

**Montgomery County Commissioner's Meeting
November 18, 2008
Chairperson – Sally Morris
Vice Chairman – Dolon W. Corbett
Commissioner – Billy Maness
Commissioner – George Knight
Commissioner – Jackie Morris
County Manager – Lance L. Metzler
Finance Officer - VACANT
Clerk to the Board – Laura B. Morton
County Attorney – Russell J. Hollers**

The Montgomery County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session on Tuesday, November 18, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioner's Assembly Room. All Board Members were present. *Chairperson Jackie Morris reconvened the meeting and the following was heard:*

Invocation

Rev. Tom Vanoy, pastor of the Mt. Carmel Baptist Church gave the invocation.

Overview of Rules & Procedures

Chairperson Sally Morris asked County Manager Lance Metzler to give a brief synopsis of the rules and procedures. Mr. Metzler gave the overview as requested.

Announcement of Scattered Site Housing Grant Received and Changes to the Agenda

Chairperson Morris announced that Montgomery County received a Scattered Site Housing Grant.

Chairperson Morris also announced the following changes to the agenda:

Additions:

Recognition of Youth Leadership
Social Services Budget Amendment 14/09 Emergency Assistance CIP – No County Funds Required
Fire Department Training Ground Contract

Deletions:

Public Hearing – Rezoning Request – Ewing Family Salvage Acquisition, LLC
Public Hearing – Conditional Use Permit – Walter & Shirley McKenzie

Recognition of Adult and Youth Leadership

Chairperson Morris recognized members of the audience from Adult and Youth Leadership.

Public Forum

The following spoke during the public forum:

Former Board of ***Commissioners Ralph Bostic, Brady Dickson, and Ted Blake*** all came before the current Board and thank them for their service. They said they understand that being a Commissioner is difficult. They also thanked the outgoing members for their service. The group has formed an alliance with all former Commissioners and will be meeting on occasion to discuss County Issues. They also

congratulated the newly elected Commissioners and offered their assistance to the new Board.

Mr. John Hill of 356 Bruton Carpenter Road appeared before the Board asking for an update on the Bruton Carpenter Road Project (pressure issues). County Manager Lance Metzler gave Mr. Hill an Update.

Mrs. Amy Reynolds of 106 Russell Street in Troy and Reynolds Drive in the Rocky Springs Community was present. She thanked the outgoing Commissioners for their hard work in getting the funding from the State to install water lines in their Community.

Consent Agenda

A motion was made by Commissioner Corbett and supported by a second from Commissioner Jackie Morris. The motion carried unanimously to approve the following items on the consent agenda:

- a. Approval of Minutes.
- b. Reappointment of Mary Graves, Opal Harvell, Jack Morris, Don Thompson, Gail Gallimore, & Frances Kornegay to the Montgomery County Planning Board for Services to the Aging (4 yr term)
- c. Appointment of Dottie Robinson and Al Framer to the Montgomery County Planning Board for Services to the Aging (4 year term)
- d. Approval of Resolution to Secure Rural Schools
- e. Social Services - BA 14/09 – Emergency Assistance CIP – No county funds required

Planning Board Report

Mr. Phil Henley, Director of Inspections presented the following Planning Board Report:

A motion was made by Commissioner Maness, seconded by Commissioner Corbett, and so the motion carried unanimously to table the following items until the December 16th Board of Commissioners meeting:

Public Hearing – Rezoning Request - Ewing Family/Salvage Acquisitions, LLC

Public Hearing – Conditional Use Permit – Walter & Shirley McKenzie

Public Hearing - Set Back Variance - Mark and Cheryl Smith

Chairperson Morris closed the regular session and called to order a public hearing to receive comments on the Set Back Variance request from Mark & Cheryl Smith. The Smith's are requesting this set back variance to construct a family room to their existing home. The Planning Board made a recommendation to approve this request due to the restrictions of their sub-sized lot.

No one spoke during the public hearing. Chairperson Morris closed the public hearing and reconvened the regular session.

In a motion made by Commissioner Corbett, seconded by Commissioner Maness, and the motion carried unanimously to uphold the Planning Board recommendation and approve the Set Back Variance request of Mark and Cheryl Smith.

Public Hearing – Variance Request – Armin Leith

Chairperson Morris closed the regular session and called to order a public hearing to receive comments on the Variance request from Armin Leith. Armin Leith's request had been tabled from the September Planning Board meeting. The owners agreed to move

their steps to the center deck and the Planning Board made a recommendation to approve this request.

No one spoke during the public hearing. Chairperson Morris closed the public hearing and reconvened the regular session.

In a motion made by Commissioner Jackie Morris, seconded by Commissioner Maness and the motion carried unanimously to uphold the Planning Board recommendation and approve the Variance request of Armin Leith.

Report on New Senior Outreach Program at the Community Buildings

Mr. Ralph Beane Chairman of the Planning for Services to the Aging was present along with Ms. Theresa Thomas with the Troy/Montgomery Senior Center. They thanked the Board for the funding for the New Senior Outreach Programs that are being coordinated through the Senior Center and the Planning Services for the Aging. Mr. Beane reported the Community Building programs have been a wonderful success.

County Manager's Report

County Manager Lance L. Metzler presented the following County Manager's Report:

Fire Department Training Ground Contract

- We talked about the Fire Department Training Ground Contract at our last meeting with you all.
- The lease is leasing the fire department training property on Coggins Road for 99 years to the Fire Commission.

Commissioner Maness provided the Board the history behind this request.

In a motion made by Commissioner Maness, seconded by Commissioner Corbett, and so the motion carried unanimously to approve the contract between the Montgomery County and the County Volunteer Fire Departments.

County Jail Construction Update

- The jail is still on schedule for substantial completion by February 2009 and Final Completion by March 2009.
- The roof is on and construction is speeding up.
- If you are interested then please let me know and I will take you on a tour.

Finance Director Position

- As you are aware we have been working with Springstead, Inc. to assist us with hiring a qualified Finance Director.
- We had many people apply and John recommended interviewing six.
- Interviewed the six and narrowed down to two.
- I have asked that both respond to a series of written responses to some of my questions.
- I have gotten them back and will make a decision by the end of the week.
- Both are well qualified.

Planning Director Position

- I have hired the new Director of Planning and Zoning.
- I had many to apply and several with great experience.
- I interviewed 4 applicants for the position and settled in on Scott Carpenter.
- He has a lot of good experience. He worked as the Planning Director for Surry County, Public Development Director in Georgia, Town Planner for Clayton,

Director of the State Water Supply Watershed Protection and other various planning experience.

- Over 22 years of experience.
- He will start on Dec. 1st and I am anxious for all of you to have an opportunity to meet him.

EMS Agreement

- Alan and I had an opportunity to meet with First Health about providing the County with Emergency Medical Services.
- I was very surprised and pleased to see a modest increase of only 2.9% increase per year.
- With evaluating what they are offering to provide those services for, compared to what we can do it internally it would be best to consider their offer.
- No action is required tonight but I just wanted you to know that we met with them recently and the new board will be considering the contract in the next few months.

Economic Strategies

- 5%, 10% and 15% decrease in operating budgets with Department Heads.
- 68 degrees temperature in all facilities.
- Fuel Conservation efforts.
- Employee Incentive Program
- Non-monetary, Monetary 10% for employees or units of employees with incentives.
- Improving County Efficiency-Together ICE-T Program

December Meeting Date and Time Announcement

- December 1st the new members will be sworn in and we need to have an organizational meeting on the same day.
- What time will you all consider.

Staff Presentation

Mr. Metzler presented outgoing Commissioners Sally Morris, Billy Maness, and George Knight all with plaques and pottery from a local potter in appreciation for their years of service to the County.

Commissioners Statements

The Commissioners gave the following statements:

Chairperson Morris said there is something I want to mention. We now have a Montgomery County Flag and it is flying. The next time you go by the Courthouse, take a look. Our clerk Laura Morton designed the flag. She did a wonderful job.

She said we have done some research. I have pestered Laura and Lance to death, and since this is my last meeting for awhile, I want to mention some accomplishments of this Board has made. In the last eight years we have brought the water plant in house and it is working well; made Emergency Management & 911 a separate department and put it under the County Manager's control; we have approved funding for community building renovations; approved funding to have senior activities at the community buildings; revamped several county policies and added new ones; obtained numerous grants totaling \$5,817,600; airport grants totaling over \$1,8,000,000; Springdale Heights grant for \$750,000; installed or have installed 205 miles of water lines; developed a capital improvement plan; completed one school and one near completion, in approximately 17 years the County has built four new schools, which I think is great for a poor wealth

County; helped with funding for new Forestry Building at MCC; and new jail near completion.

She said this Board has completed many projects and have maintained a reasonable tax rate.

There are several building projects that the county needs; however, we cannot build Taj Mahals. We need to build what the County can afford. There are vacant buildings that can be renovated and there will be space for renovation at the courthouse when the jail moves.

Chairperson Morris said I have heard a lot during this campaign about change; I hope things like I have listed will not change. I hope the new Board will be able to continue upgrades for the County. I know it will be hard due to the economy. The economy will turn around, but it will not be soon. I have heard projections for as long as 5 to 10 years before we see the economy getting better.

We just delayed the request for the biodiesel facility near Candor. I think this is a positive start to rekindle the job market. I recently went to Tennessee and along the way I noticed many factories and vacant buildings with sale or lease on them. The loss of jobs & industry are not unique to Montgomery County, it is everywhere. Economic Development is working hard to keep the County in the minds of anyone looking to locate in the area.

Our schools are improving. The last report I saw ranked Montgomery County 33 out of 100 Counties for money allocated per student. I think the Commissioners and the School Board have done a great job for our County to rank this high.

Most of the Commissioners have done everything we could to be on top of issues that would affect the County. Many of us have been to Raleigh, at our own expense, to discuss matters that we felt were important for Montgomery County. Some members of the Board, town boards, and economic development were in Washington on 9/11. We were there to meet with our representatives on behalf of the County's needs.

I have been fortunate to be a part of Montgomery County Government. We have a beautiful place to live and many wonderful people. I started to work in the Register of Deeds office on November 18, 1968; I have been involved with County Government for 40 years.

Mrs. Morris said thank you for your support and wished the best for the County and the new Board.

Commissioner Corbett said it has been a pleasure, most of the time, working with this group here. We have accomplished a lot. The main thing in looking back most of us have gotten long good together, we have done this and taken care of being good stewards of the County's money and that is our number one reason we are elected and serve. Again, I will miss you guys but we will be in touch. I look forward to working with the new group. Mr. Corbett said he would also like to say he thinks the idea the former Commissioners have come up with is fantastic and I hope we can proceed with that. Thank you.

Commissioner Jackie Morris said I haven't been here as long the others, but I would like to say something about each of them. It has been an honor to serve with these folks. I want to mention how they inspired me. He said I remember one day we were in a work

session and I hadn't been a Commissioner long and Commissioner Knight was hovering over me and he may not remember this, but he said boy you are going to have to get into these things. I sort of felt like those privates did along the way, but I did, I needed to get into it. He said I remember calling Mr. Maness one night and this was way prior to getting elected and he had dug his heels in on something he thought was good for the County and it turned out it was. I said Billy, I don't know if I would be for you or against you if I was there, but you dug your heels in and I respect that, you dug in and stayed with it. I said remember 10 people there giving him a fit, but I told him there were 26,000 not giving you a fit. Commissioner Morris said Commissioner Sally Morris is our first female Chairperson, not only that she served here as Register of Deeds for years and our relationship goes way back. One of the things I will miss is I get a hug from her, but Jim Matheny, I'm not hugging you. He said as Senator Tony Rand spoke the other day and I don't think there could be any other appropriate words, he walked up to me and said you know, we are probably not as good as we want to be, and probably not as good as we are going to be, but because of these folks we are a whole lot better than we were and I appreciate you.

Commissioner Knight said he was going to try his best not to talk . . . where's my wife? You tell me when to shut up. I have been known while serving on this Board of Commissioners for running my mouth. I didn't intend to irritate anybody or make them mad. I consider myself a Christian and I try to do what is right. I am a person who has and will always stand for what I think is right. I will do that until I die. My Christian faith tells me to do that; that if you are doing something that you feel is right and you feel God is proud of you, and then your reward is coming. I wasn't rewarded as a Commissioner, but my reward is coming. That is what I am looking forward to, that eternal reward and I hope other Commissioners will keep it in mind because what you do here you are going to answer to somebody, it may not be to George Knight, but you will to somebody, you will pay. That is the way I feel about. So I have stood for what is right. I hope in doing so I helped someone in this County. When I came onto this Board, I had an agenda. I look back at some things that some people had been deprived of. I looked at South Troy. I remember my uncle trying to get sewer 60 years ago. I saw no reason why these people could not get sewer in South Troy.

Right now and I hope the Commissioners will not forget it, because they need repair. Lance and I have been working on it. I believe these people were done wrong when the development was built. I don't know why those Commissioners let it happen. That is what I want to get through, be fair to all people and make sure they are treated fairly. The Commissioners didn't make sure sewer was put into all development, they did some. That has been my goal. The people the citizens of this County elect, you elect somebody that is going to work for you. Don't elect someone who has their personal agenda. I have nothing to gain from what I have said or done as a Commissioner. Anything I have said or done I have done for the citizens of the County.

Commissioner Knight said now I love our County employees, I felt that we should have an evaluation policy and merit pay for those people who do outstanding work. They should be rewarded for their hard work. Now, we lose a lot of people, but we also keep a lot of people; people whose roots are deep in this County until they can't pull them up and leave although they don't feel they are getting the paid they need. Mr. Knight said I have talked to a lot of my County Employees and as a 20 year Marine I was taught to take care of my people and they would save your life down the road. That is the way I was taught. I felt like I needed to take care of my County employees, you make them happy and they will serve the citizens of this County that is what we are here for. That is what I strive for. Now, I am going off of the Board, but George Knight's mouth has not closed yet, I will be back. I am not going to be like a lot of other Commissioners when

they do their time, you don't see them anymore. I have been interested in this County ever since I moved back to this County in 1978. I have been working for the people of this County ever since then and I don't intend to stop now or until the Lord calls me home. Again, I would like to say thank you to all our county employees and all of the citizens of this County. I hope things will get better for you. We have done our best as Commissioners. We don't want to raise your taxes but money has to come from someone. I hope things will get better. Thank you.

Commissioner Billy Maness said I think Sally has pretty much covered the past 8 years. I just want to say I appreciate all of the Commissioners for their support. If you have any ill wills or anything, call me we will support it. I appreciate all those who gave me good advice; there are two sitting in the back of the room. I appreciate the press. I hope everything goes well with the new Board and if you need me, please let me know. He also thanked County Manager Lance Metzler for his work and support.

Commissioner Knight said I forgot to thank the press for all their publicity. I hope your sales don't go down. He said I do want to mention something that Ralph and Brady did when they were Commissioners. They made sure every Commissioner got a chance to serve as chair and vice chair. I have been here six years and couldn't even serve as vice chair. I commend them for togetherness when they serve. He thanked Brady for all he has done in Mt. Gilead for the Center. Thank you.

Chairperson Morris thanked her family. She said Dalton has put up with a lot. Roy and Billy have been an inspiration. People have said I listen to Billy and Dolon and Roy, I can tell you that Billy and Dolon have called me hard headed more than once. She said we fussed and quarreled and left with the love in our hearts as it should be.

Chairperson Morris recognized the new Commissioners Anthony Copeland, Jim Matheny, and Edgar Morris. She wished them luck.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Sally M. Morris, Chairperson



Laura B. Morton, Clerk to the Board