

Town of Horseshoe Beach Workshop

Dixie County Courthouse

Commission Board Room

214 NE Hwy 351, Cross City, FL 32628

January 06, 2022 – 9:00 AM

While adhering to the CDC Guidelines and following State of Florida Executive Orders: 20-51 Establishing Response Protocol, 20-52 declaring a Public Health Emergency, 20-69 regarding Local Government Public Meetings and the Dixie County Emergency Declaration 2020-27. The Board will meet and limit access by staff and the public to the meeting room. The Board meetings are audio recorded. The public can hear and participate in the meeting via conference call by dialing 1(917)900-1022 and enter code 32628.

COMMISSIONERS

Jody Stephenson, District 1

W. C. Mills, District 2, Vice Chairman

Mark Hatch, District 3

Jamie Storey, District 4, Chairman

James Valentine, District 5

STAFF

Duane Cannon, County Manager

Paul Gainey, Asst. County Manager

Martha McCaskill, Administrative Asst/Grant Coordinator

Michael Osteen, County Attorney

Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court

Della Rhymes, Asst. Chief Deputy Clerk

Jacki Johnson, Chief Financial Officer

CALL TO ORDER

The Board meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM by Commissioner Storey.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE TO THE AMERICAN FLAG

The Invocation was led by Commissioner Valentine and the Pledge to the American Flag was led by Commissioner Mills.

TOWN OF HORSESHOE

Mr. Jeff Williams, Horseshoe Town Council member, and Attorney Sonny Bishop appeared before the Board. Mr. Williams said that Mayor James McClellon had asked for this meeting and said he will not be here due to illness.

Mr. Williams thanked the Board for scheduling a meeting for them. He said some services provided to Horseshoe, LDR, FEMA and Flood Plain Management, have been discontinued. He said the Town Council at Horseshoe has new members, as well as the Mayor and other staff.

Mr. Williams said that things done or not done by previous council members is no longer relevant. He said the citizens are asking for resolve of the issues at hand. He said the residents feel there is conflict between the county and Horseshoe. He said that he has reached out to the county for help, guidance, and compromise. He said everyone from the Sheriff's Office, EMS and Fire, Building and Zoning, and the Road Department have all helped when asked.

He said they do keep the residents updated with their progress. He compared the millage rates between Cross City and Horseshoe. He compared the services provided by the county to both towns. He asked the Board why services for the LDR and FEMA and Flood Plain Management is no longer provided to Horseshoe. He said that Horseshoe is not in compliance with these issues and that poses a risk to the insurance rates and claims of the citizens.

Building Official; Leon Wright appeared before the Board and stated this problem highlighted with FEMA has been debated for years. He said the millage rate stays the same no matter the municipality. He said that Cross City does pay the county for inspections from the Building Department. He said they do retain permitting records for Cross City and provide inspections.

Mr. Wright said he has provided the roles and responsibilities of the Flood Plain Administrator to Horseshoe. He said that he is licensed to be a Flood Plain Manager. He said that FEMA came last year to visit the county and they take photos of anything and everything when they come to town. He said they ask for documentation to support the changes reflected in the photos. He said that he must provide this information to them and argue compliance issues.

Mr. Wright said that Mr. Bob Zerbe was under private contract as the Flood Plain Administrator for Horseshoe in 2017. He said that Flood Plain Ordinance violations on properties affect the other properties insurance rates as well. He said this can also affect mortgages on properties.

Mr. Wright said he saw some issues and pointed them out to the Horseshoe Council when he became the Building Official. He said they would email him back and they would allow this to happen.

Mr. Wright said this will take time to fix these issues. He said that he can help train someone for them, but this is a huge volume of work. He said the Flood Plain Administrator needs to be a local person to work on this. He said there is an annual Flood Plain Conference they can attend and there are programs and scholarships available to help. He said that education and understanding is crucial to that job.

Mr. Wright said the Mayor of Horseshoe had asked about the benefits of remaining incorporated versus unincorporated. He said that is their choice. He said that Horseshoe is in violation and there is a time limit to fix these issues.

Commissioner Hatch said in 2008 there were some differences. He said Horseshoe hired their own Building Official as needed. He said that he doesn't see where the Board has the means to take this responsibility on. He said they do some services for the city, and they pay a higher millage rate, so this is the difference in the money. He asked if they have someone in mind for this position.

Mr. Williams said the Mayor took over the responsibility of the LDR. He said they had a part time FEMA person and he decided this was more work and he was not qualified to do this, so he resigned. He said they have made attempts to work on these issues.

Mr. Williams asked if Mr. Wright was the Flood Plain Administrator and the LDR Administrator for the Town of Cross City.

Mr. Wright replied they have their own LDR and Flood Plain Administrator. He said they pay to have inspections done. For example: The City Manager gives a Zoning Compliance Letter, he verifies this, and issues permits and does the inspections.

Mr. Williams said this is what Talmadge did for Horseshoe in the past.

Mr. Wright said the difference being that if he tells the Town of Cross City that this is wrong they would fix the issue.

Mr. Wright said that Horseshoe is a small community and FEMA takes photos of everything. He said some of the people they hire are not trained on what to look for. He said FEMA turns their reports in to the state.

Mr. Wright said that Horseshoe passed a Shed Ordinance. He said the Ordinance required a permit. He said that a letter would be presented to Building and Zoning and they would take photos of flood vents and retain the records. He said he informed them of a Shed without a permit and was told not to worry about this.

Commissioner Stephenson asked who will assume responsibility for past and existing violations.

Mr. Wright replied there is a time limit to fix these issues. He said this would take away from his other work if he were to do this. He said they need to have someone on their staff do that work. He said he was able to help Suwannee with several issues. He said the county has had the best FEMA Audit this year compared to other years. He said if you are out of compliance that the insurance rates are higher.

Ms. Martha McCaskill asked if taking over these violations would affect the whole county.

Mr. Wright replied if Horseshoe were to dissolve then yes, the county would assume these violations.

County Manager Duane Cannon asked when the deadline is.

Mr. Wright replied that depends on your relationship with the FEMA representative. He said the prior FEMA representative had some grudges with Dixie County. He said the current representative may give some slack, but it is at their discretion. He said that FEMA contacted Building and Zoning and said that Mr. Wright was the contact for Horseshoe. He said that he is not. He said that Bob Zerbe was their contact under a private contract outside of Building and Zoning.

County Attorney Michael Osteen asked if a license is required. He said the Mayor in Fanning Springs does both the LDR and Flood Plain Management.

Mr. Wright said they also have a Building Official and an Inspector to review these.

Attorney Osteen said that Horseshoe could hire and train someone to do this for them.

Mr. Williams said the Town of Horseshoe residents feel like they are paying for services and not getting the services. He said he now understands that Cross City does their own LDR at their expense, do their FEMA and Flood Plain Administration also at their own expense.

Mr. Wright said for example: A person wants to build a home in Horseshoe, the town says yes they can do this, the applicant brings documentation to Building and Zoning, they will check that all is in compliance and keep records, if FEMA were to question, then they would send the records to Horseshoe.

Attorney Sonny Bishop asked the Board if Cross City is treated the same as Horseshoe Beach.

Mr. Wright said that Horseshoe is not paying for their inspections and Cross City does. He said that he can attend their meeting tonight and help answer questions.

Mr. Williams asked if they find someone to do the job, could Mr. Wright provide some help.

Mr. Wright said the conference is in Orlando, FL in May of this year.

Mr. Jeff Hardison said that Fanning Springs covers parts of the two counties of Gilchrist and Levy.

Mr. Wright said they have their own people to do this work for them.

Mr. Wright agreed there is a problem and someone must learn how to do this type of work.

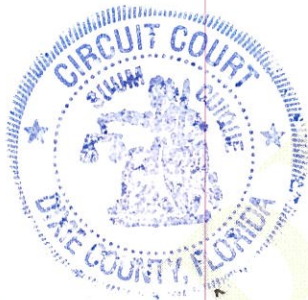
Mr. Williams said they have been unable to get answers in the past, but have learned a lot here today.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

There were no comments or concerns discussed at this time.

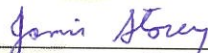
ADJOURN

Commissioner Hatch made the motion to adjourn at 9:41 AM. Commissioner Valentine seconded. Board approved.




ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DIXIE COUNTY, FLORIDA



Jamie Storey, Chairman


Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk-Auditor

PLEASE BE ADVISED that if a person decided to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearings, he/ she will need a record of the proceedings, and for such purpose, he/ she will need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

“Persons with disabilities requesting reasonable accommodations to participate in this proceeding should contact (352) 486-4931 (Voice & TDD) or via Florida Relay Service at (800) 955-8771.”

The Board meets the first Thursday of each month at 10:00 AM and the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 PM. Individuals that would like to be placed on the agenda should call Barbie Higginbotham, Clerk of Court, by 4:00 PM on the Friday Preceding the Board meeting, at (352) 498-1200.