

Regular Session, September 19, 2016, 7:00 p.m.
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Closed Session

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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, September 19, 2016, at 7:00 p.m., in the Robert E. Hibbitts Meeting Room of the 1924 Courthouse, 30 North College Avenue, Newton, North Carolina.

Present were Chair Randy Isenhower and Commissioners Katherine W. Barnes, Sherry E. Butler and Dan A. Hunsucker. Vice-Chair Barbara Beatty was absent and attending training in Chapel Hill.

Also present were County Manager Mick Berry, Assistant County Managers Dewey Harris and Mary Furtado, County Attorney Debra Bechtel, Assistant County Attorney Jodi Stewart and County Clerk Barbara Morris.

1. Chair Randy Isenhower called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., noting a quorum was present.
2. Commissioner Sherry E. Butler led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
3. Commissioner Katherine W. Barnes offered the invocation.
4. Commissioner Hunsucker made a motion to approve the minutes from the Board's Regular Meeting and Closed Session of September 6, 2016. The motion carried unanimously.
5. Recognition of Special Guests: Chair Isenhower welcomed everyone present, specifically acknowledging Anthony Starr from the Western Piedmont Council of Governments.
6. Public Comments.
Mr. Billy Sudderth presented a request for the Board to support the establishment of a Multi-Purpose Resource Center in the Ridgeview Community of Hickory. The Board thanked Mr. Sudderth for the information regarding this project.

7. Presentations.

All Commissioners joined Chair Isenhower at the podium for the following presentations:

a. The Board presented a proclamation to Chairman of the Board Frank Drendel, President & CEO Eddie Edwards and Senior Vice-President/General Counsel Burk Wyatt of CommScope honoring the company's 40th anniversary. The proclamation recognized CommScope's contributions to Catawba County in jobs and economic impact and applauded the company's achievements.

b. The Board presented Catawba County Chamber of Commerce President Danny Hearn with a proclamation recognizing the Chamber's honor of being named Chamber of the Year by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives and extending the Board's appreciation for the leadership role the Chamber has in our community.

c. The Board presented Catawba County Chamber of Commerce President Danny Hearn with a Distinguished Public Service Award recognizing Mr. Hearn's service to Chamber work for the last forty-three years, including twelve years with the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce.

8. Appointments. None.

9. Departmental Reports.

A. Cooperative Extension.

Cooperative Extension Agent Donna Mull presented a request for the Board to approve a request to revise the by-laws for the Catawba County Youth Council which apply to membership and appointment of students to the Catawba County Youth Council.

Based on the Council by-laws, Section 2 reads: The Commission shall be comprised of up to 28 youth appointed by the commissioners as follows: Two representatives from each of the public high schools, one home school student, and one private school student, and one representative from each of the following community organizations: 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Centro Latino, Hmong Association, and NAACP.

The Youth Council officers requested revision to the appointment process (Section 2 a) and requested the following change: The Youth Council shall be comprised of 2-4 representatives from each Catawba County High Public Schools. There will also be up to four (4) private school and home school representatives selected for the Youth Council. If a school lacks four representatives, the open spaces will provide an opportunity for a fifth student from any one school to participate on the Council. The adult advisors will work with the student officers to review applications and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners to appointments. The council will seek students that are representative of the diversity of Catawba County population.

The Council officers sought this change in order to allow more students to benefit from Youth Council involvement. It has also become increasingly difficult to recruit youth from selected community organization and some of the organizations initially identified are no longer functioning. However, the Council is seeing youth involved in 4-H and Scouts applying for Youth Council through their respective schools.

Section 2(a)3 addresses reappointment. As it reads, "students may be re-appointed for an indefinite number of terms, so long as the student continues at their school for which the appointment is made." The Council officers requested that active participation also be a consideration for reappointment and revised the statement to read: students may be re-appointed for an indefinite number of terms, based on Council attendance, participation, and continued enrollment at their respective school." The council leadership expects students to attend at least half the meetings and have no more than three absences in a row in order to be eligible for reappointment.

In addition, to reflect the increase in members, Section 3c was revised to read "a quorum of one-half of the official youth council members shall be required to be present to take any action authorized or required by this referendum."

Officers of the Youth Council updated the Board on their activities. Commissioner Butler made a motion to approve the proposed changes. The motion carried unanimously.

B. Social Services.

Social Services Director John Eller and members of the Catawba County Aging Coalition presented a request for the Board to endorse the 2016-2020 Catawba County Aging Plan developed by Catawba County's Aging Coalition. The Catawba County Aging Planning Leadership Team was formed in July 2009 to provide leadership in a collaborative planning process that promotes a livable and senior-friendly community for Catawba County. The primary purpose for this community driven planning effort was to assess our current state in the arena of Aging Services and determine Catawba County's "readiness" to provide programs, policies and services that meet the needs of a growing older population, families and caregivers.

The Catawba County Aging Plan was created over a two-year period and involved many citizens in reviewing the current status of aging services in Catawba County as well as issues/needs related to the growing older adult population. This plan was then presented to the Board of Commissioners in 2011. The results from the Aging Planning process provided insight for the community at large, service providers and elected officials with ways to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of our aging population. The results were not a product for the Board of County Commission to solve or fund, but rather for the community as a whole to use in becoming more livable and senior friendly. Five years later, this plan has now been updated for education throughout the County.

The Aging Plan identified the need for an Aging Coalition to serve as the gatekeeper of the Aging Plan. Social Services is a representative, and is not staffing or leading this effort as we want it to be community driven. This is a long term, broad based plan that includes six goal areas with corresponding strategies and measures of success. The six overarching goals include:

- 1) Assisting older adults and their families to make informed choices;
- 2) Empowering older adults to remain independent through the availability of community based services and supports;
- 3) Health and wellness;
- 4) Protecting the safety and rights of older and vulnerable adults;
- 5) Volunteerism and social opportunities; and
- 6) Ensuring public awareness and responsiveness to the needs of older adults.

The Aging Coalition will consider the following suggestions made by the Board of Commissioners:

- Assess solutions to assist and educate caregivers assisting loved ones who are diagnosed with Alzheimer's and related dementia to provide education and prepare them for the progression of the loved one's condition.
- Highlight opportunities for the aging community to volunteer, and assess how the United Arts Council could help be a venue for engagement.
- Given our transportation sprawl issues in the County, proactive solutions should be assessed as to how our community plans to address this issue given the future projected growth of our aging population.
- Assess solutions that involve strategies to better engage the faith community in supporting seniors in their communities with transportation and home repairs.
- Promote a "one stop" call center for our citizens to assist with aging and adult services issues, while leveraging private sector funding to support it.
- Assess options to have geographically diverse sites that can support aging programming and assist with sprawl related transportation issues to increase active lifestyles in local communities across the County.

Chair Isenhower asked that the Coalition provide the Board with periodic updates on this plan and its efforts. Commissioner Butler made a motion to endorse the Aging Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

C. Planning.

Planning and Parks Director Jacky Eubanks presented a request for the Board to authorize the chairman's signature on a letter the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) regarding the NC Highway 150 Project. NCDOT held a public hearing on August 22, 2016 at Mt. Anderson Baptist Church for the purpose of presenting the NC Highway 150 preliminary design. Upon completion of the presentation NCDOT received public comment and invited written comments to be submitted on or before September 23, 2016. The below comments and proposals are based on staff observations, citizens input and the Commissioners thorough and extensive review of this plan.

Catawba County prefers the Alternative 1 design from Slanting Bridge Road to Marshall Road. The following comments support the County's position:

- Alternative 1 was overwhelmingly supported by the public at the NCDOT initial scoping meeting held at Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire and Rescue on November 21, 2013.
- Alternative 1 alignment is consistent with the adopted Sherrills Ford Small Area Plan and Highway 150 Corridor Plan.
- Alternative 1 was part of the adopted land use plan which took into account a future village center with storefronts adjacent to the existing Highway 150 alignment.
- Alternative 1 was incorporated within the Village at Sherrills Ford, LLC design upon which driveway permits have been approved by NCDOT and future ones are anticipated. The Village at Sherrills Ford strongly supports Alternative 1 as reflected in their design which was based upon the current Hwy 150 alignment.
- Alternative 1 does not further undermine the rural character of the Terrell Historic District due to the fact structures have been razed, altered, or expanded upon inconsistent with the National Register of Historic Places. Also, approximately 83 acres within the Terrell Historic District are for sale or under option for purchase.
- Alternative 1 would have less impact upon the existing Sherrills Ford-Terrell Fire/Rescue Station located on Slanting Bridge Road.

Catawba County prefers a reduction in right-of-way from approximately 220' to 150' from NC Highway 16 By-pass to Harvel Road. The following comments support the County's position:

- A reduction in right-of-way would appear to be less costly and disruptive to existing and future businesses along the current NC 150 alignment.
- Alternative 1 in its proposed design utilized a reduced right-of-way width in front of the Robert Harold Gabriel Estate property just west of the Highway 150/Sherrills Ford intersection).
- A reduced right-of-way design would accommodate the four-lane median separated facility and future traffic projections with reduced speed limit (45-50mph).
- The limitation of controlled access shown on the preliminary design along with the many existing driveway cuts reinforces the consideration for a reduced speed limit and design right-of-way width.

Catawba County would request that NCDOT consider the following based on the 2016 draft STIP which postpones right-of-way acquisition for R-2307A (NC 16 Bypass to Harvel Rd.) until 2026:

- An updated Environmental Assessment (EA) and cost benefit analysis.
- Re-evaluate the Terrell Historic District.
- Study a southern by-pass from Beaver Boulevard to Bud Lane (significantly less impact to residences, businesses and utilities).
- The reduction in right-of-way referenced above.
- Updating traffic counts to plan for traffic demand beyond 2040 because of the likely timeframe of the construction project.
- Consider traffic impacts and transportation improvements to side roads such as Greenwood Rd. and Kiser Island Rd., driveways into parking areas such as Midway Marina, and proposed entrances to developments such as Bridgewater and the Village at Sherrills Ford.

- Reconsider turning movement options for emergency vehicles at EMS bases located on Mt. Pleasant Road and Slanting Bridge Road.
- Re-evaluate need for and location of controlled access areas.
- Evaluate impact upon business expansion/improvements, buying and selling of property, future growth and development and revenue enhancement.
- A thorough explanation as to why other bypass routes were not considered (excluding the Terrell Historic District) for the Hwy 150 Improvement Project and why the subject could not be addressed over the next 2-5 years.

Catawba County continues to support the multi-use path and its long range benefits of connecting people and places across multiple jurisdictions identified in the Carolina Thread Trail Plan and the Lake Norman Bicycle Plan.

Commissioners confirmed the letter would include the referenced letters from Fire Chief Rick Davis and the letter from Commissioners Beatty and Butler to Lou Wetmore as well as the referenced map.

Commissioner Barnes made a motion to authorize the Chair to sign the referenced letter. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Other Items of Business:

Author Gary Freeze and Editor Sidney Halma presented Board members with The Catawbans, Volume III, Boomers and Bypasses. The Board was thanked for its support of this ongoing effort in preserving Catawba County's unique history.

11. Attorneys Report.

County Attorney Debra Bechtel requested the Board a Closed Session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(3)(4) and (5) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege; to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations; and to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiation agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase option, exchange, or lease. She did not anticipate any action to be taken when the Board returned to Open Session. Commissioner Barnes made a motion to move into closed session pursuant to above referenced statute. The motion carried unanimously. The Board moved into Closed Session at 8:25 p.m.

12. Manager's Report:

None.

13. The Board returned to open session; no action was taken. Commissioner Hunsucker made a motion to adjourn at 9:25 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Randy Isenhower, Chair
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Barbara E. Morris
County Clerk