



Chatham County, NC

Meeting Minutes Board of Commissioners

Monday, December 1, 2014

5:00 PM

Historic Courthouse Courtroom

Regular Session - 5:00 PM - Historic Courthouse Courtroom

Present: 5 - Vice Chair Mike Cross, Commissioner Walter Petty, Commissioner Diana Hales, Chairman Jim Crawford and Commissioner Karen Howard

INVOCATION and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Commissioner Cross delivered the invocation after which the Vice Chairman invited everyone present to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Petty welcomed those in attendance and called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM.

Chairman Petty presented plaques to the Commissioners who recently left the Board. He thanked former commissioners Jim Elza, Brian Bock and Pam Stewart (absent) for their service and dedication to the County.

OATHS OF OFFICE

The Honorable Carl Fox will administer the Oath of Office to Commissioners James Crawford, Diana Hales, Karen Howard, and Walter Petty.

The Honorable Carl Fox, residing Superior Court Judge, administered the oaths of office to the newly elected commissioners.

The first commissioner to be sworn was Mr. Walter Petty. Mr. Pettys wife, Abby, held the bible for her husband while he took his oath.

The next commissioner to be sworn was Ms. Karen Howard. Ms. Howard's father, Sir William Allen, KCMG, held the bible for his daughter while she took her oath.

The next commissioner to be sworn was Mr. James Crawford. Mr. Crawford's wife, Maureen, held the bible for her husband while he took his oath.

The final commissioner to be sworn was Ms. Diana Hales. Ms. Hales' husband, Mr. Cheyney M. Hales, held the bible for his wife while she took her oath.

All of the commissioners posed for pictures with their families and Judge Fox after taking their Oath of Office.

After all the commissioners were sworn, Judge Fox gave brief comments thanking

the community for the opportunity to serve them.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD

14-1062

Vote on the selection of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Chatham County Board of Commissioners

The County Attorney presided over the Organization of the Board. He began with the election of the Chair. He opened the floor for nominations.

Chairman Petty nominated Commissioner Cross. He stated he appreciates his experience and his role with the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. He stated if one looks at his profile online they will see he is involved with a lot of things statewide and he has enjoyed serving with him the last four years.

Commissioner Howard nominated Commissioner Crawford. She stated she has no doubt he has the leadership skills and that he shares the concerns of the majority of this board.

The County Attorney called for a vote for all in favor of Commissioner Cross as Chairman. Commissioner Cross received 2 votes.

The County Attorney called for a vote for all in favor of Commissioner Crawford as Chairman. Commissioner Crawford received 3 votes.

By majority vote, Commissioner Crawford was elected the new Chairman of the Chatham Board of Commissioners. Chairman Crawford moved to the center seat and thanked everyone for the opportunity to serve. Chairman Crawford stated the first order of business was to present an engraved gavel to Commissioner Petty to thank him for his service for the past two years as Chairman of the Board. Commissioner Petty thanked the Chairman for the gift.

Chairman Crawford stated the next order of business was the election of Vice Chair. He stated the nominations were now open.

Commissioner Hales nominated Commissioner Cross.

Commissioner Howard nominated Commissioner Hales.

Chairman Crawford called for a vote for all in favor of Commissioner Cross as Vice Chair. Commissioner Cross received 3 votes.

Chairman Crawford called for a vote for all in favor of Commissioner Hales as Vice Chair. Commissioner Hales received 2 votes.

By majority vote Commissioner Cross was elected as Vice Chair.

Chairman Crawford read the following statement:

"Thank you one and all for joining us here today. I am honored and humbled by the position given to me.

Please join me in marking and appreciating the public service of Commissioner Pam Stewart and Commissioner Brian Bock. It is our hope that their significant works on behalf of the citizens of Chatham County will endure and that they will continue to

contribute to our civic life.

Chatham has the most promising future of any county in North Carolina. We are blessed by nature with beautiful landscape and productive soils. Our people are talented and industrious. As we grow together, it is our aim to pursue policies that ensure all residents enjoy the prosperity to come and receive just treatment by our institutions.

We are dedicated to open and inclusive government. In our deliberations we seek the counsel and advice of all people. Everyone's concerns shall have a full hearing in this chamber. No one will be turned away at the door.

I have faith in the proven public leadership of Commissioner Cross, Commissioner Petty, and Commissioner Howard. This board will draw insight from each of them, and I have high expectations for their continued success. I am especially proud to serve with Commissioner Hales. Her capacity for hard work and dedication to informed public policy has been well demonstrated, and I stand ready to assist her in her quest to protect and preserve the water and other natural resources of our county.

As for myself, all I can say is that I am ready to facilitate the many discussions that must take place as we move forward down the road. I will rely heavily upon our county staff for information and incisive reporting of our community's needs and our government's obligations. Some of our challenges are known, others are partially known, and still others lay ahead unseen. Our success depends on your skill and expertise.

We will ask for greater cooperation and planning between county institutions and the leaders of our municipalities to diagnose and solve common problems. We will also confer with regional representatives to make equitable decisions and wise plans for central North Carolina.

Together, we citizens of Chatham must develop a guiding vision of government. A comprehensive land use plan is one major task we will perform. Improved safeguards for Jordan Lake have to be implemented. Making adequate provisions for our public schools is not only the key to drawing business-building investors to our county, but also a generational obligation to our children.

The next five years are crucial for the growth of our community. The decisions we make will set the course for the next half-century. Please give us the benefit of your wisdom and grant us patience as we struggle to work through our shared problems. As we progress, let our motto be: 'None of us is as smart as all of us.'

Let's get to work. Thank you."

[14-1059](#)

Vote on a request to approve the appointment of Lindsay K. Ray to a one year term as the Clerk to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Hales stated she would like to change the appointment to a two year term instead of a one year term.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hales, seconded by Commissioner Howard, that the Appointment of the Clerk to a two year term be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Cross, Commissioner Petty, Commissioner Hales, Chairman Crawford and Commissioner Howard

APPROVAL OF AGENDA and CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Commissioner Hales, seconded by Commissioner Howard, that the Agenda and Consent Agenda be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Cross, Commissioner Petty, Commissioner Hales, Chairman Crawford and Commissioner Howard

14-1035

Vote on a request to approve a contract with Chatham Habitat for Humanity, Inc. to appropriate \$150,000 to provide affordable housing to low and moderate income residents.

Attachments: [Habitat Agreement](#)

A motion was made by Commissioner Hales, seconded by Commissioner Howard, that this Contract, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Cross, Commissioner Petty, Commissioner Hales, Chairman Crawford and Commissioner Howard

14-1036

Vote on a request to approve the Next Generation 911 Solution Contract proposed by Motorola Solutions Inc. and Intrado Communications Inc.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hales, seconded by Commissioner Howard, that this Contract, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof, be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Cross, Commissioner Petty, Commissioner Hales, Chairman Crawford and Commissioner Howard

14-1037

Vote on a request to approve the Sheriff's Bond

A motion was made by Commissioner Hales, seconded by Commissioner Howard, that this Agenda Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Cross, Commissioner Petty, Commissioner Hales, Chairman Crawford and Commissioner Howard

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

Larry Hicks welcomed the new board and stated there is a lot going on in the next several years. He thanked Commissioner Stewart and Vice Chair Bock for their service. He stated there are a lot of former commissioners present and with the chair's approval he would like for them to stand and be recognized. The Chairman did approve and the former commissioners stood and were recognized.

Esta Cohen, 688 Van Thomas Road, Pittsboro, Chair of the Agriculture Advisory Board, addressed the commissioners. She congratulated the commissioners on their upcoming term and stated the Agriculture Advisory Board is looking forward to working with them. She asked that the Board consider appointing a member of the Agriculture Advisory Board to the Economic Development Corporation Board when a vacancy becomes available. They feel that outside of the large chicken plant concerns, the Economic Development Corporation currently does not solicit the agricultural community and does not involve itself with marketing the agriculture endeavours of the county. She has addressed on several occasions both the Board of Commissioners and the Planning Board about the Farmland Preservation Plan. That plan goes hand in hand with the Agriculture Economic Development Plan which was developed at the same time. As we look forward to protecting and preserving farmland, the County's agricultural concerns have to be actively recruited.

Caroline Siverson submitted the following comments:

My name is Caroline Siverson. I live at 5560 Castle Rock Farm Rd., Pittsboro. I am speaking on behalf of Chatham Citizens for Effective Communities known as CCEC. First, I would like to congratulate our new commissioners on their election to the Board. And, thank you to the entire board for your willingness to serve Chatham County. Yours is an awesome responsibility, and we look forward to an upcoming term of proactive and thoughtful governance. CCEC was formed in the early 2000s in response to what was then a development boom. Since that time we have concerned ourselves, among other things, with environmental and land-use planning issues affecting the county.

As we look ahead, we have the following concerns:

We are fearful of the negative impacts on an impaired Jordan Lake as Chatham Park develops due to the current lack of sufficient protections in Pittsboro's approval of the project. Already we are seeing sedimentation reaching the Haw River from the first phase of this massive build-out. While jurisdiction lies with Pittsboro, the impacts will be felt regionally. It is our expectation that our county leaders will engage with Pittsboro's leaders to prevail upon them to protect the Haw River, Jordan Lake and their tributaries.

An updated comprehensive land-use plan is needed. While the current 2001 plan is good, the accompanying map was never adopted, resulting in a weakened plan lacking regulatory teeth. The 2013 survey conducted by the Economic Development Corporation concluded that citizens continue to favor the preservation of working lands and the natural environment along with an effort to focus economic growth in towns and surrounding areas. An updated plan must include provisions for infrastructure development and should reference and incorporate Chatham County's Farmland Preservation Plan, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the Chatham-Cary Joint Land-Use Plan. It must recognize the impact of a future with a densely populated Pittsboro ETJ, and incorporate the Chatham Conservation Plan developed by the Chatham Conservation Partnership. It must include more citizen input, as well as professional guidance, and must include a map.

Our third concern is the urgent need for countywide zoning. We understand that an updated Land-Use Plan must rationally come first, but meanwhile development pressures will bring commercial, as well as light and heavy industrial uses that will seek to locate in Chatham's unzoned areas. Many landowners will likely find themselves facing a loss in property values and right to enjoyment of their property as a result. A placeholder zoning measure is needed, and we trust that the BOC will be working closely with planning staff and the Planning Board to protect landowners.

John Graybeal congratulated the newly elected board members and gave a special congratulations to Chairman Crawford. He also congratulated former board member, Sally Kost, for making the long trip from Colorado.

Martha Giralami stated there has to be a way to keep track of things happening down at the legislature such as meetings of the Joint Legislative Commission on Energy Policy, the Mining and Energy Commission, and the Coal Ash Commission. All of these will have an affect on Chatham County. She has done some research on the permits for the coal ash that may be brought into Chatham and Lee Counties and she is very disturbed by the amount that may be brought over a ten year period. It is 12,800,000 tons. We are not being asked as a community and we are not being assured as a community, and we have to be coordinated to make sure the Board is getting the information it needs. Duke Energy is having a meeting on the December 11th at the Harris Visitors Center in New Hill from 4:30 PM to 7:30 PM.

PUBLIC HEARING

[14-1044](#)

Public Hearing on the Recommended 2016-2022 Capital Improvements Plan

Attachments: [PublicHearingPresentations](#)

Renee Paschal, Assistant County Manager, congratulated the new commissioners and reviewed the specifics of the item.

The Chairman opened the hearing for public comments.

Gretchen Smith submitted the following comments:

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed Capital Improvement Plan. Now that the Board of Education has decided not to use the Jack Bennett Road property for a future high school, I would like to propose the county use that property for a nature park.

Chatham County has done a great job of creating athletic parks. Now I would like to see the county Parks and Recreation program expand its reach to a broader audience. For those who want to play sports, we have some great parks. But not everyone wants to play softball, soccer, or other organized sports. Trails are something that most people can enjoy. They do not require fancy equipment. They can be used alone or with friends and family – no team required to play.

What are nature parks, and how would this differ from our existing county parks? Nature parks are wild, diverse natural settings that promote getting outside connecting with nature. Unlike our existing county parks, a nature park does not have athletic fields and provides noncompetitive activities most people can enjoy. Nature parks also provide economic development benefits, including tourism destination, multi-purpose uses, and amenities attractive to businesses, families, and retirees.

Characteristics of the Jack Bennett Road property that make it an appealing site for a nature park include its size of 94 acres of natural setting, proximity to two Significant Natural Heritage Areas, bordered by Herndon Creek and US Army Corps of Engineers Jordan Lake property, and proximity to schools and neighborhoods.

There are benefits to getting outside connecting with nature, such as reducing stress, enhancing creativity and problem solving, improving ability to focus, lowering ADHD, and fostering good stewardship and conservation values. In order to get the most benefits, getting outside connecting with nature needs to be frequent. Frequency depends on several factors: proximity to homes and schools, accessibility such as ease of getting there and availability of parking, hours of operation, and cost.

In addition to some of the Town of Pittsboro parks (Town Lake Park Trail, Rock Ridge Park), some examples of nearby nature parks run by other city or county Parks and Recreation departments include:

- Durant Nature Preserve in Raleigh*
- Wilkerson Nature Preserve Park in Raleigh*
- Historic Yates Mill Park in Wake County*
- Little River Regional Park and Natural Area in Durham and Orange Counties*

Amenities the proposed nature park could have included:

- Recreation (hiking, mountain biking, birding, climbing, geocaching)*
- Nature play areas (exploring, digging, creating, daydreaming)*
- Outdoor classrooms (demonstrations, hands-on learning, workshops)*
- Outdoor amphitheater (student and community music, drama, dance)*
- Education/Exhibit Center (animal, plant, archaeology, and geology exhibits; nature art gallery; gift shop; snack bar; office space, meeting rooms, training facilities)*

The proposed nature park could either be county run, or a public-private partnership with concessionaires. Some ideas for cost sharing and revenue include:

- CCCC sustainable building student project*
- Repurposed houses or buildings needing to be relocated*
- Volunteer projects*
- Sponsorships and grants*
- Registration, admission, and rental fees*
- Contracts with concessionaires (for example, Asheville Treetops Adventure Park)*
- Partnership with Chatham Visitors Bureau*
- Partnership with County Schools for state environmental education curriculum*
- Lease office or gallery space to other organizations (for example, Chatham Arts Council, Chatham Camera Club)*
- Co-location for other county department or public library with smaller footprint than a high school*

One issue that would need to be addressed if this proposal is considered for the Jack Bennett property is that Booth Mountain Inc. owns the timber rights to the property. This agreement was made when the intention was to build a high school and a lot of land would need to be cleared for buildings, athletic fields, and parking lots. If the plans for the property have changed, does that alter the validity of the timber rights agreement with Booth Mountain Inc.? Extensive logging on the property would no longer make this site appealing for a nature park.

Back in December 2009, a proposed CIP included a nature park at Bell's Landing. Original plans for the NE District Park included more trails in future phases. None of these have happened, but we now have another opportunity with the Jack Bennett Road property. Should the county be selling any of its property right now, at least until future property needs are better known? I ask the Board of Commissioners to please consider using this site for a county nature park.

Thank you.

John Graybeal submitted a list of questions to the clerk about the CIP for staff to review.

Debbie Tunnell stated she remembers when there was one light on Highway 15-501 and when there were less than 40,000 residents in Chatham County. Growth came and it is coming. The lighting and watershed ordinances have been developed and she would like to see those revisited. She is in favor of the renovation of the animal shelter. It is needed and it is important for the staff to have the expanded space. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to have it included in the plan. She works with the Guardians of Angels and it has taken ten years to get it in the plan.

Nicole Edwards is a Team Education Leader with the Guardians of Angels and she fully supports the renovation of the animal shelter. She thanked the new and former commissioners for supporting it. In addition to the new adoption center, the 2015 CIP also allocates funds to our school system. She is a mother of a sixteen year old who attends high school in Pittsboro. She appreciates the public school system and all it has contributed to her sons education. An equally important measure of educating is helping those without a voice. To have an adoption center in Chatham County is taking care of our population without a voice. This is teaching compassion. Lets be a county that advocates not only for public education but for compassion education.

Candace Manning Darringer is in support of the shelter expanding in the county. She noticed that much of the CIP concentrates on children. She would like to expand on that and see an educational program in the shelter that would educate the children of Chatham County on how to treat animals with kindness. There is a spillover effect into the community with the general population. Chatham County has an opportunity to create a program that could be the benchmark for North Carolina. Chatham has people so supportive of animal rights. When you educate children and bring them into the adoption center the adoption rate goes up.

Suzanne Kozel has lived in Chatham for about 20 years and is in support of the renovation for the animal shelter. Her duties with C.A.R.E. bring her to the shelter on a regular basis. She attends the quarterly stakeholders forum that LeighAnn Garrard and Layton Long hold. She has reviewed the proposal for the shelter and while it doesn't address 100% of the wish list, it takes care of a large portion. We are fortunate to have the staff like Chris, Jenny, Hannah and others that have the caring and compassion for the animals and the motivation to do their best job despite the shortcomings of our current shelter. The shelter addresses not only the sad situation for our adoptable homeless animals but improves the health and safety for our employees as well. She encourages the commissioners and staff to move up the timeline and let the community help if needed. Fundraising is always a possibility.

Rev. Terry Dorsey stated he wrote the Dahlli Lama and asked him to pray for the adoption center in Chatham County. He stated he is a fan of the Guardians of Angels. Compassion is a way to build community. When we pledge allegiance, liberty and justice for all it is truly for all. We, the privileged, speak for the ones that have no power and that is the animals. He has given more than the last ten years of his life in favor of building an adoption center in Chatham. He thinks we are doing the right thing and it is the right time and let us be the compassionate people we are.

Dr. George Lucier congratulated the commissioners on their election. He stated he had comments on the schools and the community college. Chatham park plans to build 22,000 residences which means 55,000 people. The most recent estimate is this would mean 8,800 new students during the duration of this project. This slightly exceeds the current number of students we have in our school system. Chatham

has seventeen schools now and thirteen or fourteen more schools will be needed. The Town of Pittsboro is not responsible for the schools, it is the County's responsibility. If Chatham Park is built out over twenty-five to thirty years, the County will have to build a new school every two years. The CIP does not reflect this critical need. He asked the Board to please consider forming a land banking committee. Land prices are going to do nothing more than escalate. This committee should include a member of the Board of Commissioners, a member of the Board of Education, a member of the Pittsboro Town Commissioners, the Director of the County Recreation Department, and a key player with the Chatham Park Investors. He also had comments about the community college. Chatham Park promises to bring good jobs to Chatham. We need to be able to train Chatham County citizens to get these jobs and the community college is the best way to train the citizens. We should not delay in building the college health sciences center. It should be built as soon as possible, not some time after 2020 as indicated in the current CIP.

Cabell Regan, attorney and Vice Chair of Guardians of Angels, stated he is an advocate for the inclusion of the animal shelter in the CIP.

Randy Voller stated he supported Dr. Lucier's comments. He had some bullet points of things the CIP should revisit.

- Crosswalks, the CIP should revisit that.
- Transportation, we need to rethink it as we grow.
- Bookmobile
- Connecting our water, how to fund these connections to help our municipalities
- Jordan Lake Partnership
- Re-use water, OWASA like reuse water network
- Wastewater, part of the CIP needs to revisit
- Property next to Central Carolina Community College, it could be an economic driver for the town
- Investing in municipal CIP projects
- Revisit combined facilities
- Building a new facility in the middle of the county, leave the bus garage and ask the fairground to combine under one ownership.

Jeffrey Starkweather stated he heard an impressive speaker about the overcrowding at Northwood High School and he sees that the High School has been delayed for two years in the CIP. He also supports the Guardians of Angels. He agrees with Dr. Lucier about Chatham Park and the schools. They are bringing back their master plan and that will give the commissioners the opportunity to speak and ask for changes. One of the changes in the plan should be that school sites should be given to the County by Chatham Park. School sites were given to the County by Briar Chapel and the same should happen for Chatham Park. Any other place in the U.S. would not only require a development of this size to provide the school sites it would also require them to build the schools. Northwood has 1300 students and it is time we start thinking about committing to that. Chatham Park is one mile from Northwood. Most students that move to Chatham Park would be going to Northwood. It is an economic driver, people have to make long drives to get there and the sooner you start planning for something the more you will be in a position for that high school. It makes sense to go ahead and build that high school.

BOARD PRIORITIES

[14-1038](#)

Set dates for January 2015 Board of Commissioners Retreat

The Board agreed to set the Board of Commissioners's Retreat for Tuesday, January 6, 2015, Thursday, January 8, 2015 and Tuesday, January 13, 2015. All sessions

will begin at 9:00 AM and the location is to be determined. The Board also agreed that a facilitator for the retreat will not be needed.

[14-1060](#)

Discussion and approval of Commissioners' liaison assignments to boards and committees.

Attachments: [Board of Commissioner liaison table dec 1 2014](#)

Commissioner Hales agreed to serve as the alternate delegate to the TJCOG. After some additional discussion, the Board agreed to approve the list of liaison assignments for the commissioners.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Cross, seconded by Commissioner Hales, that this Agenda Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Cross, Commissioner Petty, Commissioner Hales, Chairman Crawford and Commissioner Howard

MANAGER' S REPORTS

The County Manager reminded the Board of the Work Session on the CIP Work Session at 9am on Thursday, December 4, 2014.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

There were no reports at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Petty, seconded by Vice Chair Cross, that this meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Vice Chair Cross, Commissioner Petty, Commissioner Hales, Chairman Crawford and Commissioner Howard

RECEPTION

Please join us for a reception on the first floor immediately following the meeting to honor our newly elected Commissioners.