

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR SOMERSET COUNTY
SPECIAL SESSION
TUESDAY APRIL 6, 2021

At 1:02 p.m., the Board of Somerset County Commissioners met in Special Session with Commissioner President Craig Mathies, Sr., Commissioner Vice President Charles Laird, Commissioner Randy Laird, Commissioner Eldon Willing, and Commissioner Rex Simpkins.

Also in attendance were County Administrator-Clerk Ralph D. Taylor and Executive Secretary Kimberly Lopez.

Closed Session Summary Report for April 6, 2021

On April 6, 2021, from 2:04 p.m. until 2:11 p.m., at 11916 Somerset Avenue, Room 111, upon a motion made by Commissioner Simpkins and seconded by Commissioner Willing, it carried (on a vote in favor by Vice President Charles Laird and Commissioner Randy Laird) to enter into Closed Session by Authority of State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Subtitle §3-305 (b) (1) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction; and §3-305 (b) (8) to consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation.

Present for the Closed Session Meeting were President Craig N. Mathies, Sr., Vice President Charles Laird, Commissioner Randy Laird, Commissioner Rex Simpkins, and Commissioner Eldon Willing. Also present were County Administrator Ralph D. Taylor, and Executive Secretary Kimberly Lopez. Topics discussed were: (1) Personnel/Legal; Actions taken: None; (2) Property Acquisition; Actions taken: Approval of Signature.

President Mathies asked Commissioner Willing to lead those present in Devotion and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes from the March 23, 2021 Open and Closed Session meetings were presented and approved on a motion made by Commissioner Willing and seconded by Commissioner Simpkins. Vice President Charles Laird and Commissioner Randy Laird voted in favor; therefore, the motion carried.

Ms. Joni Williamson and Mr. Colin Zimmerman of Coastal Realtors were now before the Board to present the 2020 Somerset Housing Statistics (ranging from pre-Covid to post-Covid).

Ms. Williamson presented numbers for homes sold, volume sold, average sale price, new listings, days on the market, and months of inventory. Following the presentation, the Board entered into a brief discussion regarding appraisals and the price of building materials.

Ms. Williamson and Mr. Zimmerman then left the meeting.

Mr. Gary Pusey, Director of Technical and Community Services, and Ms. Mary Phillips, Assistant Director of Technical and Community Services, were now before the Board. Mr. Pusey began by discussing the blighted homes project and the success so far. He further advised that the projected cost for each home removal is less than originally expected and that homes can be removed for interested property owners at no charge to them (with the requirement that they do not sell the property or build on it within a 5-year time frame; after that the lien will be removed and they can build or sell). Mr. Pusey then provided a list of blighted homes on major roads (broken down by Commissioner District).

A motion was made by Commissioner Randy Laird and seconded by Vice President Charles Laird to remove the blighted homes within his district (#5). Commissioner Willing and Commissioner Simpkins voted in favor; therefore, the motion carried.

A motion was made by Vice President Charles Laird and seconded by Commissioner Randy Laird to remove blighted homes located at 73 Richardson Ave., 215 Richardson Ave., 69 Richardson Ave., 26420 Burton Rd., 10854 Mahlon Price Rd., 5646 Tulls Corner Rd., 29629 Quindocqua Rd., and 2901 Byrdtown Rd. Commissioner Willing and Commissioner Simpkins voted in favor; therefore, the motion carried.

Ms. Phillips then addressed the Board regarding the current code for hunting/fishing cabins, which there are no provisions for acreage or location. The Board entered into a discussion, and a motion was made by Vice President Charles Laird to review each request for a hunting/fishing cabin placement case by case. A discussion followed the motion regarding the protocol for changes to the code, which involves the Planning Commission; therefore, Vice President Charles Laird rescinded his motion and the discussion concluded.

During this time, Mr. Taylor and Commissioner Simpkins each took a brief leave from the meeting.

Mr. Pusey and Ms. Phillips left the meeting.

Under discussion items, Mr. Taylor requested the Board select nominees from each of their districts for the 2021 Redistricting Committee.

Mr. Taylor then advised of two volunteers to serve on the Somerset County Tax Assessment Appeals Board: Mr. Guy Wheeler and Ms. Laverne Johnson.

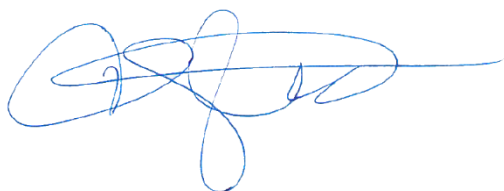
A motion was made by Commissioner Randy Laird and Vice President Charles Laird to recommend Mr. Guy Wheeler to serve on the Somerset County Tax Assessment Appeals Board. Commissioner Simpkins and Commissioner Willing voted in favor; therefore, the motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Simpkins and seconded by Commissioner Willing to recommend Ms. Laverne Johnson to serve on the Somerset County Tax Assessment Appeals Board. Vice President Charles Laird and Commissioner Randy Laird voted in favor; therefore, the motion carried.

The Board was advised for the need of a Closed Session.

Therefore, on a motion made by Commissioner Simpkins and seconded by Commissioner Willing, (that carried on a vote in favor by Vice President Charles Laird and Commissioner Randy Laird), the Board entered into Closed Session by Authority of State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, Subtitle §3-305 (b) (1) the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction; and §3-305 (b) (8) to consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation at 2:04 p.m.

Approved by:



Board of County Commissioners
For Somerset County

Respectfully Submitted:



Kimberly Lopez
Executive Secretary