

**MINUTES  
CHATHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
WORK SESSION  
FEBRUARY 15, 2010**

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The Board of Commissioners (“the Board”) of the County of Chatham, North Carolina, met in the Agricultural Building Auditorium, 45 South Street, located in Pittsboro, North Carolina, at 3:00 PM on February 15, 2010.

Present: Chair, Sally Kost; Vice Chair, George Lucier; Commissioners Mike Cross, Carl Thompson, and Tom Vanderbeck

Staff Members Present: Charlie Horne, County Manager; Jep Rose, County Attorney; Renee Paschal, Assistant County Manager; Vicki McConnell, Finance Officer; Sandra B. Sublett, Clerk to the Board; and Elizabeth Plata, Deputy Clerk to the Board

***Agenda***

1. **Evaluation of Tree at the Law Enforcement Center:** The arborist report on the condition of the oak tree in front of the Law Enforcement Center will be discussed.
2. **Review of the Pittsboro-Chapel Hill Bus Service** – Brian Litchfield will present the most current ridership information for Board of Commissioners’ review.
3. **Efficiency Contest:** Approval of a request to approve the Chatham County Efficiency and Innovation Contest

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the Work Session to order at 3:02 PM.

**EVALUATION OF TREE AT LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER**

David Hughes, Public Works Director, reviewed the evaluation of the tree at the Chatham County Law Enforcement Center. The report, in its entirety, follows:

**Background and History:**

An oak tree grows in the lawn in front of the sheriff’s office. Now a parking lot is planned around the tree. This tree is too cracked and rotten and leaning to remain in a parking lot.

**Assignment:**

January 2010, Ms. Renee F. Paschal, Assistant Manager of Chatham County, asked me to assess the large, oak tree in front of the sheriff's building. I am assigned to evaluate its current condition, review management options to maintain tree health while constructing the parking lot, and submit a report for the Commissioners. My rate for consulting is \$95.00 per hour. I am limited by a lack of sophisticated diagnostic gear, and by inspecting the tree when the leaves are off.

**Observations:**

The tree leans to the northwest. I cleared away vines and groundcover and found an open crack, six inches wide and six feet long, on the southeast side of the trunk. Some reaction wood growing on the edge of this crack reinforces the tree, but not a lot. Inside, the tree was very hollow. Twig extensions at the ends of the branches indicate slow growth and low vitality.

**Discussion:**

The size of the crack and the depth of the hollow indicate that this tree has lost more than half its strength. The location of the crack, on the back side of the lean, decreases stability further. If the area under the tree remains rarely used, the risk would not be great. If people and property are invited to the area, as in a parking lot, risk is much greater.

**Management Options:**

This tree could be retained indefinitely, with extensive care:

1. The parking lot could be built on top of a layer of structural soil, so no roots are harmed. The cost of the structural soil could be \$1-2,000.
2. The branches growing toward the northwest could be reduced, to lessen the lean. Up to 10% of the leaves can be removed per year.
3. The trunk could be supported by a propping system of wooden or metal beams. This would take up room (parking places). These options are commonly done on high-value and historic trees, buying decades of useful life for the tree owners and stakeholders. Removal is a much simpler option.

**Conclusion:**

Considering the planned use of this area and the tree's condition, conserving it tree would be difficult and expensive. I recommend removal, which would be a significant loss to the site's and to Pittsboro's urban forest canopy. If quality replacement trees are installed elsewhere on the grounds and maintained well, there would be a net gain.

This concludes my report. I am available to clarify any portions of it upon request.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Meilleur, ISA Board-Certified Master Arborist #SO-0284B  
Better Tree Care Associates  
919-387-7045

**Assumptions and Limiting Conditions:**

1. Any legal description provided to the consultant/appraiser is assumed to be correct. Any titles and ownerships to any property are assumed to be good and marketable. No responsibility is assumed for matters legal in character. Any and

- all property is appraised or evaluated as though free and clear, under responsible ownership and competent management.
2. It is assumed that any property is not in violation of any applicable codes, ordinances, statutes, or other governmental regulations.
  3. Care has been taken to obtain all information from reliable sources. All data has been verified insofar as possible; however, the consultant/appraiser can neither guarantee nor be responsible for the accuracy of information provided by others.
  4. The consultant/appraiser shall not be required to give testimony or to attend court by reason of this report unless subsequent contractual arrangements are made, including payment of an additional fee for such services as described in the fee schedule and contract of engagement.
  5. Loss or alteration of any part of this part of this report invalidates the entire report.
  6. Possession of this report or a copy thereof does not imply right of publication or use for any purpose by any other than the person to whom it is addressed, without the prior express written or verbal consent of the consultant/appraiser.
  7. Neither all nor any part of the contents of this report, nor copy thereof, shall be conveyed by anyone, including the client, to the public through advertising, public relations, news, sales or other media, without the prior expressed written or verbal consent of the consultant/appraiser – particularly as to value conclusions, identity of the consultant/appraiser, or any reference to any professional society or institute or to any initialed designation conferred upon the consultant/appraiser as stated in his qualifications.
  8. This report and any values expressed herein represent the opinion of the consultant/appraiser, and the consultant's/ appraiser's fee is in no way contingent upon the reporting of a specified value, a stipulated result, the occurrence of a subsequent event, nor upon any finding to be reported.
  9. Sketches, diagrams, graphs, and photographs in this report, being intended as visual aids, are not necessarily to scale and should not be construed as engineering or architectural reports or surveys.
  10. Unless expressed otherwise: 1) information contained in this report covers only those items that were examined and reflects the condition of those items at the time of inspection; and 2) the inspection is limited to visual examination of accessible items without climbing, dissection, excavation, probing, or coring. There is no warranty or guarantee, expressed or implied, that problems or deficiencies of the plants or property in question may not arise in the future

Mr. Hughes answered questions from the Board.

Chair Kost asked if there were non-profit agencies in the County that could use the wood for people in need of firewood or some other public purpose.

Commissioner Vanderbeck suggested that a slab of wood from the tree be used for a bench and a plaque in tribute to the grand tree that has to be removed. He also suggested that The Grand Trees of Chatham be a part of it in the form of taking a picture of the tree and dedication of some plantings of new trees.

Chair Kost asked how the parking lot would be reconfigured. Mr. Hughes explained the layout.

Commissioner Lucier asked if the Appearance Commission would make suggestions as to screening and types of trees. Chair Kost stated that, as liaison to the Grand Trees Committee, she will ask for their recommendation.

Commissioner Thompson stated that the Board needs to be prepared to list the reasons why the Board is making the decision to have the tree removed.

Chair Kost reiterated the danger factor of the leaning tree.

Commissioner Thompson moved, seconded Commissioner Vanderbeck, to accept the staff recommendation to have the tree removed. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

Chair Kost asked to have Debra Henzey prepare a press release on this matter and work with the Grand Trees of Chatham.

**REVIEW OF THE PITTSBORO-CHAPEL HILL BUS SERVICE**

Brian Litchfield presented the most current ridership information for the Board of Commissioners' review. He discussed the marketing of the service, including the use of marketing funds that will come from Triangle J Council of Governments, reviewed the ridership numbers, average cost per trip for the service to date, and provided a comparison for start-ups in other areas.

He reviewed the Pittsboro Express Performance Reports for November and December, 2009 and January 2010 as follows:

Chapel Hill Transit							
<b>Pittsboro Express Performance Report</b>							
<b>November 2009</b>							
Performance Indicator	Performance Standard	Current Month	Prior Month	% Change	Current YTD	Prior YTD	% Change
<b>Ridership Data:</b>							
Total Rides		1,940	1,914	1.36%	4,817	-	-
Total Avg. Daily		102	87	17.36%	61.31	-	-
<b>Operating Data:</b>							
Days	-	19	22	-13.64%	69.00	-	-
Service Hours		150.48	174.24	-13.64%	546.48	-	-
Rides/Hour	15.25	12.89	10.98	17.36%	7.74	-	-
Cost per Ride		\$2.88	\$0.60	382.33%	\$10.50	-	-
Cost Per Trip		\$41.47	\$1.15	3501.66%	\$44.70	-	-
Fares		\$3,176.0	\$9,000.0	%	\$12,504.4	-	-
Complaints	-	0	0	-64.71%	7	-	-
Commendations	-	0	2	-100.00%	4	-	-
Accidents	-	0	0		0	-	-
Incidents	-	0	0		0	-	-
<b>Comments: Despite 3 less days of operation we still saw a slight increase in ridership. The cost per trip for the month of October was unusually low because of a lump sum payment by UNC during that month. The Pittsboro Route will not be operating on 12/24, 12/25, 12/28, and 1/1/10</b>							

Chapel Hill Transit							
Pittsboro Express Performance Report							
December 2009							
Performance Indicator	Performance Standard	Current Month	Prior Month	% Change	Current YTD	Prior YTD	% Change
<b>Ridership Data:</b>							
Total Rides		1,120	1,940	-42.27%	5,937	-	-
Total Avg.							
Daily		56	102	-45.15%	49.78	-	-
<b>Operating Data:</b>							
Days	-	20	19	5.26%	89.00	-	-
Service Hours		158.40	150.48	5.26%	704.88	-	-
Rides/Hour	15.25	7.07	12.89	-45.15%	7.61	-	-
Cost per Ride		\$5.37	\$2.88	86.46%	9.47	-	-
Cost Per Trip		\$42.58	\$41.47	2.68%	44.28	-	-
Fares		\$3,210.01	\$3,176.00	1.07%	\$15,714.48	-	-
Complaints	-	0	0		4	-	-
Commendations	-	0	0		0	-	-
Accidents	-	0	0		0	-	-
Incidents	-	0	0		0	-	-
<b>Comments: Lower ridership can be contributed to Holiday closures.</b>							

Chapel Hill Transit							
Pittsboro Express Performance Report							
January 2010							
Performance Indicator	Performance Standard	Current Month	Prior Month	% Change	Current YTD	Prior YTD	% Change
<b>Ridership Data:</b>							
Total Rides		1,830	1,120	63.39%	7,767	-	-
Total Avg.							
Daily		92	59	55.22%	65.46	-	-
<b>Operating Data:</b>							
Days	-	20	19	5.26%	109.00	-	-
Service Hours		158.40	150.48	5.26%	863.28	-	-
Rides/Hour	15.25	11.55	7.44	55.22%	8.26	-	-
Cost per Ride		\$4.94	\$5.37	-7.92%	8.72	-	-
Cost Per Trip		\$67.85	\$41.18	64.78%	48.21	-	-
Fares		\$178.02	\$3,210.01	-94.45%	\$15,892.50	-	-
Complaints	-	0	0		4	-	-
Commendations	-	0	0		0	-	-
Accidents	-	0	0		0	-	-
Incidents	-	0	0		0	-	-
<b>Comments: As we move into the new year we expect to continue the steady rise in ridership.</b>							

Commissioner Lucier thanked Mr. Litchfield for the six months update. He asked about the average riders per day. Mr. Litchfield noted that 90% of the ridership is currently UNC employees.

The Board questioned the worst case scenarios versus the revenue now expected. Chair Kost questioned why the UNC employees did not pay the agreed-upon \$60.00 monthly pass cost. Mr. Litchfield explained that they were sold their passes at \$155.00 per pass for August through June. Chair Kost stated that she was baffled; that the Board would have to revisit the numbers; that when the Board discussed this, the monthly pass was \$60.00; that she applauds getting the ridership, but what they are being charged is a far cry from the negotiated and agreed upon rate.

Considerable discussion ensued with regard to rate adjustments for the next fiscal year in terms of Chatham County and Pittsboro's commitments, giving up parking spaces when passes are purchased, adjustments based on the given information, consideration given to scaling down bus sizes to meet ridership, bus routes, and marketing strategy.

Mr. Litchfield stated that he would get back with the County Manager to distribute financials through June.

### **MARKETING PLAN**

Mr. Litchfield explained that the Pittsboro Route Draft Marketing Plan was created based on information gathered from discussion with key partners involved in those areas or 'hotspots' served by the route. These partners include Triangle J COG, Chapel Hill Transit, Town of Chapel Hill, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Additional partners may prove beneficial to further planning. The information collected from planning discussions with these partners has helped create suggested strategies for strengthening the use of the Pittsboro Route's transit line.

The Draft Marketing Plan is organized as follows:

- GoTriangle.org Web Presence
  - Highlight the Pittsboro Route on the homepage
  - Continued presence with written articles(s)
- Non-Rider Survey
  - Electronically based with some hard-copies available for distribution
  - Will include a variety of questions including those that would identify obstacles that deter use of Pittsboro Route
  - Ultimately, the survey will ask if more information on the transit line is desired ["Yes" response will add person surveyed to Individualized Marketing Effort]
- Direct Mailing Campaign
  - Use Commuter Location Data from UNC-County Manager for direct address mailings
- Individualized Marketing Outreach
  - Customized packets to select 'hotspots' containing...
    - Pittsboro Route Information
    - EmergencyRideHome (ERH) Services
    - Chatham Transit Network Services
    - Survey
- Additional brand development marketing recommendations/adjustments

Mr. Litchfield answered questions from the Board regarding marketing via the UNC listserves/transit website or where all the other major bus schedules are available, internal advertising inside the bus, and financials subsidizing trips. He stated that there is some money available for marketing; that approximately 90% of the ridership is UNC related; that most of those folks made up their minds by August and either bought their pass or their parking space and are not likely going to change what they're doing until next year; and that he feels that they should focus on marketing at the end of this school year.

Chair Kost stressed that they need some non-UNC riders who are paying the \$60.00 monthly ridership fee stating that they need to make the numbers work to a point that they can support it.

By consensus, the Board agreed that they should be getting and seeing the schedule out there.

Commissioner Vanderbeck asked if they had dealt with the sustainability program at UNC. He stated that he would charge them with getting the word out to save on green house gas, take vehicles off road, and try to make a more friendly-safe campus. He stated that it would be right down their alley to get the word out, not only within their own department, but also throughout the campus as young people understand these things a bit more and like to participate in them.

Mr. Litchfield agreed stating that they could talk with them as UNC is dedicated to and has shown their interest in public transportation.

Commissioner Vanderbeck asked if the County's Transportation Planner was involved in any of this discussion, if she would have time to follow-up on this and come up with some creative ideas regarding supplementary funding, marketing, and take responsibility to follow these numbers more closely as a transportation person.

The County Manager stated that she was already involved in some of the issues. Mr. Litchfield stated that she had included in some of the communications.

Chair Kost asked to have the statistics provided for the percentage of time the bus is on-time and how it is doing. Mr. Litchfield agreed to get those statistics.

Chair Kost asked when (and what's the probability) do we have to make a decision on when to apply and what is the likelihood of getting a renewal on the grant. Mr. Litchfield stated that they have enough funding to cover the cost of the Pittsboro Express at 50% for another year; and that next year would be July through June and that he will confirm by email; that after that point, it is anyone's guess as to whether the State or Federal Government will have grant funding available; that there are grants now available for funding of more non-urban areas for which Pittsboro would qualify; that it depends on what is available at the time; and that they will be looking out for things the same as they do for their other partners.

Chair Kost thanked Mr. Litchfield. Mr. Litchfield stated that they were very pleased to be partnering with Chatham County.

### **EFFICIENCY CONTEST**

Sybil Tate, Performance Manager, stated that at the Budget Summit, the Commissioners discussed and approved the efficiency contest. The Commissioners asked Staff to determine the details. Staff has additional clarifying questions and recommendations before implementing the contest. The Commissioners recommended creating a pool of funds for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners and distributing the winnings once the savings were validated. Staff is concerned that requiring the winners to track savings and delaying the reward will deter employees from submitting ideas.

In an effort to avoid tracking results and provide the awards immediately, Staff suggests decoupling the idea from the award amount. Staff suggests offering a nominal prize for each idea implemented. The ideas that will be evaluated occur during the normal budget process when cost-saving ideas are usually vetted. There will be a nominal monetary prize for each idea implemented.

Ms. Tate answered questions from the Board regarding the contest.

After further discussion, Commissioner Lucier moved, seconded by Commissioner Vanderbeck, to approve the Efficiency Contest. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

## **COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

### **Resolution to Encourage Governor Perdue to Authorize the Release and Use of Certain Conservation Money Which has been Embargoed Due to the State's Budgetary Situation:**

Commissioner Lucier stated that he was going to ask to have Item #8, Resolution to Encourage Governor Perdue to Authorize the Release and Use of Certain Conservation Money Which Has Been Embargoed Due to the State's Budgetary Situation, removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the Regular Agenda for discussion. He explained that the resolution had a technical correction in the "Therefore be it resolved" which should be changed from Triangle J to the Chatham County Board of Commissioners.

### **Clean Water Management Trust Fund:**

Commissioner Lucier asked if anyone had ever found out what happened to the \$217,000.00 that the County was to get for the Northeast Park from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund.

The Assistant County Manager explained that the County is on the list; that it depends on whether they decide to go down the list in funding this year or whether they decide to entertain new projects. She stated that she feels that the County will get the funding, but it is a matter of when.

### **Road to Recovery:**

Chair Kost explained that each year, the Southern Growth Policies Board starts a conversation in the South on a particular issue related to economic development. They do this by holding community forums, or moderated discussion, in communities large and small across the region. In 2009, more than 2,300 Southerners participated in community forums, state policy dialogues, and an on-line survey to share their thoughts and opinions on how communities could best take advantage of the economic opportunities associated with energy. They asked Chatham County to host a forum last year and have again asked to do it this year; that the topic of the forum is "Road to Recovery"; that the Economic Development Corporation is going to host it on March 17, 2010 in Siler City during the evening hours; that they asked if Chatham County would like to co-sponsor the forum; that she doesn't think it will cost anything; and that if it is agreeable with the Board, she will give them the go ahead to do this.

By consensus, the Board agreed to co-sponsor the forum.

### **Catawba Landfill Tour:**

Chair Kost asked for dates on which the Board would like to take a tour of the Catawba Landfill. By consensus, March 22, 2010 was selected as the date on which most would be able to attend. Commissioner Thompson stated that he might not be able to take the all-day trip.

### **Roadside Litter:**

Chair Kost stated that after the issue regarding jail inmates picking up roadside litter was brought up at the last Board of Commissioners' meeting, she met with Major Blankenship of the Sheriff's Office. There are a number of issues, including staffing, security, and the logistics, and that right now, it isn't feasible to pursue this further.

Commissioner Thompson stated that he thought he had seen an e-mail where the County engineer could take care of some of the clean-up with some crew that did not include inmates. He stated that it looks like someone has been cleaning along the stretch of Highway #421 that he had mentioned.

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that the work had been done the day after he met with the Department of Transportation officials. He stated that they had said they would follow-up



with enforcement of the "Adopt a Highway" program to make certain that they are meeting their requirements of the program.

Commissioner Thompson thanked Commissioner Vanderbeck and the County Manager for their efforts.

**Andrews Store Road Signalization at Highway #150501:**

Chair Kost stated that Commissioner Lucier and she met with Planning Staff, Reuben Blakely, NC DOT Engineer, and Briar Chapel officials to discuss issues along Andrews Store Road including the signalization at Andrews Store Road and Highway #15-501; that they will be meeting with the school system to discuss the road improvements that will be required in front of the middle school. She stated that the road has taken a beating due to construction traffic; that Mr. Blakely stated that they were trying to find funds, not to just resurface the Andrews Store Road, but to strengthen the pavement.

Commissioner Lucier stated that it is important to move forward with that as quickly as possible; that the improvements need to be done by the time the Margaret Pollard Middle School is completed; that he doesn't think it will work without a traffic signal and a right-hand turn; that the school is scheduled to be completed in October; and that they are trying to push NCDOT along to make it happen.

**State of the County Address:**

The State of the County address will be held on March 15, 2010 in the Superior Courtroom.

**Ethics Training:**

Ethics training was been scheduled for March 25, 2010 in the County Manager's Conference Room, from 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM.

**School Board Meeting:**

Chair Kost stated that she attended the Chatham County School Board meeting last week; that the Board of Education confirmed the high school as part of the Capital Improvements Plan; that at that same meeting, they selected a board member, Gary Leonard, to replace Col. Gerald Totten, who passed away in December.

**Freedom Farm:**

Commissioner Lucier stated that he would be talking to the Freedom Farm, 305 Carol Hall, UNC Campus, Chapel Hill; that it is a group out of the Center for Competitive Economies; that Jason Jolly and he are meeting with them, using Chatham County as a example of how to go from not having a plan for economic development to getting and implementing one and the issues they faced in doing it in Chatham County.

**State Group:**

Commissioner Lucier stated that he was meeting with a group next week in looking at how to protect farmland when it is infringed upon by urban development. He stated that they are looking at how local governments deal with that in terms of all the things that Chatham has done with regard to infrastructure, school, transportation issues, etc. The meeting will be held on February 25, 2010 with location and time to be announced.

**Tax and Finance Committee Meeting:**

Commissioner Cross stated that Frances Wilson and he will be sitting on two respective panels with the second meeting of the Tax and Finance Committee for the North Carolina Association; that as part of the panel review, there will be people who have worked on land

transfer and sales tax; that they will be discussing those who have been successful and those who have not been successful; that they will be putting together a list of things that might help the next time.

**Triangle J Legislative Goals Committee:**

Commissioner Cross stated that as Co-Chairman of the Triangle J Legislative Goals Committee, he is going to propose that the Triangle J actually find some bill sponsors and sponsor some regional bills; that this has never been done; that they have plenty of "horsepower" between Wake, Moore, Lee, Durham, Orange, Johnston and Chatham Counties; that he doesn't know what kind of reception to expect, but that he is hoping that the Land Transfer Tax, other ideas, and regional seven county bill sponsor for the 2011-2012 session; that they are meeting as this year's short session committee; and that he doesn't think they will change anything for the short session, but they will start working on 2011 now.

The Board agreed that this was an excellent idea.

**Plastic Containers Recyclables:**

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that effective February 22, 2010, Chatham County residents can recycle plastic containers such as margarine and yogurt tubs as long as they have a marking of 1 to 7.

Commissioner Lucier stated that he had attended an environment subcommittee meeting for the Association of County Commissioners; that they had a presentation on recyclables; that they said that there is a tremendous demand for recycled plastic products; that it is becoming a money-making enterprise as the cost-per-pound as doubled in the last year.

**RECESS**

Commissioner Cross moved, seconded by Commissioner Lucier, to recess to the meeting to the Agricultural Building Conference Room for dinner at 4:16 PM. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

The Board discussed the JobLink Center.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Thompson moved, seconded by Commissioner Vanderbeck, to adjourn the Work Session. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0), and the meeting was adjourned at 5:48 PM.

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Sally Kost, Chair

ATTEST:

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