



Coweta County Board of Commissioners

Work Session/Called Meeting

22 E Broad Street
Newnan, GA 30263
www.coweta.ga.us

Shannon Zerangue
770.254.2601

Tuesday, January 25, 2022

4:00 PM

Commission Chambers

~ Minutes ~

COWETA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Call to Order

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Bob Blackburn	District 3 - Chairman	Present	
John Reidelbach	District 4 - Vice Chairman	Present	
Paul Poole	District 1	Present	
Tim Lassetter	District 2	Present	
Al Smith	District 5	Present	
Michael Fouts	County Administrator	Present	
Kelly Mickle	Assistant Administrator	Absent	
Eddie Whitlock	Associate Administrator	Present	
Fran Collins	Deputy County Clerk	Present	

The Honorable Board of Commissioners of Coweta County, Georgia met in Work Session/Called Meeting on Tuesday, January 25, 2022.

Meeting Called to Order

REGULAR SESSION

1. 12807 Discuss SPLOST Transportation Projects

Administrator Fouts presented a brief history of the 2019 Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST). He noted that the 2019 SPLOST was approved by referendum in November 2017 and collections began in 2019. He explained that this 1% sales tax was originally projected to collect \$140 million during the 6-year period (2019-2024).

He presented an overview of SPLOST projects submitted by municipality and a breakout by category. He highlighted the fact that the County earmarked the majority of their allocation for transportation projects totaling \$71 million. He also reviewed actual sales tax collections since 2019 and noted that collections have continued to increase year-over-year. He explained that population growth and impacts of the pandemic seem to be the primary contributing factors for the current trend.

In response to questions from Commissioner Smith, Administrator Fouts explained that the total sales tax in Coweta County is 7%, 4% is the Georgia sales tax, 1% is County SPLOST, 1% is ESPLOST (Education SPLOST), and 1% LOST (Local Option Sales Tax - which helps to reduce property taxes). He added that historically, the estimated breakdown of those paying the sales tax has been 60% residents and 40% visitors.

Ms. Candace Boothby, President and CEO of the Newnan-Coweta Chamber of Commerce explained that the last sales tax study performed by the Chamber indicated that 72% of sales tax collections was generated by out of county visitors.

Commissioner Smith expressed his belief that citizens should be made aware of the data

to understand the value that they are receiving from the sales tax.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Administrator Fouts explained that he is not confident that the trend of double-digit percentage increases will be sustainable for the balance of the collection period.

Administrator Fouts explained that staff is recommending that any additional sales tax collections be designated to complete planned but unfunded transportation projects. He reviewed two (2) collection projections for the remaining three (3) year period, one model with a 0% or flat growth, and another model with a 2% growth factor. Based on actual growth realized, the County may receive an additional \$23 - \$26 million above the original allocation for projects. Staff is currently anticipating a 2% growth rate for collections but noted that projects can be adjusted if sales tax trends downward.

Administrator Fouts further explained that Public Works Director Tod Handley and staff developed an initial list of SPLOST transportation projects and stated that the list is revised based on Board priorities and funding. The list also includes annual roadway maintenance and rehabilitation, crack sealing, in-house paving projects, shoulder improvements, thermoplastic striping, raised pavement markers, and Public Works equipment used to maintain the roads and rights-of-way.

Commissioner Lassetter explained that although sales tax revenues are increasing, the costs for goods and labor are increasing as well. He stated that the Public Works staff does a good job of projecting these costs when scheduling and completing projects.

Public Works Director Handley explained that no major cost increase occurred with the contracts let in early 2021, but the next cycle probably will. For example, reinforced concrete pipe currently has a lead time of several months and prices have increased significantly. Historically, corrugated metal pipe has been the most cost-effective option to be utilized on a project but has now doubled in price making concrete pipe the least expensive option. However, manufacturers in concrete pipe will probably begin to raise prices too. He further explained that staff will be advertising for bids for the first Full Depth Reclamation (FDR) project, expects to open those in March 2021, and will be interested to see how those increase.

In response to a question from Commissioner Smith, Administrator Fouts explained that the SPLOST revenues are separate from property taxes derived from the millage rate. He noted that SPLOST funds are designated for specific capital projects separate from the annual operating budget.

In response to a question from Commissioner Reidelbach, Administrator Fouts explained that without SPLOST revenues, it would take approximately 2-3 mills of property taxes to maintain the current level of service. He explained that in 2009, the County budgeted approximately \$6.5 million for road maintenance in addition to SPLOST. However, all road maintenance has since been funded solely by SPLOST because of millage rate rollbacks and balancing the budget. He further explained that a proposed single-county transportation SPLOST (TSPLOST) was defeated in November 2019 which would have generated an estimated \$125 million over five (5) years for countywide transportation projects.

He briefly reviewed a list of proposed transportation projects for the Board's consideration that could be completed with the additional SPLOST revenues. He also mentioned that most of these projects are safety improvements that would have been funded by TSPLOST. In closing, he explained that staff will consider the feedback provided by the Commissioners and then present a final list at a future Board meeting.

The Board briefly discussed the proposed projects and suggested some other areas for review by staff.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

2. 12806 Discussion Regarding Complete Communities (aka Mixed-Use Developments)

Community Development Director Jon Amason expressed appreciation to Administrator Fouts for his direction and then introduced County Planner Jenny Runions to discuss mixed-use developments.

Associate Administrator Whitlock exited the meeting.

Ms. Runions explained that the main purpose of this presentation is to garner input and vision from the Board regarding mixed-use developments. She provided a brief overview of the planned development project zoning overlay district that provides the opportunity for mixed-use in the Comprehensive Plan.

She explained that the term "Complete Communities" is used as a planning concept/term that describes neighborhoods and communities where a mixture of land-uses exists, but strategic planning or redevelopment may enhance the connection between commercial and residential. These communities may have naturally developed over time or may take form through strategic planning. The term "Mixed-Use" is a zoning term that defines master-planned communities that layer compatible land use, amenities, and utilities that create a live, play, and work environment. Mixed-use developments provide an alternative to subdivisions and strip malls in suburban and urban areas and assists with reining in sprawl and rising housing costs.

She further explained that mixed-use is one of the ten (10) principles of smart growth and is a planning strategy that seeks to foster community design and development to make best use of infrastructure. According to survey data collected, many citizens, particularly retirees and young adults, are interested in mixed-use developments because higher gas prices and long commutes have increased the appeal to live, work, and play in the same pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods and complete communities, which currently don't exist in Coweta County.

Ms. Runions described the purpose and intent of mixed-use developments which is to allow for a mixture of complementary land uses (housing, retail, offices, commercial services, and civic uses), to create economic and social vitality, to encourage linking of trips, to develop uses that are safe, comfortable, and attractive to pedestrians, to provide flexibility in siting and design of new developments and redevelopment, to anticipate changes in the market place, to reinforce streets as public places, to provide roadway and pedestrian connections to residential areas, to provide transition between high traffic streets and neighborhoods, and to encourage efficient land use by facilitating compact, high-density development and minimizing the amount of land that is needed for surface parking. The three (3) key components that define mixed-use include integrated pedestrian and bicycle facilities, relevant connection between non-residential use and surrounding residential, and architectural and landscaping guidelines to create a cohesive aesthetic and street facade. She explained that the community benefits from a housing variety and density, which strengthens neighborhood character and promotes a pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment.

Commissioner Blackburn exited the meeting.

Ms. Runions explained that the common types of mixed-use developments include residential, commercial, institutional, and industrial. Success of mixed-use developments largely depends on the ratio of these components. Mixed-use development types include vertical mixed-use which combines different uses in the same building, horizontal mixed-use which combines single-use buildings on distinct parcels in a range of land uses within one block, and mixed-use walkable

blocks which is a combination of both vertical and horizontal mixed-use.

She also explained that the Comprehensive Plan includes language that provides the vision and opportunity for mixed-use developments in the county with a 20-year horizon. The vision for the character areas is a cumulative perspective rather than immediate, and changes in land-use patterns, population, and transportation are anticipated to be gradual as to not overload the existing infrastructure and communities. There are several Character Areas within the Comprehensive Plan that identify mixed-use as compatible land use, and the Growth Strategy provides guidance on density and development regulations needed for each location. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan was written to provide a tiered path to growth and opportunity for mixed-use in the county.

She highlighted the proposed Interstate Gateway Character Areas within the Growth Priority areas on a map of Coweta County and explained that they consist of a one-mile radius from the interstate exit. The recommendation to focus on Interstate Gateways is based on existing infrastructure, varying densities, and land-use from urban, suburban, to rural. She explained that direction is needed from the Board regarding the proposed Interstate Gateway Character Areas.

Administrator Fouts explained that after input from the Board is received, staff will begin to formulate the framework of an ordinance. He also noted that transportation will be a primary component in analyzing proposed mixed-use projects like the *R-PDP (Residential Planned Development Project)* district.

The Commissioners discussed their desire to focus on the Interstate Gateways in the Growth Priority areas.

Ms. Runions reviewed components of Interstate Gateway mixed-use that will be reviewed, summarized survey results from the Comprehensive Plan, and provided visual examples of existing mixed-use developments around Georgia and the country. Lastly, she reviewed the next steps to include identifying market needs and trends, analyzing ratios, and continuing research on successful mixed-use ordinances as staff begins drafting an ordinance. She also recommended that staff facilitate a mock application process before the final ordinance is adopted.

In response to Commissioner Reidelbach, Ms. Runions, indicated that staff would have a draft ordinance for the Board's consideration by April.

RESULT:	DISCUSSED
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ADJOURNMENT

Motion To: **Adjourn**

The Board voted to adjourn the meeting.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	John Reidelbach, District 4 - Vice Chairman
SECONDER:	Tim Lassetter, District 2
AYES:	John Reidelbach, Paul Poole, Tim Lassetter, Al Smith
ABSENT:	Bob Blackburn