

Regular Session, June 17, 2013, 7:00 p.m.
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Appointments

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council	06/17/13	831
Economic Development Corporation Board of Trustees	06/17/13	831
Designated County Voting Delegate and Alternate NACo	06/17/13	831

Catawba County Schools

Rt of first refusal on old St. Stephens Elementary School Property	06/17/13	836
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Emergency Services

Town of Catawba Fire Department Fund Balance	06/17/13	832
Update on Construction of New Animal Shelter	06/17/13	835

Ordinances

Chapter 2 Administration – CVMC Ex officio members	06/17/13	832
Chapter 20 – Parks and Recreational Area Preservation and Prohibited	06/17/13	833

Planning, Parks and Development

Amendment to Lake Norman Motor Coach Resort Site Plan	06/17/13	828
Chapter 20 – Parks and Recreational Area Preservation and Prohibited	06/17/13	833

Public Hearings

Unnamed street	06/17/13	828
Amendment to Lake Norman Motor Coach Resort Site Plan	06/17/13	828
CDBG Grant for Old Shelby Road Water Line Extension	06/17/13	830

Resolution

CDBG Grant for Old Shelby Road Water Line Extension	06/17/13	830
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Sheriff's Office

JAG Grant	06/17/13	832
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Streets/roads

Unnamed street	06/17/13	828
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Utilites and Engineering

CDBG Grant for Old Shelby Road Water Line Extension	06/17/13	830
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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, June 17, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in the Robert E. Hibbits Meeting Room of the 1924 Courthouse, 30 North College Avenue, Newton, North Carolina.

Present were Chair Katherine W. Barnes, Vice-Chair Barbara G. Beatty and Commissioners Dan A. Hunsucker and Randy Isenhower. Commissioner Lynn M. Lail participated by teleconferencing.

Also present were Assistant County Manager Dewey Harris, Assistant County Manager Mary Furtado, County Attorney Debra Bechtel and County Clerk Barbara Morris. County Manager J. Thomas Lundy was absent.

1. Chair Katherine W. Barnes called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and noted that Commissioner Lynn M. Lail would be participating by teleconferencing and County Manager J. Thomas Lundy was absent due to the birth of his granddaughter.
2. Chair Barnes led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

3. Commissioner Randy Isenhower offered the invocation.
4. Vice-Chair Barbara G. Beatty made a motion to approve the minutes from the Board's Budget Hearings with Departments and Outside Agencies of May 28, 2013, Budget Public Hearing and Wrap-Up of May 30, 2013 and the Regular and Closed Session of June 3, 2013. The motion carried unanimously.
5. Recognition of Special Guests: Chair Barnes welcomed everyone present, and specifically welcomed County Employee Steve Lackey who was attending as part of his participation in the Catawba County Leadership Academy.
6. Public Comments for Items Not on the Agenda: None.
7. Public Hearings:
 - a. E-911 Addressing Coordinator Renee Hart came forward and requested the Board conduct a public hearing to receive citizen input and consider approval of the road name Willadean Lane for an unnamed street located in Clines Township. The goal of the County's E-911 Office is to assign individual E-911 numbers to all dwellings located in the county. One step towards achieving this goal is to name streets or driveways that meet the road naming requirements, which are that the road must be at least 1200 feet in length and/or access three or more parcels.

Mrs. Carol Miller, who owns one of the parcels that border on an unnamed street off County Home Road in Clines Township, brought the matter to the County's attention. Staff determined that the right of way should be named since there are five properties accessed from it. A suggestion was received from Mrs. Miller to name the street Willadean Lane in memory of the late wife of Mr. Carl Edward Lail, one of the current property owners on the subject right-of-way. Since there were no other suggestions received, and this name is not a duplicate, staff recommended approval of Willadean Lane.

Chair Barnes opened the public hearing, noting it had been duly advertised. No one came forward to speak and Chair Barnes closed the public hearing. Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve the name Willadean Lane for this unnamed street. The motion carried unanimously.

- b. Planner Chris Timberlake came forward and requested the Board conduct a public hearing to receive citizen input and consider an application by Lake Norman Motor Coach Resort to amend an existing site plan to add five additional RV/motor coach sites, for a total of 63 spaces, in the existing PD Planned Development district.

The PD Planned Development district, considered a "special district," encourages the master planning of large scale, multiple or mixed use development patterns. The site plan, approved on December 17, 2007, included 58 spaces along with proposed amenities (a pet park, playground, pool, bath house, deck, and caretaker's cottage). The plan illustrated future areas for expansion for parking and sites, dependent on sewer availability.

On November 26, 2007, the Catawba County Planning Board recommended approval of the site plan and rezoning to the Board of Commissioners based on the omission of the number 25 from the statement on the site plan indicating "Future Expansion Area of 25 Sites upon Sewer Availability." Future review and possible approval would be based on allowed imperviousness, that the applicants strive to align the entrance of the campground with Paradise Cove, and that the applicants connect to public sewer upon availability. On December 17, 2007, the Board of Commissioners gave approval subject to the following conditions: Any further expansion would come before the Board, the owners agreed to dedicate land (to the extent feasible due to topography) for a right-of-way for a turning lane into the resort in the event the North Carolina Department Of Transportation (NCDOT) approved such a turning lane, and connection to public sewer would be required before the resort could expand beyond the current 58 spaces.

The proposed amendment indicated the addition of five spaces. Four are overflow gravel spaces and one is an after-hours arrival site. The proposed sites are to the west and northern side of the parking area. Each site would be served by water, sewer, and electrical hook-ups. These are existing sites added without approval or permits. The applicant was now seeking approval. If received, the applicant would need to apply for all other applicable permits.

Applicants who propose a planned development usually have more opportunity for flexibility and creativity in design than is possible under conventional zoning regulations. However, some uses (such as auto repair, motor vehicle sales), are not permitted in the PD district. Development standards found in Article V of the County's Unified Development Ordinance must be met for all new development.

The property is located at 6738 East NC Highway 150 in the Sherrills Ford Small Area Planning District. Lake Norman is to the north; parcels to the south, east and west are zoned HC Highway Commercial, with some developed (restaurant) and some not developed, and R-30 Residential, some undeveloped and vacant and some with existing residential structures.

Public sewer is currently being installed along East NC Highway 150 with sewer availability anticipated in January 2014. The property is currently served by a private septic system and public water. East NC Highway 150 is designated as a boulevard in the 2035 Greater Hickory Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan. This road, listed as a strategic highway corridor, is a major east-west route between Shelby, Lincolnton, and Mooresville and is recommended to be widened from two to four lanes. The State Transportation Improvement Plan contains plans for the widening to a multi-lane facility with construction currently scheduled for 2019. Traffic counts taken in 2011 to the west of the site along East NC Highway 150 measured 11,000 with 8,700 average daily trips to the east. Based on design and construction, the road capacity in this area is 14,200, according to the Catawba County Thoroughfare Plan. The proposed additional development should not overburden the existing roadway.

The Sherrills Ford Small Area Plan serves as the current land use plan for this area and the subject properties are inside an office institutional/mixed residential corridor. This "mixed-use corridor" is envisioned by the Small Area Plan to provide both a variety of residential uses and smaller scale commercial uses conducive to neighborhoods. Staff considers this request to be consistent with the adopted land use plan.

Staff recommended approval of an amendment to the site plan allowing Lake Norman Motor Coach Resort five new sites, for a total of 63 sites, but only if the following conditions are met: the Sherrills Ford Small Area Plan recognizing the parcels as being in a future mixed-use corridor; the purpose of the PD Planned Development, established to encourage the master planning of larger scale developments; conditions required by the Board of Commissioners at its December 17, 2007, meeting that any further expansion come before the Board; the owners dedicate land (to the extent feasible due to topography) for a right-of-way for a turning lane into the resort in the event NCDOT approved such a turning lane; and connection to public sewer be required before the resort could expand beyond the current 58 spaces. The spaces could not be used until sewer connectivity is established for the five spaces, applicable permits are issued, and inspections completed.

The Catawba County Planning Board voted 7-0 to submit a favorable recommendation for approval of an amendment to the site plan allowing Lake Norman Motor Coach Resort five new sites, for a total of 63 sites, but only if the conditions outlined in the previous paragraph are met, and allowing the resort to use the additional five spaces until public sewer is available, at which time all 63 spaces and amenities (pool, bath house, caretaker's cottage, food service, etc.) must connect to public sewer. All applicable state & local permits and inspections must be completed prior to using the five new spaces.

Chair Barnes opened the public hearing, noting it had been duly advertised. Jim Davidson, developer of the resort, came forward and spoke. He said Duke Power used the resort during outages when they brought people in to work and they needed the additional spots. He said the

septic was only working at 18 to 40% capacity and it could handle the load. He apologized for his staff not getting the proper permits and asked that the Board go along with the Planning Board's recommendations. Sarah Scherr came forward and stated she had always been skeptical about the septic being so close to the water and the developers should have followed the rules set forth by the Board when they started the project. She went on to say it would break her heart if the Board did not stand by what they had set forth in 2007. Chair Barnes closed the public hearing.

After discussion by the Board members and noting the concerns regarding expansion voiced by residents of Sherrills Ford in 2007 and the fact that sewer service along Highway 150 would be available within 6 months, Commissioner Isenhower made a motion to follow staff's recommendation that the five additional spaces could not be used until sewer connectivity was established, applicable permits were issued and inspections were completed. The motion carried unanimously.

c. Utilities and Engineering Director Barry Edwards came forward and requested the Board conduct a public hearing to receive citizen comments and adopt a resolution and certification regarding an application for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Division of Community Assistance (DCA). Catawba County submitted an application on September 11, 2012, for the Old Shelby Road Water Line Extension Water Project but the project was not approved for funding. The DCA has contacted the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) and informed it that additional funds are now available to position the County to receive funds. In order to receive funding for this project, the County must hold a second public hearing.

CDBG funds are designed to enable local governments to install municipal water and/or sewer lines with taps and connections for low and moderate-income households (incomes at or below 80% of area median income) in areas where there are no municipal water and/or sewer lines.

The County proposed to further extend water south on Old Shelby Road between JV Parker Road and Buff & Allen Road, connecting to an existing water line on Old Shelby Road that was part of the Advents Crossroad Water Project installed in 2003. Also as part of this project, several neighborhoods and side streets will be served, namely White Pine Drive, Hemphill Road, Salem Road, and Faith Olive Church Road.

This project will provide municipal water to 131 persons, of whom 123 are low to moderate income (LMI), or 94%. These 131 persons represent 63 households, of which approximately 90% are LMI. Of the 63 households being served, 52 show severe water needs and 6 show moderate water needs, illustrating a water need in 92% of the households.

A house to house survey was conducted by the WPCOG to assess water need and income. County and McGill Associates staff conducted well inspections of residences along the route surveyed by the WPCOG. Of those wells surveyed, 52 show severe needs, including 14 without a well; one residence has a dry well; 26 are unapproved wells certified by the County's Environmental Health Department and 11 are non-potable wells with heavy minerals that are not fit for drinking. Of the remaining households, six have a moderate need due to periodically failing shallow wells and five have no well issues.

Due to the imperative need for water and low income in this community, the County is applying for \$750,000 from CDBG funding to install 3,800 linear feet of 12-inch water lines along Old Shelby Road and 4,300 linear feet of 8-inch water lines along the secondary roads. The County is providing an 8.5% match of \$63,000 for a total project budget of \$813,000 to cover design, permitting, construction, service connections to 63 homes, and grant and contract administration. The County's match will be derived from waiving capital fees for the 63 connections. The project is being developed in cooperation with the City of Hickory. It will be an extension of the Advents Crossroads Revenue Sharing Agreement, dated April 1, 2003, between Catawba County and the City of Hickory.

Chair Barnes opened the public hearing, noting it had been duly advertised. No one came forward to speak and Chair Barnes closed the public hearing. Commissioner Hunsucker made a motion adopt a resolution and certification regarding an application for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Division of Community Assistance (DCA). The motion carried unanimously. The following resolution applies:

CATAWBA COUNTY
AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION AND CERTIFICATION
2012 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)
OLD SHELBY ROAD WATER LINE EXTENSION CDBG WATER PROJECT

WHEREAS, various State and Federal agencies provide for funds to municipalities to meet the needs of local governments in financing the cost of Community Development; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Community Assistance is the State administering agency for the Community Development Block Grant Program whose funds are designed to enable eligible local governments to install municipal public water and/or sewer line(s) with taps and connections to low and moderate-income (LMI) households (incomes at or below 80% of area median income); and

WHEREAS, the Catawba County Board of Commissioners has solicited and received citizen input regarding the Community Development Block Grant Old Shelby Road Water Line Extension CDBG Water grant which will provide water service to 63 homes as part of the grant; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CATAWBA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

That Catawba County is applying for \$750,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Infrastructure grant funds;

That Catawba County will substantially comply with all Federal, State and local laws, rules, regulations and ordinances pertaining to the project and to Federal and State grants pertaining thereto.

That, Katherine W. Barnes, Chair of the Catawba County Board of Commissioners, and successors so titled is hereby authorized to develop, execute and file an application on behalf of the Catawba County to appropriate Federal and State agencies to secure funds for the Community Development Block Grant Project.

That, Katherine W. Barnes, Chair of the Catawba County Commissioners, and successors so titled is hereby authorized and directed to furnish such information as the appropriate governmental agencies my request in connection with such applications for the project; to make the assurances and certifications as contained above; and to execute such other documents as may be required in connection with the construction of the project.

That this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

Adopted this the 17th day of June, 2013 at Newton, Catawba County, North Carolina by vote of the Board of Commissioners upon a motion by _____ .

8. Appointments:

Commissioner Isenhower recommended the reappointment of Ronn Abernathy and Jennie Connor for sixth terms, Brandi Tolbert for a fifth term, Valaree Adams, John Eller and Jennifer Mace for third terms, Sarah Nelson for a second term, Alton Price for a first full term, and the appointment of Va Yang for a first term to succeed Andrew Jennings, on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council. These terms will expire June 30, 2015. Chair Barnes recommended the reappointment of Robin Nicholson for a first full term and the appointment of Mike Curtis for a first term to succeed Burk Wyant on the Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors. These terms will expire on June 30, 2016.

Chair Barnes also recommended the Board appoint her as Designated County Voting Delegate and Vice-Chair Barbara Beatty as County Alternate at the National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference. These recommendations came in the form of a motion which carried unanimously.

9. Consent Agenda:

The following four items were presented by Assistant County Manager Dewey Harris.

a. A request for the Board to approve a grant application for the 2013 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG). JAG funding allocation is based on population and violent crime statistics. The County's eligible award for 2013 is \$17,421, and no local match is required. The Sheriff's Office requested these funds be used to purchase the following equipment to improve law enforcement: 1) 800MHz Portable Mobile Repeater – to effectively use radio communication on-site during a critical incident. This unit will be stored and working daily at CVCC and may be transported if needed to the Sheriff's Office Mobile Command Vehicle. Many County schools and some industrial buildings prevent 800MHz radio communication due to denser construction materials (concrete and steel). This repeater system will increase and extend signals so communications remain constant during a critical incident; 2) Forensic extractor software – to obtain data at crime scenes that can be used as evidence. This system can be used in the field to extract data (text, GPS, photos, call logs, contacts, memory, passwords, and deleted data) from cell phones, vehicle GPS systems, and tablets with Apple operating systems. This information is essential to criminal investigations due to the wide use of wireless devices. The evidence obtained may lead to other suspects, and may be obtained during the arrest or pursuant to search warrants.

b. A request for the Board to appropriate existing fund balance of the Town of Catawba Fire Department in the amount of \$2,500. The funds will be used to pay for legal services performed by Mr. Robert A. Mullinax, PLLC. On February 17, 2012, the Town of Catawba notified the County of its desire to alter the method by which fire protection is delivered in the Town of Catawba. Since the Town also provides fire protection for the Catawba Rural fire district, any change would have implications for the rural district.

Numerous options were explored and, on November 19, 2012, the Catawba Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. was formed. The newly formed fire department will provide fire protection for both the Town and rural district via contractual agreement. The services of a consultant and an attorney were needed to establish the new fire department and negotiate the contractual agreement with the Town of Catawba. Management Solutions for Emergency Services, LLC and Robert A. Mullinax, PLLC, provided these services. Neither the Town nor the fire department anticipated these fees when preparing the fiscal year 2012-13 budgets. However, the Town of Catawba has agreed to pay Management Solutions for Emergency Services and the fire department for Mr. Mullinax's services. Mr. Mullinax's fee is \$2,500.

Historically, each department has its own fund balance, which is carried from year to year unless the department makes a request to appropriate it. The fund balance is created through tax revenue collections exceeding the projections established by the County's Budget staff prior to the fiscal year. Fire departments have been allowed to utilize ninety percent of existing fund balance to address major projects such as buildings, building additions, truck replacement and other non-operating budget needs such as equipment items. Ten percent of each department's fund balance is held for unforeseen expenditures during the budget year. The Town of Catawba Fire Department's fund balance prior to this withdrawal is \$291,702.

c. A request for the Board to amend in its entirety, and adopted, revisions to Section 2-335 of the Catawba County Code of Ordinances. Chapter 2, Article IV, Division 4 of the County Code is entitled Board of Trustees of Catawba Valley Medical Center. In May, the Center's Board of Trustees amended its bylaws. Until those amendments were made, the only ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees was the county commissioner appointed to the board. The Board of Trustees has determined it is in the best interest of the hospital to have the chair of the Catawba Medical Foundation also serve in an ex-officio capacity on the Board of Trustees. The following ordinance applies:

Ordinance No. 2013

BE IT ORDAINED THAT THE Catawba County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2 Administration, Article IV Boards, Commissions and Committees, Division 4 Board of Trustees of the Catawba Valley Medical Center, Section 2-335 Ex officio members be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2-335. - Ex officio members.

A county commissioner, by reason of position on the board of commissioners, and the chairperson of the Catawba Medical Foundation shall each serve ex officio on the board of trustees of Catawba Valley Medical Center.

This the 17th day of June, 2013.

d. A request for the Board to amend the County Code, Chapter 20, Article IV, Sec. 20-99, Parks and Recreational Area Preservation and Prohibited Activities, as it relates to concealed carry of firearms in County parks, in response to a change in North Carolina General Statutes. On May 24, 1999, the Board adopted an amendment to the County Code, Title 31, Public Safety, Chapter 310, Parks, Recreational Areas and Campgrounds that read *"It shall be unlawful for any person to bring into or have in his possession: (a) Any rifle, shotgun, handgun, BB gun, air gun, spring gun, slingshot, bow, or other weapon in which the propelling force is gunpowder, a spring or air, or any explosive of any kind."*

These regulations have served Catawba County well for over a decade. However, recent changes mandated by the North Carolina General Assembly under House Bill 650 have required language changes in the Code in order to be in compliance with State law.

The new State law reads *"A unit of local government may adopt an ordinance to prohibit, by posting, the carrying of a concealed handgun on municipal and county recreational facilities that are specifically identified by the unit of local government. If a unit of local government adopts such an ordinance with regard to recreational facilities, then the concealed handgun permittee may, nevertheless, secure the handgun in a locked vehicle within the trunk, glove box, or other enclosed compartment or area within or on the motor vehicle. For purposes of this section, the term 'recreational facilities' includes only the following: a playground, an athletic field, a swimming pool, and an athletic facility."*

Under this provision of State law, the County will continue its current practice of restricting concealed handguns from being carried at St. Stephens Park and Mountain View Recreation Center, since they have recreational facilities (i.e. a playground and athletic fields). (The County has ownership interest in approximately 5 acres of the Mountain View Recreation Center site based upon the fact that the site was developed using federal grant funds that flowed through the County.) While it will be unlawful for a person to carry a concealed handgun on his or her person at these locations, the concealed handgun permittee may, nevertheless, secure the handgun in a locked vehicle within the trunk, glove box, or other enclosed compartment or area within or on the vehicle.

Those restrictions would not apply at Bakers Mountain and Riverbend Park because they are passive parks.

Chair Barnes asked if any commissioner wished to have an item broken out of the consent agenda for further discussion. Commissioner Isenhower asked that item (d) be removed from the consent agenda. Chair Barnes then asked for a motion on the remaining three items. Commissioner Lail made a motion to approve the consent agenda (without item (d)). The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Isenhower cited uniformity across the state and the ability of carrying a concealed handgun by law abiding citizen being a deterrent to non-law abiding citizens to becoming violent as reasons not to ban concealed handguns in the referenced parks. Commissioner Hunsucker spoke of his concerns about emotions running high at athletic events and a gun doing more damage than a fist. Chair Barnes said it was a conundrum and she knew of several municipalities that had done as staff was proposing but Commissioner Isenhower cited that the City of Hickory did not. After further discussion, Commissioner Hunsucker decided that the ban was not the way to go. Commissioner Hunsucker asked if they could wait to act on this but County Attorney Bechtel said the County was not in compliance with the state law and the matter needed to be addressed. Commissioner Lail made a motion to follow the recommendation of staff and ban concealed handguns in county parks with recreational facilities (St. Stephens park and Mountain View Recreation Center). Chair Barnes and Commissioner Lail voted in favor of this motion; Vice-Chair Beatty and Commissioner Isenhower and Hunsucker against. The motion failed. Commissioner Isenhower then made a motion to amend the ordinance as stated but removing subparagraph (2) of the proposed amendment. Commissioner Isenhower and Hunsucker and Vice-Chair Beatty voted in favor; Chair Barnes and Commissioner Lail against. The motion carried. The following ordinance applies:

Ordinance No. 2013-

BE IT ORDAINED that the Catawba County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 20 Lakes, Waterways and Parks, Article IV, Section 20-99, Parks and recreational area preservation and prohibited activities is hereby amended to read as follows:

Chapter 20 - LAKES, WATERWAYS AND PARKS

Sec. 20-99. - Park and recreational area preservation and prohibited activities.

(i) *Weapons, explosives, etc.* It shall be unlawful for any person to:

Openly carry a handgun or possess on or about his person any deadly weapon, gun, other than a permitted concealed handgun, or any such instrument capable of causing serious bodily injury designed for use as a weapon including but not limited to any: knife, switchblade, blackjack, dirk, dagger, sling-shot, loaded cane, metal knuckles, razor, stun gun, or nightstick.

(j) *Alcoholic beverages, drugs, fireworks, etc.* It shall be unlawful for any person to bring into or have in his possession:

- (1) any alcoholic beverage or narcotic drug, hallucinogen, or any other controlled substance without a valid physician's prescription; or
- (2) any fireworks, unless specially permitted by the county.

This the 17th day of June, 2013.

10. Departmental Reports:

A. Economic Development Corporation:

Economic Development Corporation President Scott Millar presented a request for the Board to approve a 24 month extension of the fee waiver program of certain landfill fees and erosion control permit fees to encourage development of pre-graded sites, demolition and removal of dilapidated

buildings, and rehabilitation of historic buildings in order to encourage economic development. On June 18, 2012, the Board approved this fee waiver program. The program was set to expire on June 30, 2013.

Three demolition projects have been approved and completed to date, with two additional projects approved and in the process of de-construction.

Considering all five demolition projects, the County's landfill fee waiver could total \$104,067. In exchange, private developers estimate re-investing more than \$21 million to redevelop vacant or under-utilized structures into everything from new restaurants and a brewery to a family-friendly, national destination for classic cars and trucks. These re-investments represent new jobs and businesses to the area, and also approximately \$112,000 in new property tax receipts, resulting in positive net income to Catawba County.

Legislation recently passed by the General Assembly should further bolster the County's efforts to encourage the tear down of obsolete buildings, the development of pre-graded sites and improvements to the area's aesthetics. Under the new law, non-hazardous demolition materials such as brick, dirt, gravel, and concrete may be buried onsite, whereas these materials have historically not been allowed to be used as fill. In combination, the new State legislation and the County's program can significantly reduce the cost of building demolition including the two largest considerations: truck hauling and landfill fees. This combination may propel Shurtape into demolishing the A.A. Shuford Plant on Highland Avenue in Hickory.

In addition, a "Reinventing Spaces" workgroup, chaired by Mr. Stephen Shuford, is one of the six focus areas of the Innovate Catawba initiative, previously known as the Southern Growth Policies Board "Competitiveness Plan". This group's mission is "to improve the aesthetics and economic development potential of our community by reinventing spaces through programs that promote legacy structure demolition or renovation". In addition to considering this fee waiver a vital part of the toolbox for their initiative, the group has been instrumental in the passage of statewide legislation for building demolition and is continuing to work on ideas to further their work.

Commissioner Isenhower asked if some potential projects had been lost to the restrictive nature of the criteria and Mr. Millar indicated they had just had someone apply and the acreage was too small. Commissioner Isenhower asked that wasn't the criteria looked at as a guideline and some flexibility utilized? Mr. Millar said they would look into it.

Commissioner Hunsucker then a made a motion to approve this extension based on the fact that the waiver program has produced significant re-investment in high value corridors, resulting in improved aesthetics and positive net tax income to Catawba County; the re-investment by private developers has spurred new job creation and new businesses, with the potential for several to become "destinations" for regional or national visitors; the aforementioned legislation combined with a continuation of the County's fee waiver program maintains momentum and increases the likelihood of widespread improvements; and the fee waiver program aligns closely with one of the six pillars of the Innovate Catawba plan. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Emergency Services.

Emergency Services Director Bryan Blanton presented an update on the construction of the new animal shelter. This was for information only and no action was taken.

11. Other Items of Business: Vice-Chair Beatty congratulated Hunter Harvey for his selection by the Baltimore Orioles.
12. Attorney's Report: County Attorney Debra Bechtel introduced Amber Eades who is a law student doing a summer internship with the County Legal Staff.
13. Manager's Report:

Assistant County Manager Dewey Harris presented an offer from the Catawba County Board of Education to purchase the old St. Stephens Elementary School property located at the intersection of Springs Road and 29th Ave, NE in Hickory. The Board of Education has determined that the use of this real estate is unnecessary and undesirable for public school purposes and desires to proceed with a sale. Pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes, the Board of Education must first afford the Board of Commissioners an opportunity to purchase the real estate at a fair market price or at a price negotiated between the Board of Education and the Board of Commissioners.

In August 2000, the Board of Education unanimously declared the old St. Stephens Elementary School site as surplus for school purposes. On October 2, 2000, the Board of Commissioners declined the offer to purchase the property as there were no current or future foreseeable needs for the property. Staff recommended the Board of Commissioners exercise its right of first refusal on the old St. Stephens Elementary School property and decline the option to purchase, as the County does not have any current or foreseeable future use for this property. Commissioner Isenhower made a motion to decline the offer to purchase. The motion carried unanimously.

14. Adjournment. Vice-Chair Barbara G. Beatty made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 p..m. The motion carried unanimously.

Katherine W. Barnes, Chair
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Barbara E. Morris
County Clerk