

**FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 13, 2009 AT 8:00 A.M.**

**LOUISBURG POLICE TRAINING CENTER**

**AGENDA**

- I. Welcome – Vice Chairman Bobbie Jo May
- II. Review/Approval of Minutes from June 11, 2009 Meeting – Vice Chairman Bobbie Jo May
- III. Legislative Update – Representative Lucy Allen/Senator Doug Berger
- IV. Consider Adoption of 2010 Census Resolution – Christine Mackey-U.S. Census Bureau
- V. Overview of 2009-2010 County Budget – Angela Harris
- VI. Update on 401 Citizens Action Committee – Gary Cunard
- VII. Economic Development and Existing Industries Update – Ronnie Goswick/Richie Duncan
- VIII. Southeast High Speed Rail Resolution – Ronnie Goswick
- IX. Other Business – Vice Chairman Bobbie Jo May
- X. Adjourn – Vice Chairman Bobbie Jo May

# FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, August 13, 2009

## Minutes

The Franklin County Economic Development Commission was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Vice Chairman Bobbie Jo May on August 13, 2009 at the Louisburg Police Training Center.

In attendance were Commissioners: Bobbie Jo May, Larry Woodlief, Scott Hammerbacher (Director-Planning & Inspections), Angela Harris (County Manager), Elic Senter (Mayor of Franklinton), Rob Southerland (Airport Manager), Leelan Woodlief, Don Lancaster (County Commissioner), and Brenda Robbins (Administrator, Town of Youngsville). Also, in attendance were Ronnie Goswick (Economic Development Director), Richie Duncan (Existing Industry Coordinator), Lori Duke (Admin. Support Specialist), Rick Seekins (Kerr-Tar COG), Mike Brown (Employment Security Commission), Gary Cunard (The Franklin Times), Gary Faulkner (401 Citizens Action Committee), Christine Mackey (Partnership Specialist-U.S. Census) and Doreen Kluger (U.S. Census). Absent from the meeting were Commissioners: Mark McArn, Matthew Winslow, Joyce Cooke, Mike Leonard, Cedric Jones (N.C. Cooperative Extension), Lauren Jones (Chairman-Chamber of Commerce), Bryce Mendenhall (Public Utilities Director), Marsha Strawbridge (Mayor of Bunn), Mayor Karl Pernell (Mayor of Louisburg), Lucy Allen (NC Representative), Doug Berger (NC Senator), and Margaret Nelms (Mayor of Centerville).

The second item on the agenda was the review and approval of the minutes from the June 11, 2009 meeting. Commissioner Leelan Woodlief made the motion to approve the minutes, with Commissioner Senter seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

The third item on the agenda was the Legislative update given by Representative Lucy Allen. Representative Allen was unable to attend the meeting. Ronnie Goswick informed the group that Representative Allen called to inform the Commission that she regrets not being able to attend.

The fourth item on the agenda was consideration of adopting "2010 Census Resolution". Richie Duncan said Christine Mackey, who is leading the census collection in Franklin County, is here to give a presentation, and at the end of the presentation she asks that the EDC board make a motion that we present this resolution to the County Commissioners for adoption. Christine Mackey said the 2010 census is fast approaching. North Carolina continues to be one of the fastest growing states in the country, and has four (4) cities in the top 25 – Raleigh, Durham, Cary and Charlotte. Ms. Mackey says she works with communities, organizations

and anyone who wants to promote the census. The long form is no longer used, and there is now a new, shorter form with only 10 questions on it, which should only take 10 minutes to fill out. The form is available in six (6) different languages, and there will also be questionnaire assistance sites opened. The census questionnaire is safe and confidential. All answers are protected by law, and violators are subject to a \$250,000 fine or five (5) years in prison or both. The forms will be mailed out in March 2010, with "Census Day" being April 1, 2010. The counts are to be delivered to the President by December 31, 2010, and the data will be made available approximately in the spring of 2011. Ms. Mackey said they are working hard to establish "complete count committees" in communities, so they can get the most organized data they can. Commissioner Senter made a motion that the EDC support the efforts of the 2010 U.S. Census, and asks that they present this information to the County Commissioners for adoption of the 2010 U.S. Census resolution. Commissioner Leelan Woodlief seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The fifth item on the agenda was an overview of the 2009-2010 budget given by Angela Harris. Mrs. Harris said first, she would like to touch on a few things from the 2008-2009 budget. We really emphasized to department heads the need to curtail travel, and if it was necessary, we would support it. During that budget season, we worked hard to cut back on expenditures. We talked about expected growth and the impact of this growth on infrastructure, and we talked about the green economy. Our tax department has done an excellent job working with tax payers on payment plans, and we made the budget. This week, we had conference calls with "Fitch Ratings" and with "Standards & Poors" in order to maintain our bond rating. As we went into the 2009-2010 budget, we knew one major question we had to answer was how we were going to cover construction of the new Franklinton High School, and renovations to other schools in the county, as well. The bulk of our debt is in public utilities and education, and in looking to the future, it was very important that we maintained a healthy fund balance. Mrs. Harris said she was given the goal to avoid a tax increase, but it became apparent that we had to have a tax increase in order to maintain our bond rating – especially since we were moving forward with the new high school and other renovations.

Mrs. Harris said the County Commissioners followed the state's budget as much as we did our own budget, and we were in constant discussions with Representative Allen and Senator Berger throughout the budget process. They knew that certain things would have an impact on us, such as the ADM (Average Daily Membership, a formula that uses school enrollment to determine funding levels) fund, which will affect us in the 2010-2011 budget. We also made the decision to postpone our tax revaluation for another year, as well.

Mrs. Harris said we are planning to re-bid our communications project, so we will have better paging and coverage throughout the county. We are planning the jail and detention center expansion, and the Commissioners have decided to look at a scale-downed model – one that will be more affordable.

The sixth item on the agenda was an update on the "401 Citizens Action Committee" given by

Gary Cunard. Mr. Cunard said there has been some discussion about how the committee is going after TIGER funds exclusively, and one of the reasons for this is that it forces us to do what should have been done several years ago. The application process forces us to pull all the information together into one document, and when we have that application in hand, we will have the cost data, the safety data, etc. We have been in contact with Senator Hagan's and Senator Burr's office, and someone from Senator Hagan's office has been assigned to help walk us through this application process. Mr. Cunard said it is a long shot, but he thinks we'd be foolish not to put in the application, and it's a once in a lifetime process. The key is to remember that once this data is put together, we can go back to Senators Hagan and Burr to ask for transportation legislation funding, which he believes is due in October. This process is very complicated, and we've hired Rick Seekins (Kerr-Tar COG) to help us with the application, which is due September 15<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Cunard said one thing we need are letters of support from organizations and citizens, and we will be sending out samples of a resolution and a letter of support for your boards, etc. Mr. Cunard said we do have to have a government entity as the applicant, and he's asking the EDC board to authorize them to go before the County Commissioners to ask that Franklin County to be the applicant. Also, he would ask that the EDC board consider passing a resolution of support.

Gary Faulkner said this is an excellent opportunity to get this project funded. He knows there are many issues about the 401 committee going after the TIGER funds because the Governor has already given her support to the Yadkin River project, but we are determined to get this application done, and the County has to move forward with this process.

Rick Seekins said we have 6-7 weeks to put together this application, and the action you take today is not just for the 401 committee, but it's for a whole coalition of groups. You will never see a chance to get this much money at one time.

Commissioner Senter made the motion that the EDC board, on behalf of the "401 Citizens Action Committee", make a request to the Board of County Commissioners that Franklin County be the government applicant for the TIGER application, and that the EDC board send a letter of support for the 401 project. Commissioner Robbins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The request will be made at the County Commissioner's August 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The seventh item on the agenda was the economic development and existing industries update given by Ronnie Goswick and Richie Duncan. Mr. Goswick said the number of companies looking at the county has increased a little in the last three (3) months, and there has been quite a bit of interest in the Triangle North Franklin site also. It will cost approximately \$1.6 million to construct the road for access from Triangle North Franklin to US 401, and we have approximately \$900,000 of the \$1.6 million already. Mr. Goswick said we are looking to create 75 jobs there, so we can get grants to put in the sewer that is needed in order to attract companies.

Richie Duncan said we participated with the Employment Security Commission, workforce development and the Governor's Rapid Response team, to meet with the employees at Hon and provide information, names and phone numbers of people they could call if they had questions. Also, they will be learning basic keyboard and computer skills, and how to complete a résumé. Mike Brown said many years ago, companies would just lock the doors when they were closing, but now we can now come out and talk to the employees to let them know what is available to them, and the Rapid Response Team is great too. Ms. Duncan said that she noticed that the Dollar Tree has its sign up at the new shopping center where the Super Walmart Center is at, and there will also be a Raffles Salon, RUE 21, an Oriental restaurant, as well as many others. In speaking with Miles Freedman, who is the President of GFD Management, he said he is here for the long haul and wants to become very involved in the community. He said the first thing he did was to send his architects into Louisburg to look at the buildings, etc. and told them he wanted them to model the Louisburg Plaza buildings similar to the architecture in Louisburg. Ms. Duncan said the front of the buildings in the plaza are similar to the façade of Louisburg College. Ms. Duncan said she hopes that we can have Mr. Freedman speak at a future meeting.

The eighth item on the agenda was discussion of a resolution for southeast high speed rail given by Ronnie Goswick. Mr. Goswick said all the county economic development directors have been forwarded a resolution, and asked to discuss possible adoption of the resolution with their respective boards. Mr. Goswick said he feels high speed rail is a future need for North Carolina, as well as for its counties. Commissioner Senter said he had a problem with supporting something that's going to kill the businesses in downtown Franklinton. Commissioner Lancaster commented that the high speed rail will also go through an industrial park, which he definitely doesn't agree with. Mr. Goswick said he knows this will affect some communities, but it will be much safer, and as it is with any kind of progress or change, we seem to adapt to it over time. Mr. Goswick said this is a long-range (10-15 years) plan, and said he would get more information and come back to discuss further at a future meeting.

The ninth item on the agenda was other business. There was no other business to report.

With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.