

**MINUTES
PUBLIC MEETING
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
APRIL 2, 2009**

The Ware County Board of Commissioners met in a Public Meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 2, 2009 in the Ware County Commission Chambers with Chairman Jimmy Brown presiding.

CALL TO ORDER: Chairman Jimmy Brown.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairman Jimmy Brown, Commissioners Carlos Nelson, Gene Dixon and Victor Aldridge.

COMMISSIONER'S ABSENT: Commissioner Kathy E. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT: County Manager Gail Boyd, County Clerk Pam Gibson, County Attorney Huey Spearman.

DISCUSSION – THE LAKES GOLF COURSE AT LAURA WALKER PARK: Chairman Brown welcomed the citizens to the meeting. He said the purpose of the meeting is to discuss options in regards to the State of Georgia closing the Lakes Golf Course at Laura Walker Park. He said Representative Harry Dixon and Senator Peg Blich worked hard to get the community this Golf Course.

Commissioner Nelson – requested County Manager Boyd give an update from Representative Mark Hatfield and Senator Greg Goggans regarding the status of Golf Course at the State level. Manager Boyd stated Representative Hatfield contacted her and said it is in the State Conference Committee. The Golf Course will fall under the DNR Budget and currently those funds are still in the State's proposed budget. The DNR Commission will have the discretion as to how the funds will be allocated. Representative Hatfield and Senator Goggans said they are working diligently to keep the Golf Course open. Commissioner Nelson noted that some citizens say the County should not own a golf course. He said the golf course is an economic development engine for this community. He suggested forming a committee to get the numbers and put together a plan to keep this resource in the public. He said maybe the State would consider giving the golf course to the County. We should support this as a community.

Commissioners Aldridge and Dixon – said they are anxious to hear from the community.

CITIZENS SPEAKING IN FAVOR:

Pete Gibson, 1895 Sinclair – suggested it could be run with one main groundskeeper, inmate labor to maintain greens, volunteer labor for the clubhouse and Corporate Sponsors. He added through tourism the golf course could become profitable.

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Danny Yarbrough, City Commissioner – said the City Commission would support a committee to save this resource.

Louis Herrin, 1805 Danora Drive – said there is a lot of support out in the community to save this resource.

Scott Rodgers, Recreation Director – said a public golf course can be profitable. He said you market after middle class citizens. He used the Augusta golf course as a model and offered to contact the individual who runs it to come and talk to the committee. He added that he supports the effort to save this resource. He added that more recreation labor would be needed than is currently available.

Mike Morris, 1149 Riverdale Drive – said the golf course is user friendly, has good drainage, etc.

Dale Starling – said the golf course made \$500,000 and the expenditures were \$60,000.

Joe Gant, 1619 Seminole Springs Road – believes the golf course brings revenue into the community. He said people come from all over the country to play and it is a treasure.

Sherry Beverly, Waycross Tourism Bureau – said they work well with the Recreation Department and offered to help.

Norman Davis, City Commissioner – applauded the Board of Commissioners for doing this and said the City Commission would support the effort.

Robin Blackard, Waycross-Ware County Chamber of Commerce – said the Chamber offers its support.

Dee Meadows, OADA Chairman – said on behalf of the OADA Board they support this effort.

Commissioner Nelson - said this meeting is to pull together a committee from all sections of the community to form a plan to present to the State government.

THE LAKES GOLF COURSE COMMITTEE

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ADJOURNMENT: There being no further discussion the public meeting adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Date approved: May 11, 2009

Jimmy Brown, Chairman

Pam Gibson, County Clerk