

FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, October 9, 2008 at 8:00 a.m.

Conference Room – Novozymes, Franklinton, NC

AGENDA

- I. Welcome – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- II. Review/Approval of Minutes from September 11, 2008 Meeting – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- III. Legislative Update – Senator Doug Berger/Representative Lucy Allen
- IV. Update on Water/Sewer Expansion Projects – Bryce Mendenhall
- V. Update on 401 Steering Committee – Gary Cunard
- VI. Economic Development and Existing Industries Update – Ronnie Goswick, Richie Duncan
- VII. Company Visit Update – Mark McArn
- VIII. Update on Commercial Brokers – Mark McArn
- IX. Other Business – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- X. Adjourn – Chairman Shane Mitchell

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Thursday, October 9, 2008

Minutes

The Franklin County Economic Development Commission was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chairman Shane Mitchell on October 9, 2008 in the training room at Novozymes North America in Franklinton.

In attendance were Chairman Shane Mitchell, Commissioners: Bryce Mendenhall (Public Utilities Director), Joyce Cooke, Elic Senter (Mayor of Franklinton), Scott Hammerbacher (Interim Director-Planning & Inspections), Mark McArn, Angela Harris (County Manager), Lucy Allen (NC Representative), 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), Chuck Stires (Candidate-NC Senate), Gary Cunard (The Franklin Times), Mack Cooper (Concerned Citizen) and Jack Blackmer (Novozymes-Mgr. Environmental Services). Absent from the meeting were Commissioners: Lyn Buffaloe (County Commissioner), Don Lancaster (County Commissioner), Leelan Woodlief, Mike Leonard, John Barnes (Franklin County Chamber, Chairman), Bobbie Jo May, Mayor Karl Pernell (Mayor of Louisburg), Marsha Strawbridge (Mayor of Bunn), Doug Berger (NC Senator), and Margaret Nelms (Mayor of Centerville).

Chairman Mitchell thanked Novozymes for allowing us to have our meeting here, and recognized Jack Blackmer with Novozymes. Mr. Blackmer said that it was announced yesterday that Novozymes had been awarded a \$12.3 million contract from the Department of Energy to improve the efficiency of enzymes used to convert corn to ethanol. This is a 2 ½ year contract, and Novozymes will aim to double the efficiency of the enzymes used to convert corn to ethanol.

The second item on the agenda was the review and approval of the minutes from the September 11, 2008 meeting. Commissioner Senter made the motion to approve the minutes, with Commissioner Robbins seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

The third item on the agenda was the Legislative update given by Representative Lucy Allen. Representative Allen said that Governor Easley has ordered a 2% cut of all state departments, and revenues are coming in slower than expected. The good news is we have budgeted extremely conservatively, so the effect is not as devastating. Compared to a lot of other states, we are in better shape because we have balanced our budget and we have built up our revenues.

Representative Allen said that you may have seen on TV or in the newspaper that there is an interim committee that is looking at whether or not Legislative meetings should be fully televised. The approximate cost would be \$2 million. Representative Allen said she expects to see this happen by the time the House is back in session on January 28, 2009.

Commissioner Senter said that the Town of Franklinton has received a \$205,000 grant from the Rural Center, which will be used for sewer work from Pocomoke Road to US 1. With this grant, the Town of Franklinton has been able to procure a Hardees restaurant, which Commissioner Senter said they are very excited about.

The fourth item on the agenda was an update on water/sewer expansion projects given by Commissioner Mendenhall. Commissioner Mendenhall said that with the help of Franklin County and the Town of Franklinton, the force main redirection has been completed, which now runs down Lane Store Road, instead of through Franklinton. We have submitted plans for approval for the east Youngsville sewer expansion in conjunction with the Town of Youngsville, Franklin County and Hill Ridge Farms. This will allow for a restaurant to be built at Hill Ridge Farms. We are looking into putting a water tank outside of the Town of Youngsville between Cedar Creek Road and Mays Crossroads Road. Commissioner Mendenhall said that phase I of installation of piping to the Hunter Place pump station should be completed soon, and then they will begin on phase II, which will open up the corridor along Richland's Creek, and will provide additional capacity to the Youngsville Commerce Center. Commissioner Mendenhall said in reference to the Ray's Creek project, there is one property right-of-way that needs to be addressed. Once this is cleared up, we will be ready to move forward.

The fifth item on the agenda was an update on the 401 Steering Committee by Gary Cunard. Chairman Mitchell said that Mr. Cunard had given him a letter with a list of 24 people who have agreed to serve on the committee. Mr. Cunard said that he has spent a lot of time talking to people and the response has been very positive. He believes that once this committee begins to meet and starts asking questions, it will have a positive effect. We have real estate agents, developers, attorneys, local business people, etc. – a fairly diverse group on this committee. There is also someone who doesn't actually live in the county, but drives to the county each day, so he has a vested interest also. Mr. Cunard said he is very excited about this committee, and would like to be an ex-officio on the committee. Chairman Mitchell said that we need to decide on a name for this committee, i.e. "401 Citizens Action Committee". We definitely need to move forward on this because there is a great interest in it. The Board agreed. Chairman Mitchell read the names of the committee members: Russ Vollmer, Larry Woodlief, Ryan Raynor, Pier Williamson, Mark Rowe, Mack Mahoney, Jimmy Murphy, Joe DeSantis, Tex Finch, Jack Simmons, Kathy Hanham, Marie Boyette, Allen DeHart, Eddie Watson, Gary Faulkner, Thomas Clifton, Doug Moore, Michael Blake, Fred Johnson, Ed Armstrong, Howard Jones, Darrell Smith, Marbeth Holmes, and Rod Foth. Chairman Mitchell said that Gary Cunard would be on the committee as well. The next course of action is to get with these people in order to set a date to meet. Chairman Mitchell said he would be glad to work with

Mr. Cunard on this.

The sixth item on the agenda was the economic development update given by Ronnie Goswick, and the existing industries update given by Richie Duncan. Mr. Goswick said that our office has had fewer inquiries this past month, but during this time, we are taking advantage of this by getting our buildings and sites in good shape, and obtaining new information on them. Also, Mr. Goswick said he would be attending the “Southeast U.S. Japan Conference” from October 18-21, 2008, which is being held at the Raleigh Convention Center. Two years ago, Mr. Goswick and Debbie Lilly (RTRP) attended this conference in Florida, and the Japanese are very interested in North Carolina. Mr. Goswick said we have a new Airport Manager, Rob Southerland, and he has made quite a few improvements at the airport. Mr. Goswick said we continue to work on Triangle North Franklin. This has turned out to be quite a learning process and involves more than we ever anticipated. We are currently working on phase 2 of the road process, and we are also doing the sewer permitting for that project in order to finish the certification for that site.

Richie Duncan said that all of the industry expansions have exceeded the number of jobs that were committed to, and the industries have been very cooperative. Ms. Duncan said that Arch Aluminum & Glass has moved into their new building located on Northbrook Drive, and encouraged anyone who would like to visit the facility to please let her know. Ms. Duncan said the annual industrial appreciation golf tournament was held yesterday at Olde Liberty Golf & Country Club, with 25 teams participating. Ms. Duncan said that there is a full page article, along with the economic development ad, in the current issue of “Park Newcomers Guide” magazine. The new Franklin County maps are at the Greater Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. Youngsville Area Business Association (YABA) has printed their new directory. Also, we have an article in the latest issue of “Carolina Business Journal”, which talks about economic development in the County, as well as the County government aspect. Ms. Duncan said that she and Mr. Goswick recently attended the N.C. Rural Center’s “2008 Rural Partners Forum”, which was filled with ideas for innovation. Emphasis was placed on the e-NC program, which is an initiative to link all North Carolinians – especially those in rural areas – to the Internet. Unfortunately, funding is only available for Tier 1 counties, and Franklin is a Tier 3 county. Additionally, there is an equine study being conducted. Ms. Duncan said she has given this information to Cedric Jones with Cooperative Extension, so he can coordinate this with our local horse farms. We don’t know the actual economic impact this has on the County, and how we can help these folks to grow, but we will be working with Mr. Jones on this. Ms. Duncan said that there were several seminars presented at the forum, and there is something in every seminar that applies to Franklin County. Ms. Duncan said that she and Mr. Goswick are going to take a look at each of these to see which ones have an impact on the County. Also, Ms. Duncan mentioned that the newly formed “Ben Franklin Society” held its initial meeting on September 25, 2008, and will have another meeting soon. This group was formed to try and put together a database of the assets of Franklin County.

The seventh item on the agenda was the company visit update given by Commissioner McArn.

Commissioner McArn visited with Mike Rowe of Rowe's Men's Shop in Louisburg. Rowe's is a 7,500 sq. ft. building, with 5 employees. They serve a 50-mile area, and have been in business since 1952. Mr. Rowe said that he thinks the growth in the County is great, but the new Super Walmart is going to hurt his business. He said that many people come into Rowe's asking for donations for a particular group or organization, but he wishes that all these people supported his business as well. He said if there is some way that the EDC could encourage citizens to support local businesses, this would be great. Commissioner Mendenhall commented that his department had always purchased their safety boots from Red Wing, which is in Wake County. This year, we were able to work with Rowe's on getting our employees safety boots, and we will continue to work with Rowe's.

Commissioner McArn said that one of the things that becomes more and more popular to someone who is considering locating to the County are traffic counts. There are normally two (2) sources that are used for traffic counts – private sources and the NCDOT. Most private sources are afraid that if they give out this information, then another competitor will come in. The counts from the NCDOT are dated, i.e. they have 2008 information currently, but they won't publish these figures until 2009. Commissioner McArn said he wanted to investigate what it would cost for us to obtain an average daily traffic count, and he'd like the permission of the EDC to do so. Chairman Mitchell told Commissioner McArn to go ahead and move forward with checking on the price for this. Commissioner Hammerbacher said you may also want to contact Kerr-Tar COG because they have done traffic counts for a few of their projects.

Chairman Mitchell noted that Lars Hansen, President of Novozymes, had come into the meeting, and asked Mr. Hansen to say a few words. Mr. Hansen said this is an exciting time for Novozymes, with the open house for our \$26 million expansion held this past Tuesday, and then the announcement yesterday that we received a \$12.3 million contract from the Department of Energy to continue our research into alternative fuels. Mr. Hansen said that Novozymes enjoys their close relationship with the County, and they would be happy to host any future meetings.

The eighth item on the agenda was an update on commercial brokers by Commissioner McArn. This agenda item will be discussed at next month's meeting.

In other business:

- The next meeting will be held on November 13, 2008 at 8:00 a.m. Location TBD.
- Ronnie Goswick said that the Triangle "Reality Check" is scheduled for February 24, 2009 at the Raleigh Convention Center, and will be a half-day visioning exercise for a diverse group of 300 political, business, environmental and civic leaders. Anyone interested in being a part of this, please go to www.reality-check.near-time.net and submit an application.

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