

## **The Chatham County Climate Change Committee**

At their meeting on September 21, 2015, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners voted to establish the Chatham County Climate Change Committee.

### **Mission of the Committee:**

The purpose of the Committee will be to make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners and others regarding likely climate change impacts in Chatham County and ways to adapt to and mitigate these impacts, including (a) reducing emissions of greenhouse gases (primarily CO<sub>2</sub>) with related improvements in air quality, (b) promoting the use of renewable energy, (c) promoting carbon neutral/green building standards for new and existing buildings both public and private and (d) encouraging resilient conservation-oriented land uses and both residential and commercial land development standards that foster climate change mitigation and adaptation.

### **Initial Committee Activities:**

A key focus of the Committee will be to make recommendations to the County about ways to (1) reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (primarily CO<sub>2</sub>), (2) adapt to climate changes and (3) promote educational activities that support both. Initial Committee projects and activities that have been identified include:

- Study carbon-neutral policies that have been considered and/or adopted by other local jurisdictions and businesses;
- Identify the sources of energy that are now used in Chatham County;

- Make recommendations to the County regarding use of the LEED building standards;
- Make recommendations to the County regarding the sources of renewable energy that could be used to support County and other buildings;
- Make recommendations to the County regarding energy efficiency of County-owned and other buildings and vehicles;
- Make recommendations to the County regarding possible amendments to the zoning and subdivision ordinances and building codes to improve the efficiency of residential buildings and the conservation qualities of housing developments;
- Make recommendations to the County regarding ordinance and regulatory amendments to encourage maintenance of timberland generally, greater use of trees in commercial and residential developments and discouragement of deforestation practices;
- Make recommendations to foster agricultural practices that avoid unnecessary contributions to climate change;
- Make recommendations to the County regarding education of the public on issues relating to climate change.

Size of the Committee: At its meeting on September 21, 2015, the Commissioners approved a Committee of 9 members. However, this submission recommends that the Committee be expanded to 11 members with one of the new members representing the town of Pittsboro and the other new member representing the town of Siler City. It is anticipated that the Committee will hold monthly meetings.

## Qualifications for Committee membership:

The Committee should consist primarily of members who are dedicated to its mission and who have time and resources available to devote to the work and research that will be necessary to accomplish its objectives. As noted above, in order to achieve cooperation between the County, Pittsboro and Siler City, the plan is for each of the towns to have a representative on the Committee. It would be useful if Committee membership also included persons with knowledge relating to:

- Renewable energy systems
- Building efficiency
- Green building standards
- Conservation standards applicable in both residential and commercial settings
- Transportation efficiency standards and fuel options
- Forestry and agricultural practices and management
- Ecology and environmental science
- The literature relating to the science of climate change

## Committee support:

The Committee may seek either as “ex officio” members or otherwise help and advice from County and other local government staff who are knowledgeable about the matters it wishes to consider. It may also look to the local universities, community colleges and other experts for assistance.

October 26, 2015