

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

The Board of Commissioners (“the Board”) of the County of Chatham, North Carolina met in the Chatham Community Library, Meeting Room, located in Pittsboro, North Carolina, at 3:00 PM on November 15, 2010.

Present: Sally Kost, Chair; George Lucier, Vice Chair; 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; Jason Sullivan, Planning Director; and Elizabeth Plata, Deputy Clerk to the Board

Work Session

1. **Single Family Rehabilitation:** Discussion regarding a single family rehabilitation under the 2009 NC Housing Finance Agency Single Family Rehabilitation (SFR) grant
2. **Residential Energy Efficiency Program:** Discussion of a request to approve the program proposal and provide feedback to staff on this project
3. **Library Cards:** Discussion on rules for obtaining a library card for the Chatham County Libraries

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the Work Session to order at 3:00 PM.

Chair Kost said that there are three items on the agenda, and then the Board will go into Closed Session to approve some Closed Session minutes. She recognized the representatives from the library and said that this item would be taken up first since people were here for that.

LIBRARY CARDS

Library Director, Linda Clarke, introduced Library Advisory Board Member Edith Calhoun.

Ms. Calhoun said that she thought that this discussion was going to be about issuing library cards to children. She said that the Board of Education is willing to look at a taskforce to deal with this issue. She read the background paragraph:

“The previous County library policy for library cards to grade school children required the parent or guardian to present a photo ID and proof of a permanent local address. For years, the State of North Carolina was very lenient in providing driver’s licenses to immigrants so that photo IDs were widely available. This leniency has recently been

discarded by the State and many new immigrants do not have a photo ID. All libraries must balance the requirement to provide services as generously as possible with the duty to reasonably protect their taxpayer provided assets.”

Ms. Calhoun said that they want children to use the library and the hope is that the parents will join them. The decision needs to be made about how to do this with the present policy of requiring a photo ID for those people that do not have them. This will have to be amended.

Commissioner Lucier said that the Board of County Commissioners could say that all children who go to school should have a library card and it is important for the library system and the school system to work it out and make it happen.

Ms. Calhoun said that they have been working on a policy to try and set this up. There is a consideration that books might not get returned.

Chair Kost said that it is a two-part issue. One is to establish the policy and the other is to have the schools and the library work it out.

Commissioner Thompson asked if there were other models similar to this in the region. Ms. Calhoun said that there have been some models, and this is a nationwide issue. The system in place in Wake County works pretty well.

Ms. Clarke said that she spoke with the Library Director in Wake County. She said that the policy in Wake County is exactly the same as Chatham County’s. What the staff is really asking is to set up a program, which involves children getting cards through the school, but parents have to sign that they would be responsible for lost books. She said that the Superintendent of Chatham County Schools is very interested in partnering in a library card initiative.

Commissioner Lucier moved, seconded by Commissioner Vanderbeck, to establish an overarching policy that all school children in Chatham County have a library card and that the library system and the school system will work out the details and come back to the County Commissioners, if necessary, for approval.

Chair Kost asked for an amendment that, “all school children will be eligible for a library card.” Commissioners Lucier and Vanderbeck agreed with the amendment. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

SINGLE FAMILY REHABILITATION

Jason Sullivan, Planning Director, explained the specifics of the request. In 2009, the County was awarded a NC Housing Finance Agency grant to rehabilitate housing for low and moderate income families. The county contracted with The Wooten Company to administer the program and work has been progressing since that time. The estimated cost to rehabilitate one of the homes exceeds the maximum funding under the program and an alternative funding source has been identified to cover the increased cost; however staff needs direction from the Board on whether to proceed with the rehabilitation.

The SFR program allows up to \$40,000 in repairs per house with additional funding available for lead abatement. For the house in question, the lowest bid submitted was in the amount of \$60,204 and the County can commit up to \$53,770 towards the rehabilitation. The property owners applied for and have been approved for a USDA Rural Development Loan to cover the additional cost of \$6,434. Staff has also confirmed with the NC Housing Finance Agency staff that two separate contracts can be written for the work. One contract in the amount of \$53,770 would be between the County, property owners and contractor and the second contract would be in the amount of \$6,434 and would be between the property owners and the contractor.

The issue that has been recently brought up is that if the USDA funds fall through in a worst-case scenario, the County may be expected to cover the additional cost. The reason is that the SFR program has specific energy efficiency standards that must be met and the

County will be expected to ensure they are met once the project moves forward. The Wooten Company has drafted two contracts and separated the work so that the minimum HFA requirements would be in the contract that would include the County.

The Wooten Company has requested a letter from USDA confirming that a loan has been approved for the property owners to cover the additional work. The Wooten Company staff is also revisiting the home to ensure that the scope of work adequately covers all of the items that need to be completed to meet the Housing Finance Agency requirements. Staff has spoken with Mike Handley, Senior Housing Rehabilitation Officer with the Housing Finance Agency, and he said they are familiar with and have worked with rehabilitations with multiple funding sources and this would not be unique. He also said that if the USDA funding fell through for some unforeseen circumstance that the County could request a variance from the maximum funding amount. The variances are considered on a case-by-case basis and he could not guarantee whether it would be approved.

Chair Kost asked about the scope of work and if there was any consideration to modify that so that it would fall within the amount of available funding.

Mr. Sullivan said that there was some discussion about that, but everyone was more comfortable leaving the scope of work the way it was because it is a fairly large house and the homeowners would like to have the additional work done. There were more than three bids on this project.

Chair Kost asked if there would be future problems with the thresholds being too low in moving forward with future homes.

Mr. Sullivan said that this would be the last home that is done under the program for this year. All of the others have come under the \$40,000 cap. Another option for the County, if the loan fell through, is to go back to Housing Finance and request a variance from the maximum allowable for the home.

Mr. Sullivan answered several clarifying questions of the County Commissioners.

Mr. Sullivan said that he is waiting on a letter from USDA that the owners have been approved, but it has been confirmed by phone.

Chair Kost suggested waiting to take action on this until it is known for sure that the loan is secured.

Mr. Sullivan said that there is verbal confirmation from USDA. The critical thing is that the contracts must be awarded and signed by the end of 2011 and the work has to be completed by March of next year.

Commissioner Vanderbeck moved, seconded by Commissioner Thompson, to move forward with this project. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

RESIDENTIAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM

The County Manager said that this is a proposal from the UNC Environmental Finance Center, who received a Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation grant to research what role North Carolina counties can play in helping to incorporate the value of energy efficiency and renewable energy into various parts of the housing/marketing sector.

Glenn Barnes, Senior Project Director of the Environmental Finance Center at UNC, made a presentation. He described the research proposal and what role Chatham County would have in that.

Mr. Barnes said that they are not asking for money, but the grant will be paying for the time. They will need some time from the Board and the staff to complete this work. They are particularly asking for feedback on the research and recommendations, advice about implementing the program, and insight into the key approaches for raising awareness of the value of energy efficiency.

Commissioner Vanderbeck said that the Green Building Task Force and the Energy Task Force did a lot of work before combining to try and access funds for this. He thinks that this is a worthwhile program, and he would support the continued research into this because the money is there and the savings are there.

Mr. Barnes said that the federal government announced last week a new national program that would be available to homeowners to do energy efficiency upgrades. One of the goals is to collect data on energy savings and on the resale value of the home after the improvements.

Chair Kost asked about any barriers at the State level that would prevent the County from doing some of these things on the local level. Mr. Barnes said that this would not be a research paper. This is meant to be an action item for the County. He will identify these potential barriers.

Commissioner Lucier moved, seconded by Commissioner Vanderbeck to approve the EFC research proposal. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

Mr. Barnes said that the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation goal is not to just have three communities come out with very good programs, but that Chatham County would then become a model program for similar counties across the State.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Thompson moved, seconded by Commissioner Vanderbeck, to go out of the Work Session at 3:50 PM and convene in Closed Session for the purpose of preventing the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes 143-318.11(a)(1). The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Lucier moved, seconded by Commissioner Vanderbeck, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0), and the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 PM to the Library Work Room for dinner.

Sally Kost, Chair

ATTEST:

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