

FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2009 AT 8:00 A.M.

**VANCE-GRANVILLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE –
MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM, LOUISBURG, NC**

AGENDA

- I. Welcome – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- II. Review/Approval of Minutes from May 14, 2009 Meeting – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- III. Election of Officers – Don Lancaster
- IV. Legislative Update – Representative Lucy Allen/Senator Doug Berger
- V. Update on 401 Citizens Action Committee – Gary Cunard
- VI. Economic Development and Existing Industries Update – Ronnie Goswick/
Richie Duncan
- VII. Highlights from “2009 State of the Research Triangle Region” – Ronnie Goswick
- VIII. Company Visit Update – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- IX. Employment Security Commission Update – Mike Brown
- X. Other Business – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- XI. Adjourn – Chairman Shane Mitchell

FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Thursday, June 11, 2009

Minutes

The Franklin County Economic Development Commission was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chairman Shane Mitchell on June 11, 2009 in the multi-purpose room at Vance-Granville Community College in Louisburg.

In attendance were Commissioners: Shane Mitchell, Larry Woodlief, Scott Hammerbacher (Director-Planning & Inspections), Angela Harris (County Manager), Bobbie Jo May, Don Lancaster (County Commissioner), Joyce Cooke, Mike Leonard, 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), Mike Brown (Employment Security Commission), Tanya Evans (Progress Energy) and Gary Cunard (The Franklin Times). Absent from the meeting were Commissioners: Mark McArn, Matthew Winslow, Elic Senter (Mayor of Franklinton), Leelan Woodlief, Bryce Mendenhall (Public Utilities Director), Rob Southerland (Airport Manager), Marsha Strawbridge (Mayor of Bunn), Mayor Karl Pernell (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 May 14, 2009 meeting. Commissioner Robbins made the motion to approve the minutes, with Commissioner Hammerbacher seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

The third item on the agenda was the election of officers given by Commissioner Lancaster. Commissioner Lancaster said the nominating committee met, and he presented the following nominees: Mark McArn (Chairman), Bobbie Jo May (Vice Chairman) and Leelan Woodlief (Secretary). Commissioner Robbins made the motion to accept the nominees as read, with Commissioner Cedric Jones seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

The fourth item on the agenda was the Legislative update given by Representative Lucy Allen. Ronnie Goswick said that Representative Allen was unable to attend the meeting. However, she did call him and asked that he give a report in her absence. Mr. Goswick said they hope to have the budget approved by midnight on Friday. If that happens, they may be able to offset some of the cuts to education and health care. Some non-profit organizations have had major cuts also, and Representative Allen said she hopes some funds can be allotted in the budget for

them, as well.

The fifth item on the agenda was an update on the “401 Citizens Action Committee” given by Gary Cunard. Mr. Cunard said the committee is still meeting every two (2) weeks, and there is a meeting tonight at 7:00 p.m. at the Louisburg High School media center. Mr. Cunard said the Town of Louisburg has agreed to join CAMPO, which is good news. We are cautiously optimistic about the “TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Discretionary Grants Program” because if you read the guidelines for this program, you would have thought this would be geared towards US 401, but we talked to Senators Burr and Hagan, and we tried to talk to Congressman Etheridge, but we were stonewalled. Governor Perdue has dedicated all this money to replace the bridge over the Yadkin River. This bridge has been in a deteriorated state for 25 years, and the State hasn’t done a thing about it. Mr. Cunard said one of the things we are going to talk about at tonight’s meeting is how we want to respond to this, but I don’t know if there is anything we can do about it. Gary Faulkner has gotten together a lot of statistics, and we are also escalating the political pressure with billboards and bumper stickers in order to focus attention on this highway. Mr. Cunard said another thing that is very frustrating, is that after all the money is funded in the TIP (Transportation Improvement Program), only seven (7) percent goes to highways. Mr. Cunard said from what he can determine about the SPOT (Strategic Planning Office of Transportation) program, is that the Secretary of NCDOT will have the ability to move projects up or down, and we don’t know how those criteria are going to be presented. We’ve asked the NCDOT to come to a meeting and explain this to us, but no definite date has been set by them to be on our agenda.

Angela Harris said Richie Duncan has been working with TIGER grants and she’ll have more details at the 401 meeting tonight. Ms. Harris said in reference to SPOT, we’ve also asked for more details, so that we can report this information to the County Commissioners. Richie Duncan said the target date is the County Commissioner’s August meeting.

The sixth item on the agenda was the economic development and existing industries update given by Ronnie Goswick and Richie Duncan. Mr. Goswick said there is a company from the United Kingdom that is looking at the shell building and one of the former Flextronics buildings. Also, we have a medical device company looking to build a new facility here in the county, but this is in the very early stages. Mr. Goswick said representatives from the N.C. Dept. of Commerce recently came out to visit Triangle North Franklin, as well as the three (3) other Triangle North sites.

Richie Duncan said even though the economy is tough right now, we still have industries moving forward with expansions or with new product lines. We have been very focused on what is available to the county via stimulus funds. There are many stimulus funds out there, but there are pre-requisites you should already have in place. Ms. Duncan said she met with the Franklin County Homebuilders Association on June 2nd, and fortunately there are funds for them to take advantage of in the form of the “Weatherization Assistance Program”. Ms. Duncan said another area we are looking at very closely is in regards to internet deployment of broadband in

the rural parts of the county. We have worked with Zolleville Rest Home for a grant with the Rural Center, which will provide for much needed improvements to the rest home, as well as add jobs. Ms. Duncan said we are also working with the Town of Franklinton on a planning grant for Franklin County Volunteers in Medicine to use the building across from the high school for a medical clinic. There has also been some interest in the cotton mill in Franklinton by two (2) different types of businesses. One of the businesses – a paint recycler – will be going before the Franklinton planning board this Monday night. Commissioner Brenda Robbins said that the new buildings in downtown Youngsville have two (2) clients – one is under contract with a deli and the other is working with an attorney’s office to locate in one of the buildings.

The seventh item on the agenda was highlights from the “2009 State of the Research Triangle Region” given by Ronnie Goswick. Mr. Goswick said the annual “State of the Research Triangle Region” event was held on May 21st. Mr. Goswick said the county’s projected growth annually from 2007-2027 is 47%, making it the fourth fastest growing county out of the 13 counties in the economic development region of the Research Triangle Regional Partnership. The county experienced a gain of 375 in employment (number of people employed-not jobs) from January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2008. Mr. Goswick said that the only real negative statistic was that the county’s wage growth was one of the lowest compared to the other counties. Mr. Goswick said that this report is online at the Research Triangle Regional Partnership’s website at www.researchtriangle.org if anyone wishes to take a look at it. The report contains information about the region, as well.

The eighth item on the agenda was the company visit update by Commissioner Mark McArn. Commissioner McArn was unable to attend the meeting.

The ninth item on the agenda was the Employment Security Commission update by Mike Brown. Mr. Brown said over the last 3-4 months, he has seen some stability in unemployment rates. Claims in our office have dropped by about 40%, which is great news. Mr. Brown said what we don’t see is who the employers are filing for and we don’t see what’s on the internet. Also, there has been about a 20% increase in job listings. Mr. Brown said that North Carolina ranks 6th in the U.S. for highest unemployment at 10.8%, with Michigan being #1 at 12.9%. Twenty-nine states had a decrease in unemployment rates for May, and eleven states had an increase.

The tenth item on the agenda was other business. There was no other business to report.

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