

**Minutes of Public Hearing
Elbert County Board of Commissioners
Monday, January 11, 2021**

A Public Hearing held to consider adding Hemp Processing facilities as a Conditional Use Permit in Industrial Zones and adding Hemp Growing in Agricultural Zones as a Conditional Use Permit. These will be added to Chapter 6 of the Elbert County Zoning Ordinance. There were no public comments.

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Chairman Lee Vaughn called the meeting to order. Present were Chairman Vaughn, Vice Chairman Kenneth Ashworth, Commissioner Horace Harper, Commissioner Chris Alexander, Commissioner Casey Freeman, Jr., Commissioner Freddie Jones, County Administrator Bob Thomas, County Attorney Bill Daughtry, County Clerk Tamara Butler and CFO Phil Pitts.

After the pledge to the United States flag the invocation was given by Bill Daughtry.

Adoption of the Agenda. Chairman Vaughn asked for a motion to amend the agenda to remove item 6, regarding returning the accounting function of the District Attorney's office and adding Discussion and Approval of the 2022 DOT contract for the Elbert County Transit. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to amend the agenda and approve the agenda as amended. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried.

Adoption of the Minutes of December 14, 2020. Commissioner Alexander made a motion to adopt the minutes as read. Commissioner Ashworth seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Discussion and approval to reappoint Mr. Horace Baker to the Elbert County Board of Tax Assessors. This is a 3-year term and will expire December 31, 2023. Commissioner Ashworth made a motion to approve the reappointment of Mr. Baker. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Discussion and approval of the FY2022 DOT Contract Section 5311 Program for Transit. Mr. Thomas stated the contract amount is for \$360,000; effective July 1, 2021. Commissioner Harper made a motion to approve the 2022 transit contract. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Discussion and approval to amend the Elbert County Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 6, to add “Hemp Processing Facilities” in Industrial Zones as a Conditional Use and to add “Hemp Growing” operations in the Agricultural Zones as a Conditional Use. Mr. Daughtry stated this is a new area of the law in Georgia. To make Hemp Processing Facilities a conditional use would give us more authority to weigh all factors when making a decision regarding the possibility of increased noise and traffic. Hemp Growing will be a conditional use in Agricultural zones and subject to compliance with the applicable requirements contained in the rules of the Georgia Department of Agriculture. This is for first reading only.

Discussion and approval to reappoint Matt Easom as Public Defender for Elbert County State Court for the 2021 calendar year at the same current rate of \$1,250 per month. Mr. Daughtry stated he has only heard good things about Mr. Easom and the job that he is doing. He also said that he spoke to Mr. Easom and he has agreed to remain at the \$1,250 per month; therefore, he recommends his reappointment. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve Mr. Easom’s services. Commissioner Ashworth seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Discussion and approval of First Reading to amend Chapter 58 of the Code of Ordinances to comply with the Georgia Timber Harvesting Requirements and Establish Operational Requirements for Commercial Vehicles in Elbert County that was approved by the Georgia Legislature last year. Mr. Daughtry stated this is based on House Bill 897 that was passed last legislative session; the bonding requirements are basically what we have in place now but does add giving timber haulers appeal rights if we contend that they have damaged our roads. The Commercial Vehicle Ordinance now applies to any commercial vehicle of more than 4 wheels, will not be allowed to park on the edge of the road; enter or leave highway that is not an established road. If mud or gravel is in the roadway; it will be their responsibility to clean the road to its original condition. This is for first reading only of both ordinances.

Discussion and approval of the Scope of Work to be performed by KCI Technologies for the Off-System Safety Program funded by the Georgia DOT. This work is for new signage, striping, safety stop bars and edge lines on various county roads. Total project cost is around \$300,000. This is the fourth grant that Elbert County has received under this program. Mr. Thomas stated that we will start work on this in the next 30 to 60 days and funding will be for next year. Commissioner Harper made a motion to approve the Scope of Work from KCI Technologies. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Discussion and approval to adopt an ordinance for Elbert County to become a Georgia Certified Broadband Ready Community. This ordinance will notify broadband companies that we encourage the development of facilities in Elbert County that will provide services to our residents in the rural areas. It will also allow the county to utilize any state funding that may become available in the future. Mr. Thomas stated this is the first step in the process to become a Broadband Ready community and will also help in any funding that may be available. Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve this ordinance. Commissioner Ashworth seconded the motion. Upon voting the motion carried 5-0.

Finance Report. Mr. Pitts stated that the Hotel/Motel funds are up to around \$40,000; mainly due to the lack of activities this past year. SPLOST and TSPLOST revenues continue to be good with about \$350,000 received in December. General Fund expenditures are under budget through December.

Public Comments. There were no public comments.

Adjournment. Commissioner Harper made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Alexander seconded the motion. The motion passed 5-0.