

MINUTES
REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF EDGEcombe COUNTY
MARCH 4, 2024 AT 6:00 P.M.

IN THE JONATHAN FELTON COMMISSIONERS ROOM
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING
TARBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIR LEONARD WIGGINS AT 6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Leonard Wiggins, Chair, Mrs. Viola Harris, Vice-Chair, Mr. Donald Boswell, Mrs. Evelyn Powell, Mr. George Thorne, and Mr. Ralph Webb.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rev. E. Wayne Hines.

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Eric Evans, County Manager, Mrs. Natalie Bess, Deputy County Manager, Mr. Michael Peters, County Attorney, Mrs. Michael Matthews, Assistant County Manager, Mrs. Linda Barfield, CFO, and Ms. Frangie Mungo, Clerk to the Board.

2. SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS.

Safety instructions provided by Mrs. Bess.

3. PRAYER.

Prayer provided by Mrs. Harris.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL.

Mrs. Powell moved to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2024 as presented. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

5. PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Mr. Wiggins called a public hearing to order relative to proposed text amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).

Mr. Peters read the public notice as published.

Mr. Evans stated that an application was submitted by Mr. C. B. Daughtridge requesting reductions in minimum lot widths when located within a subdivision and each lot fronts an interior subdivision street in Mixed Residential, Single-Family, and Multi-Family zoning districts. Specifically, he requests minimum lot widths be reduced to 80 feet in R-20 and R-30 zoning districts and 50 feet in the R-10 zoning district. Our UDO currently allows a minimum lot width of 80 feet in R-20, R-30 and R-10 zoning districts when located within a subdivision of four or fewer lots and each lot fronts an interior subdivision street; however, a subdivision of five or more lots must meet the minimum lot width of 125 feet. The Planning Board voted unanimously to forward the UDO text amendment requests to the Board of Commissioners with a favorable recommendation. The Planning Board stated that the proposed amendment is consistent with Edgecombe County's adopted policy guidance as expressed in the 2014 Comprehensive Plan based in that it is consistent with the Growth Management Policy, Growth and Development Goal. Mr. Evans stated that Mrs. Katina Braswell, Planning Director, and Mr. C.B. Daughtridge, Applicant, were present to answer any questions.

Mr. Wiggins call for public comments.

Mr. Wiggins stated he needed understanding in terms of what the request is.

Mrs. Braswell stated that Mr. Daughtridge is asking that the minimum lot widths be reduced to 80 feet in R-20 and R-30 zoning districts. In R-10 he is asking that those

lot widths be reduced to 50 feet. This is the minimum and the developer can always increase, but this is the minimum that he is requesting.

Mrs. Harris asked what would this difference change. What would be the cause and effect?

Mrs. Braswell stated that the lots would increase the density. More homes would be built within the subdivision because of the minimum lot width requirement.

Mr. Thorne asked if this changed the whole UDO or just for that subdivision.

Mrs. Braswell stated that it is going to change the entire UDO. Any developer would have to follow the new requirements.

Mr. Wiggins stated that this is quite a drastic change. He asked if this made it more affordable.

Mr. Evans stated that it will help to encourage development.

Mrs. Harris asked if they will be putting in little “cracker box” houses by being so close together.

Mrs. Braswell stated that they still have to meet the required set-backs on both sides.

Mrs. Harris asked about the Planning Board’s discussion that make them all agree to it.

Mrs. Braswell stated that it was the density. More homes per acre.

Mr. Daughtridge stated that he sold and developed about 300 lots in the County, which added to the tax base in the last 2 ½ years. This is what it takes to continue. Those lots were existing lots.

There being no further comments the public hearing was adjourned.

Mrs. Powell moved to approve the request as recommended by the Planning Board. Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 5 for to 1. Mr. Boswell opposed.

6. SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT(S):

A. Mr. Ron Lewis and Dr. David Streeter presentation from Charters of Freedom. Dr. Streeter stated that they are a nonprofit educational organization. They go to communities and build replicas that are very much like the Charters of Freedom that are in the national archives in Washington, DC. They consist of the Declaration of Independence, United States Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Civil Rights Amendments. He stated that they build settings and not monuments. He stated that a monument is something that pays an honor to a person, place, event that is no longer with us. The Charters of Freedom gives us all the rights and liberties that we have, and are very much alive and well.

Mr. Lewis stated that they have build and dedicated 30 in North Carolina. He stated that he hoped that the Board will be willing for them to come to Edgecombe County and build the Charters of Freedom. Mr. Lewis provided a slide presentation showing the Charters of Freedom. He stated that they are prepared to gift Edgecombe County the Charters of Freedom, at no cost, the settings of the Charters of Freedom if the County would like to build some ancillary services like a sidewalk or a flag pole to dress up the location, that would be at the County’s expense.

With no opposition from the Board Mr. Wiggins recommended that the Manager, and a couple of Commissioners to take a look at it and if they feel like we should move forward consider location. He asked Mrs. Harris to chair that committee. Mrs. Powell volunteered to also serve on that committee. Citizens Roosevelt Higgs and Alfreda Perkins also volunteered.

B. Graham Palmer and Mr. Na'im Akbar, Rural Opportunity Institute, presented an update on initiatives.

Mr. Palmer stated that ROI has facilitated a policy listening session with members of the Edgecombe and Nash Communities every month for the last 2 years. Two top items were Disrupting the School to Prison Pipeline and Workforce Development.

Mr. Akbar stated that the school issue came up through their listening sessions. Making the schools a more healing environment. He stated that the Sheriff's Office can work with ROI and design a trauma informed training session. This will help the SRO's work with the kids to better understand what the kids were going through.

They provided updates on:

- SRO evaluation report.
- Town of Tarboro and Edgecombe County Workforce Development.
- Young Civic Leaders Program.
- Mental Health in Schools.

7. PUBLIC PETITIONS.

Mr. Evans read an email comment from Crystal Wimes-Anderson regarding ROI: *I am sending this email as I wanted to come before the Board and speak, but I will be at another meeting at the same time. I want to bring attention to Rural Opportunity Institute or ROI who's already serving the City of Tarboro in some capacity. I believe their training would be beneficial to Edgecombe County government team as well as our school system to include administrators, teachers and students. They specialize in resilience training, dealing closely with trauma. I know the Sheriff's Office had once before used feedback with their staff and inmates and expressed satisfaction. I believe that it would be beneficial if the County collaborated with ROI to provide services to its employees. As an employer we take care of the folks taking care of the people. We usually get a return on our investment at a greater rate than the cents that we spend on it. I would love to believe that the Sheriff's Office, Fire Departments, Health Department and Social Services department staff could utilize the additional resources, as these entities deal more closely with the community than any others. I would too like this training to somehow be implemented within our school system for our teachers as part of their training and rolling out to students that could benefit from the sessions. I can speak out about all the things being done wrong, but I would like to speak about what we can do to fix what we are preparing to embark upon. It's going to be a year of many challenges so equipping the team early is highly recommended. Let's be proactive and be the change we want to see in our community. Again, I am asking the Commissioners to take some thought into bringing in ROI to be a part of what's happening here in Edgecombe so that it goes beyond the City of Tarboro and has as many members as possible.*

Mr. Phil Bullock, Battleboro area, stated that he was wondering about the property taxes. He stated that it is unbelievable as to what we are having to pay. His increase in taxers on parcel of land was over \$100,000. He stated that we are in an economic depression. What is taking all of this income? He stated that it is hurting him. He came tonight to express his feelings and it is the wrong time to increase the taxes.

Mr. Wiggins stated that the Board has not set a tax rate.

Mr. Bullock stated that he was talking about the valuation.

Mr. Wiggins stated that if you think your individual property is not fair he should talk to the Tax Assessor.

Mr. Bullock stated that he has talked with them.

Mr. Evans stated that their will probably be more with the same concerns and Mrs. Tarasa Lewis, Tax Administrator, will be coming to talk about the next steps in the process and what has been done so far.

Rev. Roosevelt Higgs talked about affordable housing and the need for it in Edgecombe County. His hopes were that the County could put up some apartments in rural areas of the County. Rev. Higgs talked about the passing of the last survivor of the Platters, Mr. Milton Bulluck, who loved Princeville, NC and Edgecombe County. He stated that Mr. C. B. Daughtridge is the reason why Edgecombe County went into the district concept. He won the election in November of 1994 and advocated going into the district concept to eliminate the racial polarity around the election.

The following items were moved up on the agenda:

I. Approval of Map Reviewer designation.

Mr. Evans stated that NC General Statutes requires the Board to designate by resolution staff who will serve as our mapping and land records Review Officer as well as Alternate Review Officers. Presented for Board consideration is the resolution to designate G. Ray Wilson, GIS Coordinator, as Review Officer, and Tarasa Lewis, Kaitlin Keel, Katina Braswell, P. Bryan McIntyre, and Casie Price as Alternate Review Officers.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the resolution as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

J. Approval of Petition to Appeal Taxes Due.

Mrs. Lewis provided an overview on a petition received from a taxpayer, Mr. Joel Boseman by his attorney Mr. Randall Pridgen which petitioned the Board pursuant to NCGS 105-312K to approve the valuation set forth in the 2023 Discovery Worksheet prepared by the County Tax Administrator and the total tax due as stated therein. Mrs. Lewis read the overview stating that the final recommendation was an adjustment to the 2023 discovery tax bill for to \$2,719,604 from \$8,307,684 for Board approval.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

K. Approval of convening of the Board of Equalization and Review.

Mrs. Harris moved to convene as the Board of Equalization and Review at the April 1, 2024 meeting. Mr. Throne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote. Mr. Wiggins stated that tax rate will be decided on the recommendation that is made to the Board and it will be up to the Board to set the rate. The recommended budget tells the Board how the money is going to be allocated to be spent. The Sheriff's Office, we have additional schools coming on, Health, all of our departments.

Mr. Evans stated that at this point the values have gone out. The values are determined by the market. That is the sale of property similar to each property that is being valued. The housing market is driving this for any other County that is in the year window of revaluation. The next important step will be the Board making that difficult decision as to how to set that rate. The feedback from the citizens is extremely important for us. Also important is for the Board to know the sentiments of their constituency so that they can make those decisions when the time comes. A public hearing is usually held the first Monday in June to present the proposed budget and at that time the citizens will be given another opportunity to not only hear what the recommended tax rate will be for next year,

but also what the full draft budget is and will have an opportunity to ask questions and give feedback and response to that.

8. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Approval of budget amendments.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve budget amendments numbers 1-3 as presented. Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

B. Approval of Recreation Mini-Grant Awards.

Mr. Evans stated that the Recreation Mini-grant program was created to offer grants to community-based organizations that provide recreational facilities and/or activities. We increased this year's funding from a maximum of \$2000 per project to \$5,000, with a total budget of \$50,000. The review committee met to discuss and rank the twenty-five proposals received. Each proposal was rated based on the project description, timeline, area served, number of individuals served, duration of the program, budget and feasibility, and the capacity of the organization. The committee recommends the twenty-four projects in the amounts listed on the attached document to receive funding.

Mr. Webb moved to approve the grant awards for twenty-four programs as presented and to authorize Mr. Evans to execute agreements with each. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

C. Approval of application for fireworks permit.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the application for Frank Terzino, Jr. and to authorize the Fire Marshal's Office to issue the necessary permits for fireworks/explosives as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

D. Approval of the sale of service weapon to retiring deputy.

Mr. Evans stated that NC Statute 20-187.2 allows the Board of Commissioners to award a retiring officer his/her service weapon. It specifically states that you may do so at the price determined by you as the governing body. Sheriff Atkinson has requested that consideration be given for retiring Captain Ross Ellis. Mr. Evans stated that to show the County's appreciation for his exemplary service, and to provide a memento to that service, he recommended that the Board approve the transfer of his service weapon at a price of \$1 upon the retirement of Captain Ellis.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve as presented. Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

E. Approval of Clerk to the Board/Executive Assistant job description.

Mr. Evans stated that some years ago, the functions of the Clerk to the Board were combined with the functions of the Executive Assistant to the County Manager. This is a common approach for many counties. However, at that time, a job description reflecting the new position was not created. He recommended that the Board approve the job description for the Clerk to the Board/Executive Assistant (Executive Assistant II - Grade 6)

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the job description as presented. Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

F. Approval of Subrecipient Agreement with Edgecombe Community College.

Mr. Evans stated that the grant Edgecombe Community College received that was to be used to equip a training facility at Kingsboro Business Park has been repurposed to purchase the former incubator building at Fountain Park. At the December meeting, the Board approved the acceptance of ownership of this building. Since then, ECC has gotten approval from the NC Office of State Budget Management to enter into a subrecipient agreement for those funds, which will pass through to the County for the purchase of the building. Mr. Evans stated that we are creating a joint effort with

Edgecombe County Public Schools, Edgecombe Community College, Turning Point Workforce Development, and Carolinas Gateway Partnership to turn the 40,000 SF facility into a workforce readiness center focused on manufacturing, engineering, and technology. Also, we recently learned while in discussions with one of our prospects for Kingsboro, that it will be strategically available for additional ramp-up training for the company if Edgecombe County is selected. Mr. Evans recommended that the Board consider approving the subrecipient agreement and project budget ordinance.

Mrs. Powell moved to excuse Mrs. Harris. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mrs. Powell moved to approve the subrecipient agreement with Edgecombe Community College and the budget ordinance as presented. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

G. Approval of structure for Getting Off the Lists Taskforce Structure.

Mr. Evans stated that we have embarked upon an effort to Get Off the Lists. We are focusing on those statistics that need to be addressed to create a better future for our County. We have identified four focus areas: Youth & Families, Education & Workforce Development, Affordable & Safe Housing, and Health Equity. Our approach is to create a taskforce for each focus area that will advise the work so we can identify and support existing efforts under each area to increase their positive outcomes that, over time, will enable us to Get Off the Lists. The structure of our taskforces will include an advisory board for each focus area which will communicate with larger community groups to gain the insight needed to advise the Board and others on our efforts. Therefore, Mr. Evans presented for Board consideration a proposed structure for each advisory board. If approved, we will then recruit members for each to bring back for appointment.

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the advisory board structures as presented. Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

H. Approval of acceptance of 911 Communications Grant.

Mr. Evans stated that Edgecombe County is being awarded a grant from the North Carolina 911 Board in the amount of \$41,654.45. The purpose of the grant is to purchase radios that will serve as back-up for the 911 Communications radio system. This grant does not require a match.

Mr. Webb moved to approve the acceptance of the grant award and approve the grant agreement as presented. Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

L. Approval of grant award for Kingsboro Phase II Infrastructure.

Mr. Evans stated that we received notice from the NC Department of Environmental Quality of a grant award for the Kingsboro Industrial Park Phase II Sewer Extension Project. The award, which are state appropriated funds, total \$13,774,000. The project will involve construction of 44,000 LF of sewer force main, new sewer lift station, new Flow Monitoring System, installation of SCADA system along with other miscellaneous items. This project will help increase the sewer capacity at the Kingsboro Industrial Park to approximately 5 million gallons per day.

Mr. Thorne moved to approve the Grant Project Ordinance as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

9. APPOINTMENTS:

A. Trillium Advisory Board.

Mr. Boswell moved to appoint Mrs. Viola Harris. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

- B. Town of Princeville ETJ.
Mrs. Powell moved to appoint Robert Andrews. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.
- C. ABC Board.
Mr. Boswell moved to excuse Mrs. Powell from the vote. Mr. Webb seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.
- Mr. Boswell moved to reappoint Mrs. Evelyn Powell, Mr. Charlie Harrell and Mr. C.B. Bunting. Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.
10. AFTERLISTS AND RELEASES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL.
Mrs. Powell moved to approve the afterlists and releases as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.
11. CONTRACTS FOR REVIEW AND/OR APPROVAL.
Mrs. Harris moved to approve the contracts as presented. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.
12. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS FOR REVIEW.***Received***
A. Water and Sewer update.
B. Monthly Financial Summary provided by Mrs. Barfield.
13. MANAGER'S REPORT.***Received***
A. "Open Door to Edgcombe Presentation" - #1 the Structure and Function of County Government. Mr. Evans provided a presentation.
B. CDBG Neighborhood Revitalization Award.
C. Update on Opioid Settlement Funds.
D. Major events and updates.
E. Human Resources Board Leadership.
F. Workforce Development Indicators.
G. TDA financial report.
H. Update on ARPA projects.
14. COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.
Mr. Thorne stated that he has had several requests from citizens for services that the Sheriff's Office provides. He wanted to thank them publicly for their professional and quick response to all of those requests.
Mr. Webb expressed his appreciation to the Board members and Mr. Evans in regards to his dad's death on the 7th.
Mr. Webb stated that he comes in to Tarboro most of the time he is on highway 258 by Sara Lee. Our economic development team should not bring those coming in looking at Edgcombe County from the south end of the County up to 258 and especially not down Colonial Road. It is a disaster. It is trash everywhere. He stated that we need to identify the problem and fix it.
Mr. Wiggins agreed stating that we need to do whatever is within our jurisdiction to do.
- Mrs. Harris stated that they were very grateful to Agricultural Secretary for the visit that they had on the 21st. It was an interesting visit at ECC. She stated that it is going to afford us some agricultural grants.
15. ATTORNEY'S REPORT.
None.
16. CLOSED SESSION.
Mr. Boswell moved to go into closed session to discuss:

A. Economic Development. [N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(4)]

Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Boswell moved to go out of closed session and resume the regular meeting. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

17. ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. Boswell moved to adjourn the meeting. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Approved April 1, 2024.


Frankie Mungo, Clerk to the Board