Chatham County, NC

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Monday, November 7, 2022 **2:00 PM** **Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center**

Work Session - 2:00 PM - Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center

Chair Howard welcomed everyone to the November 7, 2022 meeting.

Present: 5 - Commissioner Mike Dasher,Commissioner Diana Hales,Vice Chair Franklin Gomez Flores,Chair Karen Howard and Commissioner Robert Logan

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

Alfreda Price Wicker said for the past twenty years, a generation of people have died in Goldston. They have left their buildings and houses behind. There were eight structures including: a mobile homes, a barber shop, a barbeque pit, and houses. These abandoned buildings make the community look ugly. Ms. Price Wicker and her neighbors decided to renovate a house, and the money spent could have been used to buy a new house. Most of the houses cannot be rehabilitated. She said they wanted to live in a safe, healthy, pretty community. It was not an individual project. She asked the Board of Commissioners to please take a look at this problem and see if the Board of Commissioners could help. Half of the houses are in Goldston and are in the Town. They gave the Clerk a letter that was sent to the Town.

Chair Karen Howard said the Board would ask staff to look into it to see if the County could help in any way.

BOARD PRIORITIES

22-4530 Receive Environmental Review Advisory Committee Annual Report

Attachments: Environmental Review ADVISORY COMMITTEE SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT
ERAC Powerpoint for BOC

Elaine Chiosso, Chair of the Environmental Review Advisory Committee, gave a presentation to the Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Chiosso reviewed the Environmental Review Advisory Committee's mission, including the committee's role as the Watershed Review Board. She reviewed the Environmental Review Advisory Committee's accomplishments. The Environmental Review Advisory Committee looked at making conservation subdivisions into a stand-alone ordinance. The committee thought it was a great quick fix and looked forward to a long-term solution being developed as part of the Unified Development Ordinance process. The committee also initiated the Tree Protection Ordinance Working Group and that group would present its recommendations to the Board of Commissioners on December 5th.

She reviewed the Watershed Review Board's accomplishments. She clarified that the Watershed Review Board agreed only emergency towers on public land could be allowed in the critical watershed areas.

Ms. Chiosso reviewed Environmental Review Advisory Committees challenges including a struggle with attendance and getting a quorum.

She reviewed recommended changes including more publicity about what the Board of Commissioners advisory committees did and to look into membership structure to determine if such a large advisory committee was needed.

The Environmental Review Advisory Committee was particularly happy with the partnerships along the other advisory committees.

Chair Howard asked if the committee met virtually or in-person. Ms. Chiosso said virtually.

Commissioner Hales said maybe a link to the policy with the application could ensure applicants read the policy before deciding to apply for an advisory board or committee.

Commissioner Hales commended the Environmental Review Advisory Committee's work on the Tree Protection and Conservation Subdivision Ordinances. In the suggestions to the Unified Development Ordinance the Environmental Review Advisory Committee requested the committee be included in the subdivisions and review of the Environmental Impact Assessments. Commissioner Hales said the new commissioners may have new ideas or interests that may drive additional work or the Environmental Review Advisory Committee.

Chair Howard said having the opportunity to participate in important discussions may be a catalyst for volunteer interest.

Ms. Ray would remind staff liaisons to review the policy in the onboarding process, and she could make reading the policy a requirement to apply.

Ms. Chiosso was very appreciative of the volunteers and their work on these advisory committees.

22-4532 Receive Library Advisory Committee Annual Report

Attachments: Final Annual Report 2022

Lisa Padgett gave the annual report to the Board.

There was a one hundred and forty percent increase in programming during the COVID-19 pandemic and two hundred and forty percent increase in participation. The library also issued more than two thousand library cards during this period.

Future growth was going to pose barriers and challenges with different areas impacted on the library. In order to remain relevant, there must be change. The library was steeped in tradition but some of those traditions may need to go out the window to engage with new audiences and provide new services.

Vice-Chair Franklin Gomez Flores asked if there had been any challenges with the

Siler City Board being in and out of the library. Linda Clarke said the big challenge was the meeting room space in Wren Library. This space was used by the Town Board and the library has not been able to access that space for programming while the Town Hall has been and continues to be renovated. She hoped the renovations would wrap up soon.

Commissioner Hales saw the program today for the Teen Writing Contest and she loved the idea. Ms. Clarke said this was a first-time project. I was difficult to motivate teens at that age. There was a staff member at the library in Pittsboro and there was a teen board and they have a lot of input into their activities and the writing contest came out of that.

Commissioner Hales asked if there was still a way to build community through the library for youth. She was all for it. She said that the county still does not have a library in the east. At some point there would need to be a library in the southeast in the Moncure area and now was a good time to begin planning for that. Moncure was like Goldston in that many parts were in distress.

Ms. Clarke said there was a plan to expand the children's area at the Goldston library and that was the most immediate thing she knows about happening to grow the libraries. A feasibility study would be needed for any future library projects to determine an accurate need. Commissioner Hales commented that this may be a good discussion at the Capital Improvement Project Work Session. Libraries should be part of the landscape in the next fifteen to twenty years. Chair Howard was the liaison to the Library Advisory Committee and she would work with staff and the Library Advisory Committee to determine the best path for future library planning.

Commissioner Robert Logan said public libraries around the country have experienced a lot of political rhetoric recently. Commissioner Logan asked if Chatham had experienced this. Ms. Clarke said Chatham libraries had not experienced anyone asking for a book to be removed from the collection. A display was questioned but she felt school libraries were the ones targeted. Public libraries could work to review their collection development policy. The library needed to be able to state what they collected for the library. The library's job was to present information and both sides of the story.

Juana Gomez Soriano, branch manager of the Goldston Library, led an activity with the commissioners and gave instructions in both English and Spanish. The commissioners made paper turkeys. The activity was an example of how the library has worked to provide inclusive programming for Chatham residents. Ms. Clarke explained that language can be one of the biggest barriers for participation. The activity also used supplies that most residents have around their homes.

22-4527 Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee FY 21-22 Annual Report.

Attachments: FY22 Annual Report Presentation-Final

2022 Advisory Committee Summary Annual Report

James Fogleman gave an annual report to the Board.

Mr. Fogleman praised Tracy Burnett and her staff and all they do to serve the community. The Recreation Advisory Committee recognized that growth would create more demand for Parks and Recreation staff, especially in the Moncure area. Ms. Burnett said staff was in negotiations with a firm for the Parker's Ridge Park project.

Recreation Advisory Committee held open gym hours at Chatham Grove and in Silk Hope. Many youths said they did not have anywhere else to go and appreciated having open gym hours to play sports. Sports helped break down barriers. A person does not have to speak the same language to love soccer and be able to communicate to each other about the sport.

Mr. Fogleman hoped that the Board of Commissioners could continue to support parks and recreation staff by continuing to increase funding. Commissioner Hales was always delighted to hear from Parks and Recreation. She loved seeing how well attended the Trunk or Treat event was at Southwest Park last week. She was also happy to see an advertisement in the newspaper for the new trail coordinator position. Assistant county manager, Bryan Thompson, said interviews for the job position begin tomorrow.

Commissioner Hales thanked Mr. Fogleman and the committee for their work.

22-4529 Receive Climate Change Advisory Committee Annual Report

Attachments: FINAL CCAC ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTATION 2021-2022
CCAC Summary

Climate Change Advisory Committee Co-Chair Charlie Cooper gave an annual report to the Board.

Mr. Cooper reviewed the mission and goals of the committee. The membership has stayed pretty stable over the last year. He reviewed the makeup of the committee and highlighted the depth of knowledge and talent contributed by the members.

Mr. Cooper reviewed the committee's accomplishments and activities. At the request of Commissioner Dasher, the Climate Change Advisory Committee presented ten recommendations to the Board of Commissioners last December and were pleased with how well it was received by the Board. Climate Change Advisory Committee encouraged the County to look at nature-based solutions and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

He reviewed any progress made on each of the ten recommendations over the past year. The committee continued to monitor Duke Energy's carbon plan. Chatham cannot continue to be a carbon neutral county if Duke Energy does not do its job.

Mr. Cooper reviewed the Climate Change Advisory Committee's recommendations and its barriers and challenges.

Mr. Cooper thanked Kevin Lindley for helping get the electronic vehicle charging station installed at Smithfield's BBQ in Siler City.

Chair Howard thanked the committee for all their work.

Commissioner Hales also thanked the committee for their dedication to helping the Board of Commissioners address climate change in Chatham County. We need to be able to show that we can meet our plan by 2024 and that absolutely means more charging stations are needed. She would like to see the County aggressively find funding for these charging stations. She wants residents to see the Board of

Commissioners invest in this endeavor.

Chair Howard thanked staff for creating the Electronic Vehicle Charging Station Map. Kevin Lindley thanked Brandon Dawson of the planning department and Austin Conklin of the geographic information systems department for creating the map.

Chair Howard said it was important that the County preserved green space amidst the continued growth of the county.

Commissioner Hales said electronic vehicle charging stations were needed throughout the county. It may be a cost to the County at first, but it would not always be a cost. Mr. Cooper said the private sector was going to take care of this problem once a critical mass was reached. There would definitely be undeserved areas of electrification, and the committee would continue to look into it.

Commissioner Logan believed there was significant attention regarding climate change. The County must be vigilant and intentional about climate change. He suggested a climate change dashboard for the website that made this information understandable to the general public. Mr. Cooper said that it was part of the tenth recommendation and finding it measurable. The Climate Change Advisory Committee would add that as a goal.

Commissioner Logan asked if the charging stations were universal. Mr. Lindley said there were two types. Tesla had an option and everything else was a different option. Tesla had put their own charging infrastructure together. There was talk of Tesla creating an adapter so that other vehicles could use their charging stations.

Vice-Chair Gomez Flores asked if the scenic byway was a way to preserve green space. Mr. Cooper said that he would get to the equity question. How does the government do what the private sector did not? The only reason Chatham was close to carbon neutrality was because of Chatham's farmland and tree preservation.

22-4531 Receive Affordable Housing Advisory Committee Annual Report

Attachments: AHACAnnualReport2022 (4)

Richard Poole gave an annual report to the Board.

Mr. Poole reviewed the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee's mission and goals, activities and accomplishments, barriers and challenges and recommendations.

Mr. Poole said there were three types of vouchers available. The regular vouchers were for section eight housing. These were mostly for families that were non-disabled. There were emergency vouchers. These vouchers worked with the emergency housing task force. The mainstream vouchers were for disabled people, both non-elderly and elderly.

Mr. Poole was alarmed by the voucher availability in the county. He suspects the number of vouchers not used was growing. He believed landlords used to take vouchers and are now becoming more reluctant. Landlords were likely to take two thousand dollars a month for a unit versus taking a voucher.

Mr. Poole was an ex-official member of the Unified Development Ordinance subcommittee and there would be an affordable housing component to the Unified Development Ordinance or at least that was the current thinking.

Commissioner Hales appreciated the committee and their report. Commissioner Hales saw in a newsletter that Wake County and the City of Raleigh were working with two banks to provide loan revenues to rehabilitate housing. Mr. Poole said that it was done by Rebuilding Together of the Triangle. Commissioner Hales sent the article to the county manager. Mr. LaMontagne sent the information to the Assistant County Manager Bryan Thompson. Mr. Thompson had forwarded the information to the Triangle J Council of Governments and asked if it could be replicated in Chatham County. Commissioner Hales told Mr. Poole about the public input from residents of Goldston. She does not believe the numbers presented will go down but will continue to increase. For every job, it translated into supporting eight people.

Vice Chair Gomez Flores visited the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee meeting and provided them with information about Siler City. He wanted to know what could be done on a county-level. He asked how the County would get to a point where opportunity would be provided for current homeowners. Mr. Poole said pre-COVID pandemic the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee started discussions about whether the county-wide property maintenance code should be adopted. That could be a long-term solution with some of the dilapidated units. It is not perfect because homeowners fix up their purchased homes, but they may no longer be affordable after repairs. Mr. Thompson said that staff were looking into how local governments could help intercede with homes that are a liability to the owner. Commissioner Hales would like more information on how Wake County is rehabilitating homes.

Commissioner Hales knows it was a large undertaking and was glad the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee had the ability to look into these tough issues. Mr. Poole said there were no magic solutions. Chair Howard said even solutions had consequences to be mindful of.

Chair Howard said larger than the point in time count are the people couch surfing and living out of their vehicles. There were so many people off the radar because they are not un-housed. The housing should meet the needs of the community.

RECESS

The Board of Commissioners recessed until the 6pm regular session.

End of Work Session

Regular Session - 6:00 PM - Chatham County Agriculture & Conference Center

INVOCATION and PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Karen Howard asked all those present to bow for the Invocation and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present: 5 - Commissioner Mike Dasher,Commissioner Diana Hales,Vice Chair Franklin Gomez Flores,Chair Karen Howard and Commissioner Robert Logan

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Karen Howard called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA and CONSENT AGENDA

Chair Howard called for a motion to approve the agenda and the consent agenda.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hales, seconded by Commissioner Dasher, that the Agenda and Consent Agenda be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Commissioner Dasher, Commissioner Hales, Vice Chair Gomez Flores, Chair Howard, and Commissioner Logan

22-4526 Vote on a request to accept $35,399 funds for Public Health workforce training.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hales, seconded by Commissioner Dasher, that this Agenda Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Commissioner Dasher, Commissioner Hales, Vice Chair Gomez Flores, Chair Howard, and Commissioner Logan

22-4535 Vote to approve the appointment to Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC)

A motion was made by Commissioner Hales, seconded by Commissioner Dasher, that this Appointment be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Commissioner Dasher, Commissioner Hales, Vice Chair Gomez Flores, Chair Howard, and Commissioner Logan

22-4545 Vote to approve appointments to the Agriculture Advisory Board.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hales, seconded by Commissioner Dasher, that these Appointments be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Commissioner Dasher, Commissioner Hales, Vice Chair Gomez Flores, Chair Howard, and Commissioner Logan

22-4548 Vote on a request to authorize Chatham County to partner with North Carolina Emergency Management (NCEM) / North Carolina Geodetic Survey (NCGS) in a United States Geological Survey (USGS) 3D Elevation Program (3DEP) grant application.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hales, seconded by Commissioner Dasher, that this Agenda Item be approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Commissioner Dasher, Commissioner Hales, Vice Chair Gomez Flores, Chair Howard, and Commissioner Logan

End of Consent Agenda

PUBLIC INPUT SESSION

Larry Ballas talked about global warming and climate change. He gave information to the clerk about a website, www.iqair.com, that listed pollution by city. Chatham County was really low in pollution. He said Chatham did not need solar energy. Everything we have said about global warming was tentative. The science was not definite, and it was still changing. Larry said solar energy was a waste of money, especially for the agriculture and conference center. It does not change anything.

BOARD PRIORITIES

22-4533 Receive the Recommended FY24-30 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).

Attachments: InitialPresentationToBOC- 2024-2030

Bryan Thompson presented the 2024-2030 Recommended Capital Improvement Plan.

The Capital Improvement Plan planned for capital costs and also plans for the operational costs and ongoing maintenance. Pay-go projects continued to be needed and continued to be more complex. Mr. Thompson said the staff used to be able to budget five to eight percent for inflation and those numbers would no longer hold.

The schools have begun working with their consultants for population projections.

Vice Chair Gomez Flores asked if the buildings would be demolished and new buildings constructed on top of those sites. Mr. Thompson said the understanding from the schools was new buildings would be built, and the current facilities would be used while the new construction was underway. Staff hoped to have population projections from the schools in January or February.

The 2021 borrowing allowed the County to get a very competitive one point fourteen percent interest rate. A Public Hearing was scheduled for November 21st and a Work Session was scheduled for December 13th. The projected adoption was scheduled for December 19th.

Chair Howard asked about pay-go projects and having more at higher costs. She asked if the County had a policy around what fits a pay-go project. Mr. Thompson said the County did have a policy and when costs got up to ten million and beyond the staff looked to a borrowing option. Chair Howard asked if it was possible to state a trigger number of how many projects would necessitate a borrowing. Mr. Thompson explained that it was best the Capital Improvement Plan drove the borrowing process for the schools instead of lumping together small projects for a borrowing.

Commissioner Dasher asked if the capital reserve contribution was a fixed percentage of the budget. Mr. Thompson said the County's contribution was going to be discussed for transferring.

Commissioner Hales said there was a new school in Chatham Park in North Village. She asked if the extra cost was compared to Chatham Grove because it was a larger school. Mr. Thompson said the cost was mostly driven by financial factors. Commissioner Hales asked if the land was being donated by Chatham Park. Mr. LaMontagne confirmed that North Village and South Village were both being donated

for school sites and the school system determined what kind of school goes where. The Memorandum of Understanding between Chatham Park and the schools designated one school site for both the northern and southern villages.

Commissioner Logan said there was a lot of ongoing maintenance for the high school and secondary schools. He asked if that was pay-go funds. Mr. Thompson said the County worked closely with the schools about how to fund those types of items.

Commissioner Logan asked if Mr. Thompson would share what Phase 2 at the Agriculture and Conference Center would consist of. The event director for the conference center Larilee Isley was present and said there would be a farmers' market space, a covered arena, and an outdoor classroom space.

CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk to the Board Lindsay Ray, said the meeting's agenda will be updated on the County's website with the Recommended FY24-30 Capital Improvements Plan presentation.

Ms. Ray reminded the Board of the upcoming meetings and locations. The November 21st regular meeting will be held at the Chatham Agriculture and Conference Center. The December 5th meeting will be the swearing-in ceremony held at the Historic Courthouse. The December 19th regular meeting will be held at the Chatham Agriculture and Conference Center.

She sent an email to the Board about the Chamber holding a meeting on November 15th at the Chatham Agriculture and Conference Center and she needed to know by Wednesday if any commissioners were going to be attendance, because she would need to make the reservation.

She will be out of the office all next week. Deputy Clerk, Lacee George, would be available in Ms. Ray's absence. Chatham County's paralegal, Ann Hammack, would also be available.

MANAGER'S REPORT

County Manager Dan LaMontagne said Chair Howard and himself attended a My Future NC workforce development meeting. Mr. LaMontagne also attended the Triangle J Council of Government summit on workforce mental health. Carolyn Miller and Courtney Jones were also in attendance. Next Thursday and Friday he will be assisting the Town of Pittsboro with the selection of their next town manager.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Mike Dasher had nothing to report. He wanted to encourage everyone to vote tomorrow.

Vice-Chair Franklin Gomez Flores had nothing to report and repeated Commissioner Dasher's sentiment for everyone to go out and vote.

Commissioner Diana Hales had nothing to report. She attended the ERAC and Planning Board meetings. There will be a full agenda with rezonings at the next meeting. She attended a Chatham County function with a presentation from the Chatham Literacy Council. The council will now be offering financial literacy

information.
Commissioner Robert Logan also attended the Chatham Literacy presentation and thought it was an excellent meeting. He attended the first land management meeting in Pittsboro. Wastewater treatment was a major item on the agenda.

Chair Karen Howard said adult literacy tends to be an issue that flies under the radar. The Chatham Literacy Council is doing good work. The oil and gas commission moved forward to support a baseline health study in the communities for potential fracking locations like Chatham and Lee counties. She attends a harm reduction hub on Saturday in Siler City and said ordinary people can get Narcan at the health department. They provided resources like counseling and walking clubs to encourage wellness in the community. No one was immune to addiction, and we need to reduce the stigma.

Ms. Ray said she attended a School of Government event at Pembroke where she presented on the County's advisory committee policy. This year there were six elected officials in the meeting, and she learned a lot. Commissioner Kyle Shipp from Pittsboro was present and she was proud.

Chair Howard asked whom else had registered for the Legislative Goals conference. Ms. Ray said Chair Howard was the voting delegate and Vice Chair Gomez Flores was the alternate.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Howard called for a motion to adjourn.

A motion was made by Vice Chair Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Hales, that this meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Commissioner Dasher, Commissioner Hales, Vice Chair Gomez Flores, Chair Howard, and Commissioner Logan