



Chatham County, NC

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Thursday, January 24, 2019

9:00 AM

Agriculture and Conference Center

BOC Retreat

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dasher called the meeting to order at 9:03 am. He stated Commissioner Crawford had a business matter to attend to and he would be joining the meeting soon.

Present: 5 - Chair Mike Dasher, Vice Chair Diana Hales, Commissioner Walter Petty, Commissioner Jim Crawford and Commissioner Karen Howard

BOARD PRIORITIES

[19-2924](#)

UDO

Attachments: [UDO RFP Final Draft 1_16_19](#)
[Unified Development Ordinance BOC Retreat](#)

Planner Cara Russell gave a presentation on the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to the Board. (Presentation attached)

Commissioner Howard asked if we be able to discuss tiny home communities during this process. Planning Director Jason Sullivan informed Commissioner Howard that the guiding document will be the Comprehensive Plan and these that types of discussions will come up.

Vice Chair Hales asked if the planning board would address the issues with the churches during the UDO process. Mr. Sullivan stated they would not because those issues need to be dealt with now.

Vice Chair Hales asked if the consultant hired for this project would be from North Carolina. Mr. Sullivan responded not necessarily.

Commissioner Petty inquired as to how many counties in NC have attempted to do a UDO. Mr. Sullivan did not have a number but stated that it is not uncommon and a pretty standard practice.

Commissioner Crawford joined the meeting at 9:22 am.

Vice Chair Hales said that Siler City approves a section of their UDO at almost every meeting and wanted to know if the Board would be doing this or looking at the document in its entirety? Mr. Sullivan said the consultant will advise on the adoption process.

Chair Dasher believes the intent is always good but is concerned that often UDOs become large convoluted documents that no one really understands. He worries it will not allow for freedom and flexibility.

The Board and staff discussed their wishes to have a flexible document.

Vice Chair Hales would like to have the map of the Comprehensive Plan in planning so it is visible to the public.

The Board agreed for staff to move forward with issuing the RFP.

19-2925

Commissioner Discussion

- a. Community engagement
- b. Present Use Valuation audit program
- c. Budget guidance

Ms. West introduced the first topic of Community Engagement.

Commissioner Petty said if there are things that need to be handled outside of nonprofits to find another way to handle it other than the EDC. Everyone agreed.

Commissioner Howard thought it would be helpful to have categories under different umbrellas of funding. Commissioner Petty responded that the role of the BOC should be to provide a way for those groups to have a voice, rather than to fund them. Commissioner Howard explained that she thinks it is not just about giving money to different groups but more of a global approach of supporting community groups. She stated that arts are an economic engine and would be better advanced under something other than the EDC.

Chair Dasher stated one advantage to having county assistance is that nonprofits would have some help getting to where they no longer need county funding. Commissioner Petty said every time you come up with a pool of money, people will try to draw from it. Commissioner Howard responded that it should be up to the Board to discern who should receive it.

Mr. LaMontagne informed the Commissioners that the County is hiring a Community Engagement Coordinator that would work on some of this. He suggested that some criteria could be using county vendors, how much money have you already raised.

Commissioner Petty expressed his interest in waiting until the position has been filled for a year so they can bring back feedback and a budget request.

Vice Chair Hales and Commissioner Howard encouraged the commissioners to go visit the schools where the artists-in-residence programs have been for a couple of years.

Commissioner Crawford asserted that the importance of the arts is seen in mental health and expression of emotions.

Commissioner Petty asked if there were stipulated qualifications yet. Mr. LaMontagne responded that the County still looking at that. Commissioner Petty stated this person should have the skills to help these agencies with capacity building and marketing.

Policy Analyst Stephanie Watkins-Cruz said Charlotte has a program with some good

criteria.

Mr. LaMontagne would like the Board to ask staff to develop criteria and come back at the next retreat in 2020.

Vice Chair Hales said that small business center also fits with community engagement.

Vice Chair Hales wanted to know how will the fairgrounds' funding request work. Ms. West responded that she has asked them to frame out the money they are requesting for for this mid-year budget and he will come to the BOC in February.

The Board agreed by consensus to direct staff to bring back criteria at the 2020 budget retreat.

Commissioner Crawford suggested the County have another photography contest to encourage more community engagement through art.

Ms. West stated the next discussion is Present Use Valuation audit program.

Tax Administrator Jenny Williams gave an update on the audit. The County has hired an employee experienced with the Present Use tax category. There is not a concrete number of parcels in present use because you can be in more than one. There are 4,232 in forestry, 27 in horticulture, and 2,746 in agriculture. They think around 5,100 are in present use value. There is a minimum of evaluating 1/8 of the parcels a year but the department goal is to do 1/4 every year.

Chatham Park has approached the County about a forestry management plan but they have to own the property for four years before they can apply for it.

Chair Dasher asked how does one find out something is no longer in forestry. Ms. Williams responded that if property transfers they get taken out of the program and an application is sent to the new owner.

The Tax Department will be working with Ginger to have meetings with farmers.

Vice Chair Hales said there may be some focus on this in the legislative session.

Chair Dasher asked if we could find out how many forestry management plans the County has. Ms. Williams will look into it.

Vice Chair Hales asked how the County would know if someone had earned \$1,000 of agricultural income the past year. Ms. Williams responded that we require proof of income.

Ms. West stated the next topic is budget guidance

Mr. LaMontagne said it is an exciting time coming but with the growth will come some hard decisions.

Ms. West explained that we fully intend to use our natural growth to cover our operating budget and not a tax increase. What we are looking for is a not to exceed. There is generally a consensus that an increase is necessary. A tax increase would be used for CIP Debt and Education = 4,864,770.

The Board directed staff not to exceed a 0.68 tax rate.

Commissioner Petty feels that as elected officials, the Board should feel obligated to get the most out of the funds for the people and that taxpayers are properly represented and this is why he asks the questions he does. Commissioner Howard agrees it is part of the commissioners' job to ask the questions.

A motion was made by Commissioner Crawford, seconded by Commissioner Howard, that this Agenda Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Chair Dasher, Vice Chair Hales, Commissioner Petty, Commissioner Crawford and Commissioner Howard

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Howard, seconded by Vice Chair Hales, that this be adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Chair Dasher, Vice Chair Hales, Commissioner Petty, Commissioner Crawford and Commissioner Howard