

East Armuchee Community Center

Our community has the opportunity for a multi-purpose community center funded by SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax), which is up for vote July 15. The proposed center would be built on a 10-acre tract at the ball field just west of Villanow. Getting such a center paid for by SPLOST funding is a unique opportunity and one *we must take advantage of now*. Over 50 community members have worked with Commissioner Bebe Heiskell in planning the proposed center for our youth, adults and seniors.

Your vote on July 15 for continued SPLOST funding is a vote FOR the proposed community center. A negative SPLOST vote in our precinct likely will be interpreted throughout the county as meaning our community *does not want and is not supportive of the community center*. Therefore, our center could lose its priority status and designated funding may be redirected to other communities in the county that DO support the SPLOST and the local projects it funds.



“ You can’t imagine how happy I am with the community participation in this project. ... These folks deserve it (because) they don’t have anything over there. They asked me what we could do, and I told them to tell me what they wanted. So they had plans drawn up, and we began from there. ... I have made (the center) high priority, (and) I told them they would have to help me get this SPLOST passed in July because that is what we’ll use to pay for it.”

— Bebe Heiskell, Walker County commissioner

The East Armuchee Community Center complex could include and be used for ...



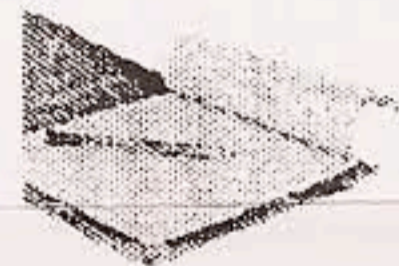
Fire hall



Part time sheriff's substation



Playground



Community room

- * gym
- * exercise / nutrition classes
- * meetings
- * weddings, parties, receptions
- * health screenings
- * square dances
- * movies
- * adult literacy classes
- * GED classes / tutoring
- * gospel sings
- * music events
- * senior activities, crafts, meals
- * game nights - bingo, cards, checkers, chess

Picnic shelter / pavillion

For family, church, community

- * picnics
- * cookouts
- * parties, receptions



Ball fields

- * softball
- * baseball
- * soccer
- * football



Recreation

- * volleyball
- * horseshoes
- * disc or mini golf



Walking trails / track



Emergency shelter

- * tornadoes
- * snowstorms
- * disaster command / donation site



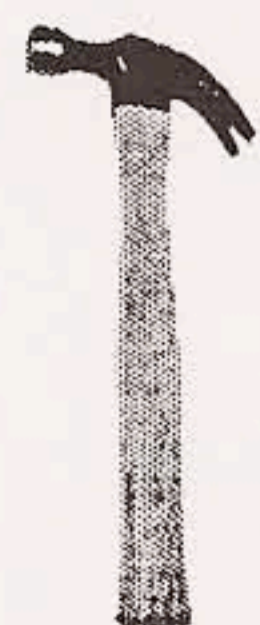
In additon

- * voting precinct
- * bloodmobiles
- * bookmobiles
- * car shows
- * crafts / art shows
- * farmers market
- * trash collection / recycling
- * rabies clinics
- * auctions - farm, garden, household
- * flea markets
- * community yard sales

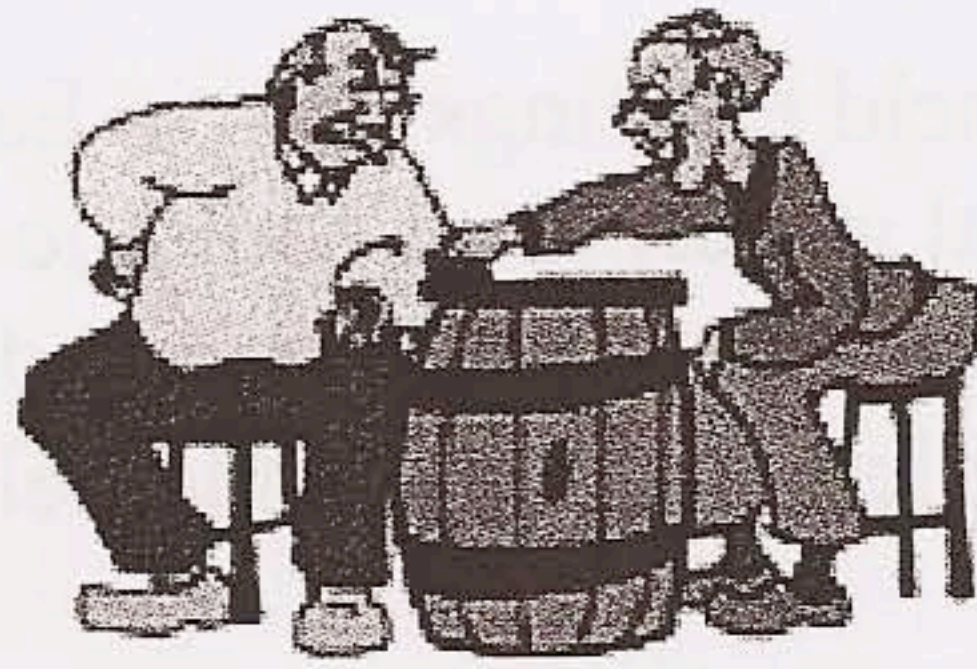


Community information clearing house

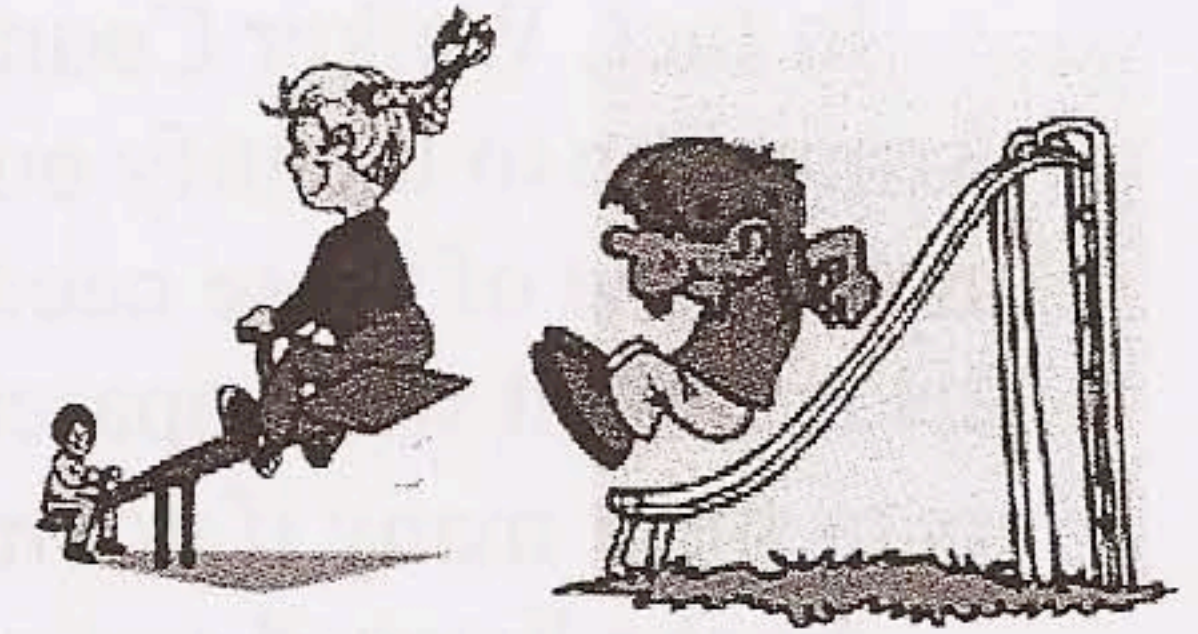
- * services needed — widows' yards mowed, home repairs, etc.
- * services available
- * lost and found pets
- * disaster relief coordination



And **MORE ...**



Meeting needs



Have you ever noticed that by simply listening carefully to people's conversations, you can quickly pick up on their needs – and those of their community?

"We just got a new washer, but the old one is still good and has years of good service left in it. I wish I knew someone who needed one."

"I have only a small yard, but I am unable to mow it and can't afford to pay anyone. I wish I knew someone who would mow it for me." – a widow.

"I wish there was a playground nearby where the kids could play to their hearts' desire and I could walk a track and get back in shape." – a young mother.

"I need to go into the hospital for a week, but I don't have anyone to watch my house and care for my livestock and pets while I'm gone."

"I wish there was somewhere I could sell my extra tomatoes and make a little money."

"I wish we had a farmers' market close so I could get good, locally grown squash, beans, tomatoes, and cantaloupes and help our local farmers at the same time."

"I wish we had a neighborhood senior center where I could go and talk with others and have a good old game of checkers. I get so lonely just sitting at home doing nothing."

"I'd love to have a yard sale, but there's no traffic on my back road over here."

"I remember the festivals we used to have and how much fun our family had. I wish we could have them again."

"I love raising and showing flowers. I wish we had a garden club in this area."

"I like donating blood, but it's so far into Fort Oglethorpe. I wish it were closer."

* * * * *

Yes, we all have needs and wishes. And since we are residents of East Armuchee, that means our community has needs as well. With an increasing number of elderly residents, widows, single parents, etc., we see many needs and wishes that our community has but is not meeting and cannot meet at the present.

But in listening to our neighbors' expressed needs and wishes, one fact becomes quickly apparent: They share a common potential solution – a multipurpose community center.

In fact, Walker County Commissioner Bebe Heiskell has held meetings here in East Armuchee to identify our needs and see what she and our local government could do to meet some of those needs. As individual and community needs were enumerated and discussed, it was apparent that a local community center complex could meet and help us to meet many if not most of those needs.

As she listened and understood our needs, Commissioner Heiskell took an active interest and part in our quest for their solution, a community center. She has given us, our community and proposed center her full cooperation and support and has made the center among her top priorities for the county.

While many of us could meet our individual needs or wishes such as giving blood or going to the farmers' market by driving to Chattanooga, Fort Oglethorpe, Dalton or even LaFayette, we are reluctant or simply financially unable to do so now as gas hovers around \$4 a gallon and continues to climb. So instead of us going off to have our needs met, such services must now come to us or we must leave those needs and wishes unmet and unfulfilled.

While a local community center will meet many and varied needs of our seniors, families, singles, and youth, it will cost money. However, Commissioner Heiskell has made the center a "high priority" for SPLOST funding. Rather than us having to fund the center ourselves, she will use SPLOST funds for the center if the SPLOST is renewed in the upcoming July 15 election.

As we have listened to our neighbors, we are convinced of the need and potential of a local community center complex. Just as a house can and does provide for the varied needs of its varied inhabitants, so can and will an East Armuchee community center provide for ours.

Just as Commissioner Heiskell listened to our need for some kind of local garbage pickup service and provided the weekly service Thursdays at the Villanow fire station, so has she listened to our hearts on our need for a community center. She has understood our needs, has caught our vision, and is giving the center her full support.

Now it is up to US on July 15 to support the center and its funding through SPLOST by voting to extend the SPLOST tax and to show Commissioner Heiskell our support and appreciation for her efforts in planning, supporting and promoting the proposed community center.



PLEASE REMEMBER: A YES vote for the SPLOST on July 15 is a YES vote for our community, our neighbors and the proposed East Armuchee community center. *Most importantly, a YES vote enables us to collectively meet many of the needs and wishes of our local residents that we could not meet or even touch individually.*

TO: CITIZENS OF THE EAST ARMUCHEE VOTING PRECINCT
This includes all specific areas within the voting precinct including Villanow, Reo, Concord, the Gap, the Pocket, Trans, Gitup, and all other specific areas.

FROM: COMMUNITY COMMITTEE TO PROMOTE SPLOST & COMMUNITY CENTER

Committee Members: Richard & Crystal Hobbs, Kathy Decker, Gail Raburn, Barbara Jean Lloyd, Tate & Katie O'Gwin, David Oxford, Jim Pope, Joyce Cantrell

DATE: JUNE 9, 2008

SUBJECT: SPLOST VOTE ON JULY 15

Most of you have probably heard about the upcoming SPLOST (Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax) vote scheduled for July 15 and the effects that it may have on our local community. Many local residents have already expressed differences of opinion concerning this issue, and the disagreements may continue. However, some of you may not know all of the details about how a positive SPLOST vote will affect our community. Therefore, our committee wants to explain the effect of a positive SPLOST vote for our community as we view it, and that is the purpose of this paper. Your consideration for support of the SPLOST vote and the proposed community center will be appreciated.

First, the SPLOST is simply an extra one percent sales tax that counties may impose and use for local purposes. However, since we are already under the current SPLOST program **THERE WILL BE NO INCREASE OF THE PRESENT TAX RATE.** The new SPLOST rate will merely be a **continuation of the present SPLOST rate when it expires.**

You may have heard or read in the newspaper about the proposed community center that the county hopes to build on a 10-acre tract at the ball field just west of Villanow. Commissioner Bebe Heiskell explained it well in a newspaper article on March 28 and showed a strong commitment for it. A copy of this article is attached. But for this community center to materialize, the SPLOST vote must pass the entire county, and we feel that there must also be local support for it. **Without local support, we feel that the funds for the community center may be redirected to another community that does show interest, and WE WOULD GET NOTHING.**

COMMUNITY CENTER FACILITIES At this point, no one can say with certainty how the community center will be specifically designed. However, Commissioner Heiskell has attended two of our local community club meeting during the past year and has discussed this issue with us. She has also discussed it with individual members, viewed the property first-hand, and has made a strong commitment to it in the newspaper article.

We have heard some say that we do not need a community center for our area, although many others believe we do. But for the ones who advocate that we do not presently need it, perhaps the future generation in our community will need it. As one member put it at one of our meetings, "Do it for the kids." Getting a local community center like this is a once in a lifetime

opportunity which we have never had before. We cannot refuse the opportunity now and expect to get it in the future simply by changing our minds. By that time the funds will likely have been directed to another community. If we are to get the community center, we must take advantage of this golden opportunity now.

There will be many benefits with a community center. Although the final drawings have not been started, Commissioner Heiskell has exceeded our expectations with her support of the idea. The attached newspaper article gives a good description about some of her visions. It should be emphasized that the community center will be for all local citizens to use on a fair and equitable basis; this includes the youth, mature adults, and senior citizens. The following describes some of the community center's facilities that we have discussed with Commissioner Heiskell which we hope will be fulfilled:

1. **Ball Fields** - We already have one good ball field on the property. However, there is no electricity, water, or restrooms available, which hinders the full convenient use of it. Further development could yield a youth or an all-purpose field in the future.
2. **Fire Hall** - There are plans for a new fire hall to be constructed on the crest of the hill of the center's property. In addition to this fire hall, other amenities may be attached to it which are described below.
3. **Emergency Shelter, which also may be used as a recreational gym** – An emergency shelter attached to the fire hall could be very valuable. For the ones who say we do not need a community center, no one can tell when a serious disaster – such as a tornado, snow blizzard like in '93, etc. – may strike our community, and the sudden need for an emergency shelter may indeed be necessary. We contend that it would then be desirable to have such an emergency shelter available in our community with backup generators. When the shelter is not needed for shelter purposes, this large room could be used as a youth gym, training room, additional activity room, etc.
4. **Community Room** - A community room attached to the fire hall with its separate entrance could serve many different purposes. This would allow the community use of the room without having to bother the busy fire hall personnel. This would be a multi-purpose room that could be used for community or private meetings, parties, reunions, festivals, etc.
5. **Part Time Sheriff's Office** - Both Commissioner Heiskell and Sheriff Steve Wilson have stated that a satellite part-time sheriff's office (to be used as needed and included in the fire hall building), would be very valuable at this location. The increased presence of law enforcement personnel will improve security not only at the community center but also throughout the entire community.
6. **Picnic Shelter** - This would be a multi-purpose open pavilion. This facility could possibly be used for picnics, reunions, festivals, parties, fundraisers, local farmers' markets, and other types of activities. Moreover, many old-timers will remember how people used to leisurely congregate around the country stores to talk with one another

and enjoy the fellowship of others. This shelter, along with the other facilities of the community center, could provide the environment to revive the good old days in this aspect.

7. **Playground** - The playground would include some nice equipment with a perimeter fence to keep young children safely contained.
8. **Walking Trails.** We expect suitable walking trails to be included on the property of this community center.

PROPOSED PLAN FOR SUCCESS If we are to succeed in actually getting our community center developed, we feel the following factors will greatly affect the outcome:

1. **THE COUNTY SPLOST VOTE** - The SPLOST vote must pass in the entire county, or we will get nothing because the funds will simply not be there. Therefore, we encourage a positive vote for SPLOST.
2. **LOCAL SUPPORT FOR SPLOST** - Our community will undoubtedly be judged by the results of our precinct votes. *A negative SPLOST vote in our precinct likely will be interpreted throughout the county that our community is not supportive of a community center. The county commissioner then will likely be under intense pressure from other communities not to build it here.* Instead, we believe residents in other communities will plead their case to the commissioner and advocate spending the money on projects in their communities.

In one sense, the proposed community center may be **absolutely free** for us. However, if our precinct votes negatively for SPLOST but it passes the entire county, the funds could possibly be redirected to another community (as described above) and we would get nothing. If this happens, the residents of our community would be paying the one-percent SPLOST but getting **nothing** in return for **our community**.

3. **LOCAL APPRECIATION OF AND SUPPORT FOR COMMISSIONER HEISKELL** First, we want to emphasize that we are well aware it is everyone's right to vote for the candidate of their choice. We would not and ARE NOT trying to tell East Armuchee residents for whom to vote in either the upcoming primary or the general election in November. We do, however, encourage residents to study carefully the platforms of each of the candidates, and as informed voters to make their choice.

Nevertheless, we feel that Commissioner Heiskell has been our friend by cooperating with us and making and supporting plans for our community center. Her support and enthusiasm are clearly reflected in the attached newspaper article. She has taken a special, personal interest in our East Armuchee community and in the proposed center. To our knowledge, there is no evidence that the other candidates have shown or expressed any interest in our community and our needs.

In addition, we are appreciative of her support in maintaining the garbage pickup service. This becomes more noticeable when one realizes that there are only two pickup sites in the entire county and that our community has one of them. We feel that we are fortunate and are very thankful for the county providing the service in our community while maintaining the lowest tax rate among county governments in the entire state of Georgia.

We merely want to express our appreciation to Commissioner Heiskell for what she has done and is continuing to do for our community. We also look forward to continuing to work closely with our county commissioner for the good and advancement of our community, the community center, and our East Armuchee residents.

SUMMARY As described above, we believe that if our community center is to materialize, we feel that our community must show local support for both SPLOST and Commissioner Heiskell's efforts in planning, supporting, and promoting it. Thank you for considering this issue. For more information please contact one of the above-named committee members.

YOUR VOTE AND INFLUENCE TO HELP FULFILL THE DREAM OF OUR COMMUNITY CENTER WILL BE APPRECIATED.

Published March 28, 2008

Community center for Villanow? Construction could begin before end of year

A multi-complex community center is planned for the Villanow area, and construction could begin this year.

"You can't imagine how happy I am with the community participation in this project," Walker County Commissioner Bebe Heiskell said. "I think these folks deserve it and I don't mind telling the whole world."

Heiskell described as including ball fields, tennis and basketball courts, playground, gym, fire station, and satellite sheriff's office.

"They don't have anything over there," Heiskell said. "The county has never built them anything. They need a place to go and be able to do what they want to do. They don't even have an emergency shelter since the old school burnt down and they need that."

Heiskell said plans for the complex came from members of the community who purchased 10 acres of land on the north side of Ga. 136 and then turned it over to the county with the intent of seeing a community center built. Heiskell said there are more than 50 people from the community now working on the project.

"They asked me what we could do and I told them to tell me what they wanted," Heiskell said. "So they had plans drawn up and we began from there."

Heiskell said she plans on seeing the project at the top of the list of projects earmarked for this year's planned SPLOST, or special purpose local option sales tax, to be voted on by county residents in July.

"I really don't think they believed I'd do it," Heiskell said. "But I made it high priority. I told them they would have to help me get this SPOLST passed in July because that is what we'll use to pay for it."

Asked when construction might begin, Heiskell said she hoped that it could begin before the end of the year. She said a couple of different draft proposals had been developed as to what the actual center would look like, but believed that final plans would be completed by Northwestern Technical College for the finalized complex.

"In the beginning, there were plans to see separate buildings built for each element of the complex," Heiskell said. "But now we believe that one complex will be constructed that will house each element."

Heiskell said that having separate facilities at the complex was too costly. By having each element under one roof, the county expects to cut down on the cost of the project.

Heiskell said that having such a complex would also help the Sheriff's Department maintain more of a presence in the area.

"Our deputies do a great job throughout our county," Heiskell said. "But they don't have a place to go over there. Often they have to sit in abandoned areas to fill out their reports. With the completion on this satellite office, they will have it at their disposal to work out of as they see fit."

Heiskell said the volunteer fire department in Villanow would be relocated into the complex. "I am excited about these plans for the people of Villanow and want to commend the people of the community for coming together to see this project become a reality," Heiskell said.



Bebe Heiskell,
Walker County
commissioner