

MARCH 01, 2005-WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, held a Workshop to discuss the proposed Hearing Officer Ordinance on Tuesday, March 01, 2005 at 3:00 p.m. at the South Walton Courthouse Annex.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen, Chairman, Commissioner Scott Brannon, Vice-Chairman, Commissioner Larry Jones, Commissioner Cindy Meadows, and Commissioner Rosier Cuchens. Mr. Ronnie Bell, County Administrator, and Attorney Kira Coley, Staff Attorney, were also present.

Commissioner Cuchens led with prayer followed by the pledge of allegiance to the American flag. Vice-Chairman Brannon called the meeting to order.

Attorney Kira Coley presented a power point program regarding the proposed Hearing Officer Ordinance. A copy of the presentation was provided to each member of the Board and for the record.

Mrs. Coley began the presentation by giving a brief explanation of the direction given by the Board to draft an ordinance implementing the concept of having a hearing officer conduct quasi-judicial land use hearings. The presentation then reviewed reasons for revising Chapters 9, 10, and 11 of the Land Development Code and explaining that Chapters 10 and 11 would be combined.

Mrs. Coley continued the presentation by reviewing in detail the process for development applications subject to quasi-judicial hearings. She first discussed the steps that would be taken if there was no request for a quasi-judicial hearing. Then she discussed the steps that would be taken if there was a request for a quasi-judicial hearing.

The presentation also covered issues such as who will be the hearing officer, who will be the participants of the quasi-judicial hearing, and the maximum time the hearing officer will have to render a decision.

Attorney Coley concluded the presentation by reviewing the basic revisions of Chapter 10 of the Land Development Code.

The floor was opened to public comments and questions. Mr. Bob Dobes, President of the South Walton Community Council, expressed concern with the term “adversely affected party”. Attorney Coley stated that the term would be used as it is defined by State Statute 163.3215(2). Mr. Dobes also expressed concern with language in Chapter 10 of the LDC limiting public comment to three minutes per person.

Mr. David Kramer addressed the Board and requested clarification for several portions of the language.

Mr. Ken Goldberg also appeared before the Board to comment on the language and make suggestions.

Ms. Bonnie McQuiston addressed the Board and spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance.

Chairman Pridgen, on behalf of the Board, expressed appreciation to Attorney Coley for her work with the proposed ordinance.

The Board commented on several aspects of the proposed ordinance. Commissioner Meadows voiced opposition to the language that limits the time for a person to request a quasi-judicial hearing to 15 days after a written preliminary decision is issued. She stated that she would be in favor of implementing the ordinance for a six month period with the option to bring it back for evaluation.

After lengthy discussion regarding the proposed process, the Board directed Attorney Coley to revise the ordinance to be brought back at a later date. Attorney Coley advised the Board that the Planning Commission had requested that a Joint Workshop between them and the commissioners be held to discuss the ordinance. Chairman Pridgen directed Mrs. Coley to meet with each commissioner individually before scheduling a Joint Workshop with the Planning Commission.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:26 p.m.

APPROVED: _____

Kenneth Pridgen, Chairman

ATTEST: _____

Martha Ingle, Clerk of Court