

# FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, April 9, 2009 at 8:00 a.m.

Youngsville Community House

## AGENDA

- I. Welcome – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- II. Review/Approval of Minutes from March 12, 2009 Meeting – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- III. Legislative Update – Representative Lucy Allen/Senator Doug Berger
- IV. Update on 401 Citizens Action Committee – Gary Cunard
- V. Town of Franklinton Update – Elic Senter
- VI. Update on Water/Sewer Projects – Bryce Mendenhall
- VII. Economic Development and Existing Industries Update – Ronnie Goswick, Richie Duncan
- VIII. Company Visit Update – Mark McArn
- IX. Other Business – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- X. Adjourn – Chairman Shane Mitchell

# FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, April 9, 2009

## Minutes

The Franklin County Economic Development Commission was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chairman Shane Mitchell on April 9, 2009 at the Youngsville Community House.

In attendance were Chairman Shane Mitchell, Commissioners: Scott Hammerbacher (Director-Planning & Inspections), Angela Harris (County Manager), Bobbie Jo May, Elic Senter (Mayor of Franklinton), Larry Woodlief, Rob Southerland (Airport Manager), Don Lancaster (County Commissioner), Leelan Woodlief, Mark McArn, 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), Gary Faulkner (401 Citizens Action Committee), Gerald Rogers (401 Citizens Action Committee), Al Corpening (Youngsville Town Council), Mike Brown (Employment Security Commission), Tony Efirid (TnC Radio), Keith Shearon (Concerned Citizen) and Gary Cunard (The Franklin Times).

Absent from the meeting were Commissioners: Joyce Cooke, Matthew Winslow, Mike Leonard, Cedric Jones (N.C. Cooperative Extension), Laureen Jones (Chairman-Chamber of Commerce), Bryce Mendenhall (Public Utilities Director), Marsha Strawbridge (Mayor of Bunn), Mayor Karl Pernell (Mayor of Louisburg), 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 March 12, 2009 meeting. Commissioner Brenda Robbins 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 one problem they are facing right now is the state employee's health plan. Because the plan is not solvent right now, we will have to have an appropriation of \$250 million between now and the end of the fiscal year in order to keep the plan going. Employee dependent coverage will go up also. Representative Allen said one of the major issues with dependent coverage is that dependents are basically getting older and older and have more serious health problems. There will probably be an increase in member out-of-pocket requirements for prescription drugs, and the House plan also eliminates mail order prescriptions. Representative Allen said there is no answer to this until the conference committee meets and decides on the budget.

The fourth item on the agenda was an update on the “401 Citizens Action Committee” given by Gary Cunard. Mr. Cunard said that the four-laning of 401 from the Neuse River to Louisburg is planned in four (4) sections, and we are at the very end of that. Planning was done and it was almost ready to go to bid, but there was no money to do it. Realizing that we are several years away from the four-laning of 401, several members of the committee got together and traveled 401 and found things that need to be fixed or improved on, such as guard rails, speed reduction, turn lanes, and traffic signals. We came up with a very thorough analysis of 401 and its problems, and we have forwarded this list to Wally Bowman, NCDOT Division Engineer for District 5. Mr. Cunard said our next meeting is on April 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in Louisburg High School’s media center. Ronnie Goswick and Richie Duncan will be making a presentation on the economic benefits of four-laning 401, and how four-laning US 1 in Franklin County benefited the County economically.

Representative Allen said she believed \$3 million had been set aside for early right-of-way acquisition, but she was not sure if the money was still there. She asked that Gary Faulkner check into this.

The fifth item on the agenda was an update on the Town of Franklinton by Commissioner Elic Senter. Commissioner Senter said that Chairman Mitchell has asked that he give an update on Hardees. They have brought site plans to us, but before construction can begin, they need sewer service. We have put in for several grants, and we have received one from the Rural Center already, but we will still need to find around \$120,000 after the grants and after the \$109,000 that Hardees is putting in towards the project. Commissioner Senter said that until we know where funding is going to come from, we don’t have a firm date in place as to when construction will begin. Commissioner Senter said that if you have traveled through Franklinton within the last week, you’ll notice a sign, which is under the bridge and past the railroad tracks, saying we have started the sewer rehabilitation project. Also, we have partnered with Progress Energy to try and bring energy awareness to our citizens. We hope to have the new magistrate’s building, which is located on Front Street, finished by the first part of June. Hopefully, within six (6) months of this, there will be a pocket park adjacent to this building.

The sixth item on the agenda was deferred to a future meeting because Commissioner Bryce Mendenhall was unable to attend the meeting.

The seventh item on the agenda was the economic development and existing industries update given by Ronnie Goswick and Richie Duncan. Ronnie Goswick said he had been busy in the last month attending many meetings in an effort to prepare for future growth in the County. Recently, he attended a statewide workforce development meeting, which allows our school system to train students for jobs currently available in our market. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, we attended the launch event for the four (4) Triangle North industrial parks. Mr. Goswick said that he, Angela Harris, Christy Shearin and Richie Duncan met with Molly Maxsom to identify funding needs of Franklin County, and particularly those for Triangle North Franklin. Ms. Maxsom is working a fellowship through Senator Richard Burr’s office in Wilmington. Mr.

Goswick said he will be attending three (3) recruiting trips – one (1) in Savannah, GA in April, a consultant trip to New York in April and a biotech convention in Atlanta, GA in May. All three (3) of these trips are paid for by RTRP. Mr. Goswick said some of the projects we have been working on are: a call center (250-400 jobs), a biodiesel project that is still out there and has not made a decision yet on its location, Project Ice, Project Iceland, Project Fuqua and Project Sunbelt.

Richie Duncan said we are continuing to work with those industries who want to do expansions, however, this is moving forward slowly. We do have a networking process underway where we are trying to connect Franklin County businesses to other Franklin County businesses. One of the big projects we are working on right now is putting together a tour of some of our industries for the County Commissioners in May. Ms. Duncan said she wanted to let everyone know that the Triangle North Executive Airport will be having a “High Flight Community Day” on May 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>. This is an opportunity to really showcase the airport to a national audience. Rob Southerland said that G105 will be present on Saturday and 102.5 will be there both days. If the weather is good, he predicts attendance to be 6,000+. Ms. Duncan said if anyone would like a copy of the flyer for the event, please let her know and she would send it to them electronically. Ms. Duncan said Walmart is going to be opening a hiring center in Louisburg, and hiring 150 additional employees. Commissioner Senter asked if we knew what Walmart’s plans are for their current facility once the Super Walmart opens. Ms. Duncan said she has asked this question, and the response has been “We will let you know”.

The eighth item on the agenda was the company visit update by Commissioner Mark McArn. Commissioner McArn visited with Ron Bowman of SureTech Assembly, which is located at 150-A Jeffrey Way in Youngsville. SureTech is a manufacturer of cable assemblies, wire harnesses, mechanical and electromechanical assemblies, and serves such companies as Elsor, Suntec, Supply Point and Eaton. Mr. Bowman said that if it were not for Ronnie Goswick, they would not be here. When SureTech was looking for a location, they were looking at Wake County also. Mr. Goswick took the time to show Mr. Bowman the area, and was able to find a location for them. Mr. Bowman said that he thinks the County’s growth is great, but we need more amenities, and US 401 needs to be four-lane to accommodate the County’s transportation needs. Mr. Bowman said that Vance-Granville Community College takes care of any educational needs his business may have.

In other business:

- Angela Harris said we have submitted some water/sewer projects for stimulus funding, as well as for the Sheriff’s department. Administratively, we are looking at health plans and minimizing job loss. Recently, County employees were invited to participate in a health assessment program. We are very pleased that the County put together a wellness plan a couple of years ago because we are trying to promote wellness, and we think this can save the County money in the long-term.

- Gerald Rogers, a member of the “401 Citizens Action Committee”, said he feels that Wake County is strangling us and has anybody investigated a source of water for Franklin County that doesn’t depend on another county or a private source. Chairman Mitchell said that when we look at water needs for the County we have to look at the short-term and long-term. We have three (3) or four (4) short-term solutions out there, but we are also looking at long-term solutions. Mr. Rogers said he doesn’t think things are moving fast enough to compensate for the growth.

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