



Spalding County
online

Board of Commissioners

SPLOST PUBLIC HEARING

The Spalding County Board of Commissioners held a SPLOST Public Hearing on Thursday, March 15, 2001 at 6:00 P.M. at Eighth Street Baptist Church located at 408 Palace Street, Griffin, Georgia. Those present were Commissioners Merrill Massengale, Johnie McDaniel, Martha McDaniel, Michael Kendall, Dick Morrow, County Manager William Wilson and County Clerk Phyllis Doane.

Chairman Massengale called the meeting to order. He welcomed everyone that had come out tonight and starting off by saying that this was a public hearing to receive comments on the extension of the one-cent sales tax. He went on to say that Fayette County does not have a sales tax and Spalding County had two-cents sales tax, one for LOST and one for SPLOST. He said that he hears through the public that priorities are recreation, roads and jobs (industrial park).

Pastor W. C. James led the invocation.

The following individuals spoke on the extension of the sales tax:

Mr. Mike Michel gave his address as 115 Dobbins Circle and stated that he had read the newspaper and wanted the Commissioners to know that he feels that not being able to use transportation money to build the Aquatic Center was an honest mistake in being left off Excess Collections. He asked the Board to please complete the Wyomia Tyus Olympic Park project (gyms, community center and Swim and Dive Center) in the next SPLOST and to use bonded monies to finish this project first. He asked the Board to consider all issues in ratio.

Mr. Gary Reid gave his address as 222 Bourbon Street and made statements regarding wastewater treatment. He said that he has been waiting for over twenty (20) years to see sewer placed on the north side of town.

Mr. Wilbur Bailey gave his address as East Northwood Drive and stated he was a member of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission. He said it seems that they got shorted on the present sales tax and asked that the Wyomia Tyus Olympic Park project get put on the next SPLOST. He said that the county needs these two (2) proposed gyms at this park for basketball and stated that recreation brings economy to Griffin.

Ms. Jewel Walker-Harps gave her address as 1317 Greenbriar Drive and stated she was President of the Local Chapter of the NAACP. She asked the Board to give consideration to the northern part of the county. She said the need for sewer in this area was very critical as Mr. Reid had stated earlier and that this part of the county had been overlooked. She questioned how the black children were going to get to the Wyomia Tyus Olympic Park to participate in activities, as they would have to cross a busy Highway 92. She said that everybody seems to think that recreation is so important but there are other areas equally as important. She said they would not be

supporting the extension of the sales tax unless they see some changes in the direction it is heading.

Mr. Allen Reeves gave his address as 506 Pine Hill Road and stated that he serves on the Griffin-Spalding County Development Authority. He said that the Sewer Task Force had asked for an update from the engineers as they have been told that there is no capacity at the Potato Creek Plant to serve a new industrial park. He said because of this update, that the Sewer Task Force had moved as priority construction of a new wastewater treatment plant and had found out the latter part of last week that this would cost approximately \$16 Million. He said that Cabin Creek serves the northern area of the county where Potato Creek serves the eastern part of the county. He said that sewer could be financed through sales tax and user fees. He urged people to get out and vote for the SPLOST and vote for the Industrial Authority. He said that Spalding County is in a window of opportunity for growth.

Reverend Goggins gave his address as 873 East Solomon Street and talked about the development of children in our community for jobs and the industry that is in Spalding County and its importance to these children. He said that the Board should allocate funds and leave it there. He said that we need to live up to what we promised as your bond is your word.

Mr. Zachary Holmes gave his address as 357 Moreland Road and spoke on the error that has just been discovered on the current SPLOST. He said that this makes the county look bad. He applauded Commissioner Kendall for finding this error before irreparable damage was done, as the county would be in trouble if they had spent more than the taxpayers voted for. He said that the present SPLOST money could be used for public transportation. He also addressed the issue of consolidated government. He said that HB 489 was taking care of some of these issues; however, he feels that Griffin and Spalding County is not big enough to have two (2) separate government entities. He spoke about the host tax that DeKalb County has to benefit homeowners as it eliminates the need for property taxes. He said that we need to take a proactive approach.

Commissioner Kendall spoke at this time and stated he wanted to see that this problem was corrected. He said that he had not spoken with all the Commissioners before tonight but he was going to recommend at the next Commissioners Meeting that the Swim and Dive Center be put to a vote in June and then the Development Authority project estimated at \$20 Million and the Sewer Treatment Plant estimated at \$16 Million to be put to a vote in September. He said that the County could borrow the money for the Swim and Dive Center and this sales tax could be paid off in fourteen (14) months. He said that the fact is there is not enough money to put all these three (3) projects on one sales tax. He said that the County couldn't pay for the Aquatic Center with the current sales tax.

Reverend W. C. James, Pastor of the church, spoke on the needs for the black community. He said that it was fine to have a pool at WTOP; however, there was a need for a pool at Fairmont Center.

Mr. Bain Proctor gave his address as 435 Audubon Circle and stated he was Chairman of the Recreation Advisory Board. He said that they endorsed Fairmont Park and City Park Gym and they were in the Master Plan for Recreation. He said that vans and buses could be provided to take the children to Wyomia Tyus Olympic Park. He said that City Commissioner Joanne Todd had proposed a Joint Sewer and Water Authority at the last commission meeting to address the issues of water and sewage in Griffin and Spalding County. He stated that tax reductions could be obtained by (1) homestead exemptions and (2) host tax. He discussed floating homestead

exemptions. He also stated that there was a written policy for associations to provide scholarships in order for all children to participate in recreational activities if they so desire.

Mr. Daa'ood Amin gave his address as 123 Hummingbird Hollow and stated he was Chairman for the second year of the Griffin-Spalding County Development Authority. He said that Spalding County is in a position now to attract industry and provide jobs. He told that NACOM alone pays \$1.1 Million in school taxes and there was \$2.5 million paid by industries last year. He said that there had been 3500 new jobs created over the last seven years. He said the taxes that are paid by industries offset property taxes. He said that he had not discussed this idea with the other members of the Authority but he has done some studying and thinks that the extension of the industrial park could be scaled down and possibly done in phases which would free up some of the money on the next SPLOST. He asked the Board of Commissioners before they decided to bring the Aquatic Center for a vote in June to allow the Authority the opportunity to work our numbers and our budget. He said that we do need to honor the commitment made to voters in the current SPLOST.

Ms. Joyce Hollis gave her address as 1924 West Poplar Street and asked since the excess collections monies could not be moved was this money going to be used on transportation projects. She asked could it be used for the Poplar Street culvert. Chairman Massengale answered yes to both of her questions.

Pastor James spoke at this time and thanked the Commissioners and the people who participated tonight in the public hearing. He commented that the Commissioners were elected by districts but to remember they need to serve the entire county as elected officials.

Mr. George Reid came in late and asked if he could speak before closing the meeting. He said that he was not in favor of the SPLOST, no matter what project was presented unless it was to help the poorly developed areas of the City, especially the north side of town. He commented at the traffic signal at Bourbon Street and Spalding Heights, that there needs to be a turning lane as it is almost impossible to get through the traffic signal before it turns twice as the traffic is bad. He said that the county needs to take a hard look at what is needed and share when it comes to proposed projects. He suggested that some industrial be put in their neighborhood.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8:05 P.M.

County Clerk

Chairman

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