

Lake Ralph Hall Zoning Commission
Minutes of Public Meeting of May 11, 2023

The Public Meeting, held at the Ladonia City Hall, was called to order by Chairman Newt Cunningham at 5:32 pm. Present were Chairman Newt Cunningham, Jerry Magness, Jaylen Wallace and Greg Morris. A quorum was present.

Item 2: In the Public Comment period, Jo Dahlin stated that she did not want her property to be annexed.

Item 3: Commissioner Magness made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 10, 2023 meeting. Second by Commissioner Wallace. Motion passed unanimously.

Items 4 & 5: Chairman Cunningham stated that the County had no working relationship with the Upper Trinity Regional Water District ("District"). He proposes to zone to the shoreline and if the District wants to build in that area it will need to apply to the Commission. The Legislature gave the County, and not the District, the power to decide what will happen around the lake, and he will propose that the area directly around the lake be zoned Agricultural. He said that the area around the lake had been proposed to be zoned "Lake Operations", and that a large number of uses had been proposed for Lake Operations, including hotels, RV parks, concrete batch plants and many more uses. He said that at Bois d'Arc Lake the Lake Operations zoning designation was only for actual lake operations, dams, pumps, etc. Chairman Cunningham proposes that this area be zoned as Agricultural. Chairman Cunningham wants to re-establish a working relationship with the District.

Chairman Cunningham asked Di Hopkins, Development Services Director, to discuss items in the Lake Ralph Hall zoning regulations that differ from the Bois d'Arc Lake zoning regulations. She recommended that the requirement that a package sewage plant be required for any development over 20 acres be changed. The County currently allows a septic system for a property of 1 acre or more.

Development Services Director Di Hopkins discussed other differences and proposed changes, including for 1.09 (Zoning Violations); 8.01(g), and setback requirements.

Chairman Cunningham said that there were striking differences between the Bois d'Arc Lake regulations and the Lake Ralph Hall regulations and that the differences impede development around Lake Ralph Hall. Ms. Hopkins said that to make changes to the regulations would require, as a first step, a public hearing before the Zoning Commission.

Doug Janeway of the District spoke, saying that he thought that the relationship between the District and the County was good, and that the District wanted a good relationship. He said he would set up a meeting with Chairman Cunningham and the District Director. He said that the District has no objections to changes in the Lake Operations area zoning, and that the District doesn't care about the size of lots, but does care about sewage and water quality.

He said that the District has a contract with an engineer to investigate and look at all the water districts' infrastructure systems and see how the District might help as far as the planning and that the District owes that County an update on that. The District will be meeting with the local water districts this summer. He spoke about the proposed fishing jetty and the District's support for a fossil exhibit at the Children's Museum in Commerce. The District wants to be transparent.

Chairman Cunningham said he was not interested in backroom meetings. He recommends that the area around the Lake be zoned Agricultural. Then the Zoning Commission can consider requests from the District for projects such as campgrounds, etc. as they are made, but that the Commission intends to zone to the shore line.

Chairman Cunningham said the Commission had asked the District to bring back Freese & Nichols to work with the County. The Commission has asked the District to provide it with information on property adjacent to the shoreline which is not owned by the District. The Commission has asked for a copy of the contract between the District and Freese & Nichols. Mr. Janeway said that the District would provide a copy of the Freese & Nichols contract to the Commission, but that the contract was completed. Chairman Cunningham said that the zoning maps had been prepared too soon because the Commission had made it clear that the zoning was not completed.

Commissioner Wallace said that the District should be on the same playing field as citizens in regard to zoning. Commissioner Morris said that the process should be fair to everyone and that everyone should be on the same page.

Chairman Cunningham wants a commitment from the District for private boat docks. Mr. Janeway said the District was committed to allowing private boat docks and providing reasonable access to those private boat docks.

Chairman Cunningham said that the Commission will move forward and hoped to turn a failed relationship with the District around. Mr. Janeway said that the relationship was not failed. Commissioner Magness said he thought it would work out but that it will take both sides.

David Cullar, a local realtor, spoke in favor of allowing septic systems on lots of 1 acre or more as opposed to a sewage treatment plant. He is also concerned about the lack of a Shoreline Management Plan.

Item 6. The next meeting was set for June 8, 2023 on motion by Commissioner Magness, with a second by Commissioner Morris. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 7. A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Wallace, with a second by Commissioner Magness. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 pm.

The above and foregoing represents true and correct minutes of the Lake Ralph Hall Zoning Commission meeting that were held on the 11th day of May, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

Malinda Allison
LRH Zoning Commission Secretary