

MINUTES
CHATHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RETREAT
JANUARY 14, 2013

The Board of Commissioners (“the Board”) of the County of Chatham, North Carolina, met in the Temporary Superior Courtroom, 158 West Street, Pittsboro, North Carolina, 9:00 AM on January 23, 2013.

Present: Chairman Walter Petty; Vice Chairman Brian Bock; Commissioners Mike Cross, Sally Kost, and Pamela Stewart

Staff Present: Charlie Horne, County Manager; Renee Paschal, Assistant County Manager; Vicki McConnell, Finance Officer, Lisa West, Budget Analyst; Sandra B. Sublett, Clerk to the Board; and Lindsay Ray, Deputy Clerk to the Board

Facilitators: Betsy Polk Joseph and Maggie Choatas (The Mulberry Partners)

Agenda

Day Two

- **Introductions and check-in**
- **Clarify terms**
 - *Distinguish between a goal and a task*
- **Identify individual goals**
 - *Use a worksheet to identify your highest priority short and long term goals*
- **Share, synthesize and determine timeframe for goals**
 - *Identify and begin to plan for goals with greatest consensus*
- **Develop action and accountability plans**
 - *Determine who will take accountability for implementing goals and what the expectations will be*
- **Conclude with evaluation**
 - *Review parking lot items and complete written evaluations*

INTRODUCTIONS

Self-introductions were made.

Ms. Choatas reviewed the retreat goals as follows:

RETREAT GOALS:

As a result of this retreat, The Chatham County Board of Commissioners will:

1. Identify 3-5 short and long-term goals
2. Determine expectations, next steps and outcomes for achieving goals

Ms. Choatas next reviewed the agenda and ground rules for effective groups.

Ms. Joseph reviewed goal-setting goals stating that a smart goal is specific, measurable, accountable, realistic, ambitious, and time-bound.

Ms. Joseph reviewed a “goal example” – To develop and implement cost effective, life-saving, in partnership with public and private organization in the community, to increase the live-release rate of healthy and adoptable animals received at the Wake County Animal Shelter.

A discussion ensued regarding tasks, goals, goal-setting, and accountability.

A clarification of terms was discussed by Ms. Choatas and Ms. Joseph.

Ms. Choatas distributed a goal-setting worksheet. The Board used their time to determine and describe their goals to make Chatham a better county, discuss how they matter, and determine how they can be measured.

Commissioner Cross stated that his goals were: First Responders Memorial, Public/Private Animal Control, and Agriculture Center/Community Center.

Chairman Petty stated that his goals were: To reduce the burden pressure on our animal shelter by addressing adoption issues, etc.

Commissioner Stewart stated that her goals were: Agriculture Center/Community Center, more job opportunities, grow business in Chatham County, keeping property tax rate low/revaluation process so that it doesn't negatively impact citizens, education reform and how the education resources are used.

Commissioner Bock stated that his goals were: To increase economic growth and jobs, maintain current property tax rate, increase options for students learning and achievement (includes traditional district schools, charter schools, and private schools).

Commissioner Kost stated that her goals were: Prosperous Community (education, job training, high-speed internet, solid land use planning, infrastructure, and coordination with the towns, schools, job growth), safe, secure, and healthy community (includes court system [crime], public safety [disease], environmental concerns, and to have citizen-focused government that is efficient and effective and that we are engaging the community at every opportunity and performing community outreach).

Chairman Petty further stated his goals: Achieve AAA Bond Rating (lower cost in borrowing money), increase employment diversity that fosters economic development and allows businesses to take a look at Chatham County as a place in which to locate, reducing the pressure/load on the animal shelter, hold the tax rate down, support education, develop a concept for a Land Use Plan (will help foster business), and to spotlight the work of the Chatham County Staff.

Chairman Petty placed Preston Development in the “Parking Lot”.

Ms. Joseph reviewed the visionary, joint, and key goals of the Board.

After considerable discussion, Ms. Joseph called for a common goal. By consensus, it was “prosperous community”.

Ms. Joseph stated that the goal is to define the short-term and long-term goals that they have put into place in order to get to the final destination which will allow Staff to know what they need to do.

Ms. Choatas referred to the outcomes to achieve a prosperous community stating that they will overlap, will engage citizens, and will build a safer community.

The State of the County, Business Park Sign, and the 9-11/First Responder Memorial were placed in the “Parking Lot”.

A discussion ensued regarding the building of the Agriculture Center including a possible community center which could be used for large groups, the performing arts, tourism, and to compliment the economic sector of agriculture.

Ms. Joseph advised that the Board didn’t need to get into all the details at this time; however, they need to lump together the things on which there is a consensus.

A discussion ensued regarding a “safer community” which ensures that there is safe water to drink as without it, there could not be a prosperous community.

Ms. Joseph added the Agriculture Center and Safer Community under “Long Term Goals” by consensus of the Board.

The Board discussed the goal to ensure that County government is efficient and effective.

BREAK

The Chairman called for a short break.

Ms. Joseph reviewed the “Long Term Goals” as follows:

- To achieve a prosperous community
- To ensure that county government is efficient and effective
- To build a safer community

Ms. Joseph reviewed the “Short Term Goals” as follows:

- To get the Agriculture Center built

The Board discussed land use planning. Completion of a Land Use Plan was added to the “Short Term Goals”.

The Board discussed the idea of government being as easy and hassle-free as possible with regard to someone opening, building, or expanding a business.

Ms. Choatas asked the Board to identify the challenges and to remove the negatives that prevent the accomplishment of the goals. Also, she reiterated that it was aligning processes and identifying the challenges.

Ms. Joseph suggested that the Board continue and expand the inventory of how the County does business to identify barriers/obstacles and (including State level) and work to remove obstacles as a “Short Term Goal”.

By consensus, the Board added diversify job base and diversify tax base to achieve AAA Bond Rating to their “Long Term Goals”.

Ms. Joseph discussed “prosperous” as creating a thriving environment that will have:

- ✓ Jobs – good paying jobs
- ✓ Higher, balanced income rates across County
- ✓ Recreational opportunities
- ✓ Arts, Education, Health, Culture
- ✓ Infrastructure – water, sewer
- ✓ Balanced Economic Growth
- ✓ Safe, Secure Community

Lisa West, Budget Analyst, added: free from crime, disease, public safety, environmental aspects (water, disaster planning), efficient court system, mental health, social services.

The Board discussed safer community issues including the inequities between the fire departments, insurance ratings, public support for fire district taxes, etc.

The Board discussed and added the following “Short Term Goals”:

- To monitor the status of the mental health environment
- To invest in safe and secure schools and County buildings
- To perform necessary disaster planning

Ms. Joseph asked if there were any remaining goals the Board wanted to discuss to make sure that the County is efficient and effective.

It was suggested that energy audits be conducted to increase energy efficiency on the County’s LEED certified buildings or on any initiatives done to increase energy efficiency.

A discussion was held on holding Board of Commissioners’ community meetings in different parts of the County. Town Hall/community meetings was placed in the “Parking Lot” (and later removed).

The remaining agenda was reviewed by Ms. Joseph.

LUNCH BREAK

The Chairman called for a lunch break.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business Park:

Dianne Reid, Chatham County Economic Development Corporation, President explained that the County has received an offer to purchase land at the Chatham Business Campus. The offer is from 130 of Chatham, LLC for 187.97 acres comprising the land identified as Lots, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10 and the portion of the Common Area east of Progress Boulevard identified as comprising 36.74 acres, such land extending to the existing parcel boundaries on or within the Rocky River. The appraisal value for the buildable acreage was \$6,000.00 per acre. This included 212 buildable acres including a good amount of unbuildable acreage including Lots 1, 13, 2, 12, 3, 8, and 4. The offer is for \$1,128,000.00. An earnest money deposit of \$40,000.00 was made. The balance will be \$1,088,000.00. There is a provision for a 45 day due diligence period with closing 15 days after the offer is accepted. She stated that the contract states that the seller agrees to retain responsibility for the cost of all maintenance to the existing paved roads until maintenance is taken over by either the State of North Carolina or the Town of Siler City; that seller shall, to the extent of its legal authority, make its best efforts to ensure that the initial Chatham County tax value of the property does not exceed the purchase price; and that to assist in the furtherance of buyer’s nature conservation goals, seller shall, to the extent of its legal authority, make its best efforts to ensure or assist in coordinating the removal of the contiguous land identified

by Chatham County parcel numbers 11605, 11823, 11622, 14896, 11631, 11608, 14880, 13485, 14308, 80082, 82356, 14305, 14878, 14879, and 776953 from the Siler City Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ).

A discussion ensued with regard to the easement along the river for the trail that Siler City is hoping to build and the special requests.

Commissioner Bock moved, second by Commissioner Cross, to accept the offer striking the two paragraphs discussed.

Commissioner Kost stated that she would like to accept the offer; however, she cannot do so as she feels a provision should be placed in the offer requesting an easement along the river.

Commissioner Cross agreed with Commissioner Kost.

After further discussion, Commissioner Bock withdrew his motion.

Ms. Reid stated that she would be happy to approach the buyer and talk with him regarding the request. The County Attorney will also need to review the contract.

The Finance Officer stated that it may be more involved than just a sale due to it being County property.

Commissioner Bock moved, seconded by Commissioner Stewart, to give Ms. Reid permission to enter into negotiations with the potential buyer relative to the terms of the contract and return to the Board of Commissioners for approval. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

RETREAT CONTINUES

Ms. Joseph explained that Ms. Choatas had to leave the meeting due to sickness.

Ms. Joseph suggested that the Board sort all goals into “Short and Long Term Goals”.

The Board discussed building a hassle-free environment for building and for expanding businesses as a “Short Term Goal”. They also added the Agriculture Center Building to “Long Term Goals”.

Seeking opportunities to partner with municipalities and private entities to increase efficiency was added to “Short Term Goals”.

Support for development of adult daycare and support for Chatham Trades were moved to the “Parking Lot”.

Partnering with municipalities was discussed with regard to efficiency.

Joe Glasson explained that the State has a series of requirements that allows us to be marketed as an authentic mega site. It has to do with infrastructure access, coordination with NCDOT, public utilities, etc. Once the certification is received, it allows the County to compete with other entities throughout the entire southwestern part of the United States. The site selection managers ask for “Certified Mega Sites”. It includes building-ready infrastructure, transportation access, etc. so that someone could come in, know it’s there, and start building.

A Certified Mega Site was added as a “Short Term Goal”.

Ms. Paschal stated Chatham County is 77% residential, 14% land use, 7% commercial, and 1% industrial.

Ms. Paschal stated that the State average is 72% residential, 16% commercial, 2% industrial, and 5% other use.

The Board discussed reducing dependency on the residential tax base by 1%.

The County Manager explained that the way it is defined may not work. He stated that if the residential and commercial are growing, to reduce the residential burden by 1% may mean that commercial may have to be increased by 5-6%.

BREAK

The chairman called for a short break.

RETREAT CONTINUES

The Board reviewed and rearranged their final “Long Term Goals” and “Short Term Goals” as follows:

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS GOALS

OVERARCHING GOAL: Achieve a prosperous, thriving community

LONG-TERM GOAL: Achieve AAA Bond Rating

Short-term goals:

- Diversify job base and tax base—increase commercial and industrial tax base by 1% per year
- Complete a County Land Use Plan
- Increase options for student learning & achievement
- Obtain a certified mega site designation for economic development
- Maintain the property tax rate
- Build a business-friendly environment for new and expanding businesses

LONG-TERM GOAL: Build the new Agriculture Center.

LONG-TERM GOAL: Ensure efficient, effective government

Short-term goals:

- Conduct energy audits of buildings that were constructed to be energy efficient (e.g. LEED) or have had energy efficiency improvements (e.g., Johnston Controls)
- Continue and expand the inventory of how the County does business to identify barriers/obstacles (including state level) and work to remove obstacles
- Seek opportunities to partner with municipalities and private entities to enhance efficiencies

LONG-TERM GOAL: Build a safer community

Short-term goals:

- Invest in safe and secure schools and county buildings
- Monitor the status of the mental health environment
- Protect the environment and drinking water and send letters of support to state officials

PARKING LOT ISSUES:

- Preston Development... maintain close working relationship
- First Responder/9-11 Memorial...discussion coming March 18, 2013 Board of Commissioners' meeting
- State of the County--- make sure we demonstrate staff achievements, but also note the big challenges we face
- Siler City Business Park signage
- Disaster planning to include emerging risks.... Commissioner Kost to report back
- Chatham Trades: Keep eye on this group for support.... Losing some of their funding sources

Chairman Petty asked how much time Staff needed in order to process the retreat information and return to the Board with questions and comments.

Ms. Paschal stated that the budget kick-off is on February 1st. They will have to give the departments a list and some direction on how to proceed in order to maintain the tax rate. She stated that some things do have budgetary impact i.e. improvements to County buildings/school buildings, energy audits might if a consultant has to be hired, etc. She stated that they would have to go ahead with the list.

Commissioner Kost stated that the buildings inventory might become a CIP issue.

Further discussions were held regarding clean water protection, Staff review, Parking Lot issues, First Responders Memorial location, holding Board of Commissioners' meetings at other than their usual locations and using local media to get out information, actively support and visit Chatham Trades, and the no-kill, public/private animal shelter.

Ms. Joseph asked the Board to fill out their evaluation forms.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Bock moved, seconded by Commissioner Cross, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0), and the meeting adjourned at 2:37 PM.

Walter Petty, Chairman

ATTEST:

Sandra B. Sublett, CMC, NCCCC, Clerk to the Board
Chatham County Board of Commissioners