

## Minutes

6:00 PM, Monday, January 8, 2024  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS

### Members Present

Tessa Moxley  
Josh Owens  
Charlie Whiten  
Nate Duncan  
Kim Alexander  
Rex Blanton  
Trent Smith  
Chris Talley

### Staff Present

James Coley

### Media Present

None

1. **Call to order-** Mr. Coley called the January 8th meeting to order at 6:00pm.
2. **Moment of silence**
3. **Invocation**
4. **Pledge of allegiance**
5. **Approval of minutes-** December 11th, 2023. Alexander made a motion to approve the minutes seconded by Mr. Whiten and approved 7/0.
6. **Election of Officers-**
  - Ms. Moxley nominated Ms. Alexander for Chair, seconded by Mr. Blanton and approved 7/0.
  - Mr. Whiten nominated Mr. Blanton for vice chair, seconded by Ms. Moxley, and approved 7/0.
  - Ms. Alexander nominated Ms. Moxley for Secretary, seconded by Mr. Blanton and approved 7/0.
7. **Approval of Calendar dates-** Mr. Owens made a motion to approve calendar dates, seconded by Mr. Blanton and approved 7/0.
8. **Public discussion Session** *[3 minutes per person] If you are not able to attend in person and you have a comment, you may submit it by contacting the Planning Department at [planninginfo@oconeesc.com](mailto:planninginfo@oconeesc.com) or 864-638-4218, so that we may receive your comment and read it into the record*
9. **Presentation**
  - **Dr. Adam Kantrovich**-Extension Specialist, Agribusiness Asst. Director of Clemson Extension
    - i. The Ag Census was supposed to be released by the end of 2023 , but is moving slowly, so the numbers presented in this presentation

- were at least three years old.
1. Dr. Kantrovich went through some highlights from the Ag Census, primarily in relation to Oconee County.
- ii. Opportunities in beef right now, though expensive
  - iii. Ag can be dramatically affected, depending on how things are run in a county
    1. Land loss to housing development if the area is tourist-heavy.
  - iv. Present challenges to ag community: Land Loss
    1. According to the global ag productivity 175 acres are lost every hour nationwide.
    2. Ag risks:
      - a. Market price
      - b. Legal and regulatory
      - c. Human
      - d. Production
    3. Ms. Alexander- one of the issues with having a county that's primarily control-free is that control-free land has historically been valued higher than zoned land. This is not an incentive for farmers to zone their land. Currently the planning commission does not have an agricultural representative.
      - a. Dr. Kantrovich highly recommended that the ag board push to have an ag representative on the planning commission.
        - i. County level and township level commissions should have ag representation if agriculture is a significant component of county revenue
      - b. Changes need to be made at a county level in order to sustain agriculture long-term
        - i. The reality is that in order to maintain that rural character we value as a county, regulation is key
    4. Farmers need to be more vocal at a county level. Regulation might be the only way to maintain the rural identity of the county. Development isn't necessarily bad, but there are always consequences and growth needs to be controlled.
  - v. Dr. Kantrovich offered to put on 90 minute to two hour presentations that benefit farmers; insurance, succession planning, accounting/record keeping, etc.
  - vi. Mr. Owens suggested having an advisory round table with all the different ag organizations and Clemson Extension. Mr. Talley agreed that it would be a good idea.
  - vii. Mr. Blanton asked for Dr. Kantrovich's opinion regarding Sewer South
    1. Discussion ensued regarding the necessity of keeping the process public, taking public opinion into account, and being conservative with where and how development happens.
- Kim-the comprehensive plan is going under review starting this year, and farmers need to be aware of the decisions and plans that are being made.
  - Dr. Kantrovich suggested that it would be a good idea to have Troy Helms

present at the ag teacher February meeting

**Discussion** [to include Vote and/or Action on matters brought up in discussion if required].

Mr. Owens made a motion to change the calendar, switching district V from February to March, and move up the meeting of the roundtable to February, seconded by Mr. Blanton, and approved 7/0.

- Board member updates
  - i. Ms. Moxley: The Oconee Food Council is hosting a series of Farmers' Breakfasts, to begin on January 17th at Rocky Knoll Baptist Church. The presentation for this breakfast will be about the RFSI grant.

**10. Adjourn:** Mr. Whiten made a motion to adjourn at 7:16pm, seconded by Mr. Smith and approved 7/0.