

Regular Session, December 20, 2010, 4:00 p.m.
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Appointments

Nursing and Rest Home Advisory Board	732	12/20/10
Town of Catawba Planning Board	732	12/20/10
Mental Health Partners Board of Directors	732	12/20/10

Closed Session

Personnel Matter	736	12/20/10
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County Attorney

Amendment to County Code – re: County Attorney	732	12/20/10
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JCPC

Risk and Need Priorities	732	12/20/10
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Ordinance

Amendment to County Attorney – Appointment; qualifications; terms; compensation	732	12/20/10
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Planning, Parks and Development

Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan	733	12/20/10
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Resolution

Adoption of the Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan for Catawba County Communities	733	12/20/10
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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, December 20, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. in the Robert E. Hibbitts Meeting Room of the 1924 Courthouse, 30 North College Avenue, Newton, North Carolina.

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

Also present were County Manager J. Thomas Lundy, Assistant County Manager Lee Worsley, County Attorney Debra Bechtel and County Clerk Barbara Morris.

1. Chair Katherine W. Barnes called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Chair Barnes explained the early meeting time was due to a work session that had been scheduled with the Legislative Delegation but subsequently cancelled due to conflicts with the legislators' schedules and the death of Representative Hilton's mother-in-law.
2. Commissioner Randy Isenhower led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
3. Vice-Chair Lynn M. Lail offered the invocation.
4. Vice-Chair Lail made a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 6, 2010 and the amended minutes of August 17, 2009. The motion carried unanimously.
5. Recognition of Special Guests: Chair Barnes welcomed all present and recognized reporters from both area newspapers.
6. Public Comments for Items Not on the Agenda: None.

7. Appointments:
Vice-Chair Lynn Lail recommended the reappointment of Pamela Lowdermilk for a third term on the Nursing and Rest Home Advisory Board. Ms. Lowdermilk's term will expire November 30, 2013. Commissioner Barbara Beatty recommended the reappointment of Kathy Ervin for a fourth term on the Town of Catawba Planning Board. Ms. Ervin's term will expire November 30, 2013. Commissioner Randy Isenhower recommended the appointment of Dr. Amy Wood for an unexpired term on the Mental Health Partners Board of Directors in the category of a clinical professional from the fields of mental health, developmental disabilities or substance abuse. Dr. Wood's term will expire June 30, 2011. These recommendations came in the form of a motion, which carried unanimously.
8. Consent Agenda:
County Manager J. Thomas Lundy presented the following two items on the consent agenda:
a. A request for Board approval of the risk and needs priorities set by the Catawba County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) for Fiscal Year 2011-12. The JCPC is an organization established by the State of North Carolina's Department of Juvenile Justice. Representatives are involved with youth and youth programs and membership is mostly determined by State statutes. The JCPC exists to identify risks of youth in the community, prevent crime among at-risk youth, review court data and identify needed programs to provide intervention and prevention. Funding is allocated by the State, distributed to the County and then to programs.

Each year, the JCPC is required to follow a process that begins with prioritizing risks and needs, with the final step being approval of a funding plan. The risks and needs priorities are set in the fall and early winter, with the approval of the funding plan occurring in the spring. The JCPC Outreach Committee reviews court data provided by the Department of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention for the last three years and receives input from Catawba County juvenile court counselors as it compiles a list of priorities for funding for the next fiscal year. The State requires priorities to include two programs, restitution and establishing a gang prevention/intervention program, and these are encompassed within the proposed risk and needs priorities noted below.

The recommended priorities for the Catawba County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Funding for FY2011-12 are: 1) mental health assessment and treatment (specifically refers to assessment/psychological completed within 21 days); 2) substance abuse assessment and treatment; 3) residential; 4) restitution/community service; 5) mentoring; 6) mediation; 7) parenting skills and; 8) sexual abuse intervention services.

Chair Barnes noted that the proposed priority list did not contain the required State priority of gang prevention/intervention and County Clerk Barbara Morris responded she had contacted the Chair of the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council to clarify this omission and David Eckard had responded that the programs in the proposed priority list had gang prevention components which met with this State requirement.

- b. A request for the Board to amend sections of the County Code pertaining to the County Attorney to update the code with current practices. Over the years, the duties and responsibilities of the County Attorney, appointed under North Carolina General Statute 153A-114, have evolved as in-house attorneys have been added to County staff. The amendments to Sec. 2-146 and the deletion of Sec. 2-147 would make the ordinance consistent with current practices but also provide flexibility should the Board want to change its practices in the future. The following amended Ordinance applies:

Ordinance No. 2010 –

BE IT ORDAINED that the Catawba County Code of Ordinance, Chapter 2 - Administration, Article III - Officers and Employees, Division 3 – County Attorney is hereby amended to read as follows:

DIVISION 3 – COUNTY ATTORNEY

Sec. 2-146. – Appointment; qualifications; term; compensation.

The board of commissioners shall appoint a county attorney who shall be an attorney at law licensed to engage in the practice of law in this state and a resident of the county during his tenure. The county attorney will be appointed yearly at the organizational meeting of the board of commissioners shall determine. The retainer paid to the county attorney shall entitle the county to be a preferred client and, upon request, will secure his attendance at commissioners' meetings and other meetings of the board of commissioners and for telephone conferences and other conferences for interpretation and advice to county agencies and for any other matters the board may request. The working title of this position may be Counsel to the Board or any other title the board deems appropriate.

This the 20th day of December, 2010.

Chair Barnes asked if any Commissioner desired to have an item broken out of the consent agenda for individual consideration. None was requested. Vice-Chair Lail made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Departmental Reports:

Parks, Planning and Development.

Assistant Planning Director Mary George and Carolina Thread Trail Community Coordinator Randi Gates presented a request for the Board to adopt a resolution adopting the Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan and Thread Trail map for Catawba County. In December 2007, the County adopted a Comprehensive Parks Master Plan which included survey results on the types of passive recreation facilities desired by citizens in the county. Results indicated that greenways and paved trails were the most desired recreational facilities among those surveyed. In order to meet this need, the Parks Master Plan identified locations for new greenways and supported trail development in the county. Since adoption of the Parks Plan, Planning staff has explored opportunities for funding trail development. One such opportunity is the Carolina Thread Trail program.

In 2005, the Trust for Public Land, Catawba Lands Conservancy and the Foundation for the Carolinas established a vision for preserving and connecting open lands in the Charlotte region. This vision developed into the creation of the Carolina Thread Trail (CTT), an initiative to create a network of greenways, trails and blueways in a fifteen county region that will connect 2.3 million people in North and South Carolina. The fifteen counties include: Anson, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cherokee, Chester, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lancaster, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanley, Union and York.

The CTT was established as a non-profit organization and is being financed with private donations and State and Federal public funding sources. The CTT provides funding to local governments, through a grants process, to begin the development of the Thread Trail segment within each jurisdiction. Funding is available to support a four-step process of thread trail development: planning, design, acquisition and construction. In September 2009, Catawba County received a planning grant for development of a Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan which would include all jurisdictions in the county. The goals of the planning process were to have the County and cities work together to develop a plan that identifies trail corridors, designates the backbone of the network as the Carolina Thread Trail and outlines an action plan for implementing prioritized segments of the Thread.

The CTT Master Plan was developed over the course of a year using input from a 32-member Steering Committee consisting of representatives from the County, seven municipalities, trail interest organizations, Duke Energy and citizens. The Steering Committee identified priority destinations that should be connected by the Thread Trail, including parks, historical and cultural sites, schools, town centers and existing trails. The priority destinations were further refined through a series of public input meetings held in January 2010 in Sherrills Ford, Newton and Hickory. The top-ranked locations in the County included Murray's Mill, the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge, the SALT Block and the Catawba River. Attendees at the community input meetings also were given an opportunity to draw their preferred route for the Thread Trail. Input received from approximately 100 citizens attending

the community meetings, 284 on-line survey respondents, stakeholders and existing community recreation plans was used by the Steering Committee in drafting its recommended CTT route.

The recommended CTT route includes 126 miles of trails connecting destinations throughout the county. These routes are depicted as a quarter mile wide swath since actual trail alignment will depend upon existing conditions, availability of land, rights-of-way, landowner interest and future opportunities. Also included in the Plan are 112 miles of secondary routes, which are alternative CTT routes or trails providing additional connectivity. Approximately 56,500 people, over a third of the County's population, live within a half mile of the proposed Thread Trail network. Many of the County's priority destinations are within a quarter mile distance. Upon drafting its recommended route, the Steering Committee again sponsored a series of community input meetings in Sherrills Ford, Newton, Hickory and Mountain View. Approximately 50 citizens attended these meetings, providing input which was used by the Committee to further refine the route.

With the location of the Thread Trail charted in the County, the next step was to identify implementation strategies. The Steering Committee developed a five phase action strategy for the Thread Trail Plan: Phase one would focus on building community support, with a Greenway Trails Advisory Committee established using members of the Steering Committee to promote greenway development, advise local governments on trail implementation and conduct public information campaigns to advertise trail successes and future trail plans. In Phase Two, this advisory committee would work to ensure that the top priority segments are completed and future routes are identified based upon availability of land, public support, linkages, maintenance availability and resources at risk. The Plan establishes nine priority segments, including six routes in the County's jurisdiction, as follows:

- 1) a 2.1 mile segment along the South Fork of the Catawba River from Blackburn Bridge Road south to the Lincoln County line
- 2) a 2.5 mile segment from Claremont City Hall to the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge
- 3) a 2.6 mile segment from the Bunker Hill Covered Bridge to the Town of Catawba
- 4) a 2.6 mile segment from Murray's Mill to the Town of Catawba
- 5) an undetermined length within the future Mountain Creek Park on Lake Norman
- 6) a 4.1 mile segment from Sherrills Ford Road along Island Point Road to Raccoon Track Drive north to a Duke Energy power easement

In Phase Three of the action strategy for the Plan, the Advisory Committee would assist in locating funding sources and endorsing grant applications, as it is expected that it will be necessary to apply for additional grants to use as leverage for funding from Federal, State or private funding sources. During Phase Four, the Advisory Committee will work with landowners and local governments to acquire right-of-way or fee simple land for developing the Thread Trail. This may include donations (either through development or gifts), purchase or zoning/development regulations. Finally, in Phase Five, the Advisory Committee would assist in developing a long-term maintenance and safety plan for the Thread Trail network, working with the resources of each jurisdiction.

The adoption of the Thread Trail Plan will allow the County to apply for future design, acquisition and construction grants from the Thread Trail organization. The adoption of the Plan does not commit any financial resources to be used to implement the Plan. The Plan will be implemented based upon availability of grant funding and capital funding in the County's budget over time. The Thread Trail Plan has been submitted to each governing board in the county (with the exception of the Town of Brookford, which has not participated in the process). Each City Council has adopted the Plan as it pertains to its jurisdiction. Minor amendments have been made in some jurisdictions, such as relocating the primary CTT route along the Heritage Greenway in the City of Newton.

The Thread Trail Steering Committee, at its September 10, 2010 meeting, recommended approval of the Thread Trail Master Plan which includes a Thread Trail Route map for Catawba County with minor amendments made around the Murray's Mill pond and Hudson Chapel Road. The Catawba County Parks Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Master Plan, and accompanying map as submitted, at its December 1, 2010 meeting. The Catawba County Planning Board conducted a public hearing on the Thread Trail Plan and map at its December 6, 2010 meeting. No one was present to speak regarding the matter. The Planning Board was very supportive of the trail plan and commented that this area of the country is behind in trail development compared to the western U.S. and Europe. The Board acknowledged, however, that funding for trail development may not be a priority in upcoming budgets due to the economic downturn. The Planning Board unanimously recommended the Thread Trail Plan and accompanying map for adoption by the Board of Commissioners through approval of a resolution.

Since this item of business had been advertised as a public hearing, Chair Barnes opened the floor for public comments and none were made and she closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Hunsucker asked what the construction costs would be and Mary George indicated that the total cost was undetermined at this time and it would take many years to build and all grant opportunities would be researched and sought. Commissioner Hunsucker said he would not want numerous unfinished segments throughout the County with no connectivity. Commissioner Isenhower inquired on who would be responsible for maintenance and Mary George indicated that again the complete trail would take years to come together but volunteers and grants funds would be sought for trail maintenance. Commissioner Beatty praised Mary George for her efforts in this project and made a motion to adopt the required resolution. The motion carried unanimously. The following resolution applies:

RESOLUTION #2010 -

**ADOPTION OF THE
CAROLINA THREAD TRAIL MASTER PLAN FOR
CATAWBA COUNTY COMMUNITIES**

WHEREAS, the Carolina Thread Trail's mission is to bring resources to the 15-county region in the south-central piedmont of North Carolina and the north-central portion of South Carolina in order to create an interconnected trail system with major regional trails designated as the Carolina Thread Trail, and

WHEREAS, many communities in our region have taken a lead in planning and/or building local trails and greenways, and those efforts can be greatly enhanced by being connected to a larger regional network of trails; and

WHEREAS, this Master Plan outlines a means for long-term coordination of greenway and trail development within the county, cities and towns in Catawba County to help promote the preservation and improvement of residents' quality of life; and

WHEREAS, it presents a first-ever plan to integrate all existing and proposed municipal and county trails with additional greenway/trail segments that will together create a comprehensive multi-use network for connecting people, places and destinations to each other and surrounding counties; and

WHEREAS, it is well understood that building a trail system of this scale is a long-term undertaking, and segments will emerge over time and grow together, and adjustments will be made to the proposed routes as circumstances change and more information becomes available; and

WHEREAS, adoption of this Master Plan means that it will serve as a guideline for developing future proposed connections and does not imply a commitment of funding by local governments for implementing the trails described therein.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Catawba County Board of Commissioners that Catawba County hereby adopts the Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan for Catawba County Communities; an outline for a system of trails that will connect our communities, people and special regional points of interest for years to come.

Adopted this the 20th day of December, 2010.

10. Other Items of Business: None.
11. Attorney's Report: None.
12. Manager's Report.
County Manager Lundy requested the Board consider moving into closed session pursuant to General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6), to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee. No action was anticipated upon return to open session. Commissioner Hunsucker made a motion to move into closed session at 4:50 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.
13. The Board returned to open session at 5:15 p.m. Commissioner Beatty made a motion to adjourn at 5:15 p.m.; the motion carried unanimously.

Katherine W. Barnes, Chair
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Barbara E. Morris
County Clerk