



Gwinnett County Government Communications Division NEWS RELEASE

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COMMISSION APPROVES NEW LAND BUYING POLICY

(Lawrenceville, Ga., July 21, 2011) – Gwinnett County commissioners on Tuesday adopted a new policy that sets out strict procedures for acquiring land. Board Chairman Charlotte Nash said, “Adopting this new policy is the right thing to do. It clearly outlines the process for making good decisions about land acquisitions and holds the Board of Commissioners and County staff accountable for our actions.”

A Special Grand Jury last October criticized several land purchases and said the acquisition process “should follow a clearly-defined system of policies and procedures.” The new eight-page policy covers ethics requirements and duties of staff and commissioners and spells out a process calling for a 17-point written report on proposed land acquisitions. Specifically, property that is considered for acquisition must tie into an existing master plan, project, program or other documented need, and the source and amount of funding budgeted for the purchase must also be verified.

Additionally, the policy includes procedures for buying right-of-way and easements for transportation, water and sewer projects along with sections on how to handle land donations and condemnation proceedings. It also directs the County attorney to provide the Gwinnett County Grand Jury a summary report of all land acquisitions other than rights-of-way and easements.

Nash said, “I applaud the Board for addressing these issues and taking action in direct response to past problems. I believe this new process will achieve the goals envisioned by the Special Grand Jury by providing detailed written information to all parties involved and making the whole process transparent to Gwinnett residents.”

Nash worked closely with County staff to develop the new policy and also expressed appreciation for their efforts. “Our goal is get the land we need for the best possible price without favoritism or conflicts of interest. I think following these procedures will accomplish that goal,” said Nash.

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Note: The *Gwinnett County Land Acquisition Policy* is attached to this news release.