

WHITE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC HEARING HELD

MONDAY, AUGUST 16, 2010 AT 5:00 P.M.

The White County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing on Monday, August 16, 2010 at 5:00 P.M. in the Main Court Room of the White County Courthouse. The purpose of the Public Hearing was to receive public input regarding the possible relocation of the White County Detention Center Construction Project from Hulsey Road to Truelove Road. Present at the meeting were: Chairman Travis Turner, Commissioner Joe Campbell, Commissioner Craig Bryant, County Manager Carol Jackson, and County Clerk Shanda Smallwood.

Chairman Turner called the meeting to order.

Chairman Turner directed attention to the presentation at the front of the Court Room – which included a site plan, aerial photo, and an elevation for the Truelove Road property. He emphasized that a decision regarding the location of the Detention Center Construction Project had not been made at this time and the Board of Commissioners wanted to receive the citizens' comments on this matter. Chairman Turner asked for a show of hands from those opposing the construction of the White County Detention Center on Truelove Road – approximately fifty (50) attendees raised their hands signifying opposition to the location on Truelove Road.

Chairman Turner presented the guidelines for meeting participation.

Public Comments made in opposition to the relocation of the White County Detention Center Construction Project to Truelove Road are as follows:

Jack Mott, 2227 Hwy 17 Sautee, GA – Mr. Mott asked if the Board of Commissioners had an estimated cost associated with making the Hulsey Road site a buildable location. Commissioner Campbell stated the estimated costs for utility relocation, sewer upgrades, and preparations for the future by-pass was \$500,000.00 to \$600,000.00. Mr. Mott asked what the future plans for the existing jail would be. Chairman Turner stated that no decision had been made regarding the present jail. Mr. Mott asked what the cost was to build the present jail. Commissioner Campbell stated the cost was \$2 million to \$3million. Mr. Mott said he was concerned about the wasting of money on this project and he wanted to see more information before a decision was made on the project.

Craig English, 283 Woodbriar Sautee, GA – Mr. Mott stated if the Detention Center was constructed in excess of the present need, the State of Georgia could require White County to house State inmates at a boarding fee which was considerably less than the operating costs of the facility – resulting in White County subsidizing the State of Georgia. Sheriff Walden responded that once an inmate was sentenced that the State of Georgia can not require White County to house inmates only because bed space is available.

Denver Truelove, 790 Truelove Road Cleveland, GA – Mr. Truelove asked what the County's plans were if the City of Cleveland did not grant sewer capacity for the proposed Detention Center. Commissioner Campbell stated the County would have to build a sewer treatment system on the property, which would omit the \$3,000.00 per month sewer fee to be paid to the City of Cleveland. Mr. Truelove asked what the cost of a sewer treatment facility would be. Commissioner Campbell stated \$178,000.00 and said these types of systems were state of the art, which recycle water that could be utilized in various ways. Chairman Turner emphasized that no decision had been made on the type of system to potentially be used, as the Board was researching options with the City of Cleveland for consideration.

Steve Smith, Truelove Road Cleveland, GA – Mr. Smith estimated a sewer treatment system would produce 15,000 per day of effluent and he asked where this water would go – if there had been a civil plan developed for the site. Mr. Smith stated the site plan illustrated an impervious surface of approximately three acres and he is concerned about potential run off.

Cindy Teems, Cooley Woods Road Cleveland, GA – Ms. Teems stated she was concerned about the effect of property values and safety relative to the construction of a jail on Truelove Road especially considering the concentration of residents around the Truelove Road area.

Ron Runkle, 380 Hamilton Road Cleveland, GA – Mr. Runkle stated he was concerned about negative effects on property values, intrusive lighting, noise issues, and traffic problems. Commissioner Campbell stated he had spoken with residents whose property borders the current jail location and these residents had not expressed any negative concerns regarding their proximity to the current jail.

Charles Aiken, 17 Hiawatha Hills Cleveland, GA – Mr. Aiken indicated he had communicated with Steve Gooch, former Sole Commissioner in Lumpkin County, regarding the location of Lumpkin County's new jail and Mr. Gooch had indicated to him that there had been issues with the present site due to lude behavior of inmates in the jail yard which had caused issues for surrounding residents and businesses.

William Gannon, 243 Hiawatha Hills Cleveland, GA – Mr. Gannon expressed his concern for neighborhood safety and traffic issues with the potential construction of the White County Detention Center. He stated that this would have a negative impact on the neighborhood and he felt there had to be a more appropriate area for the Detention Center than on Truelove Road. Mr. Gannon asked if citizens could be informed of other properties being considered for the project.

Jeanette Cox, Dogwood Lane Cleveland, GA – Ms. Cox read a statement indicating her opposition to the White County Detention Center being built in a residential area such as Truelove Road.

Robelle Reed, 78 Hiawatha Hills Cleveland, GA – Ms. Reed stated she questioned the Truelove Road land purchase for locating a convenience center four (4) miles closer to the present Transfer Station and relocating a Public Works Facility. She stated she had spoken with Dawson County, which had utility relocation issues during the construction of their new jail, and the Dawson County Manager had indicated they were able to work through the utility issues with

minimal disruptions. Ms. Reed stated the issue with the area having previously been a dump had been addressed when the present jail was constructed and this could be handled again. Ms. Reed summarized her objections to the jail being constructed in a residential area such as Truelove Road.

Lynn Gannon, 243 Hiawatha Hills Cleveland, GA – Ms. Gannon stated she was concerned about her children being exposed to criminals visiting inmates at the jail.

Jim Fisher, 32 Hiawatha Hills Cleveland, GA – Mr. Fisher stated he was concerned about tax increases being necessary to fund the Detention Center Construction Project and the operation of the new facility. He felt the project was moving too quickly and should be delayed until Spring. Mr. Fisher stated he would be monitoring any construction on Truelove Road and reporting any violations to the appropriate agency.

John Abernathy, 114 Hiawatha Hills Cleveland, GA – Mr. Abernathy pointed out the bus stop on the aerial map in relation to the proposed jail location. Mr. Abernathy stated that all information leading up to the 2008 SPLOST vote indicated the jail project would be an expansion of the existing facility. He asked what options would be available if the voters did not pass the next SPLOST in order to service the 10 (ten) year bond issue on the jail project. He recommended that the five member commission to take office in January 2011 be the one to coordinate the jail project. Commissioner Bryant emphasized the Board's intention was to pay the bond issue off within five (5) years if at all possible.

Chairman Turner asked for a show of hands for those in support of the relocation of the White County Detention Center Construction Project from Hulsey Road to Truelove Road.

No hands were raised.

Chairman Turner asked if there were any comments in support of the project. Having no participants wishing to make comments in support of the Truelove Road project, Chairman Turner stated the Board of Commissioners would accept five (5) additional public comments in opposition to the White County Detention Center being built on Truelove Road.

Wayne Varios, 168 Dogwood Lane Cleveland, GA – Mr. Varios stated he had relocated to Cleveland, GA within the past three (3) weeks from Louisiana. He stated he was concerned for the safety of the neighborhood if a jail was built on Truelove Road. He cited several incidents of escapees from pod designed prisons in Louisiana – where he had lived previously.

Sylvia Matthews, 65 Pine Lane Cleveland, GA – Ms. Matthews stated she was concerned with the additional burden the new detention center would place on the taxpayers of White County – with increased operational expenses and she felt the decisions were being made in a rushed manner. She suggested forming a panel of citizens to further research the County's options. Chairman Turner indicated to Ms. Matthews that the Board of Commissioners had been discussing the jail project, in public meetings, for over a year.

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Ricky Young, 170 Morningside Drive Cleveland, GA - Mr. Young stated that his home would be more exposed to the proposed jail than any other property in the area. He explained that he had invested his savings in his home with recent renovations and he knew he would never be able to sell property adjacent to a jail. Mr. Young stated he was humbly asking the Board of Commissioners to reconsider constructing a jail on Truelove Road.

Polly Roberts, 51 Garrison Drive Cleveland, GA – Ms. Roberts asked the Board of Commissioners if the County owned any property in the Industrial Park that would be suitable for constructing the jail. Chairman Turner stated the County only owned the property which contained the White County Transfer Station and the White County Animal Control Facility; and the surrounding property is owned by LHR Farms.

Jean Marcuson, 78 Hiawatha Hills Road Cleveland, GA – Ms. Marcuson stated she was concerned about the negative effects the construction of a jail would have on property values for the surrounding area.

Chairman Turner asked the Commissioners for any closing comments.

Commissioner Campbell stated there was no location in the County where the Board of Commissioners could decide to locate the jail that would make everyone in the community happy. He further explained that current the County was funding boarding bills to surrounding Counties when these funds could be kept in White County. Commissioner Campbell said the Board of Commissioners were responsible for doing what is best for the majority of the citizens in White County and that was not always an easy task. He explained that the initial plan was to locate the jail on Hulseley road, adjacent to the current jail; however with research that has proven to be cost prohibitive and they are having to reevaluate other options. Commissioner Campbell stated that due to unfunded mandates, changes in jail standards, and classification requirements - renovation of the existing jail would be very costly.

Commissioner Bryant expressed his appreciation to those in attendance, stated he would be evaluating all the comments made, and cautioned the attendees about accepting misinformation on the project. He invited anyone to contact him personally regarding information on the project.

Chairman Turner stated he would be evaluating all aspects of the proposed project.

Chairman Turner called the meeting adjourned.

The minutes of the August 16, 2010 Public Hearing are hereby approved as stated this the 13th day of September 2010.

WHITE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

s/Travis C. Turner
Travis C. Turner, Chairman

s/Joe R. Campbell
Joe R. Campbell, Post 1

s/Craig Bryant
Craig Bryant, Post 2

s/Shanda Smallwood
Shanda Smallwood, County Clerk