Consulting Services (*Roads Superintendent David Robinson*)

16. 2025-026 Disaster Debris Monitoring Contract - DebrisTech (*Roads Superintendent David Robinson*)
17. 2025-027 Georgia Emergency Communications Authority (GECA) Nondisclosure Agreement (*Finance Director Abby Branan*)
18. 2025-028 Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) Grant Agreement (*Finance Director Abby Branan*)
19. 2025-029 CSC Design Agreement for Design Services on the Transfer Station Construction (*Director of Operations Ashley Peck*)
20. 2025-030 Agreement Between Lumpkin County & Georgia Cycling Association for the use of Blackburn Park for Mountain Bike Training and Practice (*Assistant County Manager Rebecca Mincey*)

OTHER ITEMS

21. Alcoholic Beverage License (Farm Winery Tasting Room) to Kevin Buckley for Buckley Vineyards (*County Clerk Melissa Witcher*)
22. Use of Remaining FF&E Funds for Pinetree Recreation Center (*Pinetree Recreation Center Manager Jared Ray*)

Chairman Dockery said at the retreat they discussed the need for shade and picnic tables. People buying food at the concession stand will benefit from having somewhere to sit. Staff have prepared a list of those items and are requesting the BOC to prioritize it and authorize what they would like to move forward with. He read aloud the list of items. Chairman Dockery asked how much FF&E was left. He said they need to prioritize the list, and the only thing missing from the list was the shade. He suggested looking at an aluminum structure that doesn't have to be attached to the building but can run down the length of the building. They would rather have a freestanding structure not attached to the building, but providing shade is the priority. He said it wouldn't be something intended for reservations, but rather an option for anyone to use for shade. He stressed the importance of making a decision on it so they could get the items ordered and hopefully in place before it opens. Mr. Ours said there is \$157,000 left in the FF&E, but he thinks more needs will be

identified as we go along. Commissioner Stringer said he would spend more money on the shade than other items on the list. Chairman Dockery said the shade is his number one priority and picnic tables number two. Commissioner Stringer asked if the distributors provide the dispensers, and Mr. Ray responded no. The distributors do not seem to be interested in doing so, but he will check again.

23. Approval of Field 5 Concession Stand/Restroom Construction Project (*Director of Operations Ashley Peck*)

24. 2020 SPLOST 2025 Work Plan Amendment (*Finance Director Abby Branan*)

COUNTY MANAGER

ASSISTANT COUNTY MANAGER & DEPARTMENT HEADS

COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Mayfield said the fact that the BOC can discuss different opinions without getting ugly says a lot for everyone sitting up there.

Chairman Dockery thanked the community for their input as it relates to Land Use. All of the comments were heard and some of them were not implemented at this time, but everyone had an opportunity to speak. They considered everyone's input and that is important to them in making a decision.

PUBLIC COMMENT (Agenda Specific)

Robin Hall said in the discussions regarding compute centers; you are absolutely right in restricting them in the county. He thinks you should be very careful in planning for them. He has read reports that local authorities should not have the right to ban them, but having these kinds of regulations will make it a not-so-favorable environment for coming here. Those are the things that could make them say this is not the correct place for us. He wanted to make sure that the transitional housing changes would not block places like Jeremiah's Place from being able to expand.

Pam Deitz agreed with Mr. Hall regarding the tight regulations over crypto mining and compute centers. At the February 18th Public Hearing, there was a request made to consider making the Rural Places character area have the same restrictions as Agricultural Preservation. The results of the comprehensive plan states that the residents and visitors cherish the scenic beauty and historic nature of our community. They respect development and welcome some change, but they are desperate to maintain this rural Appalachian character that we love. So, she would strongly request that the Board of Commissioners consider the request to assign rural places the same restrictions as agricultural preservation. She isn't sure how that could happen but asked for

them to consider it. Her other comment is related to the preliminary and final plat time. She agrees that one year is a long time and after one year there should be a discussion with an extension request. Perhaps there should be guidelines of what an extension request should require. Also consider, if you do a longer extension, at what point would the developer then need to adhere to new ordinances if the ordinances had changed during that time? She is not sure about the procedures of that. She agrees the final step needs to go before the planning commission because it is another set of eyes and ears for checks and balances. She commended the BOC for the openness to talk and hear the community.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 pm.

Date

Chris Dockery, Chairman
Lumpkin County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

Melissa Witcher
Clerk, Lumpkin County