



**GUILFORD COUNTY
WORK SESSION FOR THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2018 AT 2:00 P.M.
IN THE BLUE ROOM OF THE OLD GUILFORD COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

PRESENT: Chairman Alan Branson, Vice Chairman Justin Conrad, Commissioners Melvin “Skip” Alston, Jeff Phillips, Carlvena Foster, Carolyn Coleman, Alan Perdue, Hank Henning

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: County Manager Marty Lawing, County Attorney Mark Payne, Clerk to the Board Robin Keller, Tax Director Ben Chavis, Deputy County Manager Clarence Grier, Animal Services Director Jorge Ortega, Human Resources Director Karen Fishel, Planning Director Leslie Bell, members of the media, and citizens of the County.

Call to Order

Chairman Branson welcomed all those present and called the meeting to order at 2:10 P.M.

Animal Shelter Design Update

Deputy County Manager Clarence Grier introduced the item and shared that several staff meetings had taken place since the last commissioner meeting and they had received direction from the Board to re-assess the design.

Animal Services Director Jorge Ortega discussed the design plans and presented two options for the animal shelter.

Commissioner Henning questioned the capacity size of each design option.

Ortega stated that the County does have a large number for licensing for 620 animals; however, no more than 300 animals could be housed at the current, outdated, facility.

Ortega reviewed the ongoing and current issues with housing canines and felines in the existing facility and the needs they would like to address in the new facility. He noted that the current medical area is located in three different locations triplicating the work and increasing likelihood of spreading disease.

Commissioner Phillips questioned the difference between costs for Medical in both Option A and B. He noted that by reducing the design's square footage by removing both kennel and medical surgery spaces could also cut design costs.

Commissioner Coleman questioned if the County provided spay and neuter services at present.

Ortega stated that the County does complete approximately 2,700 spay and neuters in-house at the facility annually. He further noted that those numbers did not include the ongoing partnerships with the Humane Society that is approximately 800 per year.

Ortega shared that he would recommend adding an education center to the new facility. He noted, that given the two major disasters in Guilford County in the last eight months, freed-up spaces could easily be used as an emergency shelter if needed.

Chairman Branson noted his appreciation of the County Animal Services staff and their efforts in animal rescue in the eastern counties effected by Hurricane Florence. He asked about the emergency housing of animals at the shelter and if shelter had been provided.

Ortega stated that the new design would address the problems concerning the control of spreading disease. He spoke to the shelter in High Point as being designed to assist in emergency situations. He elaborated the proposed intake area and support areas of the plans. He provided the July population totals. He spoke to the plans to develop a shelter that can accommodate a larger animal population for things like spay/neuter.

Commissioner Alston asked about the 14-day length-of-stay for all animals the County is currently implementing.

Ortega shared that the goal is to have a consistent 14-day length of stay. Ortega noted that currently the average length of stay was 16 days. Ortega spoke to Option B, at 27,000 square feet with 268 animal holding spaces, and an expected cost of approximately 11.8M. He noted that this option does have a highly likelihood of being outgrown within the first few months of moving in. He provided the difference in space totals of Option A that would provide space, relevant to human population growth, for ten-to-fifteen years. He spoke to the different options regarding the sizes of the facilities, and outlined the major differences between them.

Commissioner Phillips inquired about the sections in the presentation and if all projected costs were included in the presentation data as he could not make the line items total.

Ortega noted that the costs that were left off had to do with hallways and other portions of the facility that were fixed in the design and costs were set with either option. He shared that it

would be at least two years before they could move into a new facility. He shared the costs concerning medical supplies and services. Overall, Ortega noted, that the medical costs were a significant impact on the annual budget. He spoke to reducing the cost of utilities by providing a facility with lots of natural light. Ortega reviewed the costs savings on operations; with the current facility budgeted over 400K for operational costs and medical services at 142K; 136K annually for routine maintenance and repairs; and 56K in cleaning supplies for our current facilities.

Commissioner Henning shared that he would like to see the total cost of ownership and annual maintenance for each year ongoing. As an example, he asked, what types of lighting and equipment we would be placed in the facility to reduce overall utility costs. Henning asked about the total cost of expenditures not listed in the data today. He asked Ortega to provide more information concerning what the cost savings measures would be.

County Attorney Mark Payne noted that occupancy sensors were now required fitting for all building codes and all new construction would undergo scrutiny for being energy efficient.

Chairman Branson cautioned that the Board would need to select a design that would be conducive to staff in preparation for robust design projections.

Vice Chairman Conrad noted that there would not be a lot of operational savings between Option A or B, but rather more of a cost difference between how the current shelter is running operations in comparison with either Option A or B.

Ortega shared that staffing of the new facility would likely undergo an increase especially in medical staff. Savings would be located in the reduction of costs currently expended for obtaining outside professional services.

Commissioner Alston echoed Henning's assertion and asked what the operating costs would be for both Option A or B; and what those cost differences are in relation to what the County is paying at present; he also asked to be provided with additional operating costs between Option A and Option B.

Ortega spoke to the different required by code options set by North Carolina and shared that the education center has opportunities to generate a more revenues over time.

Chairman Branson spoke to the difficulty of talking numbers without the final blueprint design.

Vice Chairman Conrad also noted that the savings were measured between what the County presently has in comparison to the two options.

Ortega spoke to the benefits associated with the upgraded facility.

Discussion ensued among the Board concerning the operating costs and the business analysis of the options.

Commissioner Cashion asked about Option B and the little room for growth from opening day. She shared that it would be wiser to invest in a facility for the future.

Ortega spoke to the nuances between the options.

Commissioner Coleman asked for a construction analysis cost.

Ortega shared that Option A would provide the County with a facility would save overall taxpayer dollars, and emphasized the cost-saving opportunities ahead.

Commissioner Phillips asked about the previous six months of dog and cat retention and intake numbers.

Ortega spoke to the numbers and what the consistencies have been in numbers from the Budget Department. Ortega recommended Option A. He shared the challenges that come along with selecting the best facility.

Commissioner Phillips noted that the Board had voted to expend 12M on this project at the County's last annual budget session. He asked if Ortega truly believed that the additional 2M was absolutely necessary.

Ortega noted the constant need to increase the size of the facility to accommodate the pet populations.

Commissioner Cashion asked for a projection of how long the Option A facility would last for the County.

Ortega shared that, in direct proportion to human population, the facility would last for ten to fifteen years if the population increases remain consistent.

Vice Chairman Conrad made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Foster, to Accept Option A For The Design of the Future Animal Shelter and to Increase the Associated Project Ordinance to 14.8M

Commissioner Alston shared his support for Option A.

Commissioner Coleman asked about a previous report regarding the control of animal populations, and if information could be received regarding future growth projections; progressive programs that will be incorporated in Guilford County. She shared her concerns to build a facility that could potentially have empty spaces when complete. She noted that to not exhaust all avenues beforehand would be a waste of tax payer money.

Commissioner Perdue noted that Option B did not come with a future expansion report, and would Ortega be able to provide that report to the Board for future study. He noted that Option A had one included.

Commissioner Cashion asked for additional information in order to accurately address the public on the project so that information may be passed with full transparency.

Commissioner Alston asked about the cost alternatives if the bid comes in lower. Alston shared that the allocation of up to 14.8M; but would not know the actual cost of the facility design construction until staff went out to bid. He noted further that if the bids came in lower or came in higher, the County would have to adjust and come back to the Board for further leadership.

Ortega confirmed and noted that in providing a high enough number will ensure that the shelter will be one that would be used by future Guilford County generations.

Commissioner Phillips expressed his appreciation for Mr. Ortega's diligent work.

Vice Chairman Conrad recognized chairman of the Animal Advisory Committee, Carl Ashby, and expressed appreciation for all of their support on this project.

Motion Carried unanimously

Development Ordinance Re-Write Update

Planning Director Leslie Bell shared that his goal was to ensure that the re-write was transparent, meets general statute requirements, improves business practices, and is more business friendly. Bell introduced Planning Board and Board of Adjustment members. He introduced Project Manager Jackie Stewart who provided the Power Point Presentation (PPP).

Jackie Stewart outlined the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). She reviewed the project schedule and introduced the steering committee. She shared that the current General Development ordinances was last updated in the 1990s, and noted that staff have done a great job with keeping up with text amendments that come down from the state. She stated that they have been holding several stakeholder interviews as well.

Ms. Stewart spoke to the project and discussed the project schedule. She noted the phases that were involved to reach the project schedule. She shared the updates that happen annually within planning zoning laws; the process of the steering committees to review recommendations and the eventual adoption. She spoke to the stakeholder interviews dating back to June 2018. She shared what the interviews deduced and what the expectations of the communities had been. She noted that the information provided consistency between jurisdictions and among municipalities.

Ms. Stewart emphasized that the UDO does not include unincorporated cities. She cited the differences among activities that occur on designated lands. She discussed the Voluntary Agriculture District (VAD) and elaborated the growth tiers that could be considered for annexation among municipalities. She discussed Guilford County's comprehensive plan and spoke to the 2016 dividing area plans. She spoke consistency land use laws. She noted that as they move toward the public workshops they will gain more information on the strengths and weakness. She shared that they also review other jurisdictions ordinances to look for consistency. She shared that the process of review is expected to take 15-18 months prior to the completion of a draft document.

Stewart Project Manager David Petton provided the UDO update highlights concerning the progressive planning and zoning efforts. He shared that there were a lot of unique characteristics in Guilford County regarding being on the forefront of planning and zoning. Over the last 10 years more, he said, counties and jurisdictions are moving toward Guilford County's long standing model. He noted that the new directions in comparison to previous typical practices. He

shared the Guilford County Planning Board duties and the ability to streamline processes to expedite service. He discussed the rezoning approvals that will ensure future development.

Commissioner Coleman expressed concern that the study did not include the smaller, incorporated areas. She asked about the ordinances that did not fall into unincorporated areas and how those areas would be addressed with zoning issues. And, what were the best practices for the incorporated areas. For the unincorporated areas, she asked if the the Stewart people recommended any housing ordinances such as group homes in unincorporated areas.

Petton explained the differences inherent in the ordinances and jurisdictions. Petton emphasized that to implement stricter zoning districts to curtail unfair zoning practices.

Ms. Stewart spoke to the question and provided additional information.

County Attorney Mark Payne related development of the state laws and statutes.

Commissioner Phillips questioned who the members of the steering committee were from in the community. He asked Leslie Bell to provide a list of the members on the steering committee and sought a commissioner serve on the committee.

Ms. Stewart spoke to the board and the make up of its members. Very diverse group.

Chairman Branson expressed concern for ensuring limiting pushback from the smaller communities. He noted that the county continues to work toward a business and development friendly ordinance.

Human Resources Compensation Study—Peer Review Group

Human Resources Director Karen Fishel introduced the item and spoke to the data sheet provided. She reviewed the proposed study peer group and shared that there were several more that would be included in this study than in the study from 2014. She noted that with more data collection, better data can be collected to ensure the County would make good decisions. She discussed the list and the benefits to casting a wider net to compile large data. She also emphasized that many of the counties could not reply to the County's request.

Commissioner Alston asked about if the commissioners would be provided a list of those counties that respond. He asked what the salary and positions that were. He inquired about Chatham County and why it was not added to the list. He emphasized that he wanted an all-grade study from janitors to department directors.

County Manager Marty Lawing spoke to the question and emphasized that it was unknown which counties would respond to the request and therefore by casting a wider net would ensure fruitful results.

Fishel assured the Board that the study would be a County-wide study of all pay grades.

Chairman Branson expressed his desire for the municipality of Mebane to be added for consideration as it continues to grow.

Commissioner Phillips asked for clarity concerning which counties were added from the 2014 study.

Fishel explained that the additions were noted on the handout.

Commissioner Coleman asked about additional details of the study.

Commissioner Perdue asked about the study containing work place work load in comparison to other counties.

Commissioner Alston requested a copy of the 2014 study. He asked if length of employment would be collected as part of the study.

Fishel elaborated that the data is on a three-week turn around on the request of data. Fishel stated that it was unknown as she had not seen the actual study yet.

Commissioner Foster asked a detail of the timeline of the study to track progress.

Commissioner Coleman noted that fairness among study participants.

Lawing stated that once the County had compiled the information, a fair determination would be made. He noted that the County would do everything to erode gains for each employee. Things like tenure and annual reviews would be considered.

Commissioner Cashion asked if benefits and cost of living would be provided as part of the study and would those increments be considered.

Chairman Branson emphasized the need to have Mebane considered. He requested that Mebane be added to the list.

The Board agreed by unanimous consent to the addition of Mebane to the peer group list and to accept the list.

Tax Revaluation Cycle

Tax Director Ben Chavis introduced the item and stated the reasons for why he believes a reappraisal is necessary. He reviewed the pros and cons of moving from a five-year reappraisal to a four-year reappraisal. Chavis noted that a more rapid cycle schedule helps with more accurate property values. He stated that to ensure fairness and property equity, shorter lengths of time between reappraisals was necessary. He shared that a reappraisal was previously on an eight-year cycle. He noted several reappraisals he had been a part of and none were better than 2017. Chavis noted that the properties are selling at a much higher rate than we have the property valued at. He shared that recent reports have shared that home prices have increased nationally by 6.9 percent year over year from April 2017 to April 2018. He provided technology that would be used to implement the reappraisal. He discussed the nuances of the reappraisal tax process. He noted the inequities that accumulate. He noted that fifty-five counties were on an eight-year cycle. He shared the Mecklenburg County after the 2019 reappraisal would be shifting to a four-

year reappraisal. He discussed the number of formal appeals the Tax Department received. He noted that in 2012 and 2017 they were able to balance the property tax.

Commissioner Alston asked for clarification regarding the sale ratio prices.

Chavis provided background on the projection where if the trends hold up over the next few years, houses will be selling for more than the Tax Department has them appraised. He emphasized the need to shift to a four-year reappraisal to adjust for 2022. He stated that the tax rate increased to 5%.

Discussion ensued among the Board regarding the tax values in 2016.

Commissioner Phillips stated that he would not be in support of a tax increase to move toward a shorter four-year appraisal. He noted that in his opinion shorter cycles would be a tax increase for those homeowners living inside the boundaries of municipalities.

Commissioner Henning emphasized Phillips statement by stating that he did not feel it necessary to move at this time. All we are doing is taking advantage of a good economy and placing the burden on the tax payers.

Commissioner Conrad echoed their sentiments noting the impacts on economic drivers such as salary and cost of living.

Commissioner Alston shared his industry perspective stated that the Board is robbing the homeowners of money.

Discussion ensued among the Board concerning the raising of taxes to assuage municipalities from reaping the benefits from the homeowners carry the burdens.

Commissioner Coleman shared that she could not determine if a shift from six to four years is necessary.

Commissioner Alston stated that he was in support of a four-year reappraisal.

Commissioner Perdue stated the market values mattered most and would not support a shorter cycle.

Chavis stated that the proof that the County would benefit was in the number of appeals received in the years of 2012 and 2017. He said that in each case the appeals came from the commercial property owners and not private homeowners.

Commissioner Phillips motioned, Vice Chairman Conrad seconded, to move to remain a five-year reappraisal cycle

Commissioner Cashion noted that the Board would need to make a decision this month if a change was coming. She questioned if a decision needs to be made today.

Chavis shared his reasons for wanting to move to a four-year reappraisal and shared that if the Board forwent a change in the cycle that the next opportunity to change it would be in 2022.

The Board thanked Mr. Chavis and his team for all of their work.

Motions Carried: 8:1

Coleman (Abstains)

Green Building Program

Planning Director Leslie Bell discussed the Green Building Program. He outlined the rebate structure. He shared the process for the rebate program. Individuals would be limited to a five-year wait period between rebate requests for the same permitted project and rebates would not exceed \$2,500. He provided a code chart which displayed both the City of Greensboro and High Point have approved a similar green building program. The program, he said, would be based on applicable minimum index levels necessary to meet energy Star qualifications at time of project completion. elaborated the different energy homes and noted that the goal is HERS 85% energy efficiency.

Inspections Manager Luis Jimenez discussed the process of the energy-efficient program. He spoke to the application process and permit issuance; Energy Smart Builder; He noted that once the requirements are met, a rebate will be issued to the homeowner.

Discussion ensued among the Board concerning the costs for energy-efficient home appliances in relation to the rebates applied.

Jimenez emphasized that the program was focused to new construction projects. He stated that it would too expensive to convert older homes to green homes.

Representative from Trebic shared that the point of the program is to incentivize people to build green homes. She noted that it was not a permanent program.

Commissioner Henning clarified that the program was for new projects only.

Commissioner Coleman emphasized the need to save money and the Guilford County did not complete the upgrades in County buildings.

Lawing shared that many upgrades have been implemented.

Commissioner Coleman moved, Alston seconded, to move forward with the Green Building

Motion carried unanimously

Adjourn

By unanimous consent the Board adjourned at 5:06 P.M.

Chairman

Clerk