

**FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

**THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2009 AT 8:00 A.M.**

**FRANKLINTON TOWN HALL ANNEX**

**AGENDA**

- I. Welcome – Vice Chairman Mark McArn
- II. Review/Approval of Minutes from April 9, 2009 Meeting – Vice Chairman Mark McArn
- III. Legislative Update – Representative Lucy Allen/Senator Doug Berger
- IV. Nominating Committee for Election of Officers – Vice Chairman Mark McArn
- V. Update on 401 Citizens Action Committee – Gary Cunard
- 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 – Vice Chairman Mark McArn
- X. Adjourn – Vice Chairman Mark McArn

# FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, May 14, 2009

## Minutes

The Franklin County Economic Development Commission was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Vice Chairman Mark McArn on May 14, 2009 at the Franklinton Town Hall Annex.

In attendance were Commissioners: Mark McArn, Matthew Winslow, Scott Hammerbacher (Director-Planning & Inspections), Bryce Mendenhall (Public Utilities Director), Angela Harris (County Manager), Bobbie Jo May, Elic Senter (Mayor of Franklinton), Leelan Woodlief, Cedric Jones (N.C. Cooperative Extension), Laureen Jones (Chairman-Chamber of Commerce), 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), Jack Blackmer (Novozymes-Mgr. Environmental Services), Tammy Ray (Town of Franklinton), Mack Cooper (Concerned Citizen), Marbeth Holmes (Concerned Citizen), and Gary Cunard (The Franklin Times). Absent from the meeting were Commissioners: Shane Mitchell, Larry Woodlief, Rob Southerland (Airport Manager), Don Lancaster (County Commissioner), Joyce Cooke, Mike Leonard, Marsha Strawbridge (Mayor of Bunn), Mayor Karl Pernel (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 April 9, 2009 meeting. Commissioner Senter made the motion to approve the minutes, with Commissioner Woodlief 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.

The fourth item on the agenda was to appoint a nominating committee for the election of officers. Vice Chairman McArn said that Ronnie Goswick, Commissioner Bobbie Jo May and Commissioner Don Lancaster have agreed to be on the nominating committee, and the nominees will be presented at next month's meeting.

The fifth item on the agenda was an update on the "401 Citizens Action Committee" given by Gary Cunard. Mr. Cunard said there have been a couple of more meetings since his last report. The committee is going strong, but we need all the help we can get. At the April 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting, Ronnie Goswick and Richie Duncan gave a presentation on US Hwy. 1 pre and post

four-laning, and the economic impact in that area. The total valuation before four-laning was about \$12 million, and now it is about \$126 million. The number of jobs went from about 90 to 1,800. Mr. Cunard said that Gary Faulkner, who is on the committee and is a retired NCDOT engineer and is now a consultant to the NCDOT, has said there were some drawings done about 25 years ago, but they are worthless because they are so far out-of-date. Mr. Faulkner asked the NCDOT what it would cost to get the designs ready to bid and shovel ready, and they said about a million dollars. Mr. Cunard said we are out looking for this money, but the problem is we have to have it by September 1<sup>st</sup>. The reason is because the NCDOT does a fly over in the winter time when there aren't any leaves, so they can get a better picture of the area. If we don't get it by September 1<sup>st</sup>, we are delayed another 18 months. Mr. Cunard said that Judge Bob Hobgood has agreed to meet with Congressman Etheridge to try and obtain some funding and get the process started. The next committee meeting is May 28<sup>th</sup> beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Louisburg High School Media Center.

The sixth item on the agenda was an update on water/sewer projects given by Commissioner Mendenhall. Commissioner Mendenhall said that the bid will be awarded for the east Youngsville sewer expansion at the May 18<sup>th</sup> County Commissioners meeting. We've been working with Novozymes during their shutdown by refurbishing Franklin County's 300,000 gallon water tank, which is located at the intersection of NC 56 and Perry's Chapel Church Road. We have about 50% of the easements in for Ray's Creek, with two (2) more to come. We finalized the Hunter Place upgrades on Holden Road just outside of Youngsville. Commissioner Mendenhall said he would like to congratulate the towns of Youngsville and Franklinton on receiving stimulus funds.

The seventh item on the agenda was the economic development and existing industries update given by Ronnie Goswick and Richie Duncan. Ronnie Goswick said the EDC office has been busy. We've had some potential businesses request information on the shell building, and one potential company has visited the EDC office twice this month. The company looked at the shell building and another building in the Youngsville Commerce Center, and has the potential for 350 employees in three (3) years. Mr. Goswick said he recently attended a renewable energy conference in Savannah, GA, and noted that Novozymes was mentioned at the conference. Also, in the Spring 2009 edition of "North Carolina Economic Developer's Guide to Renewable Energy Industries", it said that Franklin County is one of four (4) counties in N.C. that has some degree of specialization in the manufacturing industries of the renewable energy supply chain. The magazine is produced by the Appalachian State University Energy Center.

Richie Duncan said there are a number of events that will be held this coming weekend in the County. Ms. Duncan asked Tammy Ray to give the details about "Fun-N-Sun" in Franklinton. Ms. Ray said there will be many activities this Saturday during this event. The Franklinton Firemen's Day annual fund raiser, craft & vendor show in the downtown area (57 booths so far), a carnival on South Main, ribbon cutting for "Frugals", live entertainment stage and the drama club at Franklinton High is doing a production of "Grease" tonight. The event

starts at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 5:00 p.m. This Saturday in Youngsville, Commissioner Brenda Robbins said the “Lake Donna Party” is being held from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. in the parking lot of Griffin’s Restaurant. The businesses in downtown Youngsville will also be open for patrons during the event. Commissioner Cedric Jones said the annual “Franklin County Farm Foods and Crafts Tour” will be held this Saturday and Sunday. The goal of this tour is to support buying Franklin County products, support the local art community, and promote “green space” and environmental stewardship. Richie Duncan said that the “High Flight Community Day” was held last weekend, May 9-10, with about 2,000 attendees total for both days. We’ve been tracking where the attendees came from, and so far most of them came from Raleigh, with Louisburg being second, but a number of people came from out-of-state too.

Richie Duncan said she is working on a number of grants, such as the planning grant that she is working with Rick Seekins (Kerr-Tar COG) on for “Franklin County Volunteers in Medicine”. Ms. Duncan said the Rural Center has a grant program entitled “Building Reuse and Restoration Program”, which helps local governments prepare vacant buildings for reuse by new and expanding businesses. If anyone has a building or buildings they think may qualify for this program, please let her know. Ms. Duncan said we are working with Progress Energy in reference to a mailing that they will send out to all their customers about incentives available to homes and businesses for becoming more energy-efficient. You can go to [www.savethewatts.com](http://www.savethewatts.com) for more information. Ms. Duncan said she attended a forum on May 12<sup>th</sup> entitled “Going Green to Get Green”, which was hosted by a collaboration of chambers of commerce in the Triangle region. The focus of this forum was to learn how your business can become more sustainable and see a positive impact on the bottom line.

Commissioner McArn asked Ronnie Goswick about some projects that he had mentioned at the last EDC meeting, such as Ice, Fuqua and Iceland, and if they were still active. Mr. Goswick said they are still active, and will remain active until we are told that they are no longer looking in our area or have located elsewhere.

The eighth item on the agenda was the company visit update by Commissioner Mark McArn. Commissioner McArn visited Carl Hobson of Triad Rental, which is located at 13948 Capital Blvd., Wake Forest. Currently, the business is in a 10,000 sq. ft. building, and Mr. Hobson said he would be opening up a new business for small engine repair and expanding another 5,000 sq. ft. Triad has eight (8) full-time and three (3) part-time employees, and has been in business for 14 years. They rent tools and machines, sell mowers and power equipment and perform small engine repair. Mr. Hobson said he would like to see a change made in the way the water & sewer department handles unpaid water bills. His water bill got lost in the mail, and somebody from water & sewer came out and cut it off without notifying him first. The County’s Public Utilities Director, Bryce Mendenhall, said every customer signs a contract, which indicates fees and it says that the Public Utilities Department is not responsible for mail being lost by the United States Postal Service. Mr. Mendenhall said the customer is given 10 days after the bill is due to pay, and we also offer bank draft. Commissioner McArn said bills do get lost, so he wishes there was a better way of notifying people their bill is overdue because

cutting off water does impact a business or homeowner a great deal. Commissioner McArn asked Mr. Hobson if he had any educational needs. Mr. Hobson said they are working with VGCC because they have hired a Hispanic and he doesn't speak English very well. Commissioner McArn said he would like to tell everyone a bit of good news. It was once thought that APU, which is located on Park Ave. in Youngsville, was going to relocate to Vance County, but he received the news last week that they are staying in Youngsville.

In other business:

- Angela Harris said she gave the "State of the County" presentation last week, and she wanted to go over some of the highlights of that presentation. From 2000-2007, the County's growth rate was about 19%, and it is projected to grow another 18% from 2010-2020. Wake County grew by 32% from 2000-2007 and is projected to grow another 38% from 2010-2020. This growth will impact schools, infrastructure and roads. There have been many jobs lost, not only in the County, but in N.C. and the U.S. as well. However, we have experienced some job growth in the County, with Eaton Corporation, TTI Wireless, Arch Aluminum & Glass, Novozymes and Fujitsu Transaction Solutions doing some additional hiring. Ms. Harris said that while residential permits have declined, commercial activity has remained constant. We have a number of companies who have their headquarters in Franklin County, such as K-Flex USA, Novozymes, Southern Lithoplate and Welsh Paper. Ms. Harris said she found it very interesting that Welsh Paper does repackaging for QVC and Southern Lithoplate makes the plates for the New York Times. Ms. Harris said that Congressman Bob Etheridge was at our airport on April 21<sup>st</sup> to announce that TTI Wireless had been awarded \$6 million in homeland defense money. Ms. Harris noted that TTI's headquarters is based in Franklin County also. Ms. Harris also discussed the "green economy" and what the opportunities are in Franklin County.
- Ronnie Goswick said we have companies that have invested in the future of schools in the County by contributing funds to make sure new schools are built. The \$53 million bond was voted on and passed in May 2008, and industries are still interested in making sure we continue with our educational progress. We have received a letter from the owner of a property development, leasing and management group, who invested and relocated to the location they are at due to the anticipated growth projected in southern Franklin County. They are worried about the fact that Franklin County has not made a real commitment that the new high school will be started and completed any time soon, and they feel that residential growth will be in jeopardy if we don't build new schools also. Mr. Goswick said the Economic Development Commission board needs to make a stand, as to what we want to see happen in Franklin County, and give our County Commissioners the support needed to show our industries and citizens that we are trying to make Franklin County a better place to live and work. Angela Harris said that bids for the new high school are scheduled to be opened on May 28<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Matthew Winslow made the motion that the EDC board support the construction of the

new Franklinton High School, and if it requires that the County's property tax rate be increased to cover the cost of the new building, then the County Commissioners have our support in doing so. Commissioner Mendenhall seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

- Angela Harris said there will be a meeting at the Youngsville Community House on May 21<sup>st</sup> at 7:00 p.m. to discuss the planning for the location of a greenway/trail to be developed along the alignment for the "Southeast High Speed Rail Project".
- Richie Duncan said she wanted to thank Novozymes for its contribution in the form of a \$15,000 grant for a new biotechnology lab at Franklinton High School. Laureen Jones, Franklin County Schools' Career Technical Education Director, said that once the new high school is built, we are looking at providing additional equipment, and Novozymes has pledged to continue its support. Commissioner Bobbie Jo May said this will certainly build Vance-Granville Community College's Biotech program.

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