

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF HENRY

The Henry County Board of Commissioners held a Regular Public Meeting *in-person* on Tuesday, October 7, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. at the Henry County Administration Building (Community Room), 140 Henry Parkway, McDonough GA. HenryTV also streamed this live online at its website, as well as Charter/Spectrum Channel 180 and Facebook Live.

Carlotta Harrell, Chair – (Via phone)
Johnny Wilson, District 1 Commissioner
Neat Robinson, Vice Chair/District 2 Commissioner
Dee Anglyn, III, District 3 Commissioner
Michael T. Price, District 4 Commissioner
Kevin J. Lewis, District 5 Commissioner

Staff Present: Cheri Hobson-Matthews, County Manager; Kevin Johnson, Deputy County Manager; Rachel Mack, County Attorney; Stephanie Braun, County Clerk and Jasmin Head, Deputy County Clerk.

INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPATE

HENRY COUNTY CODE OF CONDUCT

(Sec. 2-2-128: Conduct during public meetings)

INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by Pastor Leonard Himes

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge was recited.

CALL TO ORDER

PROCLAMATIONS / RECOGNITIONS

A. Employee Years of Service Recognition (*Presenter: Holly Lafontaine, HR Director*)

Holly Lafontaine, HR Director gave the following presentation and recognition:

October work anniversaries are celebrated and those in attendance are asked to come forward to have a group picture with the Board of Commissioners.

- **5 Years of Service**
Anmarie Moore – Economic Development Office
Brandon Garland – Sheriff's Office
Elizabeth Turner – Tax Commissioners Office
Emily Alexander – Police Department
Frederick Ramson – Stormwater Department
Jocelyn Tobias – Solicitor General's Office
Sheralle Sheely – Building and Plan Review
Suzette Gray – Clerk of Superior Court
Thomas Perry – Department of Transportation

- **10 Years of Service**
Charles Escandon – Tax Assessors Office
Donna McDonald – Accountability Court
Jacob Perez – Tax Assessors Office
- **15 Years of Service**
Richard Loignon – Police Department
Stephanie Braun – County Clerk
- **20 Years of Service**
Andrew Hand – Fire Rescue
Andrew Jones – Fire Rescue
Brenton Cochran – Fire Rescue
Brown Avera – Fire Rescue
Christopher Lunsford – Fire Rescue
Destin Mills – Fire Rescue
Erick Roberts – Fire Rescue
Frank Robinson – Fire Rescue
James Gullion – Fire Rescue
- **25 Years of Service**
Jewell Strickland – Facilities Maintenance
Sherry Smith - E911
- **30+ Years of Service**
Joseph Smith – 31 Years of Service / Police Department
Cooper Keller – 35 Years of Service / Tax Assessor’s Office

B. Proclamation recognizing October as Breast Cancer Awareness Month (*Presenter: Amber Smith, Public Relations Specialist*)

C. Proclamation recognizing October as Community Planning Month (Presenter: Amber Smith, Public Relations Specialist)

AGENDA CHANGES / ITEM ADDITION:

Roque Romero, SPLOST Director was called to the podium to present the following monthly update on SPLOST, Capital and Transportation. The following summarized video update was given:

The update highlights progress six months after Henry County began collections for the SPLOST VI program in April 2025. Over two dozen projects are underway:

New Tax & Tag Office: Construction has begun in Locust Grove next to the existing driver services office. It’s expected to open in late 2026.

Henry County Aquatic Center: Located in McDonough, the facility’s indoor pools are complete, outdoor slides are 80% finished, and the center is on track to open in summer 2026 as the county’s first aquatic and water park.

Road Resurfacing: Nearly 200 roads will be resurfaced by spring 2027. Completed work includes Eagles Landing Parkway, Hudson Bridge Road, and East Lake Parkway. Current work is underway on Locust Road and Keys Ferry Road.

Rock Quarry Road Widening: Clearing has begun in Stockbridge, with utility relocation to follow. The project is funded by both federal and SPLOST dollars.

Future Road Widening Projects: Design contracts have been awarded for multiple corridors, including Willow Lane, East Lake Road, Oak Grove Road, East Atlanta Road, Jodeco Road, Hampton–Locust Grove Road and Patrick Henry Parkway, all of which will include new sidewalks for pedestrian access.

CONSENT AGENDA

Cheri Hobson-Matthews, County Manager read the consent agenda as follows:

County Attorney

- A. Resolution dissolving Henry First, Inc. (501c3) (*Presenter: Rachel Mack, County Attorney*)(*Exhibit 1*)
Resolution 25-318

County Clerk

- A. Resolution approving the 2026 BOC Holiday *Schedule* (*Presenter: Stephanie Braun, County Clerk*)(*Exhibit 2*) Resolution 25-319

Extension Services

- A. Resolution requesting approval of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Board of Regents regarding Cooperative Extension. (*Presenter: Jonathon Penn, Executive Director*)(*Exhibit 3*)
Resolution 25-320

Juvenile Court

- A. Resolution accepting a grant award in the amount of \$106,365 from the State of Georgia Office of the Governor/Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC) to Fund Functional Family Therapy (FFT) for FY 26.
(*Presenters: Angela Craig, Director of Court Services; and Monyato Tolbert Deputy Director*)
(*Exhibit 4*)
Resolution 25-321

SPLOST/Stormwater/Transportation Planning

- A. Resolution approving Agreements with the Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) Civic Affairs Foundation to accept summer internship grants for SPLOST, Stormwater and Transportation Planning.
(*Presenters: Roque Romero, SPLOST Director; Josue O. DeJesus, Stormwater Director; and Sam Baker, Transportation Planning Director*)(*Exhibit 5*)
Resolution 25-322

SPLOST

- A. (To perfect the record) Resolution rescinding Resolution 25-288 and authorizing the acquisition of 4,844.25 square feet of right of way, permanent easement of 4,584.70 square feet, and a driveway easement of 1,306.80 square feet in Land Lot 109 of the 6th District, Henry County, Georgia, by negotiated contract or condemnation pursuant to provisions of O.C.G.A. Section 32-3-4 through Section 32-3-19. Jonesboro Road Widening, Parcel 45 (TSPLOST). **District 5.**
(Presenter: Roque Romero, SPLOST Director)(Exhibit 6)
Resolution 25-323

(This Ends the Consent Agenda)

Commissioner Anglyn made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda; **Commissioner Lewis** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

REGULAR AGENDA

Tax Commissioner

- A. (Appeal Hearing): Property Tax Appeal for Penalties and Interest, re: Myke's Cafe & Grill
(Representative: Wanda Hernandez) (Presenter: Michael Harris, Tax Commissioner)(Exhibit 7)
Resolution 25-324

Lynn Carty, Deputy Tax Commissioner gave the following information regarding the Appeal Hearing for Myke's Café and Grill:

The Tax Commissioner's Office reviewed a request from Ms. Hernandez, owner of Myke's Café, seeking a refund of interest, penalties, and fees paid in 2022 personal property taxes. She purchased the business in 2022, unaware of unpaid taxes owed by the previous owner. In 2023, staff notified her of the delinquency, and she has since registered as the new owner and paid the outstanding taxes.

Under Georgia law (OCGA 45-5-1 and 2), tangible personal property taxes follow the business assets, making buyers responsible for any prior unpaid taxes. The office determined that penalties and fees should **not** be refunded, as it is the buyer's responsibility to perform due diligence before purchasing a business.

Chair Harrell noted this item was an Appeal Hearing and asked County Clerk Braun to set the clock for comment.

Wanda Hernandez was invited to the podium to speak regarding her appeal.

Ms. Hernandez explained that she paid the outstanding taxes for Myke's Café, even though the business was previously owned by someone else. She stated that her restaurant operated under her own business name, *El Latino*, and she was unaware of the former owner's unpaid taxes. She said she only learned of the issue when visiting the county to pay her own taxes. Because all correspondence had been addressed to "Myke's Café" and not to her, she didn't realize the debt existed. **Ms. Hernandez** believes it is unfair that she was charged late fees for taxes related to the previous owner's obligations.

Chair Harrell closed out the hearing.

Commissioner Wilson had a question regarding when a business is sold and there is a closing, is there not a list of all liens currently associated with the business?

Ms. Carty stated on real property there is, but when a business entity is purchased, there may or may not be a closing with a closing attorney and the commissioner's office is not made aware of a closing.

Additionally, Commissioner Price asked the owner if there was a partnership on the business prior to being purchased?

The appellant was asked to return to the podium to respond and Ms. Hernandez stated that she purchased Myke's Café directly from the previous owner and took full ownership under her own business name. There was no partnership involved. She explained that the seller never informed her of any outstanding tax debts and that all tax notices continued to arrive in his name. She held onto the letters for some time but eventually discarded them after being unable to reach him, as he changed his contact information.

When asked about the transaction process, Ms. Hernandez said the sale was handled informally through a notary, without a closing attorney. She later discovered multiple issues left by the previous owner, including operating without proper business licenses before her ownership.

The motion was read aloud by the County Clerk and the amount clarified for the Commissioners.

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to deny the refund request of \$1,765.40 (which includes interest, penalties and \$30 in GED/FIFA fees; **Commissioner Wilson** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0. Resolution #25-309

Transportation Planning

- A. Resolution approving adoption of the Henry County Connected Vehicle Technology Deployment Plan
(Presenter: Sam Baker, Transportation Planning Director)(Exhibit 8)
Resolution 25-325

Sam Baker, Transportation Planning Director gave the following information regarding the adoption of the Henry County Connected Vehicle Technology Deployment Plan:

Henry County has been awarded a \$825,000 Strengthening Mobility and Revolutionizing Transportation (SMART) Grant for connected vehicle technology deployment, testing, and future expansion in Henry County. Part of this grant is to develop the Henry County Connected Vehicle Technology Deployment Plan to devise how Henry County will expand this technology to the entire county.

Henry County is expanding its Connected Vehicle (CV) Technology program, which allows vehicles to communicate with traffic signals to improve traffic flow and emergency response times. Currently, the technology is deployed at 34 intersections and in 45 emergency response vehicles. A federal SMART Grant is funding a prototype to determine whether CV technology helps the county respond to emergencies faster, with results expected by February 2026.

Mr. Jeremy Ward with P3 Mobility came forward and stated the county has developed a deployment plan with the help of P3 Mobility, aiming to expand CV technology countywide. Key elements include:

1. Equipping **100+ emergency vehicles** for faster, safer response.
2. Equipping **300+ school buses** to improve safety and punctuality.
3. Enabling CV technology at **all 200+ signalized intersections** to support vehicles and future adoption in passenger cars.

The deployment will be phased in four stages, targeting 40 intersections per phase based on traffic and safety priorities. A communications strategy will educate residents, emphasizing time savings, safety, and Henry County's leadership in this technology.

Funding is structured to minimize local costs, leveraging the Stage Two SMART Grant (up to \$15 million, no local match) and Georgia DOT support covering 80% of infrastructure. Additional grants or public-private partnerships may supplement if needed. Total project costs are estimated between \$7–12 million.

The next steps include adoption of the plan by the Board, applying for the Stage Two SMART Grant, continuing prototype testing, and project rollout expected in Q3 following grant approval. This initiative positions Henry County as the first Georgia community with a comprehensive CV deployment plan and a leader in connected vehicle technology.

Commissioner Lewis asked about the financial impact to Henry County if the Stage Two SMART Grant (or other federal funding) is not awarded. **Mr. Baker** responded that alternative funding options exist, including other federal grants like the STBG program, state assistance from Georgia DOT, or public-private partnerships.

In a worst-case scenario, the county would retain the existing prototype (34 roadside units and 45 vehicle units) covering the busiest areas. Expanding the technology independently would still cost approximately \$7–12 million, which could potentially be funded by T-SPLOST as a last resort. **Mr. Baker** emphasized that the goal remains full countywide deployment, but the prototype ensures at least partial benefits even without grant funding.

Commissioner Price questioned the rationale for installing the connected vehicle technology on school buses, noting that emergency response should be the primary priority. **Mr. Baker** explained that while emergency vehicles are the highest priority, stakeholders suggested school buses could also benefit by improving student safety and on-time arrival. They acknowledged concerns that non-emergency use could be misused to bypass traffic lights.

Mr. Baker clarified that school bus deployment is optional and would require additional investment. The primary focus remains on emergency vehicles, with broader expansion to other vehicles to be considered by the community at a later time.

Commissioner Anglyn made a motion to approve; **Vice Chair Robinson** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0. Resolution #25-309

Planning & Zoning

- A. MC-25-02 (Public Hearing) Hecht Walker Jordan, PC of Stockbridge, GA requests a modification to zoning conditions for the Newberry Subdivision located north of Mount Carmel Road in Land Lots 115 & 142 of the 6th District. The property consists of 96.0 +/- acres and the request is to modify zoning conditions. **District 5** (*Presenter: Kenta Lanham, Planner III*)(*Exhibit 9*) Resolution 25-326

Kenta Lanham, Planner III gave the following summary information regarding the modifications to zoning conditions for the Newberry Subdivision:

The request is to modify zoning conditions for the Newberry Subdivision, a 55-and-up residential community north of Mount Carmel Road. The original rezoning in 2021 included minimum home sizes and garage requirements. The applicant, Ryan Homes, is seeking changes to make homes more attainable and marketable for seniors, reflecting current economic realities and demand for smaller, lower-maintenance homes.

Key proposed modifications:

- Single-family homes: Minimum size reduced from 2,500 sq. ft. to a mix of 1,200–2,000 sq. ft., depending on location. Homes adjacent to existing subdivisions (Rowan Shire, Hawthorne Ridge) will retain larger sizes for buffers. Two-car garages remain required for single-family homes.
- Townhomes: Minimum size of 1,350 sq. ft., with 30% maintaining 2,000 sq. ft. 70% may have one-car garages with two-car driveways.
- Phase implementation: Smaller homes will primarily be in future phases (Phase 3 and 4). Phase 1 and 2 homes are already under construction or sold.
- Pricing impact: Smaller homes reduce costs from \$450,000+ down to \$330,000–\$385,000, making them more affordable for seniors.

The modifications aim to align the subdivision with market demand, particularly for seniors who wish to downsize while remaining in Henry County. Staff supports the request, noting it retains the original intent while updating conditions to match current standards and promote successful project completion.

Chair Harrell called for a Public Hearing:

In Favor:

Jon Jordan with Hecht Walker Jordan, PC, representing NVR, Inc. (Ryan Homes), explained that the Newberry subdivision was originally rezoned by Tim Jones Properties in 2021 under 25 conditions, including minimum home size requirements. While most conditions remain appropriate, rising construction costs and housing prices have made it difficult to meet the growing demand for smaller, affordable homes—especially among seniors aged 55 and older. Since launching sales in 2024, only 80 of 349 homes have sold, raising concerns about the project’s viability. The request seeks to modify home size and garage requirements to better reflect market realities and the needs of Henry County’s aging population. Proposed changes include allowing a mix of smaller and mid-sized homes: 50% between 1,200–1,400 square feet, 25% between 1,600–2,000 square feet, and 25% maintaining the 2,000-square-foot minimum. For townhomes, 70% would have a minimum of 1,350 square feet with one-car garages, while 30% would remain larger with two-car garages. Single-family homes adjacent to existing neighborhoods will still meet the 2,000-square-foot requirement. These adjustments aim to make homes more attainable for seniors on fixed incomes, support the community’s desire to age in place, and ensure the project’s completion. Staff has recommended approval of the proposed modifications, and Ryan Homes requests the Board’s approval to move forward.

In Opposition:

Margaret Avera raised concerns about safety and accessibility in the proposed 55-and-up community, questioning the inclusion of multi-level townhomes that could pose evacuation challenges for seniors. She also noted that steps in many units may hinder aging in place and recommended adding accessibility features, such as wheelchair accommodations, to support residents as they age.

Kimberly Fant, a current resident of the Newberry community, expressed concern about how the proposed changes might affect the property values of existing homeowners.

Chair Harrell closed the Public Hearing.

Chair Harrell expressed support for smaller homes but opposed one-car garages, feeling they don’t match the neighborhood’s character. She asked about the number of townhomes and suggested considering cottage-style housing instead, since the community is 55+ and stairs may be challenging.

Kenta Lanham clarified that the subdivision already has zoning approval for townhomes dating back to 2001, and the proposed modification would not increase the total number of units. He explained that the purpose of the change is to make some units smaller and more affordable for seniors, helping to prevent delays or stalled development.

Chair Harrell remained concerned about stairs, one-car garages and how the changes align with the original vision for a 55 plus community.

Assistant Chief Black, Fire Marshal for Henry County, stated that the fire department has no new concerns regarding the proposed modifications. The original site development and fire safety requirements were addressed during the initial approval.

He noted that while multi-level residential structures have inherent challenges, these are covered in firefighter training and continuing education. Additionally, the applicant's representative also noted that they have included updated safety conditions for future phases, such as:

- A five-pound fire extinguisher on each floor of townhomes.
- An escape ladder for second floor sleeping areas.

These conditions will apply to Phase 3 construction and reflect updated standards not currently in place for earlier phases.

Commissioner Lewis acknowledged initial reservations about the zoning modification but indicated that, after speaking with the developer, the proposal makes sense. He specifically addressed concerns from Ms. Fant regarding potential impacts on property values and noted he wanted to hear from the developer about current average price per square foot for homes in the subdivision.

Jesse Clark from NVR Ryan Homes addressed concerns about property values in the Newberry community:

- He acknowledged the risk of the project stalling out, which could negatively affect property values, referencing issues seen during the last recession.
- He explained that appraisers typically value homes on a per-square-foot basis, so smaller homes would not reduce the value of larger homes.
- Clark emphasized that a mix of home sizes is common in 55+ communities, reflecting varying resident preferences, incomes, and mobility needs.
- Some seniors prefer layouts with a master on the main floor and upper floors for grandchildren, showing diversity in housing needs within the 55+ market.

Mr. Clark noted that the neighborhood is fully platted, and roads are built, so townhomes will be constructed regardless. However, the proposed modification improves safety by including Condition 7, which requires a fire extinguisher and a stair escape on the second floor of townhomes.

Commissioner Lewis inquired as to whether all townhomes would have a master on main= and Mr. Clark responded in the affirmative.

Commissioner Lewis expressed support for the zoning modification, noting several key points:

- **Master on main:** Ensures townhomes are suitable for seniors, addressing earlier concerns about the neighborhood stalling out, as seen in other developments after the recession.
- **Integrity of development:** Larger homes (minimum 2,000 sq. ft.) are maintained on the borders next to neighboring subdivisions to protect the overall community character.

- **Senior preferences:** Feedback from a recent AARP meeting indicated that seniors prefer smaller homes, often under 1,000 sq. ft., so the proposed 1,200–2,000 sq. ft. homes align with market demand and are still larger than what most seniors desire.
- **Affordability:** Reducing home sizes lowers prices significantly (by \$60,000–\$80,000), making homes more attainable for seniors.
- **Conclusion:** The modification supports affordable, senior-appropriate housing while maintaining the integrity of the Newberry community. The speaker moved to approve the modification.

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to approve; **Commissioner Price** seconded but had additional questions.

Commissioner Anglyn asked when the original property was rezoned and under whose ownership. **Aaron VanDyke, Division Manager for Ryan Homes** responded that it was rezoned in 2021 under Tim Jones Properties. Approximately six months later, Scarborough Holdings purchased the property and partnered with Ryan Homes. Vertical construction and model homes began with sales opening in February 2023. **Commissioner Anglyn** asked at what point did they see the change in the market? **Mr. VanDyke** stated Ryan Homes observed a mismatch between home sizes (many requiring stairs for square footage) and the preferences of Henry County buyers. Seniors preferred smaller, single-floor homes to meet market demand, they needed to adjust home sizes and layouts, including introducing ranch-style single-floor homes.

Commissioner Price asked **Assistant Chief Black, Fire Marshal for Henry County** is it difficult to safely move a 55+ resident from a second floor than a 35-year-old, given community concerns about seniors using upstairs bedrooms.

Assistant Chief Black stated explained that rescuing someone from a second floor is challenging regardless of age, but it's often harder with seniors because they may be less able to assist or move on their own. Weight is also a major factor.

Chair Harrell called for a vote: **Commissioner Lewis** made a motion to approve; **Commissioner Price** seconded. The motion carried 4-2-0, with Chair Harrell and Commissioner Wilson opposing.
Resolution # 25-326

- B. **ULDC-AM-25-01 (Public Hearing)** An Ordinance by Peter Nwaizuzu of McDonough, GA to amend Chapter 7 of the Unified Land Development Code of the Henry County Code of Ordinances regarding the regulation of front yard fences. Countywide. (*Presenter: Kenta Lanham, Planner III*)(*Exhibit 10*)
Ordinance 25-9

Kenta Lanham, Planner III gave the following summary information regarding the amendment of Chapter 7 of the Unified Land Development Code of the Henry County Code of Ordinances:

The presentation addresses a proposed amendment to the Unified Land Development Code (ULDC) concerning front yard fences (Chapter 7, Section 7.0204). Currently, front yard fences are only allowed on residential agricultural (RA) properties or properties outside subdivisions, with approval required from the Architectural Review Committee.

The applicant requested a change to allow front yard fence requests for all properties, regardless of zoning or subdivision status. Staff noted that different zoning districts have distinct entitlements, with RA allowing agricultural activities, while other districts have different standards. The proposed amendment would permit a wide variety of fence materials and heights, which could negatively affect the character and aesthetic consistency of established subdivisions.

Staff's recommendation is to deny the amendment to preserve subdivision character and maintain uniformity in front yard fencing.

It was noted that this item is a Public Hearing, was opened and with no one speaking the Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner Lewis made a motion to deny; **Commissioner Anglyn** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

ITEM ADDED:

County Manager Comments:

- **Locust Grove Tag Office:** Groundbreaking occurred yesterday in partnership with the city of Locust Grove and the SLOs team; the project is part of SPA Six and will serve the southern half of the county.
- **Cleanup Day:** The final cleanup day is scheduled for Saturday, October 25th, in District 3 (Commissioner D. England's District); details are on the county website.
- **Elections:** Early voting for the November 4th elections runs from Tuesday, October 14th through October 31st; registration for the municipal election closed on October 6th.
- **Stormwater Public Meeting:** Scheduled for Thursday, October 9th at Fairview Recreation Center, covering the Clean Water Act, stormwater management, best practices, and permits.
- **Trunk or Treat & National Night Out:** Event will be held Thursday, October 30th, at Echo Park Speedway; details available on the county website.

The county manager concluded comments, emphasizing upcoming events and community engagement opportunities.

Public Comments

No one signed up.

Approval of Minutes

- A. September 3, 2025 Regular Board of Commissioners meeting minutes at 9:00 a.m.

Commissioner Anglyn made a motion to approve; **Vice Chair Robinson** seconded. The motion carried 6-0-0.

Upcoming Meetings and Events

- A. October 21, 2025; 6:30 p.m. Regular BOC Meeting
- B. November 4, 2025; 9:00 a.m. Regular BOC Meeting
- C. November 4, 2025; 6:00 p.m. Called BOC Meeting on a Planning matter.
- D. November 18, 2025; 6:30 p.m. Regular BOC meeting canceled.

Chair Harrell confirmed Early voting will begin on October 14, 2025.

Chair Harrell adjourned the meeting at 10:48 a.m.

Carlotta Harrell, Chair
Henry County Board of Commissioners

Stephanie Braun
County Clerk