

# FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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

## Bunn Fire Department

### AGENDA

- I. Welcome – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- II. Review/Approval of Minutes from February 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. 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. Other Business – Chairman Shane Mitchell
- IX. Adjourn – Chairman Shane Mitchell

# FRANKLIN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

**Thursday, March 12, 2009**

## Minutes

The Franklin County Economic Development Commission was called to order at 8:00 a.m. by Chairman Shane Mitchell on March 12, 2009 at the Bunn Fire Department.

In attendance were Chairman Shane Mitchell, Commissioners: Joyce Cooke, Matthew Winslow, Scott Hammerbacher (Director-Planning & Inspections), Angela Harris (County Manager), Larry Woodlief, Bryce Mendenhall (Public Utilities Director), Rob Southerland (Airport Manager), Don Lancaster (County Commissioner), Leelan Woodlief, Mark McArn, Lucy Allen (NC Representative), 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), Gary Faulkner (401 Citizens Action Committee), Mack Cooper (Concerned Citizen), Jack Simmons (401 Citizens Action Committee), Tanya Evans (Progress Energy-Mgr., Community Relations), Mike Brown (Employment Security Commission), and Gary Cunard (The Franklin Times). Absent from the meeting were Commissioners: Mike Leonard, Marsha Strawbridge (Mayor of Bunn), Bobbie Jo May, Elic Senter (Mayor of Franklinton), Mayor Karl Pernell (Mayor of Louisburg), Doug Berger (NC Senator), and Margaret Nelms (Mayor of Centerville).

Chairman Mitchell said he would like to thank the Bunn Fire Department for hosting us today.

The second item on the agenda was the review and approval of the minutes from the February 12, 2009 meeting. Commissioner Leelan Woodlief made the motion to approve the minutes, with Commissioner Mark McArn seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

The third item on the agenda was the Legislative update given by Representative Lucy Allen. Representative Allen said that in the News & Observer this morning, the headline read "Governor grabs rainy day fund", which is not good news. Governor Perdue has seized the \$787 million, which was reserved for handling hurricanes and other crises. Representative Allen said that the County has asked her to form a local bill that would add some uses that would be allowed for the 911 fund, and Embarq is not happy with this. Representative Allen said that she feels it is very wise that the "401 Citizens Action Committee" is working with Wally Bowman from the NCDOT, both with TIP and stimulus funds, because it will be our division engineer who sets the priorities for the projects. She said that Gene Conti (Secretary of

NCDOT) has said that we have \$830 million in stimulus funds, and they've identified \$530 million in highway projects. They have begun to look at the most eligible projects, and she feels that Franklin County needs to keep a high profile and not let this slip off the TIP, and she thinks the 401 committee is doing just that. Representative Allen said she met with Gene Conti this week to talk with him about the 401 access road at Triangle North Franklin, and she has talked with Bill Williams (NCDOT-Division Aviation) as well. Also, she has spoken with Wally Bowman, Rita Harris (Legislative Liaison Program Director at Dept. of Commerce), and Jim Trogdon (CEO-NCDOT) about the access road, and she suggests that the EDC send a letter to each of these people as to why this access road is so important to the economy and the hub site. 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 at the last committee meeting Mike Rutkowski (Project Manager-Kimley-Horn and Associates) was in attendance. Mr. Rutkowski is very involved in the US 70 project, and we can possibly learn a great deal from how the US 70 committee is proceeding with their project. Mr. Cunard said two (2) weeks ago, we met with Wally Bowman (NCDOT) and a representative from CAMPO (Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization). There is some animosity towards CAMPO because we feel they have diverted money to other projects over the last few years. Mr. Cunard said that he didn't know if this was true or not, but CAMPO says they haven't seen anyone from our county in the last 5-6 years at any of their meetings. Mr. Cunard said that our RPO (Rural Planning Organization) has answered a lot of our questions, explained the process and urged patience, but they didn't give us any hope. Mr. Cunard said that we are putting together a public relations effort, so that we can be high profile, and we are setting up to lobby the powers that be to discuss how we can get funding. Mr. Cunard said we will meet tonight at 7:00 p.m. in Louisburg High School media center.

Representative Allen said that herself, Pat Young, Brenda Robbins, Jenny Edwards and Ronnie Goswick have attended CAMPO meetings in the past, and Pat Young gave a presentation about US 401 at one of those meetings also. She also noted that if the Garvee bonds are released, then everybody is going to go after them.

Gary Faulkner (former NCDOT engineer) said that as a committee member, this group is diligently working towards getting support and pushing this project – both locally and politically. He said that Representative Allen has been very helpful in the past, and we look towards you for help in the future. Mr. Faulkner said he has put together a great deal of crash safety volume analyses before, and he will be making a presentation tonight as to what the corridor will face in the future if we don't push this project along. Also, we will be asking the EDC to pull together some statistics to promote the effort for 401. Mr. Faulkner said that he has been told that the NCDOT is basically out of money, so projects are going to be pushed back. We need some of the stimulus money, and he reiterated that we need Representative Allen's help.

Representative Allen said we may not stand a chance of getting any stimulus funds because the project is not shovel ready. She said there would be some discretionary funds, and this may be the only hope we have.

The fifth item on the agenda was an update on Triangle North Executive Airport by Rob Southerland. Mr. Southerland said we have been very busy at the airport, and with spring just around the corner, we will become busier. During the first week of February this year versus the same time last year, we've doubled our fuel sales by 10%. The skydivers were approved, and although there have been some concerns, we've gotten together and crafted an agreement that everybody is willing to work with. On March 21st, a "safety day" will be held, so that everybody can come and talk about the jumping procedures, etc. This way, people can see what is going on and we can talk about what didn't work, what needs to be done and then do it again. It will be from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Murphy House will be setting up to sell food that day also. Mr. Southerland said if the contracts are signed at the March 16<sup>th</sup> County Commissioners' meeting, and once "safety day" is completed, we will let them start jumping for revenue after March 21<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Southerland said he has been approached by two (2) different gentlemen about the possibility of building corporate hangars at the airport, and we'd just lease them the land. Just one of the aircrafts would mean about \$21,000 in ad valorem taxes for one year. Mr. Southerland said the upcoming "High Flight" event will be on May 9-10. N.C. Rotor & Wing has gotten the helicopter from Duke hospital to come out, and the Young Eagles, History Flight, and a couple of car clubs have committed also. We are still hoping that the air convention will take place at this airport, but the bottom line is we are in competition with Lee County. Mack Denmark has said he wants this convention to be at our airport, and he is going to help with the "High Flight" event to get things going.

The sixth item on the agenda was the economic development and existing industries update given by Ronnie Goswick and Richie Duncan. Mr. Goswick said that at the February 16<sup>th</sup> County Commissioners' meeting we presented our quarterly EDC update, and he wanted to go over this presentation with the board. The agenda included statistics, status of projects and an update on Triangle North. Mr. Goswick said although our unemployment is at an all time high, we do have good people here who are willing to work, and we do market our people. The Louisburg Industrial Park is now recognized by the State as a certified site. For the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008, we have had six (6) new projects. Two (2) of these projects are closed and four (4) are pending. One of these projects is extremely large, and we have shown them the Triangle North Franklin site. Mr. Goswick said there are four (4) "Triangle North" parks that are being marketed – Franklin, Granville, Vance and Warren counties, and there will be a "launch event" on March 30<sup>th</sup> at the Vance-Granville Community College civic center in Henderson. The program starts at 11:00 a.m., with lunch to follow. Also, a new website showcasing these sites has been created – [www.trianglenorthnc.org](http://www.trianglenorthnc.org). Mr. Goswick said he recently attended "Reality Check", which addresses the reality of growth projected for our region. There were about 300 participants working in diverse groups to discuss and make suggestions about where housing and jobs should locate around our region over the next 25 years. Mr. Goswick said he

attended the “Medical Design & Manufacturing” expo in Anaheim, CA last month. There were about 100,000 people in attendance, and probably 1,500 vendors looking to sell their products. Mr. Goswick said this trip was at no expense to the County because it was paid for by RTRP.

Richie Duncan said there are four (4) potential existing industry expansions, but some industries are experiencing many challenges. Last week, an email was sent out to the industries to remind them of the services our office offers, and if they should need any help or have any questions, please let us know. Ms. Duncan said as for commercial/retail projects, we have nine (9) locations either under construction or approved for construction. The total investment estimate is \$6,362,876, with a total job potential estimate of 58-80. Ms. Duncan said that Eaton Corporation has increased its product lines and employees; TTI Wireless has opened a second location on US Hwy. 1 and increased its workforce; Fujitsu Transaction Solutions has increased its workforce to full capacity, and VFC, Inc. is increasing its workforce. Universal Forest Products in Bunn closed its facility, which impacted about 44 employees. Ms. Duncan said some of you may see a great deal of publicity about Xerium Technologies because they are a global company. Some of their manufacturing industries have experienced reductions in workforce, but at this time, the headquarters in Youngsville has not had any reduction of its workforce.

Gary Faulkner said that he would like to see the plans for the access road at Triangle North Franklin because this may have an impact on what they are doing on the 401 committee.

The seventh item on the agenda was the company visit update by Commissioner Mark McArn. Commissioner McArn said in the interest of time, he would like this item delayed until next month’s meeting.

In other business:

- Commissioner Brenda Robbins said that the Youngsville Area Business Association (YABA) business expo will be held on March 19<sup>th</sup> from 4-8 p.m. at the National Guard Armory.

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