

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ROWAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FEBRUARY 8-10, 2001 – PLANNING RETREAT
MID PINES INN & GOLF CLUB**

PRESENT: Steve Blount, Chairman
Gus Andrews, Vice-Chairman
Arnold Chamberlain, Member
Frank Tadlock, Member
Leda Belk, Member

Also present were Tim Russell-County Manager, Rita Foil-Clerk to the Board, Leslie Earnhardt-Finance Director, Don Conner-Director of Environmental Services and Ken Deal-Director of Administration.

Chairman Blount called the retreat to order at 10:30 am on February 8, 2001 and invited the Board to “look to the future”, stating that this retreat is for “vision” and not for “budget” issues. Chairman Blount also added that because of the budget, some of the topics discussed might not be adopted. Also, if there were any topics not discussed at this retreat, there would be workshops conducted at a later date.

Chairman Blount introduced facilitator Larry Parks from Centralina Council of Government (COG).

Mr. Parks reviewed the ground rules for discussion and encouraged the Board to fully participate. Mr. Parks began by inviting each Commissioner to list their individual goals that they would like to see accomplished during their term of office.

Commissioner Andrews listed the schools, economic development and concerns about senior citizens on a fixed income. As the population increases, establish a tax base to keep from increasing the tax rate.

Commissioner Belk listed the parks, schools, senior citizen concerns, growing the tax base, developing a water/sewer distribution, identification of those

that need technical training, economic development and recruitment of the Industrial Park and an overall improvement of the quality of life.

Commissioner Chamberlain listed a focus on government within the framework of the budget, accountability, technical training with an emphasis on Rowan Cabarrus Community College (RCCC), EMS-to have the best trained staff, a security system for the courthouse, innovative ways to get money-look at privatizing some services, concerns for the retired and children, and increasing the tax base.

Commissioner Tadlock discussed the schools and education, water concerns, the master plan for the 300 block of North Main-emphasizing parking, the South Rowan Library, farmland preservation and the parks.

Chairman Blount emphasized education and working closer with the School Board, Economic Development and a change of direction, managing growth and concerns about water. Chairman Blount added his concerns about the infrastructure in regards to the schools.

Commissioners discussed different views on moratoriums, cluster development concepts, zoning and control of development to protect farmland and where to build low-income housing. Mr. Parks suggested 'bus tours' to add insight in these areas.

OVERVIEW OF ROWAN COUNTY:

Dr. Bill McCoy, from the UNC-Charlotte Urban Institute, presented an overview and review of the I-85 zoning and interchanges. Dr. McCoy discussed the potential for growth in these areas and stated the question for Rowan County is where to develop next?

Dr. McCoy urged the Board to think about the future and to compare what others are doing in regards to the textile and tobacco industries, the loss of jobs in the Piedmont area and what the job market will be like in Rowan County. Dr. McCoy urged the Board to be prepared, that things will need to be done differently and the Board will need to decide what will be done differently. Dr. McCoy added that there would be risks involved.

Dr. McCoy discussed Summit Corporate Center and to begin looking at locating the retail market in the business park and added that Rowan County will not compete for the high end office construction going on along I-77.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

Commissioners discussed:

- The interchange on Hwy 152 and I-85.
- Providing Fiber Optics to Summit Corporate Center
- Pursuing the possibility of a UNC-Charlotte satellite campus at Rowan Cabarrus Community College (RCCC).
- Connection of RCCC to the industrial park.
- Need for an Economic Strategic Plan
- Partnership with Landowners
- Special tax districts

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION:

Randy Harrell, EDC Director and Jake Alexander, Board Chair, discussed the larger growth in the technical area vs. the industrial area.

Mr. Harrell informed the Board that they have a consultant that will help identify the county needs, make contacts and determine which companies would be conducive to Rowan County. This consultant will gather information and determines what makes Rowan County unique. This study will provide the necessary information.

It was mentioned that between 8,000 and 10,000 Rowan County residents travel from Rowan County to Charlotte each day.

Mr. Harrell and Mr. Alexander talked about this being a slow time, therefore a time to plan for the future.

Mr. Harrell gave an update on the upcoming move of the EDC office into the new Gateway facility on West Innes Street and the attraction this will cause for a different clientele.

PLANNING:

Marion Lytle briefly discussed a water extension plan and the use of Town Creek and estimated the cost for a pump lift station would be between \$250,000 to \$500,000.

Mr. Lytle reviewed the zoning along I-85 and noted the locations of multi-family, industrial, high residential and the ETJ areas, adding that these areas were designed for residential and commercial use so that they could be zoned for protection.

Commissioners discussed tightening up zoning along I-85, Hwy 152, Hwy 70 and Hwy 601. The Board listened to Mr. Lytle as he discussed Land Use Planning, RA zoning and looking at a 10% allowance, Rowan County's Strategic Plan and Farmland Preservation. Mr. Parks reviewed Smart Growth and asked "how will Rowan County be developed in a smart way."

JOINT MEETING BETWEEN SALISBURY AND ROWAN COUNTY:

Chairman Blount opened the joint meeting between Salisbury and Rowan County and led a discussion on the benefit of working together to bring water to the south rowan area.

Mayor Susan Kluttz presented the county with a framed picture and resolution of the water agreement signed in December 2000.

ROWAN SALISBURY SCHOOLS:

Dr. Wiley J. Doby, Superintendent, provided opening remarks and thanked the Board for their support. Also in attendance were School Board members Clyde Miller, Kay Wright Norman, David Aycoth and Martha West along with staff members Gene Miller, Sharon Deal, Mathew Sullivan and Colby Cochran. Staff gave a review of the history of the three-year agreement between the schools and the county for funding at the State PPA (per pupil average).

The Board was presented with packets and staff reviewed, through a power point presentation, the achievement measures and scores from elementary through high school levels.

Mr. Miller handed out the Rowan-Salisbury Schools Priority Facility Needs report and talked to the Board about the projected growth and cost by reviewing the needs for additions, renovations and new facilities.

The Board was thanked for the teacher supply funding and told that there has been a tremendous gain from this funding.

The Board discussed the importance of the need to improve the image of the schools and the importance of having a plan in place, referencing the Class of '99 plan. Chairman Blount asked the Board for a Strategic plan document.

Both Boards discussed "teaching the test" method and the importance of teaching concepts and critical thinking skills.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Wayne Ashworth, Beth Connell and Art Delaney presented an overview of existing Emergency Services in Rowan County. The goal for EMS is to have an eight-minute response time and the continued need for an educator/trainer for emergency services.

Staff reviewed the need for a new station in the southwest area and presented the Board with 7200 names on a petition from the Barber Junction area. The Board was told that this is the hardest area to cover and has a high volume. It would require six people to staff a new station. Staff recommended looking at the 300 Block of North Main as a possible location for a Salisbury site.

Staff also handed the Board a chart of “Rowan County-EMS Number of Emergency Calls By Unit” and discussed the call and response time.

Mr. Delaney gave a presentation on the status of fire protection in Rowan County by reviewing a five-year management plan. Mr. Delaney explained the need for an update the area of HAZ MAT (hazardous materials).

ENVIRONMENT AND RECREATION:

Jim Foltz, Parks Director and Board members Don Bringle and Pat Benfield came before the Board and presented a review of the Parks expressing the need to acquire new property for future use. Mr. Foltz asked for a committee to acquire land.

Mr. Foltz showed the Board the plans for the new handicap playground and gave an update on the parking area and restrooms at Dan Nicholas Park.

Mr. Foltz discussed the Nature Center and the continued need for renovations and added that the Parks Board would support this cause. Mr. Russell added that it is time to either “fix it or let it go.” It was suggested to contact the state for expertise and funding in this area.

LIBRARY:

Phil Barton, Library Director and staff member Lucinda Epperson gave a review and an update on the South Rowan Library explaining the layout of the new facility and the plans for fundraising. Staff referred to the handouts in the packets.

Chairman Blount talked about a visual deck to enjoy the greenway and park system.

Emphasis on the Library was mention to be as much a part of education as the schools. It was noted to be “lifelong education.”

JUSTICE CENTER:

Mr. Russell reviewed with the Board, through drawings, the proposed site plan for the 300 block of North Main Street in Salisbury. Mr. Russell informed the Board of the benefits of the successful Pretrial Service Program and the savings to the county by delaying the 48-bed pod addition. The site of Hometown Furniture will be demolished and a parking area will be created. Plans are to move the Magistrates office to the restaurant on Lee Street, which will enable tighter security at the courthouse, since it is currently operated 24-hours per day.

COUNTY MANAGER TYPE STYLE:

Chairman Blount reviewed with the Board the County Manager style of government that is practiced in Rowan County. Mr. Russell, the County Manager and Rita Foil, Clerk to the Board, are the only ones that report directly to the Board of Commissioners. The remaining staff reports to the County Manager. The Board cannot “fire” an employee; only the County Manager has this authority. It is the responsibility of the County Manager to keep the Board of Commissioners informed.

FARMERS MARKET:

The Board discussed the farmers market, which is now located in the old Brindles building. The discussion concerned whether or not the Board wanted to get involved by providing a building and then the City of Salisbury would staff the facility. The Board discussed the possibility of being involved in the “thinking process.” Funding was also talked about and that there are other needs of greater concern. It was suggested that staff to review this further.

CABLE ACCESS CHANNEL:

The Board looked in to the area of having the Board of Commission meetings on cable television. It was mentioned that there might be Commissioners that would “play to the camera” and others that may at times “look foolish.” The Board discussed the concern of public access and that the meetings were open to the public to attend if they wanted to. Funding was discussed and

the Board would support this if it were something that the public wanted. Timewarner does have a studio for use.

ROWAN CABARRUS COMMUNITY COLLEGE:

The Board discussed the bond for RCCC and the match required from Rowan County. In order for RCCC to receive the funding from the state, there must be a match from Rowan County. The Board mentioned that RCCC is a critical link between the schools and the workforce.

DSS FACILITY NEEDS:

Discussion took place on the visions for DSS and the need for additional space. Commissioners Blount and Chamberlain along with Mr. Russell and Ken Deal are working on this project.

PRIORITIES:

The following where listed as possible priorities:

1. Security System for the Courthouse
2. South Rowan Water Project
3. Space for DSS
4. Education / Schools for RCCC – Current expense excluding bond issue
5. South Rowan Library
6. 300 Block
7. EMS Station Trainer/Educator Haz Mat
8. Tightening up the Land Use Plan
9. Farmlands and Open Space
10. Satellite Campus for UNC-Charlotte at RCCC
11. Bear Habitat/Nature Center
12. Revisit and Review the Strategic Plan
13. Acquisition of land for the Parks

The Board results of the top priorities for 2001-2002 are as follows:

PRIORITY	RATING		
	H	M	L
SOUTH ROWAN WATER SYSTEM	5		
EDUCATION SCHOOLS/RCCC CURRENT FUNDING	5		

EMS NEW STATION: HAZ MAT: TRAINER/EDUC.	4	1	
SATALLITE CAMPUS FOR UNCC AT RCCC/ PURSUE POTENTIAL	4	1	
SECURITY SYSTEM AT THE COURTHOUSE	3	2	
SOUTH ROWAN LIBRARY	3	2	
TIGHTEN-UP LAND USE PLAN	3	1	1
FARMLAND AND OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION	3	1	1
BEAR HABITAT/NATURE CENTER	2	1	1
SPACE FOR DSS	2	1	2
AQUIRE LAND FOR THE PARKS	1	2	2
300 BLOCK NORTH MAIN	1	4	
REVISIT & REVIEW STRATEGIC PLAN		4	1

Commissioners led an open discussion on the format of the Planning Retreat, which the Board agreed they liked the format and discussing visions rather than “dollars and cents.”

There being no further discussions, Chairman Blount adjourned the planning retreat.

Sincerely,

Rita K. Foil
Clerk to the Board