

**MINUTES**  
**BIBB COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**September 5, 2006**  
**6:00 P.M.**

The regular meeting of the Bibb County Board of Commissioners was held in the Commission Boardroom on Tuesday, September 5, 2006 at 6:00 p.m.

Board Members present: Chairman Charles W. Bishop, Vice Chairman Samuel F. Hart, Sr., Commissioner Bert Bivins, III, Commissioner Elmo A. Richardson Jr., and Commissioner Joe O. Allen.

Staff present: Mr. Steve Layson, Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Virgil Adams, County Attorney; Mr. Ken Sheets, County Engineer; Mr. Doug Furney, Director of Lake Tobesofkee; Ms. Deborah Martin, Finance Director; Mr. Tony Rousey, Information & Technology Services; Mr. Tommy Brown, Human Resources Director; Mr. Sam Kitchens, Assistant Director of Buildings & Property; Mrs. Shelia Thurmond, Clerk of the Board; Mrs. Janice Ross, Board of Commissioners and Ms. Kari Johnston, Grant Resources Administrator.

News Media: None.

**PRAYER FOR THE DAY**

Chairman Bishop recognized Dr. Harold Harrison, Pastor of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, for the Prayer for the Day and asked everyone to stand.

Everyone remained standing for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Chairman Bishop announced that there will be a brief ceremony tomorrow morning at 10:00 a.m. in front of the Courthouse to unveil and re-dedicate a plaque which denotes the fact that this is the first site of the First Baptist Church which was constituted in 1826. And at the same time the church was constituted, the State also gave the church Lot No. 14, Square 38, which is where the Courthouse is located. Through the efforts of Jack Caldwell, First Baptist Historian, the plaque was removed, cleaned and installed on a marble slab in the lawn area of the Courthouse. The plaque will be unveiled by one of First Baptist's oldest members and one of its youngest members and a bagpiper will play for the ceremony. Everyone is invited to attend.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

***On motion of Commissioner Richardson, seconded by Commissioner Hart and carried, the Minutes of the Regular meeting of August 15, 2006 were approved as written.***

**RECOGNITION OF VISITORS**

Chairman Bishop recognized and welcomed the following visitors: Ms. Nettie Thomas, Ms. Colleen Giffin, Mr. Donald Richardson, Jr., Ms. Ayesha Thornton, Ms. Hazel Giddens and Mr. James Edmonds.

Mr. Edmonds addressed the Board by stating that he thinks the Commission is doing a really good job and that it has limited resources and unlimited demands. Mr. Edmonds stated that two of the Food Max (Piggly Wiggly) grocery stores in Macon have gone out of business and there are a lot of empty stores in this town. Mr. Edmonds stated that one of things he has discovered is that there are quite a few people working in government jobs that live in Houston County and work for Bibb County. With that statement, Mr. Edmonds asked if there was any way that the City could encourage people that if they are going to work for the City, they might as well live in the City.

Mr. Edmonds continued that one of his two handouts was a letter he received from Governor Joe Frank Harris years ago and the other was a letter from the Georgia Department of Human Resources denying him food stamps. He stated that there is something terribly wrong in this country when you have veterans begging on Spring Street. He stated further that as a citizen he has done everything this State has ever asked of him but it seems like they've gotten in a situation where they take care of everybody except the people who fight the wars and pay taxes. He added that he finds it very humiliating to go into Kroger and not be able to buy food and he wanted the Commission to be aware of that.

### **REFERRALS:**

The following item was referred to the **Engineering/Public Works Committee:**

1. Petition from Ms. Irene Watkins for the paving of Level Acres Drive Southwest.

The following item was referred to the **License and Tax Committee:**

1. Correspondence from Mr. Harold Tessendorf, Executive Director, Habitat for Humanity, advising that Mrs. Ethel Shelly will donate her property at 4226 Worsham Avenue in Lynmore Estates for construction of a Habitat home. Also, they are requesting that all past due and 2006 taxes be waived.

### **RECORD AND INFORMATION:**

None.

### **ACTION:**

1. Ratification of Resolution designating August 19 - 26, 2006 as "Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church Week" in Bibb County.

***On motion of Commissioner Hart and seconded by Commissioner Richardson and carried, the before mentioned Resolution was ratified.***

## COMMITTEE REPORTS:

**FINANCE, TAX AND REVENUE COMMITTEE** – Committee Chairman Hart reported the following:

1. The Finance Committee recommends approval of a supplemental appropriation to the FY 2007 General Fund budget in the amount of \$388,352.00 and the FY 2007 Capital Improvements Fund in the amount of \$22,430.00 to cover budget rollovers from FY 2006.

***On motion of Commissioner Hart and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

2. The Finance Committee recommends approval of authorization for Chairman Bishop to sign the lease between 914 Second Avenue, LLC, and Bibb County for parking spaces for DFACS.

***On motion of Commissioner Hart and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

3. The Finance Committee recommends approval of authorization for Chairman Bishop to sign the Affidavit, Release and Assignment form for Bond number 011-SB-103609714.

***On motion of Commissioner Hart and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

4. The Finance Committee recommends approval of the tax abatement schedule for Project Johnson.

### DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Allen commented that earlier today in the Finance Committee meeting, Mr. Chip Cherry was asked about the \$5.5 million. He then stated that any time they are dealing with taxpayers' money, and especially when it's \$5.5 million, the Commission should know where the money is going. He added that he has not been given any explanation where taxpayers' money will be used in this instance. He further added that he would like to table this matter until such time as the Board can get justification of where the money is going.

Chairman Bishop responded that this is not taxpayers' money, but tax abatement. He stated that it's a \$5 million expansion for some industry and that Mr. Cherry explained this in the Finance Committee meeting. He stated, too, that the name is being withheld because they are in competition. He also stated that this was nothing new and they (the Chamber) always use project names. Chairman Bishop also stated that he doesn't know what the tax abatement schedule was but it money that you wouldn't have gotten anyway. He stated that it was an expanding industry and it's on equipment for that industry for new jobs and they discount a certain amount of the taxes, but this is not \$5 million of taxpayers' money, but rather a schedule offering some tax relief on equipment.

Ms. Deborah Martin chimed in that over a ten year period, the savings to them would have been approximately \$309,000.00.

Chairman Bishop added that the taxes to Bibb County would have been a substantial amount more and the School Board has to approve it too. He added that this is not anything out of the ordinary and that all are given project names. He added that the way it works is that the project is not identified until the official announcement and all they can go by is the reputation of the people they've voted to be ombudsman for bringing in industry. Chairman Bishop further stated that if the competition aspect is not there, the Chamber doesn't mind giving their name, but they have to sign a confidentially contract and it has some repercussions.

Vice Chairman Hart commented that sometimes they give a little bit more information and perhaps the Board should ask for some consistency, with as much as they can say.

Chairman Bishop stated that his only concern is when he votes on these things if there is a conflict. He added that all counties do that.

Commissioner Richardson commented that it was nothing more than providing an incentive and, of course, at this stage, there is no guarantee that they will even get it.

Chairman Bishop stated that this is an existing industry and just an increase in the equipment.

Commissioner Allen added that his problem is that the Board was not given any more information other than this is a project.

Chairman Bishop stated that he wanted to stress that the County is not loaning any money and doesn't have any money in it, but this is strictly \$5.5 million they are going to spend---that they are going to buy equipment for this company for more jobs for the expansion and that's what it's based on and they have a standard table at the Tax Assessors' Office that they do these on. He added that they do depreciation on equipment but not on real estate.

Commissioner Allen asked if they get the taxes off the equipment.

Chairman Bishop responded yes, but at a reduced amount.

Commissioner Allen then added that the County is not involved in the process other than having to rely on someone outside of the Board of Commissioners to basically tell them if it's a good deal or not and yet the County doesn't know who they're talking about.

Chairman Bishop added that the Commission should trust the MEDC and Pat Topping and Chip Cherry and the people that are hired to recruit and make these package deals.

Steve Layson, CAO, stated that he would speak with the appropriate person and ask if he could give the County more advanced notice.

Commissioner Bivins added that he thinks the Commission should always take the advice of the people, they hire and who know their job.

Chairman Bishop called for the vote.

**The motion was approved by a four-to-one (4-1) vote. Commissioner Allen cast the dissenting vote.**

**RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** – None

**ENGINEERING/PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE** –Committee Chairman Bivins reported the following:

1. The Committee recommends approval of the Resolution to support the efforts of the Georgia Department of Transportation Highway 74 Corridor Study and to authorize the Chairman to sign all related documents.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

2. The Committee recommends that the request of BLC Hardwood Flooring for permission to use the right-of-way on Grace Road (*outside of the roadbed*) for the purpose of constructing a path to move materials by forklift be approved and that the County Attorney draw up an agreement to indemnify the County and to designate the use of the path.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

3. The Committee recommends that the Chairman be authorized to sign the following documents from GDOT to add a portion of Weaver Road to the State Highway System during construction of road improvements, Project STP-066-1(36), PI 333055: Order of the Commissioner 3409, Contract for Maintenance of Highways 3409M, Local State Route Acceptance Resolution and Authorizing Resolution.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

4. The Committee reports that petitions to register Goodall Woods Drive, Cody Drive, Mill Meadow Road, Cameron Way and Redhill Boulevard as public roads have been received from Earl Raymond along with a bond to ensure proper maintenance for a one year period ending on 5/22/07. The Committee recommends that the petitions be approved and that said roads be placed on the Official Road Register for maintenance by County forces.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

5. The Committee reports that petitions to register Doublegate Drive, Paddington Lane and Lannington Drive as public roads have been received from Kelvin M. Westfaul along with a bond to ensure proper maintenance for a one year period ending on 6/22/07. The Committee recommends that the petitions be approved and that said roads be place don the Official Road Register for maintenance by County forces.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

6. The Committee reports that petitions to register Little Brooke Way, Sky Hawk Lane and Pheasant Run Trail as public roads have been received from George Connell along with a bond to ensure proper maintenance for a one year period ending on 7/28/07. The Committee recommends that the petitions be approved and that said roads be placed on the Official Road Register for maintenance by County forces.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

7. The Committee reports that petitions to register Carillon Court and Carillon Lane as public roads have been received from Placemaker, LLC along with a bond to ensure proper maintenance for a one year period ending on 5/4/07. The Committee recommends that the petitions be approved and that said roads be placed on the Official Road Register for maintenance by County forces.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

8. The Committee reports that petitions to register Belleview Court, McIntosh lane, Ocala Plantation Drive, Susan Way, Thoroughbred Lane and J. Drive South as public roads have been received from Ocala Properties along with a bond to ensure proper maintenance for a one year period ending on 3/24/07. The Committee recommends that the petitions be approved and that said roads be placed on the Official Road Register for maintenance by County forces.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

9. The Committee recommends that the request of Elvis and Teresa King for permission to install two water meters on the right of way of Northern Dancer Drive be approved.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

10. The Committee recommends that the Chairman be authorized to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between Bibb County and the City of Macon regarding in-house work to be performed by Bibb County on the John Drew Tennis Center, per the recommendation of the Chief Administrative Officer and the County Engineer.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

11. The Committee recommends that the Chairman be authorized to sign Supplemental Agreement No. 1 with Waters & Son for the Bloomfield Drive Extension Project RIP#43-A, providing for traffic signal work at the intersection of Bloomfield Drive and Rocky Creek Road.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

12. The Committee recommends that the request from Ralph Whitehead Associates, Inc. for assignment of the contract for the Jeffersonville Road widening project, RIP#7, to STV Group, be approved and that the Chairman be authorized to sign the consent form indicating the approval.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

**LICENSE & TAX COMMITTEE** –Committee Chairman Bivins reported the following:

1. The Committee recommends approval of the New 2006 alcoholic beverage license for Oak Haven Golf Club, Inc. located at 7359 Thomaston Road.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved as presented.***

2. The Committee recommends approval of the New 2006 alcoholic beverage license for Dhaval Enterprises Inc. d/b/a Raceway located at 5126 Mercer University Drive.

***On motion of Commissioner Bivins and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved as presented.***

**BOARD OF HEALTH** – Commissioner Bivins reported that he has been trying to set up a meeting for Friday, which may or may not happen because many of the people involved are out of town. He stated that one of the concerns of some people he met with was if they had the Macon Water Authority send out a notice. He stated that they were concerned that it might cause panic and a lot of people would be calling, etc. He further stated that one of the recommendations was that they make contact with ACCG which he has done. He stated that they have gone over their document and said that it was provided by a reputable state agency, the Georgia Department of Human Resources, and that they saw no reason why it should not be done. He continued that one of the things this meeting was going to be about is to carry that forward unless the Board of

Commissioners has objections to it. He added, however, that this may not be done before the next meeting. He added, too, that he would be providing this information to the Board. He continued that they pretty much have to try to inform everybody in Bibb County as well as every entity in Bibb County, including every household and they are looking for ways to do that. He stated that it's a lot of work and they are trying to move forward with it.

Chairman Bishop announced that Commissioner Bivins had been appointed to represent the Board of Commissioners in carrying out the forming of the committee and he knows that he is staying busy. He added that it looks like a monumental task to just absorb all of the information that's coming out much less trying to put together a committee. He thanked Commissioner Bivins for his efforts.

**HUMAN RESOURCES AND INFORMATION SERVICES COMMITTEE** – Committee Chairman Richardson reported the following:

1. The Committee authorizes the Chairman to sign an agreement with Mercer Oliver Wyman Actuarial Consulting Inc. to perform an attestation of the prescription drug program for FY 2007 Medicare "D" comparison.

***On motion of Commissioner Richardson and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

2. The Committee authorizes the Human Resources Director to apply for the FY 2007 Retiree Drug 28% subsidy (i.e. County reimbursement) through the Federal Medicare "D" prescription program.

***On motion of Commissioner Richardson and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

3. The Committee recommends the approval for continuation of Temporary Position in Human Resources for an additional six weeks effective September 11, 2006.

**It was noted that funds will be provided from existing vacant position.**

***On motion of Commissioner Richardson and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved.***

**PROPERTIES COMMITTEE** – No Report.

**TOBESOFKEE COMMITTEE** – Committee Chairman .Allen reported the following:

1. The Tobesofkee Committee recommends approval of the request from Tom Stevens (387 Hamrick Road) for permission to construct a retaining wall from the property to the shoreline for erosion control.

***On motion of Commissioner Allen and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved as presented.***



2. The Tobesofkee Committee recommends approval of the request from the American Red Cross to waive admission fees for their employees on September 16, 2006.

***On motion of Commissioner Allen and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved as presented.***

3. The Tobesofkee Committee recommends approval of the request from Special Olympics of Georgia to use Sandy Beach Park on September 30 – October 1, 2006 for the 2006 Special Olympics Open Sailing Regatta and that all fees be waived.

***On motion of Commissioner Allen and carried, the before mentioned recommendation was approved as presented.***

**ORDINANCES & RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE** –. Committee Chairman .Allen reported the following:

1. The Committee recommends approval of an Ordinance respecting Taxicabs.

Commissioner Allen read the Ordinance by caption as follows:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF BIBB COUNTY, GEORGIA, TO AMEND SECTION SIX OF THE CODE OF BIBB COUNTY, GEORGIA, ENTITLED “BUSINESSES AND BUSINESSES REGULATIONS”; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

***On motion of Commissioner Allen and carried, the before mentioned ordinance was adopted.***

2. The Committee recommends approval of an Ordinance of the Board of Commissioners with respect to the “Hotel and Motel Excise Tax”.

Commissioner Allen read the Ordinance by caption as follows:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF BIBB COUNTY, GEORGIA, TO AMEND ARTICLE THREE OF THE CODE OF BIBB COUNTY, GEORGIA, ENTITLED “HOTEL/MOTEL EXCISE TAX “; TO PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE DATE; TO REPEAL CONFLICTING ORDINANCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

***On motion of Commissioner Allen and carried, the before mentioned ordinance was adopted.***

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** – None.

**NEW BUSINESS** – None.

Commissioner Bivins stated that he doesn't have anything new but that he was asked to check with ACCG to find out where some other counties stood in their efforts to get this done (*referring to his earlier comments relative to information being disseminated about the pandemic flu*). He stated that they are not aware of work being done by a lot of other counties and they think it's moving rather slow. He added that he did, however, talk with the Commission Chairman of Clayton County and they are giving some thought to having a consultant come in and guide them. He also stated that he talked with the Regional and thinks that they have enough resources here that they can get this done without spending a lot of money.

Chairman Bishop added that he doesn't think this issue has sunk in with a lot of people and that it's not a matter of whether the Avian Flu is coming, but rather a matter of when.

Commissioner Bivins added that this is why they need to get this information out and that they are going to try and set up a phone number so if people do want to call somebody, they can call somebody through DHR who can answer questions. He further added that they probably do need some dialogue.

Commissioner Allen stated that per a conversation he has had with certain City Council members as well as the Mayor's office, after reading an article in The Telegraph on the subject of "911 going up on fees", he hopes the Board of Commissioners or the CAO will make an attempt to talk with the Mayor and/or staff to find out exactly how these fees will be if they're within the law of doing this. He stated that he was under the impression that they could only go up to \$1.75. He also stated that he understands that this might be addressed at tonight's meeting, and he is hoping that the Commission can do some kind of leverage because this will be an impact to the taxpayers in the unincorporated area as well.

Chairman Bishop commented to the County Attorney that he thought there might be some misinformation in the Telegraph article and that Council member Elaine Lucas said that they could pass it without the County. He stated that somebody needs to let them know that it does take a vote by the County Commission to approve the collection in the unincorporated area. And even though the County is under contract, the City can legislate in the unincorporated area, no more than the County can legislate inside the City of Macon. He recommended that the County Attorney contact the City Attorney in an effort to make sure they understand that because it could create a problem if one of the citizens protested it.

Commissioner Allen asked if the County Attorney could check on the cell phone piece, too, because he lives in the unincorporated area and cell phone bills do have the 911 fee on them. He also stated that he does not remember the Commission granting approval to allow this and that the City took it upon itself to do this. Commissioner Allen then asked if the City was in violation of any ordinances.

Chairman Bishop responded that they were not and what happened when the original contract was signed, the question of the cell phone was not there because they really didn't have the capability. He stated that a portion of the extra money is supposed to go into a special account. He stated that this account is for where you can locate when a cell phone calls in. He added that you can locate not just the area of town the call comes from but the exact location the cell phone is being dialed from. He stated that at one time, there was some misunderstanding in that somebody thought the Caller ID was

sufficient to address it but they have some guidelines they have to go by and the State regulates that. He also added that there have been some changes in the law recently that allow some counties and some cities to increase the fee. He continued that particularly the bigger counties have been trying to make some changes in that law.

County Attorney Adams stated that he would take a look at the law.

At this time, Chairman Bishop recognized Reverend Ike Mack for comments. His comments were as follows:

“Chairman and Board of Commissioners of Bibb County, I have a grave concern about Houston Avenue. I serve as Pastor of Unionville Missionary Baptist Church, for the past 20 years. We relocated to that property on Houston Avenue in 1994. Since then, the road has become increasingly worse as it relates to the asphaltting process. Knowing a couple of years ago that we were petitioned about getting right of way, and all of that was done and they were expecting at least within the very, very near future for something to happen as it relates to resurfacing or redeveloping that road as well as the sidewalk problem. I’ve noticed that over the last two years public mobility has increased greatly and that means that people actually have to walk on private property or actually in the street. I noticed that all over Macon, there are projects being done in the improvement of roads and some of roads, if you ask for my own personal opinion, I would feel like some of them are not in half as bad of shape as Houston Avenue. And my question tonight is where do we stand on that, what can we expect? We are taxpaying people over there; we have a lot of traffic because of our church being there and we’re certainly trying to service the community. And we want to try and do some of the things to help develop some of the problems that we know that are over there, but sometimes, if you don’t get the face to look right, the rest of the body just want fall in place.”

Chairman Bishop:

“I’ll try to address part of it; I don’t have all of the answers. In fact, the people are not here tonight with all of the answers. Let me say this, early on, one thing that slowed down the project was the moving of utilities. That corridor is the main service trunk for communications between Macon and Warner Robins. The major trunk line runs out Houston Avenue. So, BellSouth had to move some utilities. Then there was a suit; it was a test case suit by Georgia Power on moving utility poles. There has been some resolving of that issue. There has been some resolving of that issue; however, there is still some responsibility of old obligations where the counties have to pay to move some utilities. All that delayed it to the point of where we started taking bids. In other words, as soon as the utilities were cleared where we could take bids, then we started taking the bids and we started off taking it for just a phase and the bid was so high that the one phase cost almost as much as the total project. So, they went back and they said maybe if we put the two phases together instead of the three phases that they would come in within the bid, but these contractors got so much asphalt work, it just stayed about the same. And only one company bid on it. So, then they went back and looked at the total project and they said to stay within---we only have a certain amount of money appropriated for each road and it was appropriated early on. That money is still there that was appropriated. Unfortunately, over the years the price of oil, which is in asphalt, and the price of other things has increased and as we got delayed by the utilities and by the lawsuits that came early on, we had no control over the prices. An asphalt company,

right now, won't give you a bid over---. Is it about 30 days they'll lock in a bid or the most three months even today because it fluctuates so much, up and down. You see how the gas went up and down last week. So, what they did---they went and looked at the issues. Initially, they were going to move the curb about a foot and a half, more or less, on each side. They were having a problem because, you know if you been in that area that road has been built on so many times on the original concrete, at the curb there's a hump in the center of the road and as it goes to the curb, some of the manholes are covered up completely and sand has got in there which creates some problems. So, what they proposed to do, because it would take about \$3 million to go in there and put all new pipe and everything up under the road and that would be just the cost of the pipe and stuff like that, then you would still have to move some more utilities, like water and things like that. So, we knew there was an immediate need and most of the complaints, like you're talking about tonight, come from it. I drive out through there and it's like a washtub and there are potholes everywhere. It'll probably knock the front end of your car out of line. But what they proposed is going in and resurfacing, going all the way back down as close as they can to the original road which would open the mouth of the sewer pipes. And they were going to raise the manhole covers and go back and resurface the entire route down through there. And they think they can come in within budget on bids like that. If they can take a bid to resurface the thing and they can do it in probably six months. The other way, you're talking about 18 months just for the two phases and not enough money. You got to come up with some money somewhere else."

Commissioner Bivins:

"There was also concern about looking out for the sidewalks too."

Chairman Bishop:

"And that's another thing we are going to do. We are going to go in there and repair the sidewalks and do the cuts for handicapped."

Reverend Mack:

"You said repair? Now, there are areas where they're actually no sidewalk and I was informed, I thought, upon the original process that side walking was a part of it, based on when the engineers came out and met with us, as property owners, did our survey and actually we even signed off on our right-of-way. And I mean this has been two and half, three years ago."

Chairman Bishop:

"That was the first phase, to acquire the right of way. So, that was done mighty quickly."

Commissioner Bivins:

"That's one of the concerns that the Mayor has when he came here last and I thought we had a kind of an agreement that you repair the sidewalks where they are needed but that there would be sidewalks all the way. And I thought the people were looking for ways to do that."

Ken Sheets:

“We’re looking at definitely putting sidewalks all the way down to Guy Paine. From Guy Paine on down to Broadway or where Seven Bridges comes in, it was only about two houses down there. The rest of it is in back of all those businesses on Pio Nono. I don’t know if there is a need down there from Guy Paine on down to where Broadway and Houston and Pio Nono come together.”

Chairman Bishop:

“Which would address the needs of your church if they do that out through there?”

Reverend Mack:

“I appreciate that, but I think my needs are a little bit larger than just my church. We’re there to service the community and there are a lot of residences in that area. I would say at least from the----actually from the eastside of Guy Paine all the way down to almost Eisenhower Parkway, there is traffic, non-stop traffic because there is a lot of residential area between those two areas. I go down to Guy Paine to that degree, so, my concerns are where we are, the predicted time for start and what extent would the project entail?”

Chairman Bishop:

“The only thing that’s holding it up right now, with that, is the public meeting. We felt like we ought to have a public meeting out there to have input from the people living in that area.”

Reverend Mack:

“I’ve been in that area long enough to say that sometimes public meetings are good and sometimes they are not good. What do you mean when you say good? Good, when they show up; not good, when they don’t. So, to have a public meeting and they don’t come out. People walking sometimes don’t worry about a paved road. You see what I’m saying. We should be beyond the public meeting; it’s time for action now. Again, and now I’m going to be a little more self-centered. I pastor a church and we are fortunate with me being a leader at our denominational structure. I’m president of the Sixth District Baptist Convention which covers about 17 counties and 144 churches. There are people always visiting our church for different meetings because I’m the president. And I’m beginning to become quite embarrassed. You know when people come----I’ve had county commissioners from other counties to come and say, what are you all doing about your road? And I continue to stand in defense because, well, we’ve already met and we’ve sold our right of ways and I’m sure that within the next time we meet we’re going to have our roads done. And they come back and I don’t look like a liar because I’m not a liar. And today, I thought I should come and speak for the citizens in that area. It just seems to me when I look at some of the other projects going on, I want to believe that we’re not being neglected, but by logic and reason, I’m starting to feel that Houston Avenue is being neglected.”

Chairman Bishop:

“And maybe one of ya’ll want to address that, but I think that Houston Avenue has been a project a lot longer than I’ve been here, like most of the Roads Program has, but I really feel like they’ve done as much as they could do, based on the utility easements and other things. And I’ve relatives living in that area; I’ve got relatives that own businesses, so it definitely wouldn’t be any----. And all the streets that have been paved have been inside the City limits with the exception of about one.”

Reverend Mack:

“Would the one be Houston Avenue”?

Chairman Bishop:

“I said the exception of one which would probably be Houston Road and I think, Tucker Road. I think Tucker Road is inside the City. Most of the projects have been inside the City. Bloomfield Road, Rocky Creek Road all the way up to Houston Avenue, almost up to your church. That was one of the first ones finished. All of your Bloomfield connector out there, Newberg Avenue.”

Reverend Mack:

“But pound for pound, Mr. Bishop, probably none of those streets was in as bad a shape at their infancy as Houston Avenue.”

Chairman Bishop:

“The problem was though, again, was the fact that Houston Avenue is an old street that the City has not maintained very well. They just kept putting asphalt on it nor have they maintained the utilities very well out there. We had to move the utilities. You couldn’t continue on with that. We had to acquire the property, plus as soon as that got done, as soon as there was an opportunity to take bids, they took bids. Now, the only thing that’ll hold this progress is if people want to do it in phases. If we do it in phases and it takes a period of time and we run out of money. You know, they don’t make money, but we can go ahead and do what we can do with the money we got appropriated. We can resurface that road and get it done within a period of nine months once we take the bids and they start to work. So, that’s based on the estimate of our engineer and all that’s holding us up now was the fact that the Commissioners, when they voted for this, they said we don’t want to vote for it without holding the public hearing.”

Reverend Mack:

“And the public hearing’s purpose again, and I do understand the concept of public hearing? At this juncture, what are we going to try to resolve there?”

Chairman Bishop:

“It really needs to be more of an informational meeting because there has been a lot of misinformation put out there and it’ll give the citizens an opportunity to address

those concerns that they have about the program. And I agree with you, a lot of times people don't come; the people that live in that area don't come. It's somebody from way over yonder that comes and create an issue that's not even there."

Reverend Mack:

"Right! And I just think that we are pretty much shooting ourselves in the foot."

Chairman Bishop:

"We're ready to go with it as soon as we can get---. Maybe you want to encourage some people to come and say, hey, we're ready to go ahead and let ya'll redo this road."

Reverend Mack:

"I was hoping that I could encourage ya'll to say, let's go ahead and get it done without having a public hearing."

Chairman Bishop:

"You got to talk to these folks right here."

Vice Chairman Hart:

"Let me say this, Mr. Chairman. You don't have to talk to me because I asked this morning that we don't do a public hearing, but instead we do what we promised folks we'd do. And what I said is that we ought to do what we indicated we'd do and that is go back to make sure again, now there might be some---I don't want to say compromise but adjustments we can make in terms of some of things the shortening of the street. What I'm concerned about is that I don't want us to fix the road and make it a very attractive kind of thing because it's a band aid. Then, again, clearly these roads got that way because of the way they maintained them and that is, they didn't do some things to the drainage system. So, I want to make sure that they go in, even if it takes a little bit longer, let's get something we can live with and something that's adequate. And, so, if it takes a little bit longer, so what! I think we ought to look for the monies to do it and do it appropriately and correctly, even if we do it in phases. I just think it's important that we do what we said we're going to do and I asked for the public hearing, initially, I think, but I withdrew that because when I heard people talking about this from other communities--two things: one is, I was afraid of getting lost up in discussions about other projects that have absolutely nothing to do with what we're doing here, and I wanted to make sure we gave full attention to the Houston Avenue. And secondly, I think, again, if we don't do what we said we're going to do, there's a credibility issue. Again, people will come and they would concentrate on that and not concentrate on trying to get the road fixed. So, if we are going to do what we said we're going to do, we don't need a public hearing. They've already heard that."

Ken Sheets:

"Mr. Hart, we were going to see about pulling ya'lls recommendation out of our committee last week off the Board Agenda tonight, but it went through ya'lls vote last week that we have a public hearing."

Vice Chairman Hart:

"It sure did, but I asked this morning that we reconsider that and I think you agreed that you didn't see much coming from a public hearing."

Chairman Bishop:

"I agree with you, but we've told the public now that we're going to have one."

Vice Chairman Hart:

"I don't think we've told them that much, have we?"

Chairman Bishop:

"We're going to be criticized either way."

Reverend Mack:

"I think the bigger problem is still at hand. If we could get the road done right and perhaps my lifetime and your lifetime, we would ever have to be in this position again. And I didn't come to say, well how long it's going to take to get the road done. I want to know when we are going to get started on getting the road done. I think once we see it getting started, we can all pacify ourselves six months, 12 months, 18 months because we know long term we're going to have a decent street that we can ride up and down, as well as all the complications that we have in that area, there has to be a facelift and one of the things that could assist in that is that road getting paved. It'll give everybody a little bit more motivation/incentive to go forward. The new school being erected there has helped but then you still got a nice structure there on a terrible road. So, there again, that's the band aid scenario. Let's see what we can do to get the project started and let's find monies to get it done right and then I won't be here on this issue again. And trust me, I think that if it's all about just getting the public un-notified about the public hearing that should be your least worry."

Commissioner Bivins:

"Back to what you said earlier, you're not the only person who has some concerns. I have been hearing a lot and bringing this issue off and on for the last couple of years. So, there's concern in the community and down here too and we're concerned about getting it done."

Reverend Mack:

"And I'm not here tonight to try and box or anything. I'm a preacher, not a fighter. I do realize that there are general principles and we need to get something done to Houston Avenue."



Chairman Bishop:

“We’re just as frustrated with it as you are.”

Reverend Mack:

“Probably not as much as I am because I’m on it everyday; you only do it when you’re going to see your relatives.”

Chairman Bishop:

“I go out through there quite a bit. The other thing is, the problem that we faced with this thing was, I know I inherited it and I don’t know how many other Commissioners inherited it, but when we came here, they had paid out \$1.5 million in lawsuits; it was \$1.5 million spent in redesign on roads caused by exactly what he’s talking about, about people coming back in there and talking about other issues that didn’t even affect this and so, the whole Roads Program, itself, has been a issue with trying to satisfy people in the neighborhoods where the roads are going and it has resulted in lawsuit after lawsuit by either utility companies or people not wanting a particular type road built or people not wanting to give up their property and a lot of times it ended up with condemnation of property along the right of ways in order to do this, so we definitely want to do whatever we can to utilize the property that we bought. But, by the same token, if you hadn’t got the money, then you are going to have borrow it or get somebody else to give it to you. I’m ready to get started with it as soon as it is acceptable what we are going to do with this plan, but we have to be able to pay for the road once we start paving it. We have to get the bids within the amount of money we got.”

Commissioner Bivins:

“Well, Houston Avenue needs to be done – whatever it takes. That’s the bottom line.”

Reverend Mack:

“I’m still not getting any specifics on what we’re going to do.”

Vice Chairman Hart:

“I think I’m supposed to meet and Commissioner Bivins with Ken Sheets very soon, I guess tomorrow, we’ll get an opportunity to see exactly what some of the City’s concerns were and I think, again, we’re hoping there might be some monies available there and I’m committed to looking to try to find those funds to get it done. And I think with the fewest modifications as we have to and that means we are going to have to look for funds. I’m committed to even looking for funds and seeing if we can get people to consider projects that are caught up in environmental that might not be done for 100 years and maybe some of those monies can be used at some earlier time. So, it means we might have to go back to the State and some other places to look for money. I think we ought to be just committed to making sure that it happens and let you all see this very soon.”

Reverend Mack:

“Thank you, sir, for you time.”

There being no further business and on motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

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Shelia Thurmond, Clerk of the Board