

**MINUTES  
PUBLIC HEARING  
WARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2023  
5:30 p.m.**

**The Ware County Board of Commissioners held a Public Hearing, Thursday, November 30, at 5:30 p.m. in the Ware County Commission Chambers, 305 Oak Street, Suite 201, Waycross, Georgia 31501 with Chairman Elmer Thrift presiding.**

<b>CALL TO ORDER</b>	Chairman Elmer Thrift
<b>COMMISSIONERS PRESENT</b>	Commissioner Steve Barnard, Commissioner Leonard Burse, Commissioner Timmy Lucas, Commissioner Jerry Pope
<b>COMMISSIONERS ABSENT</b>	None
<b>STAFF PRESENT</b>	County Manager Scott Moye; County Clerk Melinda Brooks
<b>PRESS</b>	Danny Bartlett - WJH
<b>INVOCATION</b>	Danny Bartlett
<b>PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</b>	The Pledge of Allegiance was waived from Work Session

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Thrift called to order the public hearing for Highway – Railroad Crossings – Southeast of Waycross along State Route 520 (Brunswick Highway). Edlin Regis of the Georgia Department of Transportation Safety Program Team, Dave Barse from Atlas Technical Consultants, and the CSXT Public Projects Manager were introduced to the Commission and citizens. Mr. Barse from Atlas Technical Consultants gave a PowerPoint presentation which is included as part of these minutes. Key points of the presentation include:

1. Section 130 Program works to eliminate highway-rail hazards.
2. RR crossings have identification numbers posted with phone number to report issues.
3. Waycross accounts for 11% of pedestrian crashes from 2001-2020.
4. GDOT proposes to close three (3) passive crossings on Knight Ave (Fleetwood Crossover, Driggers Lane, and Woodard Chapel) and add gates to a third crossing located at Blount Road.
5. GDOT proposes to extend Tomberlin Road across Knight Ave to Hwy 82/SR 520 and add a flashing lights and gates crossing at that location.

After the presentation, Mr. Barse held a question and answer session with the commissioners and citizens in the audience. Several concerns were brought up by the citizens including the location of two (2) schools and two (2) daycare facilities that are accessed via Knight Ave, citizens of Brantley County living on Central Ave who travel to

Waycross for work, traffic congestion due to less crossings, access to businesses, blocking highway for longer periods of time when mobile home dealership has to move homes down Knight Ave instead of going straight over the crossing in front of driveway, blocked crossings preventing provision of emergency care. The idea of an overpass was mentioned. One citizen asked about having crossing arms and flashing lights installed at the existing crossings instead of adding a new crossing or overpass. He was told that outfitting the current crossings would be more expensive than constructing a new one. Due to the traffic count numbers in the presentation being from a pandemic year, several citizens insisted that these numbers have increased substantially, if not doubled. At the end of the hearing, the representatives from CSX, GDOT, and Atlas determined that they needed updated information and to bring a well-planned design before the Commission if this idea is to move forward.

Chairman Thrift told the citizens that there would be more meetings and exchange of ideas (or presentations) before any decision is made.

**CLOSURE**

Motion was made by Commissioner Burse to close the public hearing with Commissioner Lucas seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The public hearing was closed at 6:43 p. m.

Date proposed to be approved: December 11, 2023

  
**Elmer Thrift, Chairman**

**ATTEST:**

  
**Melinda L. Brooks, County Clerk**

12/12/2023  
**Date**

