

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT MEETING  
FEBRUARY 22, 2024 1:30 ANNEX BUILDING**

**ATTENDANCE:** Chairman, Justice Michael White; Justice Neil Burge; Justice Rick Ash; Justice Reggie Cullom; Justice Cecil McDonald; Justice Molly Jackson; Justice Betty Hepler; Justice Tobye McClanahan; Economic Development Clif Chitwood, Mallory Darby; Finance Kelli Jones; Treasurer Candace Nichols; Collector Susan Short; Judge John Alan Nelson; Public Affairs Tom Henry; NEA Town Courier Joseph Fondren.

1. Meeting was called to order by Justice Michael White. Green energy was discussed. 30,000 acres were now getting solar panels. There was no permits or zoning in the County. Justice White has talked to County Attorney Chris Brown to explore what the options were. Dr. Cullom shared an article from USA Today. Short term moratoriums, permits per panel, bans had been implemented by other counties. Average panels were 1500 to 2000 per acre. Meeting was turned over to Justice Reggie Cullom. Lee Wilson & Co. signed a 12,300 acre contract, Crane Company 2,400, Gambill Farms 2,000. They were surrounding the city with solar panels. This was an economic impact. Property values were decreased. Justice Cullom was also in favor of a moratorium. No action today.
2. Economic Development request for \$1 million to Big River Steel for 100 jobs needed to be added to the Quorum Court agenda. The request was recommended in December but did not have a signed contract. The contract had been signed and can go to Quorum Court.
3. Economic Development asked for \$1,100,00 million for 100 jobs for Atlas. Bring Atlas up to 310 employees. One million had been appropriated in 2023 and needed to appropriate \$100,000.00. Motion was made by Justice Neil Burge to appropriate \$100,000.00 to Atlas for 100 jobs. Second was made by Justice Rick Ash. Motion passed.
4. Site Certification Process for Arkansas Aeroplex. GREDF Board thought the Aeroplex was an asset to the County and should exploited. There was no empty hangers or warehouse space on the airbase A building for storage, manufacturing was needed. The space would be certified. \$500,000.00 was needed. GREDF Board asked for approval. The building would be removed and the land cleared. Aeroplex agreed to sign a contract with the County that stated at some point if the Aeroplex decided to do something other than a recognized project under the Ordinance they would pay the County back. Justice Burge thought other Mayor's would be coming with the same request to clean up buildings. Justice Burge didn't think it qualified as an Economic Development project. Justice Burge also asked about the \$12.5 million for the cleanup of the North end. Judge Nelson said the request was for \$12.5 million. The actual amount was below \$5 million and should receive the money in three to five years. Justice Burge appreciated the leadership the County Judge's office had done. Motion was made by Justice Rick Ash to appropriate \$500,000.00 of Economic Development money for the site certification at the Aeroplex. Second was made by Justice Cecil McDonald. Justice Neil Burge voted no. Motion passed 2 to 1.
5. Denso announced they were closing. No definite reason was giving why they were closing. Final closing 2025.

6. Great River received a letter from the Johnny Cash Museum requesting a contribution of \$2,500.00, \$5,000.00 or \$10,000.00. Clif Chitwood asked the committee if there was an interest. Regulations were changed so it qualified. They would like for Mississippi County to have a presence. Justice White asked how our donation would be recognized. Justice McDonald thought the County might be opening up for additional requests. The committee would like to do more research. Motion was made by Justice Rick Ash to table the request until the next Economic Development meeting. Second was made by Justice Neil Burge. Motion passed.

7. Justice Michael White brought up Cranford Co. The committee would like to see if they would give a presentation on what had been accomplished and what they would be doing in the future. Justice Ash would like to see quarterly reports. Judge Nelson handed out booklets that Cranford had done in 2023. Judge Nelson attended the Regional Legislative Meeting. Topics discussed were Arkansas State District Court program and how they were financed, Prosecutor's salary, Tax Back, jail fees. A plaque of Shug Banks had been purchased.

8. Meeting adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Cindy George