

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

Thursday, January 12, 2006

Annual Retreat

MINUTES

Place: Museum of Life & Science, 433 West Murray Avenue, Durham, NC

Present: Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow, Vice-Chairman Becky M. Heron, and Commissioners Lewis A. Cheek, Philip R. Cousin Jr., and Michael D. Page

Staff: Department Heads and Community Leaders

Facilitator: Phil Boyle

Opening Session

Phil Boyle, Ph.D., President, Leading & Governing Associates Inc., introduced himself and described his work in a variety of local jurisdictions in North Carolina. He teaches municipal/county administration program at the School of Government at UNC-Chapel Hill for mayors and council members, county commissioners, municipal and county administrators and clerks, and state legislators. He works extensively with the N.C. League of Municipalities and the N.C. Association of County Commissioners (is a regular presenter at their annual conferences) on long-range planning efforts and with a number of state and national associations across the country.

To set a tone for the retreat in terms of modeling the conversations, Mr. Boyle asked each person to pair off with a relative "stranger" and hold a two-minute conversation. He instructed that the conversations not be job-related.

Mr. Boyle and participants summarized that the conversations were non-threatening, pleasant, and informative. Conversations during the retreat should not be griping sessions about resource allocation or limitations, or lobbying sessions for more resources.

Mr. Boyle stated that to prepare for the retreat, feedback was collected from central staff and the Commissioners (through individual telephone interviews). The following retreat goals were adopted:

1. Help board members better understand where Durham is today regarding specific policy, service, and governance issues;
2. Develop a shared sense of policy direction about tomorrow among board members and staff;
3. Strengthen communication and relationships between board members;
4. Strengthen the board's governing focus and capacity; and
5. Strengthen communication and relationships between board members and staff.

Chairman Reckhow thanked the staff who compiled the notebooks. She also expressed appreciation to department heads for preparing their departmental reports in such a short turn-around period.

Chairman Reckhow spoke about the importance of the retreat: to discuss big-picture issues and how the County can make systematic progress to address those issues.

Overview of the "State of the County"—County Infrastructure

Reports were presented regarding County infrastructure. Brief synopses of the conversations follow:

1. **CAFR**—George Quick, Finance Director, stated that the FY 2005 CAFR includes the FY 2005 audit. The Finance Department is particularly proud of this year's audit since it is the first time Durham County has received a clean audit with no management comments or single-audit findings. The auditors found no material weaknesses in internal controls, policies, or procedures. These findings are significant since the audit was done while staff was engaged in the implementation of the new financial system (SAP).
 - Clarify growth in revenue relative to expenditures
 - Assumption that fund balance will increase in response to changes in Medicaid
 - Consider employing fiscal impact analysis methodology to inform development decisions and revenue projections
 - Analysis of current and needed industrial vs. other development, e.g., residential
 - Consider zoning and rezoning assessment to better match types of land to best uses, e.g., industrial use better situated proximate to I-85 corridor than to downtown

2. **Semi-Annual Budget Report, Including Tax**—Pam Meyer, Budget and Management Services Director, highlighted revenues and expenditures for the second quarter of the fiscal year, including general fund key revenues, general fund revenue by agency, general fund expenditures by agency, all-funds revenue summary, capital financing revenue, and all-funds expenditure summary. Ken Joyner, Tax Administrator, reported on property tax revenue collected through December 30, 2005, stating that tax collection is at 74.50 percent of budget.
 - The pending schools request driven by energy costs and population growth
 - 62% on-time DMV tax collections
 - Overall revenues, expenditures, and collections on schedule and on target
 - How final revenues and collections turn out will factor into determining what funds may be available to meet schools' request

3. **CIP Update**—Glen Whisler, Engineering Director, presented project status reports for the major capital projects. Ademola Shobande, Senior Project Manager, gave a slide show for several projects.
 - Derelict property adjacent to Durham Center for Senior Life

Policy Goals and Directions

For each of the policy goals, the following process was used:

1. Staff Briefings (15 – 20 minutes)
2. Board Discussion (15- 20 minutes)
3. Results Based Accountability (RBA) Goals (15 – 20 minutes)

A summary and suggested directions pertaining to Policy Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 follow:

Policy Goals and Directions I—Safety

1. Avian Flu
 - make part of legislative package
 - clarify levels of risk, degrees of preparation

2. Youth Violence
 - Develop plan to address children and families in crisis
 - What role should the county play?
 - Move more toward a multi-party, cross-cutting approach—address communication, coordination, and best practices
 - Develop a comprehensive strategy
 - Engage the county board and city council

- Place on joint city-county committee agenda

Policy Goals and Directions II—Children Ready for & Succeeding in School

1. Child Care
 - Funding at 1/3 needed level
 - Quality standards below desired level
 - Need for greater local advocacy
 - Overall sense of losing ground
2. Preparing Parents
 - Need greater training and education to overcome lack of experience and counter influence of inadequate families on current parents
 - Service gap for pre-school age children
 - Improve family literacy
3. Supporting Schools
 - Strengthen County and City officials' presence in classrooms
 - Make use of county policy for employee volunteer time
 - Develop a joint city-county mentoring initiative (bring in the business community)

4. Addressing At-Risk/Dropout Kids

- Connect to child support services and public assistance function to foster two-parent involvement

Policy Goals and Directions III—Healthy Everybody

- 6 Key Issue Areas—access to care, obesity, STDs, infant mortality, teenage pregnancy, and substance abuse
- Mental Health/Substance Abuse
 - 70% of mental health facility clients have substance abuse issues
 - Need long-term (ten-year) mental health/substance abuse plan and media campaign to build public support for treatment/services and to reduce stigma (tie to safety goal/initiative)
 - Recruit, engage, and contract with more providers
 - Need for a residential/transitional substance abuse program/facility
 - Should the County sponsor a long-term comprehensive approach to addressing substance abuse countywide? (e.g., engage Duke and TROSA, create steering committee chaired by Cheek, address incidence of DUI/DWI among Hispanic/Latino population)
- STDs/HIV
 - Link efforts to drug use initiative
 - Enhance public awareness (e.g., counter public complacency and acceptance of HIV/AIDS)
- Obesity
 - Shift focus to front-end (prevention) rather than back-end (treatment)
 - Rationale—offset greater long-term costs
 - Adopt a community-wide approach (both short- and long-term) to community health, wellness, and fitness

Policy Goals and Directions IV – Economic Prosperity

- Economic Development Issues
 - Shortage of appropriately industrially-zoned sites (e.g., campus-type environments)
 - Perception by business that Durham County is difficult to work with
- Downtown Redevelopment Issues
 - Public sector leadership/investment
 - Historic preservation
 - Gentrification
 - Environmental

- Workforce Development Issues
 - Need more training and education
 - Availability and location of technical training
 - Improve information access/dissemination re: regional jobs and opportunities to improve likelihood of hiring county residents
 - Develop career ladders for those earning below a livable wage
 - Target investment in small and medium-sized companies representative of local economy (education, computers/software, health care, biological/life science manufacturing)

- Board Comments/Questions/Suggestions
 - In terms of technical training and education, where are we? Where do we need to be?
 - In relation to services for youth in school, what about services for youth not in school?
 - Can we look at opening schools for students and the community?
 - Business sees a regional workforce and development as an asset (e.g., Durham Tech) but county residents may not/do not get their share of regional jobs
 - What role does Convention & Visitors Bureau play/should play in economic development?
 - Take a fresh look at the Board's economic incentives policy
 - Strengthen focus on promoting county's assets, e.g., access to RDU

Policy Goals and Directions V—Healthy Environment, Vibrant Community, and Cultural Heritage

- Maintain quality of community and facilities in light of growing county infrastructure
- Resist temptation to defer maintenance in the short-term at the cost of incurring long-term expenses
- Strategy for dealing with abandoned or neglected properties
- Seek opportunities to further energy savings/efficiency, e.g., solar, digital, alternative energies
- Leverage existing resources, e.g., engaging citizens
- Look at farm/agricultural diversification (some efforts are already underway, but county may wish to expand efforts as more farm land is likely to shift away from agriculture towards other development uses)
- Promote "Big Sweep" program?
- Adopt beaver management program?

Chairman Reckhow thanked Mr. Boyle for facilitating and Assistant County Manager Heidi Duer for planning the retreat. She stated that the retreat was very productive.

Assistant County Manager Deborah Craig-Ray was instructed to organize meetings at Southwest Elementary School, Little River School, and Oak Grove School for the community to provide input on the FY 2006-07 Budget.

Chairman Reckhow announced that the County would compare its retreat notes with those of the City at the March 14, 2006 Joint City-County Committee meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Reckhow adjourned the meeting at approximately 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Vonda C. Sessoms
Clerk to the Board