

**MINUTES**  
**CHATHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 04, 2008**

---

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 9:00 AM on February 04, 2008.

Present: Chairman George Lucier; Vice Chair, Mike Cross; Commissioners Patrick Barnes, Carl Thompson, and Tom Vanderbeck, County Manager, Charlie Horne; Assistant County Manager, Renee Paschal; Acting County Attorney, Jep Rose; Finance Officer, Vicki McConnell; and Clerk to the Board, Sandra B. Sublett

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Commissioner Thompson delivered the invocation after which Chairman Lucier invited everyone present to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman at 9:06 AM.

**AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA**

The Chairman asked if there were additions, deletions, or corrections to the Agenda and Consent Agenda.

Chairman Lucier asked that Item #4 An Aging Population: Implications and Item #6 Literacy Council Introduction on the Work Session Agenda be moved to the Regular Agenda under Commissioners’ Reports.

Commissioner Thompson asked that Item #2 EDC Revolving Loan Program Discussion and Item #3 Small Business Incubator Ideas be deferred until the February 18, 2008 Board of Commissioners’ meeting.

Commissioner Vanderbeck moved, seconded by Commissioner Thompson, to approve the Agenda and Consent Agenda with the noted requests:

1. **Minutes:** Consideration of a request for approval of Board Minutes for regular meeting held January 22, 2008 and work session held January 22, 2008

The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

2. **Purchase of Pittsboro Fire Department Response Vehicle:** Consideration of a request from the Pittsboro Fire Department for assistance with the one-time purchase of a response vehicle in the amount of \$20,186.00, funds to be taken from the Emergency Vehicle Replacement Fund

The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

3. **Naming of Private Road:** Consideration of a request from citizens for the naming of a private road in Chatham County as follows:

A. Goose Creek Court

The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

4. **Tax Lien Advertisement:** Consideration of a request to approve the advertisement of tax liens for a two-week period beginning March 06, 2008

The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

5. **Mowing Service Contract:** Consideration of a request to approve mowing service contracts of County-owned properties to Green Revival Landscaping

The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

6. **Adoption Services Fee Schedule:** Consideration of a request to approve the Adoption Services Fee Schedule, attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof.

The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

7. **Grant Application Approval for Safe Havens:** Consideration of a request to approve grant application for Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program in the amount of \$350,000.00 for fiscal years 2008-2010, application attached hereto and by reference made a part hereof.

The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

8. **Board of Education Request:** Consideration of a request by the Chatham County Board of Education to transfer funds in the amount of \$413,312.00 from Fund Balance in Current Expense to Capital Outlay in order to begin design work for the Northwood High School and North Chatham Cafeteria projects

The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

#### **END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

#### **PUBLIC INPUT SESSION**

**Bob Knight**, 406 Chimney Rock Lane, Sanford, NC, stated that there were several issues on which he would like follow-up:

- Handicapped code in building code
- Approval of school by former Commissioners (appropriated funds?)
- Property Revaluation (higher rates?)
- Impact Fees (Can it go before Legislature and be done on a percentage basis instead of a flat fee?)

Commissioner Barnes explained that Impact Fees are set by the General Assembly and cannot be set on a sliding fee scale.

Mr. Knight stated that it was hard on seniors and young people to have to come up with a \$3,500.00 Impact Fee; that with the defeat of the Land Transfer Tax, it looks like the Board of Commissioners is opposing everyone; that the people appreciate having the opportunity to vote on the tax; that if the Board had gone with the sales tax, it would have "gone over"; that it seems like, to the working people in Chatham County, that since it was not approved and statements have already been made by some people, that the issue of the Land Transfer Tax will continue to be put on the ballot until it passes; that that hurts a lot of people to hear it; that the people elected the Board of Commissioners to look after them and not admonish them since they didn't go along with them at the time; that if it comes up again, a sales tax will pass; that the people in the County are tired of taking the load on whenever there are illegals are getting all the benefits; that they see people using \$500-600 in food stamps; and that there are people working where he does that do not make \$18,000.00 per year.

Chairman Lucier stated that he felt most of the Board would like to have a sliding Impact Fee scale; that that is up to the State Legislature; that the Impact Fee is a fixed fee; that regardless of whether the dwelling is one million dollars or a seventy-five thousand dollar double-wide is unfair, that this is the reason that the Board advocated for the Land Transfer Tax so that people would pay a fee when they sell their home at a time when they are most able to pay for it; that he feels that they all agree that a sliding Impact Fee scale would be more preferable than a fixed fee for everyone; that many people who opposed the

Land Transfer Tax said that they preferred the Impact Fee because it was a fee that the developer had to pay for new houses coming in; and that their powers are limited in that respect.

With regard to property revaluation, Chairman Lucier stated that is not up to the Board either; that they have appraisers to go out and appraise the property; that they are supposed to set market value; that if there is a problem with the tax valuation, they can go before the Board of Equalization and Review to seek relief; and that some are successful and some are not; that they are based on individual cases.

Commissioner Barnes stated that it would be unethical and illegal if the Board of Commissioners tried to interfere with the Tax Department's setting the County property tax valuation.

Mr. Knight stated that when the 1,500 foot buffers went into affect along the major corridors, it discouraged some people from buying; and that in his opinion, the 1,500 foot buffer will make the property less desirable when selling.

Chairman Lucier stated that, in his opinion, the 1,500 foot buffers along the major corridors would do nothing except increase property values; that this is something that will make the property values rise; that with regard to the appropriations to school funds, the previous Board had allocated in their Capital Improvement Plan for two new schools, a high school and a new middle school; that since that time (2005), the estimated cost of those schools has risen significantly by over ten million dollars; that in addition, that Board did not include the new Northeast elementary school with an estimated cost of twenty-eight million; that just with the school cost overruns that are estimated at this point, plus the Northeast elementary school, it is a total of thirty-eight million dollars; that in addition, Mr. Knight's letter did not address some water system issues; that in order for the Board to be able to deliver water to those promised water in various parts of the County, the Board will probably have to run a new line under Jordan Lake at a cost of twenty-one million dollars; that makes a cost of fifty-nine million dollars; that the justice building, approved by the previous Board of Commissioners at an estimated cost of seven million dollars has risen to twenty-four million dollars, an increase of seventeen million dollars; and that this makes seventy-six million dollars that the previous Board had not counted on; that this information was included in a press release given to the newspaper.

Chairman Lucier stated that the County Attorney had been asked to look into handicap accessibility approximately three months ago; that he is out sick; and that the Board will look into his request in terms of incorporating it into the building code to ensure that the new buildings will be fully handicapped accessible; that this issue was brought up with regard to the Northwood School gym extension; that the new schools and judicial building will be handicapped accessible.

Mr. Knight stated that he had read that the previous Board had agreed to build the schools but that no funds had been allocated.

Commissioner Cross stated that Mr. Knight was correct in stating that four cents had been appropriated.

Chairman Lucier stated that there was roughly an eighty million dollar shortfall which equates to approximately five cents.

Commissioner Thompson stated that he had heard from citizens that the County was being punitive toward them by increasing the Impact Fee; that it is sometimes difficult to get people to understand but there is a Capital Improvement Plan that the County has in place; that a major portion of that plan was inherited when they took office; that they are projects with which the current Board agrees; that on the other hand, the Chairman just mentioned the cost increases as a result of the current cost of doing them; that what is difficult for people to realize is that most of this is driven by the rapid growth in the County; that the fact is that the Board has to deal with financing these projects; that as they tried to explain during the campaign of the Land Transfer Tax, there are only so many options with which to increase revenue; that they also indicated that they were going to lower the Impact Fee if they could have the option of pursuing the Land Transfer Tax; that the Land Transfer Tax was voted

down; that he understands that people have to vote their conscience; that the reason that the Governor and Legislators lobbied for counties to have the ability to do this was because they have very few options to raise money; that most of the time it is done through ad valorem taxes; that this Board made the decision that they did not want to raise taxes unless they had to; that they understand the burden on senior citizens; that by the same token, they still are responsible for implementing the Capital Improvement Plan that will benefit the citizens of Chatham County because of the growth; that the increase in the Impact Fee was due to the fact that the Board had to raise additional revenues again to keep them from having to raise the ad valorem tax rate that much more; that if Mr. Knight could help the Board explain that to the people he sees, it would be great; that the Board has the statistics and documentation to show the rate of growth in the County and what they have to do to provide for the growth and the facilities to meet the growth; and that it is difficult to understand.

Mr. Knight stated that it was also difficult for him to understand; however, when there are people on fixed incomes, it doesn't help; that the sales tax would have been fine; and that it is hard for people to grasp it when they are making only so much money.

Chairman Lucier stated that the reason that the Board did not put the sales tax option on the ballot was that in Chatham County, it will not bring in much revenue; that the estimated revenues, based on the sales in Chatham County, would bring in approximately one quarter to one fifth of what the Land Transfer Tax would have brought in; and that would not help the Board much in terms of addressing the Capital Improvement Plan projects with which they have to move forward; that that doesn't mean that it won't be put on the ballot, but the reason the Land Transfer Tax was placed on the ballot was because it would have raised a lot more revenue in Chatham County; that for larger counties that have a lot of commercial and fore tail activity, such as Wake and Durham Counties, it would have been close; that their decision to place the Land Transfer Tax on the ballot was that it would bring in more revenue than the sales tax; that the sales tax would have amounted to approximately one cent as opposed to approximately five cents on the tax rate with the Land Transfer Tax.

Chairman Lucier further stated that the Board would do its best to hold down taxes and that they would consider the sales tax proposal.

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that another impact of sales tax is that it disproportionately affects people of lower income; that with regard to getting a broader tax base and the people that are hurting on fixed incomes, etc., the Board has authorized the application for Farmland Protection Plan; that they are also looking into value added farming processing facility which will help the farmers; that the Farmland Protection Plan will help conserve land and hopefully take the tax burden and work it so that it helps the farms; that the farmers are a big portion of the County income and they want them to do well; that they are also working on a Strategic Development Plan; that they are hoping that that will become a prime tax base for them; that some of the other things will be supplemental; and that it takes time and they do not know how the revaluations, down-turn in economy, etc. could last for a couple of years.

Mr. Knight stated that there is a lot of land in Chatham County that would be suitable for industry.

## **PLANNING AND ZONING**

**Extension of Conditional Use Permit Deadline:** Consideration of a request by Nicolas P. Robinson, Attorney-at-Law on behalf of William R. Copeland for an extension of Conditional Use Permit deadline

Keith Megginson, Chatham County Planning Director, stated that in March, 2006, the Board received a request from William Copeland for a Conditional Use Business District and a Conditional Use Permit at the intersection of Big Woods Road and Highway #64; that the permit was for an eating and drinking establishment (restaurant); that the applicant states that since that time, the continued development of The Preserve, new development of The Legacy, and other nearby residential development has caused him to need more time to obtain a clearer picture of the customer base he will be serving; that the US Army Corps of Engineers is requiring a several month process to provide an encroachment agreement, on lands currently leased to the NCDOT, for the sewer permit modification from NCDENR that

will supply the wastewater treatment for this property; that this system is currently tied into The Preserve's facility; that when the zoning request was originally presented to the Board of Commissioners for approval, the Planning Department recommended that the request to rezone the property from RA-5 to Conditional Use Business District be denied for failure to support the Land Conservation and Development Plan and that the Conditional Use Permit be denied for failure to meet all five findings as described in the application materials; that the five findings required in the Zoning Ordinance are as follows:

- Finding #1:*** The use requested is among those listed as an eligible conditional use in the district in which the subject property is located or is to be located.
- Finding #2:*** The requested conditional use permit is either essential or desirable for the public convenience or welfare.
- Finding #3:*** The requested permit will not impair the integrity or character of the surrounding or adjoining districts, and will not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the community.
- Finding #4:*** The requested permit will be consistent with the objectives of the Land Conservation and Development Plan.
- Finding #5:*** Adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, sanitation and/or other necessary facilities have been or are being provided.

Mr. Megginson stated that the Planning Board recommended by a vote of five (5) to one (1) to one (1) for approval to rezone the property from RA-5 to Conditional Use Business District stating it was consistent with the Land Conservation and Development Plan; that the Planning Board also recommended approval of the Conditional Use Permit for an eating and drinking establishment with the 12 conditions outlined in the approval; that the Board of Commissioners approved the district change and conditional use permit by a majority vote; that if the permit expires on March 20, 2008, the property will have Conditional Use B-1 Business zoning without the benefit of a Conditional Use B-1 Permit; that the applicant will have to make a request for a new conditional use permit through the process provided in the Zoning Ordinance if the property is to be developed; that the decision on the extension request is a policy decision for the Board of Commissioners and not one in which the Planning staff is making a recommendation; and that staff made a recommendation on the original request as referenced above.

Chairman Lucier stated that he could not get Attorney Robinson's letter nor the site map off his computer; that he was able to get everything else off the agenda, but unable to get the Planning documents.

Commissioner Thompson stated that he had the same problem.

The Planning Director reiterated that the Board had until March 20, 2008 to make a decision on the request.

Chairman Lucier stated that he had some questions that he would like to have answered.

Commissioner Thompson recommended that action on this request be delayed until the next meeting until they can be more informed to make a decision.

Chairman Lucier asked if there was some time period before the March 20<sup>th</sup> deadline that they would need to know whether they could start getting the building permits if this was not going to be approved.

Nick Robinson, Attorney for Mr. Robinson, stated that was correct. He stated that they needed to get moving; that the letter was sent and request made on December 19, 2007; that they were then deferred until the day's meeting; that there are some things that have to get done in order to get the building permit issued; that he would request that if the Board cannot see their way clear to vote on it today, that they do it at the next possible moment; that they would have to come up with some alternative wastewater treatment system designs before they can get a building permit issued; that part of the reason for the delay is that there are a couple of things happening: 1) For wastewater treatment, it is intended that they get their wastewater treatment through either The Legacy or The Preserve; that because of a

peculiarity having to do with the property location; that Big Woods Road is zoned by the Army Corps of Engineers; that the NCDOT has been given a right-of-way by the Corps of Engineers; that before an encroachment permit can be received, all of the other permits have to be in place; that in order to get all of the other permits in place, one of those would be a wastewater treatment permit; that slow down in the development of those neighborhoods has had a big impact on the question of when they are going to be able to get a wastewater treatment arrangement with either The Preserve or The Legacy; 2) The real estate market has slowed down significantly; that he is certain that the Board doesn't want to pressure the applicants into putting in something that doesn't make some sense in connection with the kind of growth that is going to be seen on Big Woods Road; that they have been waiting, watching, and conversing with the various persons at The Legacy and The Preserve to figure out exactly what kind of restaurant is going to be desired by the people that live out there; that as it has slowed down, it has become a little more difficult to gauge and measure; and that that this is an ideal candidate for an extension of time for a permit because one of the conditions of the Conditional Use Permit is that there are two years to commence construction unless an extension of time is granted; that this Conditional Use Permit specifically provided for this opportunity for the applicant to request an extension of time; that this land is owned by the Army Corps of Engineers; that it is almost one hundred feet from the NCDOT right-of-way; that it is 530 feet from Highway #64 to the location, which is fully wooded; and that this will vastly overwhelm the recommendation and anything they may approve as far as the corridor is concerned due to the huge amount of buffer from the highway.

He stated that there is also a very carefully laid-out landscaping plan; that the site plan was put together with a great deal of care and thought; that Mr. Copeland is "Apex Nurseries"; that they feel like they are going to get an outstanding landscaping result; that there are certain things beyond the control of the applicant that caused them to need to request the extension of time, both for the commencement of construction and for the completion of construction.

Commissioner Barnes stated that he did not have a problem with the extension; that their community would love to have a restaurant; that Highway #64 will not be seen from the location of the restaurant; that this project has been delayed, in part, by the economy; that he would like to see a restaurant built at that location; that it would employ people; that with regard to the Major Corridor Ordinance, he feels that it is well within the limitations; that if the restaurant was to be located directly on the corner, he would object to it; and that he is in favor of extending the extension as he feels it is an excellent commercial venture needed by the County.

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that there were extenuating circumstances in trying to file on December 19<sup>th</sup>, technology issues, etc.; that he doesn't see them penalizing the applicant for things beyond his control; that it is his understanding that it would be helpful to have a little lead time; that he believes that the permit was for two years; that that is an issue for him; that economic downturn, while he is sympathetic, does not weigh into changing policy and being fair to all developers; and that he would offer that the applicant be given either a four or six week extension just to allow for this normal process which has been delayed because of the circumstances.

Chairman Lucier asked if Commissioner Vanderbeck was recommending either a four or six week extension now and then revisit the issue at the next meeting. Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that was his intent.

Commissioner Cross stated that he voted for this project the first time around; that the Board just finished saying that they want more retail in the County so that property taxes would not have to be raised; that this is a high-end restaurant; that he had rather see the restaurant there than anything he can think of that could go on the property later; and that he would be in favor of granting the extension.

Chairman Lucier stated that three Commissioners would like to revisit this issue; that they realize that the request was made several weeks ago on December 19, 2007; that he thinks that the Board needs to take some action, give a temporary extension, and revisit the issue on February 18, 2008.

Commissioner Vanderbeck moved, seconded by Commissioner Thompson, to grant a six-week temporary extension to help the applicant get his permits in order to be able to move depending on the Board's decision regarding the full extension.

Commissioner Thompson stated that he did not have a problem with the Copeland's restaurant; that his main concern is making sure that he sees all of the pertinent materials in case there are questions he needs answered before making a decision.

Chairman Lucier called the question. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0). The issue will be revisited at the Commissioner's Work Session on February 18, 2008.

### **BREAK**

The Chairman called for a five-minute break.

### **LITERACY COUNCIL ISSUES**

Mary Alexion, Chair of the Literacy Council Board, presented a PowerPoint presentation that provided an overview of the Literacy Council Issues in Chatham County as follows:

## **Chatham County Literacy Council**

*Advancing literacy one person at a time*

Presented to: Chatham County Commissioners  
February 4, 2008

Chatham County Literacy Council:

***"Write to be understood, speak to be heard, read to grow."***  
*Lawrence Clark Powell (1906-2002)*

We are here to:

- **Inform**
  - Literacy issues in Chatham County
  - Who we are, what we do, and how we do it.
- **Gain your advocacy and support**
- **Hear and learn from your feedback**

### **Literacy Issues**

**Literacy: an individual's ability to**

- **read, write, and speak in English,**
- **compute and solve problems at levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job and in society,**
- **achieve one's goals, and develop one's knowledge and potential.**

Source: The National Literacy Act

### **FACT**

22% of Chatham County residents read at, or below, Grade Level 4

### **Literacy Issues and Impacts**

People who struggle to read and write ...

- *Have more limited job opportunities*
  - 70% have no full or part time job
  - 43% live in poverty
  - 17% receive food stamps

- *And if they lack a high school diploma they earn*
  - 60 cents for every dollar earned by a high school graduate
  - and only 34 cents for every dollar earned by a college graduate.

Source: National Institute for Literacy

### **Literacy Issues and Impacts**

People who struggle to read and write...

- *Are at risk*
  - Cannot read medical directions and safety information.
- *Need help*
  - filling out applications
  - understanding legal documents.
- Have difficulty being an informed voter
- Have lower self-esteem.

### **Literacy Issues and Impacts**

People who struggle to read and write ...

- Cannot help children with their school work that can make literacy a multi-generational problem.
  - \*\*\* *Children of adults who participate in literacy programs...*
- Improve their grades and test scores
- Improve their reading skills
- Are less likely to drop out of school

### **Chatham County Literacy Council:**

#### **Our Vision**

Every one in Chatham County can read!

#### **Our Mission:**

Help adults in our community build the literacy skills they need to reach their life goals.

#### **What we do**

We are dedicated to advancing literacy one client at a time by partnering with them to:

- Identify their needs.
- Assess their skills.
- Set short and long term goals
- Tutor one-on-one to improve reading, writing, and speaking.
- Learn English as a second language, if their primary language is not English.

\*\*\* We do not charge for our services \*\*\*

#### **New doors open for our clients through community partnerships.**

- ✓ Recruit volunteer tutors through community awareness programs
- ✓ Provide tutor training...
  - 12 hours of initial training
  - Periodic in-service workshops
- .... that prepare them to
  - develop client centered lesson plans
  - apply effective tutoring techniques
  - create positive learning experiences and build skills

Our outreach activities are building partnerships to help us reach clients, provide resources, and build our expertise.

Educators  
Churches  
Civic & Community Organizations  
Local Government & Community Leaders  
Literacy Organizations  
Community Services



## **Becoming a sustainable organization**

Move from 100% volunteer organization to a collaborative staff/volunteer model that builds and leverages expertise.

- Broaden representation on the board
- Hire experienced executive director
- Raise funds:
  - Galloway Ridge Gift
  - Individual Donations
  - Grant Opportunities

## Questions and Feedback

- What else can we tell you?
- Is this focus area a concern for you?
- What else should we be doing?
- Who else should we be talking to?
- Can you be an advocate for us?
- Got ice cream? Give to literacy.

Chairman Lucier thanked Ms. Alexion for her presentation and commended her for what the Literacy Board is doing. He stated that this is something that is very important to the Board of Commissioners; that the literacy issue is many issues including an opportunity issue and a human rights issue; and that they seem to be focusing more on the adults who have been left behind with the educational system.

Commissioner Vanderbeck asked if they were a licensed, non-profit board. Ms. Alexion replied that they were. Commissioner Vanderbeck asked if the presentation had been presented to the Board of Education. Ms. Alexion replied that they had not yet done so.

Commissioner Thompson stated that this was a workforce issue as well; that as we work to train the work force of Chatham County, the issue is going to be the level of adequate literacy; that he thinks that what the Literacy Council is doing is critical.

Chairman Lucier again thanked the presenters and asked them to let the Board of Commissioners know what they could do to help as time goes on, stating that they would be an advocate for their board.

## **AN AGING POPULATION: IMPLICATIONS**

Angel Dennison, Director of Senior Services and Executive Director, Chatham County Council on Aging, introduced Ethel Farrell (Department of Social Services), Holly Coleman (Health Department), and Phyllis Reid (Council on Aging). Ms. Dennison reviewed graphs of Chatham County population estimates grouped by age and Chatham County population estimates aged 60 and over. She stated that the Health Department, Department of Social Services, and the Council on Aging have a common goal to provide programs and services to enable adults to live independently in their homes and avoid premature institutionalization. She reviewed shared programs and services components and the unique components of each agency. She expanded on the Council on Aging services including economic impact, service delivery impact, community resource allocations, demographic sub-segments, labor pool, fraud, abuse, and violence. She stated that the Council on Aging bridges gaps by holding fund raisers and delivers more programs and services specially for aged people than anyone in the County around them. She stated that their biggest issue at this time is that, in order to continue to provide services to the same percentage of the population as they have been, they would like to consider a funding formula that looks more at overall of their different income resources, what percentage of the population can they serve, and can they hold that percentage steady over time to include more people in the services that they need.

Chairman Lucier thanked Ms. Dennison and invited Ms. Farrell to make her presentation.

Ethel Farrell, Adult Services Supervisor with the Department of Social Services, informed the Board of the overall services that the Chatham County Department of Social Services offers to its elderly population. She stated that they have seen the biggest impact in the past couple of years has been Adult Protective Services (APS) referrals; that they are getting more referrals from the affluent community with mental health reform; that more doctor's offices and hospitals are becoming more aware of adult services; that they are receiving more guardianship cases; that they have more estate cases; that they are now in the process of dealing with three estates, taking large amounts of staff and legal time; that they are seeing more misuse of Power-of-Attorney cases where the relatives or children are taking their monies and using it for their benefit instead of the benefit of their parents; that they also have an increase in adult care homes; that they are finding that people want to stay at home as long as possible; that there is no money available for a simple ramp for minor home repairs; that In-Home Aide Services provide support and assist adults and their families with basic home management tasks or supervision of these tasks to enable these adults and families to remain and function effectively in their own homes as long as possible. She reviewed funding monies.

Chairman Lucier thanked Ms. Farrell and invited Ms. Coleman to make her presentation.

Holly Coleman, Director of Health Department, stated that her predecessors had basically covered what was going on with the aging population, but stated that their focus is more on the mandated services including children, family planning, and women of child-bearing age; that in addition they have primary care for adults, blood pressure and blood sugar checks, influenza and pneumonia shots, disease prevention programs, immunizations for adults, communicable disease surveillance which affects the entire community; that they had 386 clients between the ages of 55 and 65 which does not include those coming in to get flu shots; that they had 305 clients over the age of 65; that for the Medicaid program, they had 60 clients to assist in keeping people out of institutions; that they have 15 people on the waiting list; that the budget is over \$195,000.00; that healthy children, teens, and adults make healthy seniors; that to just focus on senior programs will not solve future problems; and that they need to work on the problems of obesity, diabetes, and other health risks.

Ms. Dennison stated that a lot of the things discussed today have been service based and home based; and that the other pressing need in Chatham County is for transportation for the disabled and seniors. She suggested that as people return to their communities, they discuss with their friends and neighbors who are caregivers and consider how disabled people can and are limited from access, to not just health care services, but social events, recreational events, shopping, etc.

Chairman Lucier commended the Council on Aging, Health Department, and Department of Social Services for working together to provide these services.

Commissioner Thompson echoed those sentiments. He asked questions regarding guardianship issues.

Ms. Farrell stated that they were trying hard to stay away from estates and trying to recruit others in the community who would be willing to take the smaller ones.

Ms. Dennison stated that many times the labor is divided in that the Council on Aging may become guardian of the person while the Department of Social Services may become guardian of the person's finances, etc.

Commissioner Thompson questioned the funds for building handicapped ramps and the cost of same.

Ms. Dennison stated that there were different programs in collaborating and serving different people; that the average cost of a wheel chair ramp is approximately \$2,500-3,000 per ramp; that there is a collaboration of churches in the area who have contacted them who volunteer their services doing minor home repairs that are safety oriented and heavy cleaning; that it takes a lot of coordination and volunteer efforts; and that with the down-turn in home building, it may benefit them in getting the ramps built.

Commissioner Vanderbeck asked if the ramps became a permitting issue. Ms. Dennison replied that the persons who built the ramps applied for the proper building permits.

Commissioner Vanderbeck suggested that the Board might help in terms of forgiving any applicable permitting costs.

Commissioner Thompson stated that Chatham Transit Authority was looking at ways to meet the problem. He asked if it was more a cost issue than that of having available transportation. Ms. Dennison replied that it was a combination of both. Ms. Farrell stated that some of clients lived a mile or two off the regular route and getting to the point of pick-up presented a problem.

Commissioner Thompson asked if there was something that the Board could do to alleviate the problem.

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that they had discussed going over their service plan again to see what they can do to expand this and reprioritize and see what they need to do in terms of more funding.

Ms. Farrell stated that the recruitment of volunteers always helped.

Commissioner Thompson asked about the liability issue of recruiting volunteers.

Ms. Dennison stated that their volunteers were covered under their Worker's Comp and liability. She stated that Chatham Transit was working hard to solve these problems and that the Council on Aging is looking at scheduling in-home aides to be at home during the time the folks need medical appointments.

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that the Health of Chatham 2000 just came in and appears to be a very comprehensive, readable, and a helpful document.

### **MANAGER' S REPORTS**

The County Manager had no reports.

### **COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

#### **Habitat and EmPowerment:**

Commissioner Cross stated that the Clerk to the Board, the Habitat Director, and he had been researching old minutes of the previous Board to see where the previous Board designated and voted appointing Habitat as the County agent for the \$1.1 million Briar Chapel funds and EmPowerment as the County agent for the sixty builder ready lots.

Commissioner Cross moved to restate the County's agent for the Affordable Housing Funds for Briar Chapel to Habitat and the agent for builder ready lots for Briar Chapel to EmPowerment.

Chairman Lucier asked for questions and/or comments.

Commissioner Barnes seconded the motion.

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that he felt it was a good idea to re-clarify it.

Commissioner Thompson stated that he was alright with it.

Commissioner Cross added that by being the County's agent, they would also have a vote on the Affordable Housing Task Force Committee's recommendation. For clarification, he restated that as the County's agent, they would certainly be a voting member of the Affordable Housing Task Force.

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that that was a work in progress; that he certainly thinks that; that it all depends as the Conflict of Interest Policy develops, that may change it; that he does not have a problem as long as it works within the perimeters of the Conflict of Interest Policy.

Commissioner Cross stated that until something comes up about it, they will be a voting member.

Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that as far as his understanding and there would be some instrument in that they would recuse themselves and leave the room as certain matters pertain to their own personal business on that; that right now, it is not an issue; that they are working on policy issues; and that he certainly welcomes their input and that includes voting.

Commissioner Cross stated that all he was trying to do was restate what was voted on before; that if the time comes with new guidelines, then it can be looked at; that right now, the only people we have is EmPowerment and Habitat that can run the funds; that the board makes recommendations for housing matters to the Commissioners; that they do not tell Habitat or EmPowerment what they can or cannot build; that the way it was set up, they are the Board's agent and they do have a vote; that he did find the paper where the only people who do not have vote are County employees and elected officials that are ex-officio; and that everyone else who is appointed has a vote.

Chairman Lucier stated that if that was the current situation then that is fine.

The Chairman introduced Jep Rose, Acting County Attorney, stating Kevin Whiteheart, County Attorney, has a medical issue and that Mr. Rose has agreed to join the Board in the interim. He stated that one thing to be looked into is the potential for conflict of interest based on the discussion that Commissioners Cross and Vanderbeck just had.

Mr. Rose stated that it was a pleasure to be back in Chatham County.

Commissioner Vanderbeck asked that the motion should not be an add-on to the reaffirmation. Chairman Lucier stated that it was not. Commissioner Vanderbeck stated that that would be an issue that, it was in the past and it continues until this thing evolves.

Chairman Lucier stated that the motion did not include that; that it was part of the discussion; that the motion he heard just dealt with Habitat and EmPowerment just being the County's agents.

Commissioner Cross reiterated that the only non-voting members of the task force are elected officials and County/Municipal employees; that Habitat and EmPowerment are our agents so they have a vote.

Chairman Lucier stated then nothing would change until it is changed. He called the question. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0).

**Briar Chapel:**

Commissioner Vanderbeck asked, regarding Briar Chapel, if some of the lots may have been the ones that were going to be assigned in this Phase IV; that it looked as though they may have been trying to put more in it; and that he wondered if staff had looked it over.

Commissioner Cross stated that in the original proposal, and the Planning Department has it now, every phase in Briar Chapel has the affordable housing units identified, whether it was a town house, a single family, or a condo. Commissioner Vanderbeck answered ok.

Commissioner Vanderbeck asked the County Manager to check with the Planning Department to make sure that it is reviewed and that we are on track as far as the original proposal per phase as it seems to him it may be that this was a more affordable phase and they may have been trying to fit in more units there; and that he would like for this to be clarified for all of them.

**Joint Meeting with Town of Siler City:**

Chairman Lucier stated that Commissioner Cross and he are meeting with the Siler City Town Council tonight at 7:00 PM to seek common ground on joint issues.

**Contract Integrating Planning and Zoning Issues:**

Chairman Lucier stated that they needed an update in the not too distant future on what's happening with the contract that is to be integrating all the different planning and zoning issues.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Cross moved, seconded by Commissioner Thompson, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried five (5) to zero (0), and the meeting adjourned at 11:01 AM.

---

George Lucier, Chairman

ATTEST:

---

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