

Chatham County Board of Commissioners Sept. 15 meeting

Wake County schools need slice of Chatham; New Ag center bids are in; Chatham Park update; Traffic study of 15/501; Regional public safety training center; Animal Shelter expansion plans; Monopole approved for Old Farrington Rd.; County saved \$1 million; Grant application to update water lines in Nature Trail MHP; More boat storage with U-Turns on Hwy 64; Solar Farm on Hwy 64; Legacy subdivision, off Big Woods, has issue with amenity; Public input

September 15, 2014 Work and Regular Sessions Brian Bock, Mike Cross, Jim Elza, Pam Stewart (Walter Petty absent)

1. Wake Co Public Schools needs a smidge of Chatham Co. A new elementary school in Amberly subdivision in the northeast corner of Chatham will be built on the Wake County/Chatham border. A small portion (.115 acres) of the parcel to be purchased is in Chatham. Betty Parker, from Wake County schools, requested official County permission and approval. The school is slated to open in 2017. Bock asked that the Wake Co. Bd. of Education consider allowing Chatham students who live in this area to attend this school. Elza said he wanted a response on this and discussion of traffic concerns before any vote. Ms. Parker replied she will pass along the concerns to Wake Bd. of Education. The transaction was approved.

2. New Agriculture and Conference Center bid. The base bid is \$9,864,000, but when add in fees, grading, and furniture, total comes to \$11,860,000. The conference/exhibit facility will be able to accommodate 800 people (theater style) and have shell space for three small break-out rooms, and a fourth unfinished area

as an alternative break-out space. The new facility is on a 19-acre site within the 97-acre county-owned parcel adjacent to the CCCC campus in Pittsboro. The BOC approved the base bid allowing up to \$12 million to be spent based on negotiations with contractor to complete the break-out rooms.

3. Chatham Park Update. Phil Culpepper gave an update to Chatham County senior staff. The UNC Medical Center and 100 bed hospital will be completed first, across Hwy 15/501 from Northwood High School, as well as a 10-bed Hospice center. NC DOT has approved a bridge (not a highway interchange) across the Hwy 64 Bypass to connect the Eubanks Road area, the site of the hospital. Culpepper said initial four-year focus is on development of medical facilities north of Hwy 64. The first residential construction will also be in this area. Culpepper said he will meet with Chatham Superintendent of Schools and county staff. Chatham Park is not the builder of the hospital, but will own the property and therefore pay property taxes to Chatham County.

4. Traffic Study on 15/501 Corridor. Hillary Pace from Chatham Planning Dept. presented the draft congestion management plan on the 15 miles of Hwy 15/501 that stretch from Hwy 54 (north) to Hwy 64 (south). The plan looked at expected conditions in 25 years and the doubling of traffic to 30,000 vehicles per day. For congestion management, there were three scenarios involving distances between superstreet intersections. A superstreet “intersection” adds a dedicated lane for making u-turns between intersections that would otherwise require a traffic signal for cross traffic. There is already one superstreet intersection south of Briar Chapel development. Hillary said that these superstreet intersections have 14 potential conflict points for accidents, versus 32 conflict points at traditional intersections. Superstreets impact less acreage than traditional intersections with

traffic signals, there is less idling of cars waiting at traffic signals, and better traffic flow. The final report will be delivered to the MPO after the comment period ends.

5. Chatham Trades Building Plan, update. Executive Director, Shawn Poe, says they are out of space in their two buildings in Siler City. This 30-year vocational program currently serves 36 adults with intellectual and development disabilities, and there are 23 on the waitlist. They need to keep the integration of all the disabled, and the 40-year old current structure is out of space, even the conference room is being used. The cost to build a new 22,400 sq. ft. facility on their same property is \$1.2 million, plus \$300,000 to do the site grading and install the utilities. They can take on additional assembly work, but are out of space. No action.

6. Regional Public Safety Training center. Tom Bender, Fire Marshall, said there was a need for a \$50 million joint training facility, but perhaps tasks could be spread out into existing facilities at different locations. The Triangle J Council of Governments (TJ COG) is recommending a regional training approach so Durham, Chatham, Wake, Lee, Harnett, and Johnston counties can cost-share capital costs on this 7-story structure. TJ COG is asking Chatham to contribute \$6,000 now as Chatham's share for planning the first phase. Motion approved to spend \$6,000.

7. Animal Shelter architectural plans. Architect Rick Bacon evaluated the existing structure and future needs for dog kennels, ventilation, drainage, care support, and euthanasia. The existing 4,000 sq. ft. facility is a 1992 metal building, in fair condition. The recommendation is to expand and renovate in phases to become a modern resource center. Currently the shelter can hold 20 dogs and 25 cats; the

expanded facility could increase the kennels to accommodate 43 dogs and 42 cats, but based on population growth in the county, really need to create future space for 67 dogs and 72 cats. The architect designed a new adoption and receiving building, and would renovate the existing building for \$635,000 to be the intake facility. Lastly, a spay-neuter clinic would be added.

8. Monopole permit for Governors Park at Old Farrington Rd. The Planning Board unanimously approved the permit application for the 150-ft. monopole (stealth design) telecommunications tower to be located on Old Farrington Rd. The five site conditions were met, and the permit is conditional on at least one tenant being assigned before construction. By requiring the pine-tree design of the pole, it will have brown limbs and actually measure 165-ft. so it can hide the antennas. Jim Elza made a motion for continuance; failed for lack of second. The motion to approve this structure was approved 4 to 1 (Elza voted no).

9. Refinancing of county debt saves \$1 million. County staff restructured current debt for the Agriculture Center, the school bus garage, and refinancing of the Margaret Pollard school (2009 project) and other debts. Yea, big savings.

10. Nature Trails Mobile Home Park. The Chatham utilities department applied for \$750,000 CDBG grant to replace inadequate 40-year old water lines in this large mobile home park (near Governor's Club) with new 6-in. water lines for efficiency. The county will pay \$37,500 as the cost-share and mobile home residents will not be charged.

11. Three-story self-storage unit for boats and RV on Hwy 64E, public hearing. Situated on 46 acres along Hwy 64, access to this storage facility, owned by

Raleigh Industrial Partners, LLC, will require U-turns at Hwy 64 and Hwy 751. DOT long-range plans for right-of-way requires the facility to be set back an additional 25-ft. from the road. Several speakers in opposition were concerned about those U-turns, and that this storage facility will eliminate all other commercial prospects, such as grocery stores, for this underserved area. Speakers requested transportation impact analysis regarding these very-tight U-turns. Referred to Planning Board.

12. Next Solar Farm by Strata Solar. Request for conditional use permit by Strata Solar for 42 acre property in Hickory Mt. township, next to the alpaca farm. Half of the parcel (23.3 acres) is zoned R-1, the rest is unzoned. The Conditional Use Permit request covers only the 23.3 acres currently zoned. This would be a 5 megawatt solar farm and, per Strata, will produce \$10,000 in property taxes as well as 110 temporary jobs. Property is not in floodplain but they will get an erosion control permit. Neighbor was concerned about type of trees that would be planted and the materials used in solar cells. Referred to Planning Board.

13. The Legacy revises amenity promised to home buyers. This 627-acre gated development on Big Woods Road (New Hope Township) has a new owner, F-L Legacy Owner, LLC who wants to revise the sketch plan and relocate the (unbuilt) amenity (clubhouse, etc.) to another area within the development, and reconfigure some roads right-of-way. The original amenity area (spectacular view, can also see Solar Bees on Lake Jordan) in the site plan will now be used to build 23 prime homes. The amenity will be built, instead, at the traffic circle in the central area. The new owner held two community meetings, and said he is working on the bad road maintenance in the development, and this change will eliminate two channel crossings. Residents complained about the developer removing the most scenic

property dedicated for community use and not planting shade trees as required. Moving the public amenity to the traffic circle adds more traffic for the 300 homes (full build-out is 463 units) that use the circle. There also concerned about sedimentation run off. Referred to Planning Board.

14. Public Input: Esta Cohen, on Agriculture Advisory Bd., said there is no zoning to protect county agriculture and need to consider protection of groundwater supplies for agriculture in this County.

Several speakers from the Democratic Party African-American caucus spoke about the BOC's first official action in 2011 to eliminate the Executive Director's position on the Human Relations Commission, and the subsequent resignation of the entire membership of that body. Rev. Paul McAllister said that in light of recent tragic race-related shootings in other states, there is a need to reinstate this commission in Chatham County. Randy Voller, as Chair of the State Democratic Party, said the BOC is showing disrespect toward Karen Howard, the current chair of the Bd. of Education, by keeping her out of the communications loop and calling her down in public, leading others to conclude the BOC is acting spiteful because of her gender or race.

Diana Hales

Chatham County Commissioner Candidate