

A Public Hearing was held by the Tattnall County Board of Commissioners on Wednesday, January 31, 2019, 10:00 a.m. at the Tattnall County Courthouse. Purpose of Hearing was to hear testimony and receive public comments on the following requested road closings and road changes.

Road changes for District 1:

- (1) Adding- the Community Cemetery Road. Private road that begins at Alberta & Willie Robinson Road and ends at the Alberta & Willie Robinson Community Cemetery
- (2) The Willis Sikes Road closure. From Hillview Road to the Lee Tidwell Road. To include closure of the Sam McKinney Road and Gene Lynn Road.
- (3) A portion of the Alexander Mill Pond Road closure. 1.07-mile section.

Road closure for District 2:

- (1) Della Lane closure. From Hwy 280 E to the Joe Kennedy Road

Road closure for District 4:

- (1) Martha Lane closure. From Enoch Bradley road to the Covin Purcell Road.

The following members were present: Chairman Jackie C. Trim, Commissioner Edward Kennedy and Commissioner Bobby Kennedy

Staff Present: County Manager Frank Murphy, County Clerk Christy D. McCall, HR/Payroll Administrator Kay Sikes, County Engineer Dennis Odum and Sheriff Kyle Sapp.

Chairman Trim called the Hearing to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed the guests.

Chairman Trim then gave the invocation which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

- 1) Chairman Trim began with the addition of the Community Cemetery Road.

County Engineer, Dennis Odum stated this road is the only access to the cemetery. The County has maintained this road for several years. The Road is currently private and not a county road. However, the County has prescriptive easement as the County as maintained the road for several years. If the County continues to maintain the road, it must be made a public road which would include adding traffic and road name signs to the road. If the road is not made public, the county must discontinue maintaining the road. Mr. Odum recommends adding the road and continue maintenance.

Mr. Charles Thomas who owns property on that road, presented his concerns to the Board. Mr. Thomas does not want the road made public. Mr. Thomas explained that his grand mother who recently owned the land, granted the cemetery access through her property. The land is private, and Mr. Thomas feels like the County would be taking his land that he has paid taxes on for years.

Mr. and Mrs. Morris who also own land on that road voiced concerns also. They wanted to know how long the County has maintained the road. Mr. Odum was unable to give that answer other than knowing it has been several years. However, Mr. Odum stated he could pull the log that he does have to show when the road has been maintained currently. Mrs. Morris stated she was not trying to deny access to the cemetery however, voiced concerns of more public using the road if the road is made public. She stated there are already problems with people dumping trash, 4-wheeler traffic and people partying on the road.

Mr. Odum along with Mr. Murphy explained that the County has prescriptive easement as the County has been maintaining for several years. Prescriptive easement is an easement that is earned by regular use over a period of several years. They both further explained that if made a public road, Mr. Thomas could have that land taken off his taxes. It was also further explained that if the road is not made public, the County would no longer maintain the road which may result in the road to become in a condition that no one could travel the road. Which would result in people not being able to visit loved ones buried at the cemetery.

Another gentleman voiced concerns about not being able to visit loved ones in the cemetery. It was reiterated that if the road was not made public, the road could become untravellable which would result in people not being able to access the cemetery.

Mr. Thomas stated he was not trying to keep people from visiting loved ones in cemetery or not grant access but wishes for the road to not be made public and remain private.

2) Next Chairman Trim presented the Willis Sikes Road closure to include the closure Of the Sam McKinney Road and the Gene Lynn Road.

Mr. Odum stated family members have requested for this closure. The Blalock's who also own land on the road agree to close the road.

Attorney Bill Calloway who represented Mr. Willis Sikes who was unable to attend, asked the Board to close the road due to no opposition.

3) Chairman Trim presented the closure of a portion of the Alexander Mill Pond Road. This portion includes a 1.07-mile section.

Mr. McCall Woolard who owns property on the Alexander Mill Pond Road addressed the Board with his request. He requests the 1.07-mile section of the Alexander Mill Pond Road to be closed. He along with Joey Brown own the property in this section. When he learned of the new school to be constructed near this location, he knew the road could not handle the excess traffic that would occur when the school is open. He stated the road is closed more than it is open due to water running across the road in one section. He then turned it over to Joey Brown.

Mr. Brown thanked the board for their time. Mr. Brown presented detailed options to improve the Alexander Mill Pond Road along with other roads in the area to include the Jim Rowe Hightower Road, and the Doster Hutcheson Road/Jim Rowe Hightower Road. If any of this said roads are chose to be used by the school, each road would need major improvements to make the roads safe and usable for bus and other school traffic. Estimates are \$1.9M for Alexander Mill Pond Road, \$1.3M for Jim Rowe Hightower Road and \$1.2M for Doster Hutcheson/Jim Rowe Hightower Road. After details, Mr. Brown stated that the County has already done some work to the Jim Rowe Hightower Road and feels like the Doster Hutcheson/Jim Rowe Hightower Road would be the best option for the school to utilize for buses and school traffic. These reasons include, only right-hand turn would be needed to go to the school, would only require maybe one deputy to direct traffic and this is the shortest road and the least cost to improve.

Mr. Brown then explained that the traffic count on the road is only about 5 cars a day. He also voiced concerns of activity that takes place on that road. He included photos of trash that he and his wife have picked up with included beer cans and syringes with needles. He does not feel this kind of activity is safe close to the school and closing the road could stop that activity in that area.

Sherry Kelly, a resident who lives in that area, then voiced her concerns. She agreed that Mr. Brown had some very good points. However, she has a farm and uses the Alexander Mill Pond Road to travel to her farm on her tractor. Now that the WR Coleman road is closed, and with the possibility of the portion of the Alexander Mill Pond Road closing, she would have to travel a longer distance on a high way possibly on her tractor to get to her farm. She also stated that we have had an unusual amount of rain this year and normally we do not have this much rain. Therefore, road is usually in better shape to travel than it is currently due to rain.

Mr. Brown stated that he understood Mrs. Kelly's concern and would work with her in any way he could as she is his neighbor.

Mr. Odum recounted the recent project on the Glenn Sikes Road which is comparable to the Alexander Mill Pond Road. He stated the Glen Sikes Road required six 60-inch pipes and water still crosses that road at times. Reiterating that it would cost a lot to correct water and drainage problems with the Alexander Mill Pond Road, that still may not completely correct the problem.

Mr. Odum along with Chairman Trim stated that a letter was received from the Tattnall County Board of Education stating they did not oppose closing the portion of the Alexander Mill Pond Road but asked the County to make improvements to the Jim Rowe Hightower Road which they plan on using.

4) Chairman Trim next presented the Della Lane closure.

Mr. Odum stated that the property owners requesting the closure own all the property on the Road except for a small tract at the end.

Mr. Brent Durrence, property owner, along with his son Dylan Durrence, stated that owner's property does not border the road, or the owner does not access their property from Della Lane. The County has not heard anything from this said property owner thus far.

Mr. Odum stated he sees no reason not to close Della Lane.

5) Lastly, Chairman Trim presented the Martha Lane closure.

Mr. Odum stated that only two property owners on the Lane turned in request for the closure.

Mr. Jesse Bradley who owns property on the Lane addressed the Board with his concerns. His brother, Jerry Bradley owns the family home on that property. Mr. Bradley along with his other siblings, also own land on that road. He stated that the road is traveled regular by school buses and mail carriers. He also stated the road is not maintained regularly by the County. Mr. Bradley then thanked the Board for their time and asked them to keep the road open and to ensure the road is maintained regularly.

Mr. Paul Jones, land owner who has requested Martha Lane be closed addressed the Board next. He stated he wanted the road closed as there are problems with people night hunting and traveling down the road all hours of the night. He stated that the school buses could find another route to take. He then stated that the road is not properly maintained by the County and is in bad shape. He asked that if the road is not closed, that the County maintain the road better and more often.

Mr. Odum stated that Martha Lane was on the 'limited maintenance' list but that he could add it to the 'regular maintenance' list so that it is plowed more often.

Lastly, Mrs. Abigail Groover approached the Board with a dirt road being closed in the City of Collins. She stated when Mr. Murphy was Mayor, the request for the road closure was not granted. But later under another Mayor, the request for the road closure was granted.

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Chairman Trim relayed to Mrs. Groover that any roads inside the City limits of Collins would need to be addressed with the current Mayor of Collins. The County cannot do anything with dirt roads within city limits.

Chairman Jackie C. Trim adjourned the meeting at 10:59 a.m.


Jackie C. Trim, Chairman


Christy D. McCall, County Clerk