

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF GUILFORD COUNTY
WORK SESSION**

Greensboro, North Carolina
May 15, 2025

PRESENT: Chairman Melvin “Skip” Alston, presiding; Vice Chairwoman J. Carlvena Foster; Commissioners Kay Cashion, Brandon Gray-Hill, Carly Cooke, Mary Beth Murphy, Frankie T. Jones, Jr., Pat Tillman, and Alan Perdue (via virtual communication).

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Michael Halford; County Attorney Andrea Leslie-Fite; Clerk to Board Robin Keller; Deputy Clerk to the Board T’ebony Rosa; Victor Isler, Assistant County Manager; Jason Jones, Assistant County Manager; Erris Dunston, Assistant County Manager; Kyle Tarpley, Williams Company Community and Project Outreach Specialist; Zack Matheny, Downtown Greensboro, Inc. President; members of staff, media, and the public. Virtual participation was made available to members of the public and media partners.

I. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Alston welcomed those present and called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

II. NEW BUSINESS

A. TRANSCO PIPELINE EXPANSION PROJECTION INFORMATIONAL SESSION

Chairman Alston introduced the agenda item and recognized the Williams Company staff.

Kyle Tarpley, Community and Project Outreach Specialist, provided a historical overview of the company and reviewed the pipeline system. She shared that it transfers approximately one-third of the nation's natural gas and has been serving this community for over forty-five (45) years.

CPO Specialist Tarpley noted that over the last two (2) years, its corporation has committed \$2M to North Carolina communities. She shared that they routinely work with local first responders and are active in the Local Emergency Planning Communities.

CPO Specialist Tarpley reviewed its pipeline safety and regulatory systems. She noted that the team conducts frequent inspections to monitor the pipeline’s integrity. She reviewed technologies used to monitor the underground infrastructure.

CPO Specialist Tarpley noted that the proposed project is an expansion of an existing project in the area. She noted that this area is rapidly growing and there is a lot of new investment in the manufacturing and hospitality industries that rely on this energy source. She shared that this particular project will add \$1.6M dekatherms per day to the Transco system, which will meet the needs of nearly 10M homes for hot water, heating, and cooking.

CPO Specialist Tarpley reviewed the economic investment in Guilford County with a total capitalized investment of \$78.2M. She noted that the project will add ninety-seven (97) construction jobs with a one-time local tax revenue of \$409K.

CPO Specialist Tarpley reviewed the project map with the Board. She noted that it is a total of 28.4 miles. She spoke to the Eden Loop and to the Salem Loop that starts in Oak Ridge. She reviewed that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission manages the purpose and need as to whether they can begin construction on the project.

CPO Specialist Tarpley shared the project schedule and permitting process. She noted that they held open houses on March 12, 2024 with advertisements, postcard mailers to landowners, and online ads targeting community members in the area. She noted that the open houses are held to receive feedback from local landowners and elected leaders and document those concerns.

CPO Specialist Tarpley reviewed the significant environmental review that is being undertaken. She noted that they expect the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) review to be approved, perhaps in late November. She noted that construction cannot begin until FERC offers a notice to proceed. She shared that the project is expected to go into full service in 2027. She noted that approvals must also come from the Army Corps of Engineers and the NC Wildlife Commission, the NC Department of Transportation, and the NC Historical Commission.

CPO Specialist Tarpley spoke to the protocols regarding how project comments can be submitted. She reviewed the formal application process, noting milestones and sections where the public can engage. She reviewed the application's scoping period and how FERC advertises how the public can engage in the process, along with notice in local papers.

Chairman Alston thanked the Williams Company for their presentation and opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the pipeline inspection frequency.

Joey Page, Senior Operations Manager of NC North, confirmed review processes and how they identify problem areas. He spoke to a pipeline inspection gauge that is placed into the pipeline which measures the internal thickness of the pipe walls. He noted that they run an inspection gauge through the lines every six (6) years.

Commissioner Murphy noted the numerous churches, childcare centers, schools, and homes along the route. She questioned the warning time for area evacuations.

CPO Specialist Tarpley confirmed that she cannot speak to the timelines of the Federal Regulatory agencies. She noted that our current systems have been beneath the ground for decades, and underground is the safest way to move gas. She noted that we have a history of safety in this community. She shared that we have safely co-existed with the infrastructure.

Senior Operations Manager Page noted that the locations in certain areas are required to be inspected more frequently.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the notification procedures for those needing to be evacuated.

Senior Operations Manager Page noted that typically there is no warning system, but if it is determined to be a risk, the Williams Company will determine who needs to be notified.

CPO Specialist Tarpley noted that the first call is to work with the local authority.

Michael Atchie, Manager of Public Outreach, noted that safety is the first factor of the project. He shared that there are a lot of mechanisms used to ensure that the project proceeds safely.

Commissioner Murphy thanked staff for sharing that information to help us as a community have a greater understanding of the steps being taken regarding safety. She questioned the impacts to well and groundwater. She noted that the pipes are scheduled to cross reservoirs and questioned how many times the project will cross our watersheds.

PO Manager Atchie noted that they work with the NC Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to work to make sure that they using appropriate designs to prevent runoff into waterways.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the exterior coatings on the pipes and potential toxins leaking into the groundwater system and the extent they have been tested for toxicity.

PO Manager Atchie reviewed the coating noting that it is a standardized approved coating. He noted that these coatings used are safe, and there have not been instances of contamination. He shared that a fusion bond epoxy is a generally accepted coating.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the damage caused because of well construction.

PO Manager Atchie noted that with any wells within 150 feet of construction, they offer pre- and post-wellness health checks. He noted that in previous projects, anything that has gone awry has been remedied. He noted that they are happy to work with landowners on those issues.

Commissioner Murphy questioned the willingness to add an odorizer to the product to help people detect leaks.

Senior Operations Manager Page confirmed that primarily the gas has no odor. He noted that the gas from the northern pipes is already treated with an odorizer.

Commissioner Murphy questioned hosting the March 2024 convention center meeting and the location that was selected.

CPO Specialist Tarpley noted that the locations chosen for the town halls are determined by FERC expectations and a thirty (30) minute drive is determined to be reasonable. She noted that location and scheduling are based on federal criteria. She noted that invitations are typically sent through direct mail to the landowners with notice to elected bodies and advertisements in local papers. She shared that the notice does have to run two (2) times within two (2) weeks of the meeting.

Commissioner Jones noted that concerning the design efforts, he questioned the groundwater testing.

CPO Specialist Tarpley shared that we have erosion and sediment control plans that are developed. She noted that they are developed under the state guidelines and the state comes out and performs the inspections to ensure we are adhering to our plans.

Commissioner Jones noted that with respect to the new and current pipeline, he questioned how the current pipeline was reviewed and how it is holding up.

CPO Specialist Tarpley confirmed that when she says we have been in the area for seventy-five (75) years, it does not mean that the pipeline is seventy-five (75) years old.

Global Operations Manager with Williams Company, noted that their most recent inspection of Line D was last year. He noted that we used a suite of tools, including a cleaner, hard spot tools, an e-map tool, and valve measurement tools.

PO Manager Atchie noted that they take precautions to ensure the integrity of existing pipelines when placing new lines.

Commissioner Cashion noted safety concerns. She questioned any previous safety impacts.

Senior Operations Manager Page confirmed that he has been with the company for over twenty-five (25) years. He noted that they have not had a serious incident in those 25 years. He noted that on tool runs, they may have noticed that a pipe needs to be inspected. He noted that their largest concern is individuals digging in the right-of-way and breaking the pipes.

CPO Specialist Tarpley noted that they have a great relationship with Rockingham County and had a resolution passed unanimously in support of the project. She noted the support of the General Assembly. She spoke to the community support in Danville as well. She noted that we do have normal concerns received from non-governmental organizations.

Commissioner Cashion questioned how old the Williams Company is.

CPO Specialist Tarpley confirmed that they have been in business for over 110 years.

Commissioner Gray-Hill questioned how much of the gas is staying in NC.

PO Manager Atchie noted that the 10M homes figure offers scale. He noted that 1.6M is being transported per day, and 1.0M goes to Duke Energy. He shared that much of the gas is intended for combined cycle uses in the state to support power plants.

Commissioner Gray-Hill questioned the low-emitting pressure stations.

PO Manager Atchie noted that the stations are combustion turbine-driven compressors. He highlighted that these are solar turbines. He noted that they have been working through emission reduction projects to replace engine compressors with solar turbines.

Commissioner Tillman recognized Oak Ridge Council Member Ann Schneider and Mayor Pro-Tem Mike Stone. He questioned the view of the counties as they move south.

CPO Specialist Tarpley confirmed that in Davidson County, they have received a resolution in support of the project and has thus far been received warmly in Iredell County. She noted that we have been attentive and responsive to the concerns that have been raised in this community.

Commissioner Tillman thanked them for sharing their safety record. He recognized that there would be a disruption to property owners and appreciated the sharing of information. He questioned how they work with local fire and EMS personnel.

The Global Operations Manager shared that they work with local fire departments and emergency management teams.

Commissioner Cooke thanked the Williams Company for answering their questions. She noted that safety has been the largest concern raised. She questioned if there is any risk in disturbing the current pipes as they add a new line.

PO Manager Atchie confirmed that there is always a risk, which is why they are very thoughtful in their construction. He spoke to line identification, to construction on the outside of the corridor, to consideration of equipment size, and to encroachment calculations. He shared that they can also utilize tools for load distribution. He noted frequent construction inspections.

Commissioner Tillman thanked the community for supplying the Commissioners with a lot of the questions to facilitate the conversation today.

Chairman Alston thanked the Williams Company staff.

B. DOWNTOWN GREENSBORO STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Chairman Alston introduced the agenda item and recognized Zack Matheny, Downtown Greensboro, Inc., President.

DGI President Matheny acknowledged Chris Beynon, Moore Iacofano Goltsman (MIG) Urban Planning Consulting Group Chief Development Officer, who is helping with the downtown strategic development plan.

DGI President Matheny noted the downtown Greensboro economic impact is \$3.2B to the local economy.

Chief Development Officer Beynon shared that one of the founding members (Goltsman) was raised in Greensboro, and this is very much a legacy project for the organization.

Chief Development Officer Beynon noted that as we are in the early phases of Thrive 35 developing the economic corridor of Guilford County. He noted that they work around the country and shared the local economic figures. He noted that post-pandemic, a lot has changed, such as returning to work, use of technology, and how to best leverage our downtown assets. He reviewed the community workshops and information gathering so that the plan reflects the community and the community's future desires.

Chief Development Officer Beynon shared the online survey and meetings held. He noted that they have identified some emerging ideas and concepts, such as leveraging key assets, capitalizing on development and redevelopment opportunities, fostering a robust economy, spanning efficient mobility and connectivity options, creating flourishing parks, activating downtown through placemaking, and providing clean and safe amenities. He highlighted that they are cultivating existing downtown key anchors. He noted that the region is the youth sports capital and is currently on the radar.

Chief Development Officer Beynon noted that they are looking at the big projects, but also incremental growth. He noted that Greensboro does not have a river or water attraction. He noted that to contribute to a robust downtown, we need a robust housing program with mixed use and affordability. He spoke to leveraging the downtown greenway to create more neighborhoods and more livability to spur on private development in the form of housing and land use.

Chief Development Officer Beynon noted that the downtown needs to foster small businesses and entrepreneurs. He spoke to the enormous opportunity that the vacant News and Records space offers. He shared that it is uncommon to have ten (10) available acres in the downtown area. He noted that great streets are critical, and we have a lot of construction happening now in the downtown area. He mentioned that we have heard that we want street walkability and a canopy. He shared partnerships with NC A&T State University to consider and test autonomous vehicles in the downtown area.

Chief Development Officer Beynon shared that they are continuing to gain input and are seeking feedback from the Commissioners and requested Board direction and input. He spoke to goals on funding options for public and private partnerships, incentives and tax-based tools, flexible capital sources, zoning and land use to leverage downtown infrastructure alignment. He shared that next steps are to solidify partner roles.

Commissioner Tillman thanked DGI, Inc. for their leadership. He noted that a lot of great work is happening. He noted that Greensboro needs an Oktoberfest. He noted that the News and Record parcel serves as a crown jewel, and to offer a year-round world-class ice rink to host sports tournaments.

DGI President Matheny noted that the most resilient places are multi-use facilities.

Commissioner Murphy noted that there continues to be challenges around downtown parking and the loss of the Bellemeade Parking Deck. She shared that the Hopper Trolley is a start to the solution, and more integration for transportation will be key.

Chief Development Officer Beynon noted that 36% of the land inside the greenway is dedicated to parking, either surface or structured parking. He noted that it is a lot for a downtown environment. He shared that the goal is to focus on the access and connectivity.

DGI President Matheny confirmed that parking is often raised issue. He noted the Board will hear news on two (2) redevelopment projects soon with updates on parking.

Commissioner Cooke noted the locked private lots that sit empty nights and weekends. She noted that this is a great idea, and it is exciting to think about downtown strategic development. She questioned how we can continue supporting this project.

Chief Development Officer Beynon noted that as we move forward, we can bring forward the draft materials and the ability to connect with direct emails and links to share information. He shared his openness to have further discussion with the Board on their input on the planning. He hopes to come back as the plan further develops.

DGI President Matheny noted that Beynon and his team will be back in June. He noted that we had 2.3M unique visits at the Coliseum, and we had 9.3M unique visits in downtown Greensboro.

Chairman Alston and Commissioner Cashion voiced concern regarding the lack of incorporation of the International Civil Rights Center and Museum into the presentations, as we have a National Historic Site in Greensboro.

Chief Development Officer Beynon confirmed condensing the presentation and not excluding it in the future.

III. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business for this agenda.

IV. ADJOURN

There being no further business, the work session was adjourned by unanimous consent at 5:28 p.m.

Robin Keller
Clerk

Melvin "Skip" Alston
Chairman