The regular meeting of the Bibb County Board of Commissioners was held in the Commission Boardroom on Friday, February 2, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

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

Staff Present:
Steve Layson, CAO
Virgil Adams, County Attorney
Ken Sheets, County Engineer
Doug Furney, Director, Lake Tobesofkee
Tommy Brown, Director, Human Resources
Shelia Thurmond, Clerk of the Board
Barbara Wood, Public Affairs
Janice Ross, Board of Commissioners

News Media:
Keich Whicker, The Telegraph
Perry Smith, WGXA - TV
Heather Graf, WMGT-TV
Charles Richardson, The Telegraph

Guests Present:
Mark Rafuse, Noble Development Company
Marion Zimmerman, Noble Development Company
Regina McDuffie, Centreplex Manager
Dick Layton, A. G. Edwards Capital Market
Keisha Commingham, A. G. Edwards Capital Market
Doug Selby, Bond Lawyer A. G. Edwards
Jim Davis, Chief Appraiser
Pope Langstaff, City Attorney
Alan Justice, M. D.
Tony Widner
Macon City Councilman James Timley
Bob Brown, Brittain, Thompson, Bray and Brown, Inc.
Josh Andrews, Piedmont Construction

1. Follow-up discussion of Tax Abatement for the Centreplex hotel.

Discussion

Chairman Bishop opened the meeting by saying he would like to hear only the updates and/or changes on the Tax Abatement schedule for the proposed Macon Convention Center Hotel. Commissioner Richardson reiterated that he believed, even after looking over the documents again, this hotel is a bad business decision; he has concerns regarding the location and the lack of brand name; he would have liked to receive the documents that Mrs. McDuffie is distributing today in advance so he could have reviewed the information.
Virgil Adams, County Attorney, commented that there were many contradictions in the contract. He stated that the day before yesterday he received a new contract which addressed the inconsistencies.

Pope Langstaff commented on the deal with Warner Robins which the paper reported was a better deal. He stated this is basically the same deal and that two investment companies have reviewed the offer from Noble and have agreed that it is a good deal.

Regina McDuffie, Centreplex Manager, addressed concerns regarding the location of the hotel and the impact on parking at the Centreplex.

Doug Selby discussed the Memorandum of Understanding, the bond issue and how the tax abatement schedule would affect the county.

Mark Rafuse, Chief Development Officer for Noble Leadership Development, presented background information on his company and the many hotel projects that they have successfully completed. He stated the brand name would be from one of three brands: Sheraton, Meridian or Westin and that the brand name has not been finalized due to a suit filed by National Ventures Macon.

Chairman Bishop stated that the County had never before offered tax abatements for a hotel.

Pope Langstaff stated the Commissioners that the land the proposed hotel is on is not taxable now but after the hotel is built, the land will be taxed.

Commissioner Richardson stated that the land would not be taxable until the 26th year.

Chairman Bishop continued that although people are now staying at hotels located in the county, when visitors begin staying at the new Convention hotel, the County would lose that revenue. He continued by reminding everyone of the County’s commitment to Bass Pro, Sara Lee and Nichiha and the fact that the taxpayers of Bibb County and the City of Macon will receive many rewards from the County’s investments in these properties. He stated that for him to approve this project it must benefit the taxpayers of Bibb County and he was not certain that this project met the criteria.

Commissioner Bivins asked if the Chairman was involved in the initial work to start up this project.

Chairman Bishop responded he was not.

Commissioner Hart stated that it appeared that Noble and the City did not have “all their ducks in a row” and he would be more inclined to support this venture if a brand name hotel had been signed. He continued that this project involves a tremendous amount of money and commitment and there appears to be too many uncertainties for him to agree to it.
**ACTIONS**

*Commissioner Bivins moved that the Board of Commissioners approve the tax abatement schedule and support the proposal for the Macon Convention Center Hotel subject to final review of the language by the County Attorney. There being no second, the motion failed.*

2. Resolution naming the Hartley Bridge Interchange after Sgt. Kelley L. Courtney.

**Discussion**

Chairman Bishop discussed the resolution requesting that the local Legislative Delegation facilitate the naming of the I-75 Interchange at Hartley Bridge Road in honor of Sgt. Kelley Courtney. Sgt. Courtney was a soldier with the Third Marine Expeditionary Force and was killed on October 30, 2006 by a car bomb when returning from a mission outside Fallujah, Iraq. Sgt. Courtney was awarded the Purple Heart and the Combat Active Ribbon following his death. Chairman Bishop then introduced and welcomed Sgt. Courtney's mother, Eugenia B. Courtney.

**ACTION:**

*On motion of Commissioner Allen and seconded by Commissioner Richardson and carried, the resolution requesting that the Hartley Bridge Road Interchange be renamed to honor Sgt. Kelley Courtney will be sent to the local Legislative Delegation.*

3. Correspondence from Alan D. Justice, M.D., concerning the cutting of trees at the end of Dobson Road to include the area below the 369 contour line.

**Discussion**

Dr. Alan Justice discussed the plans for a new subdivision at Lake Tobesofkee which would involve cutting trees that are below the 369 line. There will be 11 lots with single and multi-family homes in the range of $350,000 to $425,000. Dr. Justice would like permission to cut the timber on these lots. There has been no tree survey done on the property. Commissioner Richardson asked if delaying a decision until after a tree survey can be completed would delay the plan, Dr. Justice responded that he and Oney Hudson would be presenting this plan to Planning and Zoning on March 12th and would need their approval before they could proceed.

**ACTION:**

*On motion of Commissioner Richardson and seconded by Commissioner Allen and carried, a tree survey done by a registered tree surveyor, which will include the species, number, diameter and value of the trees must be obtained and reviewed by the Board before permission to cut the trees will be granted. This*
survey will need to be presented to the Tobesofkee Committee at the February 20th Committee meeting.

4. Bids for Charles A. Lanford, M. D. Library.

**Discussion**

Bob Brown presented the bids for construction of the Charles A. Lanford, M. D. Library. The Purchasing Department has chosen Engineering Contractors with a bid of $2,270,000 and with alternatives, $2,357,000. When questioned by Commissioner Bivins, Mr. Andrews of Piedmont Construction stated that he utilizes minority subcontractors and has many women in management positions at his company.

**ACTION**

*On motion of Commissioner Richardson and seconded by Commissioner Hart and carried, Engineering Contractors was chosen as the contractor to construct the Charles A. Lanford, M.D. Library.*

5. Compensation discussion *(Closed Session)*

**ACTION:**

*On motion of Commissioner Richardson, seconded by Commissioner Hart and carried, the Board went into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter.*

*On motion of Commissioner Allen, seconded by Commissioner Bishop and carried, the meeting was reopened.*

**ACTION:**

*On motion of Commissioner Allen, seconded by Commissioner Hart and carried, the Chief Administrative Officer's salary was set at $115,000.00 effective February 1, 2007.*

Chairman Bishop asked for a motion to discuss a new appointment to the Tax Assessor's Board. On motion of Commissioner Richardson, seconded by Commission Bivins and carried, the appointment of a new member of the Tax Assessors Board was added to the agenda.
6. Appointment to the Tax Assessor’s Board.

**ACTION**

On motion of Commissioner Richardson, seconded by Commissioner Bivins and carried, Mr. Bill Vaughn was appointed to the Board of Tax Assessors to complete the unexpired term of Mrs. Estelle Herndon. This term will run from February 2, 2007 to March 23, 2009.

There being no further business and on motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

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Shelia Thurmond, Clerk of the Board