

FEBRUARY 14, 2012

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**NORTH CAROLINA
MECKLENBURG COUNTY**

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Budget/Public Policy Session in Conference Center Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center located at 600 East Fourth Street at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 14, 2012.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chairman Harold Cogdell, Jr. and Commissioners Karen Bentley, Dumont Clarke, George Dunlap, Vilma Leake and Jennifer Roberts
County Manager Harry L. Jones, Sr.
County Attorney Marvin A. Bethune
Clerk to the Board Janice S. Paige

Absent: Commissioners Neil Cooksey, Bill James, and Jim Pendergraph

Commissioner Dunlap was absent when the meeting was called to order and until noted in the minutes.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Cogdell, after which the matters below were addressed.

(1) CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG PLANNING COMMISSION

The Board received a presentation on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission. The presentation was made by Stephen Rosenburgh, Chairman of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission and Yolanda Johnson, Vice-Chairman. They were introduced by General Manager Bobbie Shields. The following was covered with respect to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission:

Commissioner Dunlap entered the meeting.

- Commission Structure
- Commission Duties
- Accomplishments
- Current Sample Projects

A copy of the presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Comments

Commissioner Bentley, a member of the Board's Economic Development Committee asked that consideration be given to having someone from the County participate with the Planning Commission's Economic Development Subcommittee that they plan to establish, so that economic development efforts amongst the County, City, and Towns could be better coordinated, understood, and streamlined because planning and zoning impacts economic

development.

Mr. Rosenburgh said in Tampa, Florida, they have a Development Office that assists developers with their plans to make it fit within the community's vision for growth. Mr. Rosenburgh said he'd love to see something like that in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Commissioner Leake asked would this be something that would benefit "mom and pop" type business owners. *Mr. Rosenburgh said assistance would be available to anyone that had a project that fit within established area plans for the community.*

Mr. Rosenburgh said it would not be financial help, just tangible help to get them through the system of what's required.

Debra Campbell, Director of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission addressed efforts by the City of Charlotte to collaborate more with the County to minimize the barriers for economic development.

Director Campbell said Charlotte City Council had established as part of its Focus Area Plans, to reduce barriers to economic development. She said each of the City departments, like the Planning Department, who were responsible for various aspects of economic development, were looking at their processes, ordinances and regulations and customer service processes to ensure that they were not establishing undo barriers for customers.

Director Campbell said this was something they continuously look at, because they were aware of complaints regarding the length of time it took to get something accomplished.

Director Campbell said one of the projects the Planning Commission's Economic Development Committee was working on was an Economic Development Business 101.

Director Campbell said one of the difficulties most people have when it came to working with local government was knowing what was the point of entry, where does one go, and who do you contact to address an issue, particularly when it came to business development.

Director Campbell said the subcommittee was looking at how could they work with the City and the County to try and develop information to clarify who did what and where to go and who to contact in order to help promote business development in the community.

Commissioner Leake said there was a perception in the community that it's all about "big" business. *Director Campbell said that perception did exist and that it has to change.*

Commissioner Roberts asked if consideration had been given to having a focus group of persons who had recently gone through the process to get feedback on what could be done differently to streamline the process. *Director Campbell said the Planning Commission had not done anything in that area.*

Director Campbell said the Economic Development Committee subcommittee discussed the idea of convening a couple of people who have either gone through the process in the past or recently went through the process to get their feedback on what things could have been streamlined.

Commissioner Roberts encouraged them to form a group of citizens that recently went through the permitting process and that a focus group be formed with representation from every district to talk about ways to streamline the process, hurdles that could be avoided, and ways to make it more business friendly.

Mr. Rosenburgh said if directed by the Board, the Economic Development Committee of the

FEBRUARY 14, 2012

Planning Commission could consider doing what Commissioner Roberts had suggested.

There was no objection that this be considered.

County Manager Jones noted that as a part of LUESA's Code Enforcement Division's customer service strategy, under the leadership of Jim Bartl, focus groups were convened on a regular basis, as well as the receipt of feedback from customers.

General Manager Bobbie Shields said the Board's Building Development Commission did exactly what Commissioner Roberts was speaking of. General Manager Shields said persons were always welcome to come before the Building Development Commission and share their experiences.

General Manager Shields said County staff would be willing to work with the City of Charlotte to improve the process.

Mr. Rosenburgh said they would get with City and County staff to see how they could accomplish what Commissioner Roberts suggested and incorporate it into some of the things the committee was considering.

Commissioner Bentley asked that the towns be included as well.

Commissioner Dunlap asked were the committees of the Planning Commission representative of city and county appointees. *The response was yes.*

Commissioner Dunlap asked how were differences between the Planning Commission and what a town may want worked out. *Director Campbell said the Planning Commission Department had a very good working relationship with all of the municipalities within the county.*

Director Campbell said all of the municipalities had their own planning departments. She said what occurs whenever there was a plan that overlap boundaries or the boundaries touch, notification goes out and staff from that municipality participates in the Planning Commission's effort with respect to a plan and the same was done by municipalities. Director Campbell said a lot of dialogue takes place.

Director Campbell said issues were resolved as they would with any party, there's some "give and take" and sometimes there was disagreement, but most of the time there's a lot of collaboration.

Commissioner Dunlap said the duties of the Planning Commission as outlined in the presentation only spoke of advising Charlotte City Council and that there's no mention of the County.

Director Campbell said generally the land development authority was with Charlotte City Council, which was why it was probably worded that way.

Commissioner Roberts commented on the Council of Governments (COG) HUD grant for coordinating and planning. She asked whether the City of Charlotte had been contacted by COG regarding that grant. *Director Campbell said yes, they've been in contact with COG and worked with COG to develop the grant and were working with them on the planning piece of the grant.*

Chairman Cogdell thanked the presenters for their presentation.

(2) STORM WATER SERVICES, FY13 FLOOD MITIGATION PLAN AND FUNDING

The Board received a presentation about the proposed Flood Risk Assessment and Risk Reduction Plan and funding for the FY13 Storm Water Services, Flood Mitigation Program. The presentation was made by Dave Canaan, Director of Storm Water Services and Tim Trautman, Project Manager. The following was covered:

- Storm Water Services: Water Quality and Flood Mitigation
- Flood Mitigation Challenges
- Accomplishments & Problems
- Floodplains and Flood Mitigation
- Flood Mitigation Success
- Need for New Mitigation Plan
- Flood Risk Assessment and Reduction Plan Process
- Flood Risk Assessment and Reduction Plan Concept
- Need for Re-tooled Flood Mitigation Funding
- Current Flood Mitigation Funding
- Proposed Flood Mitigation Funding
- Storm Water Fee Impacts
- Results with Fee Increase
- Results with Current Funding

The Board was also provided a copy of the Flood Risk Assessment and Risk Reduction Plan prepared for Storm Water Services by AECOM and Storm Water Services Annual Programmatic and Funding Strategy Flood Mitigation CIP FY13 and Beyond.

A copy of the presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Comments

Commissioner Clarke asked about federal funding being available going forward, which was addressed. *It was noted there would be a shifting of the position of the program from focusing on federal dollars to a local plan based on local criteria with the vast amount of funding being local dollars.*

Commissioner Clarke asked about the adoption of the fee initially which was addressed. *It was noted that initially the fee was established to cover operating costs.*

Commissioner Clarke said if the fees were approved, what would the funds be used for. *The response was that it would be spent on structures and mitigation efforts designed to decrease the incidences of flooding and flood damage.*

Commissioner Clarke asked if the County would be rechanneling streams and things of that nature. *The response was that it was doubtful there would be anything of that magnitude.*

Commissioner Clarke asked had there been any analysis of the fee taking into consideration inflation since it was first adopted. *The response was no.* Commissioner Clarke said it would be interesting to see what that would be.

Commissioner Bentley asked about Future Losses Avoided (Estimated) as noted in the presentation and how were those estimates derived, which was addressed.

Commissioner Bentley asked about the fee increase recommendation over a three year period and whether there had been any discussion of stretching that out, which was addressed.

FEBRUARY 14, 2012

Commissioner Bentley said she would like to see the pros and cons for stretching it out, because it was a significant increase over a short period of time. She suggested stretching it out to around five or six years and what that would look like from a mitigation perspective.

Commissioner Dunlap asked had there been any comparisons made to other similar size counties in the state when it came to rates. *The response was that data was available, but staff did not have it with them. It's felt however, that the County was probably the second highest in the state when it came to storm water rates.*

Commissioner Dunlap said he'd like to know more about the comparisons.

Commissioner Dunlap asked why continue the buy-out plan, when there were people who knowingly live in the floodplain and were required to have insurance. *The response was that people who live in the floodplain were not required to have flood insurance, but it's strongly suggested they do. Further, that having flood insurance does not take away the flood risk, but it provides monetary assistance to the property owner to rebuild after the flooding. Also, that what it doesn't do, was return that floodplain back to its natural condition.*

Director Canaan said its better for the floodplain to be natural and not have development in them, which was the long term goal.

Commissioner Dunlap asked about the removal of debris from creeks. *The response was that's a service provided by the County for the major systems when the debris causes a blockage and impacts the function of the creek. Other debris was removed through the Adopt a Stream Programs and the Big Sweep program, both of which rely on volunteers.*

Commissioner Bentley left the meeting and was absent for the remainder of the meeting.

Commissioner Dunlap asked were the fee changes being proposed applicable only to areas outside of Charlotte City limits. *The response was that the fee being discussed was applicable to all properties within Mecklenburg County.*

Commissioner Roberts left the meeting and was absent for the remainder of the meeting.

(3) NATIONAL CENTER FOR ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY PILOT PROGRAM UPDATE

The Board received an update from the Arts & Science Council on the Charlotte-Mecklenburg pilot project, Charlotte Center for Arts & Technology. Scott Provancher, President of the Arts & Science Council and Denise Watts, Executive Director of Project Lift gave the update. They were introduced by County Manager Jones.

The pilot was initiated as an effort to increase Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' graduation rates. The Arts & Science Council is leading an effort to create a local National Center for Arts and Technology (NCAT) site, modeled after the nationally recognized curriculum and program of the Manchester Bidwell Corporation (MBC) in Pittsburgh PA. The National Center for Arts and Technology was created in 2005, as a nonprofit 501(c) (3) subsidiary of MBC, to oversee the replication of Centers for Arts and Technology around the nation. The MBC program has been successfully replicated as NCAT sites in Cincinnati, Grand Rapids and San Francisco.

This local initiative was being launched in response to a feasibility study completed on behalf of ASC and Mecklenburg County. The program seeks to create a seamless bridge for students, linking school day instructions with out of school learning opportunities that connect the dots of teaching, education and eventually life-long learning. Launching this effort with

FEBRUARY 14, 2012

programming beginning in 9th grade would help address the gap in after-school and non-school hours learning opportunities for students while aligning with academic goals for North Carolina and CMS. The main goals of the MBC youth arts educational model are drop out intervention and prevention, improvement in attendance and cross-disciplinary education. The outcomes of the MBC curriculum demonstrate success in serving the diverse population that is the target group for this effort.

The idea came about as a result of Mecklenburg County staff hearing Bill Strickland speak about Manchester Bidwell program and its success at a National Association of Counties (NACo) annual conference. County Manager Jones after hearing the presentation at NACo and others traveled to Pittsburgh to visit Manchester Bidwell Center. Mr. Strickland was then invited to give the keynote address at the Cultivating Creative Communities Conference in Charlotte in 2006. He came again in 2007 for the MetLife Lecture Series. Because of the success of the program, a feasibility study was done for Charlotte-Mecklenburg County. The following was covered in the presentation:

- Charlotte Feasibility Study
- Feasibility Study Key Findings
- Why the Manchester Bidwell Model
- Manchester Bidwell Core Values
- A History Of Success
- Outline of Charlotte Center for Arts & Technology
- Partnerships Established To Date
- Goals – Year 1
- Pilot Photography Program
- Program Advisory Committee
- Next Steps

A copy of the presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Comments

Commissioner Leake asked about the cost of the program and student participation from West Charlotte High School, which was addressed. *Mr. Provancher said the budget request was forthcoming and that it may be in the \$500,000 range.*

Commissioner Leake said she was still concerned about reading, writing, and arithmetic for students before they reach the 9th grade.

Commissioner Dunlap said he was concerned about the possibility of a \$500,000 budget request for only 50 students. *Mr. Provancher said next year it would expand beyond 50 students.*

Mr. Provancher said it's like a "start up" and there's infrastructure costs that's required at the outset. He said the full cost of the program would decrease over time once equipment was bought, location secured, staffing infrastructure and the private sector investment was determined.

Commissioner Dunlap questioned the per pupil cost and how that would look to the community.

Commissioner Dunlap said he was also concerned the pilot program was only targeting students from West Charlotte High School, when there were students all over the county that may have a greater need.

Mr. Provancher said in the first year of the pilot, "you have to start somewhere and that with

FEBRUARY 14, 2012

the infrastructure that exists at West Charlotte, it made “sense” to start there. Mr. Provancher said the program would expand to open up to a much broader range of students across the school district.

Commissioner Dunlap said he understood, but there were people throughout the community that were justifying why they should have their own school district because of funding issues. Commissioner Dunlap said this further “exacerbates” the issue when you continue to focus on the same group and there were other students in the community that had the same or similar needs.

Ms. Watts said this was not a West Charlotte initiative. She said she viewed it as a way to sustain change in that entire community, not just for the students at West Charlotte.

Chairman Cogdell said the public perception would be that it was public dollars from all over the county, once again being focused on a somewhat narrow geographic area.

Chairman Cogdell asked about the \$350,000 that was budgeted by the County. *Mr. Provancher said it’s been invested in four areas, the fee to the Manchester Bidwell Corporation who was building the curriculum and pilot for Charlotte-Mecklenburg, instructor fees and fees related to the work that the Light Factory would do, equipment and related materials costs, and administrative costs.*

Chairman Cogdell said perception was important and that there needed to be a clear understanding of what the start up expenses were.

Commissioner Leake asked about the staffing process and whether the people involved were already in the district.

Commissioner Clarke left the meeting and was absent for the remainder of the meeting.

Chairman Cogdell thanked the presenters for the update.

This concluded the discussion.

Note: The above is not inclusive of every comment but is a summary.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board the meeting was declared adjourned at 5:37 p.m.

Janice S. Paige, Clerk

Harold Cogdell, Jr., Chairman