

Garland County
Public Health, Welfare & Safety Committee Meeting

Minutes

October 28, 2019

Members Present: Chairman Larry Raney, Justices Esther Dixon, Jason Braziel, and Thomas Anderson
Members Absent: Vice Chairman Jimmy Young, Justices Jimmy Sorrells, and Matt McKee
Also present: Citizens, Elected Officials, Staff, and Media

A meeting of the Garland County Public Health, Welfare & Safety Committee was held October 28, 2019, at 5:30 P.M. in room 201 of the Garland County Courthouse.

Chairman Raney called the meeting to order and asked Justice Anderson to give the opening prayer.

Chairman Raney then introduced the first order of business, a discussion on the Highway 70 East scenic byway designation and billboards along the highway. Judge Darryl Mahoney started the discussion by stating that Ladybird Johnson designated Highway 70 East as a scenic byway. Mahoney then presented an email from Jeff Ingram, with Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT), describing the requirements for signage along a scenic highway. Mahoney paraphrased a portion of the email stating that a scenic highway allows for signage other than on-premise signs to be placed within 600 feet from a business and on the same side of the highway. Mahoney stated that even if the highway is designated as a "Scenic byway," it is not a set state standard, but the state makes sure local regulations are met before they make any decisions. Chairman Raney introduced Patty Nicholas and Dawn Ledbetter to speak about the signage along Highway 70 East. Nicholas stated that the recent widening and straightening of Highway 70 East was completed because the road was dangerous. Nicholas noted that billboards are specifically designed to distract a driver, which is equally hazardous to drivers. Nicholas noted that she had counted 28 billboards from Interstate 30 to the Martin Luther King (MLK) bypass. Nicholas also stated that several cities in the United States and areas in Arkansas do not allow billboards along the highway. Ledbetter stated that, with the advances in technology, there are things in our society that eventually time out and billboards are one of them. Ledbetter stated that she did not see the need to promote this kind of advertisement anymore. Nicholas stated that Arkansas is the "Natural State," and there is nothing natural about billboards along the highway. Chairman Raney concurred with Nicholas. Justice Anderson stated that removing the signage from the roadside properties could get quite expensive. Anderson stated that eradicating the existing damaged billboards, along with stopping any future signage from appearing along the highway needs to be included in the conversation. Justice Dixon made a motion to forward the discussion to the Quorum Court, seconded by Justice Braziel. Chairman Raney asked for questions or discussion. With none, the motion was approved without opposition.

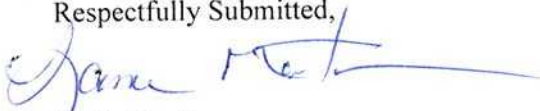
Chairman Raney introduced the next order of business, a discussion of the noise ordinance. Mahoney stated that Mr. Steven Sloan, a resident of Garland County, asked to speak to the committee about the current noise ordinance, but is not present. Mahoney stated that this is the second time Mr. Sloan has requested to speak at a committee meeting and has not appeared.

Chairman Raney introduced the next order of business, a discussion about the current vicious/nuisance dog ordinance and the animal services agreement with the City of Hot Springs. Raney then introduced Sergeant Chris Lackey and Animal Services Coordinator Michelle Stone with the City of Hot Springs. Lackey stated the current vicious/nuisance dog ordinance needs to be separated into two different ordinances. Lackey stated that if a dog is cited under the current vicious/nuisance dog ordinance, a homeowner could be required to have a \$100,000 in homeowner's insurance policy. Ms. Stone added that there are other requirements that would need to be met when an animal is charged as a vicious/nuisance dog. The owner is required to fence the animal in a confined area and add signs to alert pedestrians that the animal was deemed vicious. Stone stated that the city requirements for a nuisance animal charge are less restrictive than a vicious dog charge. Stone noted that if a dog is charged a vicious animal, the city or county could hold it for several months, whereas a nuisance dog would be cited and released to the owner. Justice Anderson made a motion to forward the discussion to the Quorum Court for recommendations, seconded by Justice Dixon. Chairman Raney asked for questions or discussion. With none, the motion was approved without opposition.

Raney then gave an update on the collection of the voluntary animal tax. Raney stated that \$303,489.39 had been collected, and \$35,699.64 has been expended.

Raney asked for any other discussion, with none, a motion to adjourn was made by Justice Braziel.

Respectfully Submitted,



Lanie Martin

Garland County Finance Director