

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
March 1, 2004 – 9:00 AM
J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Present: Gus Andrews, Chairman
Frank Tadlock, Vice-Chairman
Leda Belk, Member
Chad Mitchell, Member
Steve Blount, Member

The County Manager, the Clerk to the Board, the County Attorney and the Finance Director were also present.

Chairman Andrews convened the meeting at 9:00 am.

Commissioner Tadlock provided the Invocation and Commissioner Belk led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADDITIONS

Commissioner Blount added discussion regarding marketing efforts.

LIAISON REPORTS

Commissioner Frank Tadlock mentioned that he recently attended the Rowan Cabarrus Community College Board of Trustee's meeting and expressed their appreciation for the support from the Commissioner's for the overwhelming challenge that the college has been faced with and is sending "thanks" from them.

Commissioner Steve Blount expressed a public apology to County Manager Tim Russell for the comments that Commissioner Blount made at a previous meeting concerning the placement of towers in Rowan County. Commissioner Blount stated that he respected Mr. Russell's opinions and regrets any bad feelings.

CONSIDERATION OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.
Commissioner Blount seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following items:

- A. Approval of the minutes of the February 11, 2004 Special Called Meeting
- B. Update on Rowan-Salisbury Schools Classroom Supplies
- C. Budget Amendments

PRESENTATION ON THE UPDATE ON THE YADKIN-PEE DEE LAKES PROJECT

Bill Medlin provided the Board with an update regarding the Yadkin-Pee Dee Lakes Project.

Mr. Medlin discussed the “Central Park” strategy and the need to increase overnight stays from tourists visiting the region. Mr. Medlin highlighted the economic impact of developing the Central Park strategy and stressed that tourist attending cultural events or historic sites “spend 36% more money; they stay longer and they will come back,” “if they’ve had a good experience.”

Mr. Medlin reviewed the “two-pronged” strategy, which was created to tap cultural and heritage tourism and to also create the infrastructure that is important to creating an entrepreneurial climate.

Mr. Medlin highlighted the Small Town Area Revitalization (STAR) Project and said 24 to 30 communities had been identified in the region that would benefit from the project.

Mr. Medlin discussed the Uwharrie Cycling Center, explaining that cyclists are an extremely attractive target with high levels of income and an interest in the types of amenities that would be developed in Central Park.

Mr. Medlin mentioned the feasibility study regarding plans for an Uwharrie Chautauqua.

Mr. Medlin expressed excitement regarding the programs and thanked the Board for its support. Mr. Medlin encouraged the Board to contact him with any questions.

Commissioner Blount asked Mr. Medlin to provide the Board with a geographic description of the size of the Central Park. Mr. Medlin responded that the area consists of the following counties: Rowan, Davidson, Randolph, Stanly, Montgomery, Anson and Richmond. Mr. Medlin described the area as “principally following the southern half of the Yadkin River into the watershed as it forms the Pee Dee River.” Mr. Medlin said that there are slightly over 3 ½ million people in the areas surrounding the seven (7) counties.

Mr. Medlin emphasized that people are interested in open space, scenic drives and nature trails.

Commissioner Blount referred to discussions held by the Board at its recent retreat concerning the Greenways. Commissioner Blount mentioned the business opportunities for small businesses due to the Greenways.

Commissioner Tadlock inquired about trails designated for horseback riding. Mr. Medlin said that horse trails are the second most popular within the Uwharrie National Forest. Mr. Medlin reported the equestrian element in North Carolina has approximately a \$750 million annual impact on the economy.

Chairman Andrews asked, "Where are the majority of the tourists hitting?" Mr. Medlin responded the North Carolina Zoo, the Seagrove Potteries, Transportation Museum and Historic Sites. Mr. Medlin said the combined tourism numbers are very high and that the tourists need to be convinced to stay overnight.

Chairman Andrews thanked Mr. Medlin for a "most informative" presentation.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR UNANIMOUS ROAD NAME PETITIONS FOR WALLACE LANE AND POPS RIVER

Fredda Greer of the Planning Department introduced the newest staff member, Columbus Hawks. Ms. Greer said Mr. Hawks was the GIS Technician.

Ms. Greer said the first petition was a Unanimous Petition for Wallace Lane with one (1) property owner. Ms. Greer said Mr. Wallace's representative, Mr. Bobby Kemp, had delivered the petition.

Ms. Greer explained that there were already two (2) mobile homes on the property and that he was proposing to place two (2) additional mobile homes on the property. Ms. Greer reported that this would not be allowed under the family mobile home park ordinance. Ms. Greer said the property was subdivided with road frontage for one (1) of the mobile homes. With the placement, three (3) homes are now serviced by Mr. Wallace's driveway making it necessary to name the driveway.

Ms. Greer said staff recommended approval of Wallace Lane.

Chairman Andrews opened the public hearing to entertain citizen comment regarding Wallace Lane.

With no citizens wishing to address the Board, Chairman Andrews closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Blount moved to approve the road name of Wallace Lane. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and passed unanimously.

Ms. Greer said the second petition was for a road that had been identified by ASI as meeting the criteria to be named. Ms. Greer said the owners had submitted a petition to name the road Pops River Road.

Ms. Greer said staff recommends approval of the proposed road name.

Chairman Andrews opened the public hearing to entertain citizen comment regarding Pops River Road.

With no citizens wishing to address the Board, Chairman Andrews closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Mitchell moved to approve the road name as recommended. Commissioner Blount seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**PUBLIC HEARING FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION FOR ROAD NAME
PETITIONS FOR MORGAN ACRES DRIVE, PATTON LANE, JENNA COURT,
CANYON LANE, TRYON ROAD, DENTON DRIVE**

Morgan Acres Drive

Ms. Greer said Morgan Acres Drive was proposed for a road that services Morgan Acres Mobile Home Park. Ms. Greer said there are seven property owners along the road going into the park. Ms. Greer said ASI had identified the road as meeting the criteria for naming. Ms. Greer reported that a property owner had submitted a petition with two of seven signatures. Ms. Greer explained that four signatures were required for a majority petition and that she had returned the petition to the property owner to obtain more signatures.

Ms. Greer said to date, there has been no response and staff proposed to proceed with the selected name.

Patton Lane

Ms. Greer said ASI had identified the road as meeting the criteria to be named in August of 2002. Ms. Greer said the property owners had requested to submit a petition but to date a petition has not been received. Ms. Greer said the property owners were contacted again but still with no response. Ms. Greer said Agnes Allman had contacted the Planning Department and said that she and her nephew, Jerry Kennerly, did not object to Patton Lane.

Staff recommends Patton Lane be approved.

Jenna Court

Ms. Greer said ASI had identified the road as meeting the criteria to be named on August 20, 2002. Ms. Greer described the road as being located off of Pine Ridge Road and said

that the property owners had been notified but had not submitted a petition for the road name.

Ms. Greer said staff proposed the road name of Jenna Court.

Canyon Lane

Ms. Greer reported that the road is located off of Kidd Street and services Kidds Trailer Park. Ms. Greer said that ASI had identified the road as meeting the criteria to be named. Ms. Greer said that property owners had been contacted but no response had been received.

Staff proposed to name the road Canyon Lane.

Tryon Road & Denton Drive

Ms. Greer said the road was set for public hearing on October 22, 2002 after being identified by ASI as meeting the criteria for naming. Ms. Greer recalled that at the hearing, residents brought to the attention of staff that there were actually two roads side-by-side that should be named. Staff withdrew the proposal to review the situation and found that there were two roads.

Ms. Greer said staff had notified all property owners with no response. Staff recommended naming the two roads off of Hwy 152 East, Tryon Road and Denton Drive.

Chairman Andrews opened the public hearing to entertain citizen input regarding the proposed road names of Morgan Acres Drive, Patton Lane, Jenna Court, Canyon Lane, Tryon Road and Denton Drive.

With no citizens wishing to address the Board, Chairman Andrews closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Blount moved to approve the road names per staff's recommendations and Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH – CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION TASK FORCE

Chairman Andrews explained that each year the month of March is recognized as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Chairman Andrews turned the meeting over to Commissioner Belk who serves as the Board's liaison for the Child Abuse Prevention Task Force.

Commissioner Belk said the task force would be called together to review protocol to ensure that children are protected. Commissioner Belk said she would report back to the Board after the task force meeting.

Commissioner Belk reported that in an effort to keep up with "where the children are," a form that was approved in Raleigh is sent to all group homes requiring them to notify the

local Department of Social Services within seventy-two hours of the arrival of a child at the home.

Commissioner Belk expressed appreciation to the “folks in Raleigh” that helped implement the procedures.

Chairman Andrews thanked Commissioner Belk for her efforts and accomplishments for the welfare of the children.

DISCUSSION OF ABC MERGER

Mr. Russell reported that during the past several months the City of Kannapolis had begun making inquiries about developing its own ABC system for the purpose of establishing stores to sell liquor. Mr. Russell explained that the statutes require the City of Kannapolis to join the nearest County ABC system, which would be Rowan County.

Mr. Russell said the City of Kannapolis must join the Rowan County ABC System through some form of a mutual agreement and legislation. Mr. Russell said to accomplish the plan, Kannapolis must seek legislation in short session and that Senator Fletcher Hartsell is assisting with the process.

Mr. Russell said that Rowan County’s legislation was enacted in 1949 and the same formula is still used to distribute any profits realized by the Rowan County ABC System. Mr. Russell referred to the chart in the agenda packets and discussed the profit distributions between the municipalities. Mr. Russell said Kannapolis felt they should be entitled to a much larger share due to the large market they would be “tapping into.”

Mr. Russell said Kannapolis also felt the ABC Board should be expanded from three to five members with assurance that Kannapolis has at least one representative on the Board of three.

Mr. Russell discussed the proposed distribution of profits and the increased profits.

Mr. Russell asked for the Board’s support of the merger so that legislation could be prepared and introduced in short session.

Commissioner Blount said he felt that expanding the ABC Board to five members “would be a good thing” and that he would like the Board of Commissioners to maintain the authority to appoint the members. Commissioner Blount said he did not have a problem guaranteeing that one of the members would be from Kannapolis, with one from Salisbury and the other three as at-large members.

Commissioner Belk also said he had no problem with the ABC Board expanding to five members with one member from Kannapolis, Salisbury and three at-large members.

Commissioner Mitchell asked if Salisbury was guaranteed a slot on the ABC Board. Mr. Russell responded no.

Chairman Andrews said he felt the Board should be expanded and said he was “a little uncomfortable” with specific designations from Salisbury and Kannapolis. Chairman Andrews said the Board of Commissioner should handle the appointments for the ABC Board.

Commissioner Blount felt the largest population centers in the area should have some “moderate guarantee of representation.”

Commissioner Blount moved to accept the Manager’s recommendations on the division of profits and to suggest to Kannapolis and Salisbury that the County would expand the Board to five members, allowing Kannapolis and Salisbury to make a recommendation but with the Commissioners retaining the ultimate authority to appoint. Commissioner Belk seconded the motion.

In response to a query from Commissioner Mitchell, Commissioner Tadlock responded that the ABC Board had considered the issue with Kannapolis for “some time” and the consensus is that with the expansion, there will be additional revenue expected. Commissioner Tadlock said the proposal from the Manager has the support of the ABC Board.

Chairman Andrews repeated the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF BID FOR THE ROWAN NATURE AND LEARNING CENTER MASTER PLAN – PHASE I

Mr. Pendergrass reported on the bids for the construction of the Dan Nicholas Park Nature and Learning Center – Phase I. Mr. Pendergrass said the low bid was received from Wagoner Construction in the amount of \$1,405,700. Mr. Pendergrass emphasized the bid was the base bid and there would be “specialty work” such as rock and cage work that would be outside of the bid amount.

Mr. Pendergrass verified to Commissioner Mitchell that the bid amount was within the budget.

Commissioner Belk moved to approve bid from Wagoner Construction and expressed pleasure that a local contractor was the low bidder. Commissioner Tadlock seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

ADDITIONS:

Marketing Efforts

Commissioner Blount recalled discussion from the Board’s retreat in February regarding marketing and strategic planning efforts. Commissioner Blount said he didn’t feel that

the Board had reached a “final conclusion” concerning the marketing efforts and said he would like the Board to discuss the issue in order to make a decision.

Commissioner Belk said she said the Committee of 100, Economic Development Commission and the Chamber of Commerce had discussed marketing at the retreat but that she personally didn't know which direction groups wanted the Board to go. Commissioner Belk said her vision is to market Rowan County. Commissioner Belk suggested that the chair and representatives from each group meet in an effort to determine “what do they see that they want marketed.” Commissioner Belk said she would like for the County to actually handle the marketing.

Commissioner Tadlock said there were many resources available and said he was curious to hear the goals of the Committee of 100. Commissioner Tadlock felt the Board should wait until the information was received to determine “which part each group may want to play in this.” Commissioner Tadlock said there was a need for a marketing program and said the Board should exercise control of the marketing plan.

Chairman Andrews agreed with Commissioner Tadlock and said the County should “definitely get our name out.” Chairman Andrews said the County's name was getting “out” through Raleigh, Tourism, EDC, and the Yadkin-Pee Dee Project. Chairman Andrews said the EDC is currently the County's marketing entity. Chairman Andrews said he was “a little confused” on the role of the Committee of 100. Chairman Andrews felt the groups should be brought together in the next few weeks in an effort to gain understanding of how they will coordinate amongst themselves. Chairman Andrews said the Board could then correlate its direction. Chairman Andrews said, “The end result is they're going to be asking us for some mega-bucks.”

Commissioner Tadlock stressed that farmers are looking for ways to survive and said he felt that Agri-Tourism would be “a common word” in the future.

Commissioner Belk said that when the groups were brought together, she would like to see the hospitals, colleges, tourism and Yadkin-Pee Dee groups included along with the EDC, Chamber of Commerce and the Committee of 100.

Commissioner Tadlock felt all the groups mentioned were important and said there should be continuity with the program rather than conflict and strategies.

Chairman Andrews pointed out that the County is currently “structured through our EDC” and said the Board should deal with the EDC and allow them to provide direction.

Commissioner Belk differed with Chairman Andrews, saying the Board should involve the EDC but that the Board should “take hold of the project.” Commissioner Belk said she was unsure that the EDC was the agency to handle the marketing for the County due to their focus on the industrial market. Commissioner Belk said she did not want to hand the marketing program to the EDC until the Chamber and the Committee of 100 had assisted in deciding on the marketing effort.

Commissioner Blount discussed the differences between a marketing study and a marketing effort, explaining that the study was the gathering of the information to determine what the target market would be and whom the County would like to attract. Commissioner Blount said the EDC would want to attract the industrial/business clients. Commissioner Blount felt the Chamber, Homebuilders Association, Realtors and Municipal Association might have input as to the approach for the marketing program. Commissioner Blount suggested that the hospital be brought to the table to discuss the study phase of the plan. Commissioner Blount said the study might tell if the timing and/or the focus are right or wrong and that the study would help the Board to focus its resources on the actual marketing.

Commissioner Blount felt it would be beneficial to hold a round table discussion with representatives from all the groups mentioned and possibly the public, to gain an understanding for the next step. Commissioner Blount questioned how the process would work with the Strategic Plan as well as the Land Use Plan process.

Commissioner Tadlock said he was reluctant to suggest that it was urgent to move quickly. Commissioner Tadlock agreed with Commissioner Blount “in order to know where we want to go, we need to know where we have been and where we are.” Commissioner Tadlock suggested gathering the information “in bits and pieces” as opposed to holding a round table discussion first.

Commissioner Blount expressed concern with the timing and said that if the study would impact the budget, the Board would need to approve a line item in the budget for the study.

Commissioner Tadlock suggested researching other counties to see if they have marketing programs and if so, how they were put together. Commissioner Tadlock said he was against spending “big bucks” for a study.

Chairman Andrews agreed that the Board “should move along” but not as if “the house is on fire.” Chairman Andrews said process would tie into a master plan for promoting the County as well as a master plan for the County’s direction. Chairman Andrews felt the role of the Board should emphasize on creating jobs for Rowan County and not take on the role of becoming an advertising, promotion or marketing agency. Chairman Andrews said the Board needed to hear the structure and concepts of the Committee of 100.

Commissioner Tadlock agreed with Chairman Andrews, in that the Board should stay focused on creating jobs. Commissioner Tadlock said he was “reluctant to support anything that would be a promotion to the private sector” and that he would like to know more about the Committee of 100.

Commissioner Belk perceived the Committee of 100 as a group of local citizens that would combine their efforts and resources to support the EDC. Commissioner Belk said

waiting beyond June to make a decision would mean the Board had been “talking four years about marketing and making no moves.”

Commissioner Blount said he had not added the issue to the agenda for the Board to “make a decision today on what the study would be or what the marketing effort would be” but to suggest that the Board obtain advice. Commissioner Blount said that at least a dozen groups might like the opportunity to “come to the table” to give the Board their input. Commissioner Blount suggested that a formal meeting be held in order to allow the Board to receive the advice of those groups.

Commissioner Tadlock again stressed that he was not comfortable to “move that quickly.” Commissioner Tadlock suggested seeking information regarding the methods used by other counties for marketing and evaluating their success.

In response to a query from Chairman Andrews, Commissioner Blount again suggested the Board holding a roundtable meeting with the agencies selected by the Board. Commissioner Blount said the Board should also allow public input. Commissioner Blount said the step following the roundtable meeting would be to receive professional opinions.

Commissioner Tadlock said he would like to meet with the Committee of 100 and delay the marketing issue until the next Board meeting.

Commissioner Belk asked Commissioner Tadlock if he would agree to hold a roundtable discussion after receiving input from the Committee of 100. Commissioner Tadlock responded yes, “people coming together, providing information and then we will study the information.”

Chairman Andrews expressed his concerns saying, “We are a governmental agency” and not an advertising or marketing agency. Chairman Andrews stressed that the Board’s job was to promote the industrial park and jobs.

Commissioner Mitchell moved for the Board hear the input of the Committee of 100, distribute the marketing plan of the EDC to as many different groups as desired and allow those groups to weigh in on how the marketing plan adapts to include their group. Commissioner Tadlock seconded the motion and after further discussion the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

George Busby of Salisbury said he had spent the past twenty-nine years in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, which is “extremely tourist-oriented.” Mr. Busby referred to the Board’s discussion regarding tourism and marketing and asked the Commissioners if they remembered where they were on 911. Mr. Busby said between 911 and December 10, 2001 the tourist industry dropped from 95% occupancy to approximately 52%. Mr. Busby said during this time, most businesses delayed expansion plans.

Mr. Busby mentioned that traveling to St. Augustine in December during the same, business owners were doing extremely well.

Mr. Busby suggested that the Board contact St. Augustine in an effort to determine the marketing plan used by the town and businesses to promote the city.

Mr. Busby held up a sweatshirt from Key West and discussed the recognition the name on the sweatshirt receives when he wears the shirt in other cities. Mr. Busby said it had always been difficult for him to tell people that he's from Salisbury because people don't recognize the name.

Mr. Busby read statistics regarding the City of Salisbury and said the economic care of the County lies with the Commissioners. Mr. Busby encouraged the Board to contact St. Augustine, Key West and Virginia Beach concerning their aggressive promotion of the cities schools, businesses and resorts.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Andrews adjourned the meeting at 11:10 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rita K. Foil, CMC
Clerk to the Board