

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

Monday, April 22, 2002

5:00 P.M. Special Session

**MINUTES**

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

Present: Chairman MaryAnn E. Black, Vice-Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow, and Commissioners Joe W. Bowser, Philip R. Cousin Jr., and Becky M. Heron

Absent: None

Presider: Chairman Black

**Recommendations for the Southeast Durham Drive and Transit Corridor**

On April 8, 2002, the Board of County Commissioners reviewed the findings of a design charette recently sponsored by the Durham Area Designers to explore and consider alternatives to the alignment of the Southwest Durham Drive and Fixed Guideway routes in southwest Durham. The parcel of land recently purchased by the Durham Public Schools served as the catalyst for the charette, which recommended an alternate route for Southwest Durham Drive as well as the proposed transit corridor. Mr. George Smart, an area landowner, has also produced an alternate for the Board's consideration. Neither route would traverse the proposed school site.

The school system must proceed with the design of its site in order to open a new elementary school in the fall of 2004. While any final regional alignment of the transit routes will require careful study, local governing bodies must first determine if some other alternative to the currently proposed corridor merits consideration.

Resource Person(s): George Smart, area property owner; Dan Jewell, member, Durham Area Designers; and Hugh Osteen, Assistant Superintendent, Durham Public Schools

County Manager's Recommendation: The Manager recommended that the Board receive the presentation and determine if any recommendation regarding the proposed alignment should be forwarded to the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC).

Chairman Black called on George Smart, AIA, area property owner, to present his recommendations for the Southeast Durham Drive and Transit Corridor.

Mr. Smart proceeded with his presentation which centered around the following four areas:

- Request From Landowners
- Site Location
- Existing Site
- Opportunities (29 opportunities were listed in the presentation)

Vice-Chairman Reckhow suggested that the Board refer Mr. Smart's ideas along with the ideas of Durham Area Designers to the Planning staff. They must work with the neighborhood as the Commissioners decide how to get more detail on the plan that was adopted with the Highway 54/I 40 Corridor Study. She commented that the Board couldn't make any decisions tonight, but wanted to hear Mr. Smart's ideas. What is important tonight is that Mr. Smart's plan is consistent with the Durham Area Designers' plan in the vicinity of the school as it treats the road and the transit corridors. The only thing before the Board for a decision is to refer that concept to the transportation people for study. The Planning staff must review all the other ideas. Any information Mr. Smart has should be conveyed to the Planning staff.

Ms. Pamela Cook, 5511 Crescent Drive, said she was the leader of the group Citizens Alliance for Responsible Development. The script most definitely represents not all of the landowners and residents in their area. The citizens and landowners just learned about the Durham Area Designers and the original landowners' plans last Thursday night. The people at the meeting were led to believe that the decision would be made tonight.

Ms. Cook said that the group absolutely does support removing Southwest Durham Drive from the school property. That is the responsible thing to do. They are very interested and concerned about the land use plans for their neighborhood as it is being developed. Ms. Cook commented that she wanted to clarify the misunderstanding in her group about what was signed and the intent. She advised that the next step was to hold a meeting on May 9, 2002 at 7:00 p.m. between Citizens Alliance for Responsible Development and the Durham Area Designers. She invited the Commissioners to attend. The location was to be announced.

Commissioner Heron said the community interest is good. Some settlement must be made to ensure that these roads will not cut through the school site. The school system must be allowed to proceed with its plans. She commented that the Technical Coordinating Committee of the Transportation Advisory Committee had been asked to look at this, and they certainly know the Board's feelings about the school site. No road should run through this school site. We need to utilize that school site for what it was intended to do to provide for the school and to provide for the sale of the excess acreage for future development or some other public purpose.

Chairman Black commented that it should be kept in mind that the Board voted 3-2 on January 7, 2002 to let the schools go ahead and place a school on that site. It should also

ensure that a good bit of that excess land is preserved to use for another public purpose or be sold with that money reverting back to the citizens in some way.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow moved, seconded by Commissioner Heron, to request that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) consider the feasibility of moving the transit corridor and Southwest Durham Drive to the eastern boundary of the school site.

The motion carried with the following vote:

Ayes: Black, Cousin, Heron, and Reckhow  
Noes: None  
Absent: Bowser

Chairman Black noted that Commissioner Bowser was not present when the vote was taken, and he was not excused by the Board from voting.

Vice-Chairman Reckhow moved, seconded by Commissioner Heron, to request that the Planning Department consider Durham Area Designers' plan and the landowners' plan in conjunction with working with neighborhood groups to develop more detailed land-use plans for the area.

The motion carried with the following vote:

Ayes: Black, Cousin, Heron, and Reckhow  
Noes: None  
Absent: Bowser

Chairman Black said when the Board discussed this plan two weeks ago, one of our citizens stated that there were no African-Americans present at the charette held in March. It was understood that one company was invited, and a representative came to the charette that happened not to be African-American. She stated she had asked the Board to be open and that she had given a contact name to the charette members and knew that Commissioner Cousin had several contact names to pass along. Another charette will be held in July. Contact names could be given to the County Manager to pass to the people involved. Chairman Black said that African-Americans were invited to the first charette. However, there were none present at the first charette.

Chairman Black thanked Mr. George Smart for his presentation.

**Adjournment**

Chairman Black adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Garry E. Umstead, CMC  
Clerk to the Board