

FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, February 12, 2009 at 8:00 a.m.

Louisburg Police Training Center

AGENDA

- I. Welcome – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- II. Review/Approval of Minutes from January 8, 2009 Meeting – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- III. Legislative Update – Representative Lucy Allen/Senator Doug Berger
- IV. Update on 401 Steering Committee – Gary Cunard
- V. Cooperative Extension Update – Cedric Jones
- VI. Economic Development and Existing Industries Update – Richie Duncan
- VII. Company Visit Update – Mark McArn
- VIII. Other Business – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- IX. Adjourn – Chairman Shane Mitchell

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Minutes

The Franklin County Economic Development Commission was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chairman Shane Mitchell on February 12, 2009 at the Louisburg Police Training Center.

In attendance were Chairman Shane Mitchell, Commissioners: Joyce Cooke, Matthew Winslow, Scott Hammerbacher (Director-Planning & Inspections), Angela Harris (County Manager), Larry Woodlief, Bobbie Jo May, Elic Senter (Mayor of Franklinton), Mayor Karl Pernel (Mayor of Louisburg), Mark Warren (Town Administrator-Louisburg), Mike Leonard, Leelan Woodlief, Mark McArn, Lucy Allen (NC Representative), Cedric Jones (N.C. Cooperative Extension), Brenda Robbins (Administrator, Town of Youngsville). Also, in attendance were Richie Duncan (Existing Industry Coordinator), Lori Duke (Admin. Support Specialist), Tanya Evans (Progress Energy-Mgr., Community Relations), Tony Efirm (TnC Radio), Mike Brown (Employment Security Commission), and Gary Cunard (The Franklin Times). Absent from the meeting were Commissioners: Bryce Mendenhall (Public Utilities Director), Rob Southerland (Airport Manager), Marsha Strawbridge (Mayor of Bunn), 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 January 8, 2009 meeting. Commissioner Elic Senter made the motion to approve the minutes, with Commissioner Brenda Robbins seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Mitchell said he would like to welcome Tanya Evans to this meeting and all future meetings. Mrs. Evans is Manager of Community Relations with Progress Energy.

The third item on the agenda was the Legislative update given by Representative Lucy Allen. Representative Allen said she was excited about the Emerging Issues Forum, which was held this past Monday and Tuesday. Some of those who attended were Richie Duncan, Angela Harris, Billy Ray Hall (Rural Center), Gene Conti (Secretary of Transportation) and Dan Gerlach (President of Golden LEAF). Representative Allen said there were grants being requested for the Scoggins and IGA buildings and water and sewer grants also. Representative Allen said they received their committee assignments yesterday, and she will chair the Environmental committee again, as well as serve on the Commerce and Transportation committees. Representative Allen said that there will be a cut back in benefits for State employees, as well as some additional premiums, but retirement should be okay. We will try to keep increases in premiums as low as possible because we do understand the cost of health

insurance can be high. Representative Allen said that N.C. was making sure that we don't have to close any of our universities, but we do have a hiring freeze. As always, she is available to speak to anyone about their priorities and concerns.

The fourth item on the agenda was an update on the 401 Citizens Action Committee given by Gary Cunard. Mr. Cunard said we kicked off this committee the first week in January, and they are having their 4th meeting tonight. These meetings have been very exciting, with the most exciting meeting being when we had five (5) representatives from the NCDOT in attendance. At this particular meeting, we learned what kind of formula the DOT uses to construct highways, and we were amazed that there are any paved roads in N.C. at all. Mr. Cunard said he'd never seen anything as complex as their TIP (Transportation Improvement Program), and he was extremely disappointed in the DOT's list of projects for Franklin County. One project that money is being requested for, via the economic stimulus money, is for the bypass around Rolesville. Of course, that is already being funded with Garvee funds. Mr. Cunard said we have a meeting at 7:00 p.m. tonight in the Louisburg High School media center, and Mike Rutkowski, Project Manager, from Kimley-Horn and Associates will be in attendance. Kimley-Horn does a lot of background work with the NCDOT, and they are currently working on the bypass around Goldsboro and Kinston. Mr. Cunard said if you have a chance, please visit the website – www.super70corridor.com – for details about this project. They have mobilized groups, and are developing long-range plans for this project. Mr. Cunard said for the meeting tonight, they have put together 58 pages of statistics for the 401 corridor, which pertains to accidents, etc. Chairman Mitchell said he was in attendance at the meeting when the NCDOT representative was there, and it was very sobering to see the complexity of the funding.

The fifth item on the agenda was an update on Cooperative Extension by Cedric Jones. Mr. Jones says his office spends a lot of time on marketing things, such as local markets, so that they can grow and expand. Also, we try to establish areas where growers can do unique things, such as growing foods like endive, which is a leafy vegetable that can be cooked or used raw in salads. We also work with the Farm Foods & Craft tour in May, and we have a festival in Louisburg, where we invite chefs to take a look at what Franklin County growers have to offer. Mr. Jones said we try to encourage children to stay involved, and we educate them in marketing and agriculture. Also, we work with youth in after school programs to get them involved in our economy. Richie Duncan said she had some exciting news to announce. We have been discussing how we can get the product that's being produced in Franklin County to the chefs in the Triangle area, so it will produce revenue for the farmers and get their produce to restaurants in the Triangle. We are very fortunate to have Bob Radcliffe, Martha Mobley, Will Strader and Cedric Jones making a presentation in February to Triangle chefs, to try and convince them to buy and utilize more locally grown products. Ms. Duncan said there is also a book being written, in conjunction with the N.C. Dept. of Commerce-Division of Tourism, which will focus on agritourism. The author has been provided with a list of the Franklin County agritourism venues, and the County should be strongly featured in this book.

The sixth item on the agenda was the economic development and existing industries update given by Richie Duncan. Ms. Duncan said that we will be giving our EDC update to the County Commissioners next Monday night, and we will give this update at next month's EDC meeting. Bud Cohoon, Executive Director of Triangle North, will be speaking as part of the EDC's update at Monday night's meeting also. Ms. Duncan said we will try to have Mr. Cohoon at one of our EDC meetings in the future to speak. Ms. Duncan said there has been a lot of activity in the towns. The Louisburg Industrial Park is now officially a certified site with the N.C. Dept. of Commerce, which is great news. The Franklinton Chamber of Commerce has been revitalized and is up and running again. They have a very active group of citizens, and with the leadership of the Mayor and the town staff, Franklinton continues to grow. Ms. Duncan said the new First Citizens Bank in Youngsville has opened, as well as Anytime Fitness in the Youngsville Crossing shopping center. The Waffle House will be opening soon also. In Bunn, we are continuing to work with city leaders there, and we are in the beginning stages of this. Mark Warren, Louisburg's Town Administrator, said that they were applying for three (3) grants for the town. Elic Senter, Mayor of Franklinton, said that next Tuesday night, there would be ribbon cutting for the new town hall. The open house is at 6:00 p.m., and the regular meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. Brenda Robbins, Youngsville's Town Administrator, said that the buildings on Main Street are almost completed, and they've had many inquiries about them.

Richie Duncan said that there had been a request from a citizen to change some zoning, which is known as an AR (agricultural-residential) district, and she wanted to bring this before this board for review and discussion. These changes would remove coal and lignite mining, crude petroleum and natural gas, mining industries, nonmetallic materials, small/low impact offices, paper products and sales, salvage and recovery yards and landfills. Commissioner Scott Hammerbacher, with Planning & Inspections, said that the AR district comprises a large portion of the county – probably at least 250 square miles – and he is not in favor of these changes. Commissioner McArn made the motion that the businesses that were requested to be removed remain as is, with Commissioner Winslow seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

Richie Duncan said she and Commissioner McArn attended the ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) meeting in Raleigh on January 28th. It was standing room only, and the representatives from ICSC were overwhelmed by the attendance. Commissioner McArn said Franklin County is looked at as a “B” or “C” market, and developers are pulling back from these types of markets because of the economy. Also, many tenant concessions are being made, such as lowering rent, in order to do whatever they can to get new businesses and to keep the businesses they have.

The seventh item on the agenda was the company visit update given by Commissioner McArn. Commissioner McArn visited Moss Foods in Louisburg, and he commented that this was one of the most enjoyable profiles that he's done. Commissioner McArn spoke with Alvin Moss, who is the owner. Moss Foods has been in business since 1982, and they are the only

independent grocery store within a large radius. They have 14 meat cutters, and in a normal grocery store, you do about 18%-20% in the meat sales, but at Moss Foods they do about 60% in meat sales. Mr. Moss said he would like to see the County bring back the high school work program and keep our workforce here because many kids have to move to get work. As always, Commissioner McArn said that if anyone had a business they would like for him to profile, please let him know.

In other business:

- Mike Brown, with the Employment Security Commission, said this is a very challenging time at ESC. We are trying to process everyone's unemployment checks, and there are many employers calling him to ask how to administer task worker claims, which is when they take a week off in a quarter or shut down for a month. Mr. Brown said what concerns him is he seeing people come in his office who have worked 15-20 years for a company and they have been laid off.
- Chairman Mitchell said that the Economic Development office is looking for ways to cut postage cost, and said they would like to begin emailing the packet of information for meetings, instead of mailing them. Lori Duke said she would continue to mail packets out to those that didn't have email addresses.
- Commissioner Joyce Cooke said that some of you may have seen the green building located at 482 S. Main Street in Louisburg that has been under renovation. She is going to be leasing this office space, which has six offices, is handicap accessible, and has a private parking lot also.
- Commissioner Larry Woodlief said he had spoken with County Commissioner Foy, Richie Duncan, Cedric Jones and Shane Mitchell about the possibility of having a farm diversification fair in the County. Commissioner Woodlief said that the fair could be an event where local farmers could get information on a variety of things, such as how to diversify or learn to make or use alternative energy. Richie Duncan said she would assist with the alternative energy portion of the fair after Commissioner Woodlief finalizes the plans for the fair, and she would work with Tanya Evans of Progress Energy on this portion of the fair. Chairman Mitchell suggested that Bob Radcliffe might be someone to talk with, if Commissioner Woodlief moves forward with his idea of a fair for the farmers.

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