

# FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, January 8, 2009 at 8:00 a.m.

## Franklinton Town Hall

### AGENDA

- I. Welcome – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- II. Review/Approval of Minutes from December 11, 2008 Meeting – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- III. Legislative Update – Representative Lucy Allen/Senator Doug Berger
- IV. Update on 401 Steering Committee – Gary Cunard
  - Adopt Formal Name for Committee/Representative from EDC
- V. Triangle North Executive Airport Update – Rob Southerland
- VI. Economic Development and Existing Industries Update – Ronnie Goswick, Richie Duncan
- VII. Company Visit Update – Mark McArn
- VIII. Update on Commercial Brokers Reception – Richie Duncan
- IX. Employment Security Commission Update – Mike Brown
- X. Update on Franklinton Town Hall – Town of Franklinton Representative
- XI. Other Business – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- XII. Adjourn – Chairman Shane Mitchell

# FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, January 8, 2009

## Minutes

The Franklin County Economic Development Commission was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chairman Shane Mitchell on January 8, 2009 at the Franklinton Town Hall.

In attendance were Chairman Shane Mitchell, Commissioners: Joyce Cooke, Larry Carver (Town Administrator-Franklinton), Matthew Winslow, Leelan Woodlief, Mark McArn, Lucy Allen (NC Representative), Rob Southerland (Airport Manager), Cedric Jones (N.C. Cooperative Extension), 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), Bruce Allen (Triangle North Executive Airport), Mike Brown (Employment Security Commission), Tammy Ray (Town of Franklinton), and Gary Cunard (The Franklin Times). Absent from the meeting were Commissioners: Bryce Mendenhall (Public Utilities Director), Angela Harris (County Manager), Scott Hammerbacher (Director-Planning & Inspections), Larry Woodlief, Bobbie Jo May, Elic Senter (Mayor of Franklinton), Mike Leonard, John Barnes (Franklin County Chamber, Chairman), Mayor Karl Pernell (Mayor of Louisburg), Marsha Strawbridge (Mayor of Bunn), Doug Berger (NC Senator), and Margaret Nelms (Mayor of Centerville).

Chairman Mitchell asked Larry Carver to give an update on the new town hall in Franklinton, which is nearing completion. Mr. Carver said we are proud of the new town hall annex because we needed more meeting space, and we will be able to accommodate more people. Mr. Carver said that the town purchased the property about a year ago for \$100,000, and that it was previously occupied by Franklin County Public Utilities. Also, once completed, the annex will have wireless internet and a projector.

Chairman Mitchell said he would like to welcome Matthew Winslow to the EDC board. Mr. Winslow was appointed by Commissioner Lancaster at the January 5<sup>th</sup> County Commissioner's meeting. Also, at our last meeting, we approved to add to our by-laws that we have an ex-officio from N.C. Cooperative Extension and Triangle North Executive Airport, and welcomed Cedric Jones and Rob Southerland.

The second item on the agenda was the review and approval of the minutes from the December 11, 2008 meeting. Commissioner Mark McArn made the motion to approve the minutes, with Commissioner Leelan Woodlief seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

The third item on the agenda was the Legislative update given by Representative Lucy Allen. Representative Allen said that the General Assembly will be going back into formal session on January 28<sup>th</sup>, and as always, if anyone has any concerns they would like to discuss, please don't hesitate to contact her. Commissioner Lancaster said we would like to meet with Representative Allen to show her our shovel-ready projects, and she would be hearing from the County Manager to schedule a meeting to discuss the economic stimulus package. Representative Allen said she wanted to remind everyone that our new Governor-elect would be inaugurated this Saturday morning. Chairman Mitchell said he had received an email about an upcoming forum at VGCC, and asked Representative Allen for more details. Representative Allen said that she, Michael Wray and Senator Doug Berger will hold a forum on the "The Current Revenue Outlook and Status of N.C.'s Budget" in the Civic Center at VGCC in Henderson on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. This forum begins at 10:00 a.m. and will end around 2:30 p.m. All citizens, civic leaders and public officials are invited to attend.

The fourth item on the agenda was an update on the 401 Steering Committee. Chairman Mitchell said we needed to adopt a formal name for this committee, and at our October meeting, the name "401 Citizens Action Committee" was suggested. Commissioner Brenda Robbins made the motion to adopt the name "401 Citizens Action Committee", with Commissioner Leelan Woodlief seconding. The motion passed unanimously. Gary Cunard said that the first meeting of this committee is tonight at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Trustees meeting room at Louisburg College. This is the kick-off meeting, and the response has been really great. Chairman Mitchell said that he and Mr. Cunard have talked about this committee, and how it was formed by the EDC. Therefore, it is a direct function of the EDC, and we need a reporting mechanism back to us. Chairman Mitchell said he feels that the Vice-Chairman of the EDC should be the standing appointment as Co-Chairman for this committee. Representative Lucy Allen made the motion that the Vice-Chairman of the EDC be appointed as Vice-Chairman or Co-Chairman of the committee, with Commissioner Leelan Woodlief seconding. Chairman Mitchell said we really need to confirm whether Commissioner McArn will serve as Vice-Chairman or Co-Chairman of the committee. Representative Allen amended her motion to say that the Vice-Chairman of the EDC will serve as Co-Chairman of the 401 Citizens Action Committee, with Commissioner Leelan Woodlief seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

The fifth item on the agenda was an update on Triangle North Executive Airport given by Rob Southerland, Airport Manager. Mr. Southerland said that because of the time of the year, fuel sales are down. 100LL sales are down about 8% compared to this time last year, and Jet A is down about 38%. Some of this is attributed to economics because companies are cutting back on aviation. Mr. Southerland said accounts receivable is \$19,000, which is fairly normal. We are looking to be under budget for one reason and one reason only – fuel prices have plunged, which is a good thing for us. Mr. Southerland said the skydivers are still on track to start jumping in April, and we are working on a contract for the skydiving operations. Mr. Southerland said some of the pilots still have some concerns about this, and we are working with them to make sure these are addressed and taken care of. Mr. Southerland said the airport's

new website should be finished within two (2) weeks. We have eight (8) t-hangars available right now. We had a waiting list for a while, but that has dwindled down. However, we have no corporate space and we really need more. Mr. Southerland said he had to turn down two (2) corporate jets because there was no corporate space available. Mr. Southerland said that in December, employee Chris Sanderson resigned, and he has hired Bruce Allen part-time at the airport. The fuel farm is scheduled to be in operation in April, which will make more money for us because it will be self-service fuel. Also, a community day is tentatively planned on May 9-10, and we have two (2) youth visits planned for the farm.

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 we have submitted the Triangle North Franklin information for a very large project, and although the client is looking at Granville County also, we feel we have more to offer. There has been interest in the Louisburg Industrial Park also, and we have submitted this site to the State for it to be certified.

Richie Duncan said there are two existing industries that are looking to expand, and our focus right now is to stay in close touch with all our industries to keep things active and growing. Ms. Duncan said that the Chamber of Commerce is having their annual banquet on January 16<sup>th</sup> at the Hudson Manor. Ms. Duncan said that she and Commissioner Brenda Robbins recently met with Gerald Ashley of Arch Aluminum & Glass. During the visit, Arch was asked what they were doing related to solar energy. Although the Arch division that is in Youngsville is not doing anything yet related to solar energy, one of the other Arch divisions has developed a patent for a solar panel that they own and will be putting into the market place. Ms. Duncan gave some information from the VGCC 2007-2008 President's Report, which said that in 2007-2008, VGCC offered over 4,256 classes in 148 locations to a total of 20,744 students. In 2007-2008, VGCC had 478 graduates in its curriculum programs. Also during this time period, VGCC awarded 601 students Adult High School and GED diplomas, making the VGCC program the third largest in the state. Ms. Duncan said that the "6<sup>th</sup> Annual Franklin County Farm, Foods & Crafts Festival" will be held the weekend of May 16-17 from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Ms. Duncan said that one of the 2009 research projects, which the Ben Franklin Society had accepted, is a student photography lab. Ms. Duncan had been asked if we knew if any of the high schools may want to work with them on a possible photography lab. Ms. Duncan said that for the first time ever, the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) will hold a meeting in Raleigh. This meeting is on January 28<sup>th</sup>, and she can bring one guest. Commissioner McArn said he would like to attend.

The seventh item on the agenda was the company visit update given by Commissioner McArn. Commissioner McArn visited "All About Boats", which is located at 425 Bert Winston Road, Youngsville. The business is in a 5,000 sq. ft. building, and they have three (3) employees. They service and store boats, and they are very busy. As a matter of fact, the owner, Chuck Richter, said he is about two (2) weeks behind right now in completing repairs for boats. Mr. Richter did say that he wanted to put up an off-site sign, and he did receive the okay for this from the Town of Youngsville. However, he then had trouble with the NCDOT because they

had a problem with the sign going up in an area that was zoned residential. Mr. Richter says he feels there needs to be better communication between the different governing bodies.

The eighth item on the agenda was an update on the commercial brokers' reception given by Richie Duncan. Ms. Duncan said that York Properties held a breakfast reception at Sirchie Fingerprint Laboratories on December 18, 2008. We did have a small crowd, but we toured Sirchie and were able to promote Triangle North Franklin and Triangle North Executive Airport also.

The ninth agenda item was an update on Employment Security Commission given by Mike Brown. Mr. Brown said that the County unemployment rates were released this week, and unfortunately, Franklin County's rate increased to 7.4%. The lowest rate is Orange County, which is 4.7%, with Edgecombe being the highest at 13.3%. Mr. Brown says he anticipates that Franklin County's rate for December will be 8%. The new State rate will be released January 23, 2009.

Item ten on the agenda was previously covered earlier in the meeting.

In other business:

- Chairman Mitchell asked what the status was on Hardees in Franklinton. Larry Carver said that this project is  $\frac{3}{4}$  funded, and we are still seeking grant money. Richie Duncan said she would be happy to discuss with the town the possibility of getting an RBEG grant for this project.
- Ronnie Goswick said that "tax increment financing" bonds (TIF) is another special type of financing to be used for economic development projects. Tax increment financing can be used for a wide variety of public projects, including street improvements, water and sewer utilities, transportation systems, parking facilities, neighborhood revitalization projects, and many other purposes. The only limitation is that the proceeds must be used for projects that enable, facilitate, or benefit private development within the special district. Mr. Goswick said it has not been used very much by municipalities in the State, but it is another type of financing that is out there.
- Ronnie Goswick said that Bud Cohoon had been named Executive Director of Triangle North. Mr. Cohoon previously served as Economic Development Director for N.C. Electric Membership Corporation. Prior to his employment with NCEMC, he served as the Senior Economic Development Representative with the N.C. Dept. of Commerce.
- The next meeting is February 12<sup>th</sup>.

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