

September 9, 1998

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

Wednesday, September 9, 1998

1:30 P.M. Worksession

MINUTES

Place: Commissioners' Room, second floor, Durham County Government Administrative Complex, 200 E. Main Street, Durham, NC

Present: Chairman MaryAnn E. Black and Commissioners William V. Bell, Joe W. Bowser (arrived late), Becky M. Heron, and Ellen W. Reckhow

Absent: None

Presider: Chairman Black

Chairman Black called the Worksession to order.

Interviews for Alcoholic Beverage Control Board Candidates

The Commissioners interviewed the four Alcoholic Beverage Control Board candidates beginning at 1:30 p.m. The candidates and the interview times follow:

Hugh F. Lecky Jr.	1411 N. Gregson Street, 27701	1:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Nancy L. Miller	406 Seven Oaks Road, 27704	2:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Ernest L. Simpson	2512 Wilbon Street, 27704	2:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Frank A. Ward	1511 Ward Street, 27707	3:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

To Set a Quasi-Judicial Public Hearing Date for Three Major Special Use Permits for Telecommunication Towers

The Durham City-County Planning Department received three applications for Major Special Use Permits for telecommunication towers over 200 feet in height. It was necessary to set a quasi-judicial public hearing date for these requests. A minimum of two and one-half weeks is required for proper notification of the public hearing, including notification of adjacent property owners within the prescribed notification distance and placement of legal notices in the local papers of record.

M98-1 Gearon Communications proposed to construct a 280-foot lattice tower on the east side of Farrington Mill Road, north of the Chatham County line and west of Kennebac Drive.

M98-2 Gearon Communications proposed to construct a 300-foot lattice tower on the east side of US Hwy. 501, south of State Forest Road and north of Quail Roost Road.

M98-3 SpectraSite Communications proposed to construct a 240-foot lattice tower on the west side of Glenn Road, north of Dodge Avenue and south of Jeffries Road.

County Manager's Recommendation: To set a quasi-judicial public hearing date.

After considerable discussion, the Commissioners decided to set the quasi-judicial public hearing for Thursday, October 15, 1998 beginning at 5:30 p.m.

The Commissioners requested that dinner be served.

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Eno Drive

Chairman Black distributed to the Commissioners a letter from E. Norris Tolson, Secretary, Department of Transportation, asking the Durham City Council and Board of County Commissioners to reach a consensus by the end of November on a preferred alternative for the Eno Drive project.

Chairman Black asked that Commissioner Heron speak about the status of the work of the Joint City-County Planning Committee relative to the preferred alternative.

Commissioner Heron stated she is preparing a letter to Secretary Tolson to inform him of the committee's accomplishments regarding the Eno Drive alternative. The work of the committee is anticipated to be completed by the end of the year. The next meeting is September 25, 1998. The committee is waiting for various transportation reports to be completed and other reports to be made.

Department of Transportation board member Carolyn Grant told Commissioner Heron that the end-of-the-year deadline would be acceptable.

Appointment—Alcoholic Beverage Control Board Chairman

Commissioner Bell, ABC Board Chairman, asked the Commissioners to consider Ms. Mary Ellen Williams as next year's chairman. She is currently vice chairman and is doing a good job.

Year 2000 Project Update

With all the articles in the news and magazines, everyone is now aware of the problem that may be caused by the century change from 1999 to 2000. Due to the cost of computer space in the past, computer chips and storage have always used only a two digit year--98 for 1998. Date computations have used a year/month/day format. In the year 2000, 00/01/01 (YYMMDD) minus 99/01/01 is not 365 days but an invalid result. Computers and programs that are not corrected will cause many problems such as miscalculated payroll, bad interest calculations, invalid shipping dates, etc. The problem extends to air conditioning systems, microwave ovens, VCRs, elevators, automobiles, wrist watches--in other words, everything that uses a computer chip with a date function.

The Durham County Information Technology Department has been working for approximately 24 months to address the Year 2000 problems. The department requested time at this worksession to give an update as to the accomplishments to date and the remaining project plan.

Also, although Information Technology does not have the resources to investigate and address all other possible problems that may be caused by the new millennia, it has been asked to take on a leadership role and to assist other departments in this effort. To accomplish this assignment, IT will be starting new initiatives to motivate all departments in the County in addressing their Year 2000 issues.

Perry Dixon, Director of Information Technology; Joe Whittemore, Systems & Development Manager; and George Garland, Senior Systems Analyst, were present to present this item.

County Manager's Recommendation: No BOCC action to be taken. Accept as information.

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The Commissioners asked several questions about the Year 2000 project to which County Manager Thompson responded.

The Commissioners accepted the Year 2000 report and released Perry Dixon from presenting his report. The administration would follow up on the issues brought forward.

City-County Inspections Department

Commissioner Heron requested a report to the Commissioners from the Inspections Department about Roberts Construction Company relative to house inspections.

County Manager David F. Thompson said a written report from the department would be appropriate.

County Attorney Chuck Kitchen concurred with the Manager.

Citizen-Comment—Ralph McKinney

Mr. Ralph McKinney requested time on the agenda to make comments to the Commissioners.

Mr. McKinney, 500 Fairfield Road, spoke to the Commissioners about what is happening in society relative to racism and treating people as he feels they should be treated.

Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee Report

Ms. Mildred Barnes and Ms. Catherine P. Jones, cochairs of the Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee, were present to present a report to the Board of County Commissioners to address the complaints and concerns that have been recorded in the committee minutes. Remarks were made concerning the corrective actions being taken.

Ms. Mildred Barnes, 2023 Sprunt Avenue, 27705, and Ms. Catherine P. Jones, 5616 Inverness Drive, 27712, presented the report.

The Commissioners asked several questions about the presentation and the concerns that were raised by the cochairs. Ideas were discussed as to how to address the concerns.

Chairman Black said the Commissioners were concerned about the problems mentioned in the last group of minutes. The problems appear to be greater than those reflected in the minutes.

Chairman Black expressed the following:

1. Are there more problems today than in the past?
2. What can the Board of County Commissioners do to help?
3. Consider directing the County Attorney to work with our local legislators on upgrading the policies and regulations.

Ms. Barnes said many problems exist in the nursing homes due to a shortage of staff (the nursing homes are trying to reduce costs). The legislative regulations must be changed. There should be more in-service training. There is a large amount of turnover among the administration and aides. The Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee needs more members.

Ms. Jones said citizens should have more information about the nursing homes when considering admitting a family member. Several physicians are referring patients out of Durham County because of various problems. This should not be happening.

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Chairman Black commented that the County may need to establish an organization similar to the one for child daycare where citizens can receive information about nursing homes and related matters.

Ms. Barnes remarked that citizens wishing to admit a family member into a nursing home should read the Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee minutes to check on the condition at the home. The minutes are considered public records.

County Attorney Chuck Kitchen suggested the minutes be placed on the Internet.

Chairman Black recommended a letter be written to the headquarters of the nursing homes from the Board of County Commissioners with copies of the minutes attached stating that the Commissioners are not pleased with the services provided in the nursing homes in Durham County. This may cause the Board to get a response from the corporate office.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow suggested that letters be sent to all the corporate headquarters of the nursing homes in Durham County and apprise them that the Commissioners appreciate the work of our Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee and the fairness of its minutes and that we plan to put the minutes on our Website. The issues that have been identified should be corrected by the facilities.

Commissioner Heron suggested that Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee members discuss nursing home issues on Durham County Government's TV show.

The Commissioners agreed with all of the ideas mentioned above.

Presentation on Facility Planning for Durham County Operations

The Board set aside funds in the FY 1999 Budget to conduct a space needs assessment for administrative and operational functions and to develop a master plan to meet the identified space requirements. Staff requested that the Board review the Request for Qualifications draft for architectural services and provide input and direction.

The most critical space needs involve Social Services and the judicial system. Staff reviewed options involving space needs for Social Services with special emphasis placed on the Carmichael and 220 East Main Street facilities. Staff requested that a portion (not to exceed \$25,000) of the funds the Board set aside in the FY 1999 Budget for architectural design of the Carmichael facility be used for repairs at both facilities.

Kathy Shuart, Trail Court Administrator, discussed immediate and long-term space needs of the judicial system. To address immediate space needs, staff is investigating the potential lease of the Wachovia Building located downtown to relocate Juvenile Services, Guardian Ad Litem, juvenile court, and domestic court from the courthouse. Staff requested that a portion (not to exceed \$50,000) of the funds the Board set aside in the FY 1999 Budget for architectural design of the Carmichael facility be used to hire an architect to develop design plans for occupying the Wachovia Building and renovating vacated space in the Judicial Building. In addition, staff requested that the Board officially establish a Judicial Facilities Committee to both oversee the progress of addressing immediate space needs and to develop long-term solutions.

Resource Persons: David M. Powell, Economic Development/Property Management
Glen E. Whisler, Environmental Engineering/General Services
Kathy Shuart, Trail Court Administrator

Commissioner Heron said the RFQ should state the County's established 25 percent goal for its Business Opportunity Program.

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The Commissioners asked questions and made comments.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow commented that the property owned by the County on East Main Street, east of Roxboro Street, should be included in the report. The property should be used to revitalize the two blocks to Dillard Street.

Chairman Black suggested a human services campus be considered including Mental Health, Public Health, and Social Services in one location on East Main Street.

County Manager David F. Thompson said the resolution relative to County Offices being located downtown should be updated and reaffirmed.

Commissioner Heron expressed that a judicial complex should be considered near the detention center. This idea was discussed when the detention center was designed.

Commissioner Bowser agreed with Vice-Chairman Reckhow about rejuvenating East Main Street to Dillard Street.

Commissioner Bowser commented that the County should not make a habit of leasing vacated property downtown. It may encourage businesses to move out of downtown.

County Manager Thompson agreed with Commissioner Bowser's remarks; however, the Wachovia Building is owned by Wake Forest University.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow suggested the Board communicate with our senators about the judicial facilities need.

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Judicial Facilities Advisory Group

Commissioner Bell requested that a County Commissioner be placed on the advisory group.

Chairman Black asked Vice-Chairman Reckhow and Commissioner Heron to serve on the Judicial Facilities Advisory Group. They agreed to serve. Commissioner Heron stated she would serve as the alternate.

The Commissioners concurred to place Vice-Chairman Reckhow and Commissioner Heron on the advisory group. No vote was taken.

Employee Health Insurance

Following an extensive Request for Proposal (RFP) process to solicit proposals for the health insurance carriers for the next three years, the following recommendations were made: (1) authorize Human Resources to enter into final negotiations with WellPath Select Inc. to become the Point-of-Service (POS) plan provider for County employees; and (2) authorize Human Resources to enter into final negotiations with Doctors Health Plan Inc. to continue as the HMO plan provider for County employees.

Resource Persons: Jackye Knight, Director of Human Resources, and Donald Sherrod, Benefits Administrator

County Manager's Recommendation: County Manager Thompson carefully considers the effects to employees when a change in health care providers occurs. He suggested that before returning to the Board with a final contract, several focus groups should be held with employees to listen to their concerns about the proposed change. Overall, WellPath is a richer plan with a lower and more predictable cost increase. Doctors Health Plan has shown a steady turnaround in its financial difficulties which have never affected its service to our employees. He recommended that the Board review and discuss with HR suggestions and observations about the final negotiation process.

Representatives from WellPath Select Inc. and Doctors Health Plan Inc. were present to answer questions.

Ms. Knight reviewed the four County goals relative to health benefits.

County Manager Thompson said the County is still in the process of negotiation regarding health insurance.

The Commissioners asked questions and made comments. Responses were made by staff and health insurance providers.

No action was required from the Commissioners.

Adjournment

Chairman Black adjourned the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Garry E. Umstead, CMC
Clerk to the Board

GEU:VCS