

# **CURRITUCK COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

## **REGULAR MEETING**

**June 26, 2008, 7:00 pm**

### **Historic Currituck Courthouse**

Attendance: Kevin Burwell, Brian Innes, HD Newbern, Fannie Newbern, David Palmer, Matt Converse, Tameron Kugler, Bob Collins, Gene Gregory

Guests: Ginger Sikes, Frances Walker, Bob Kohler, Michael Cherry, Sharon & John Rorer

#### **Item I. Call to Order**

Chairman Burwell called the meeting to order at 7:40 pm.

#### **Item II. Approval of Agenda**

Chairman Burwell entertained a motion for approval of the agenda. Ms. Newbern moved for approval; Mr. Newbern seconded the motion. Motion carried

Director arrived late to meeting and asked the Chairman to add a closed session agenda item relating to Kogok Steel. As the policy does not stipulate this specific situation, the Chairman granted the request with the acceptance of the board. The item would be added as item 12(a) to the current agenda.

#### **Item III. Public Comment**

No public comment offered.

#### **Item IV. Approval of April 24, 2008 & May 22, 2008 Minutes**

Chairman Burwell entertained a motion for approval of the April 24 minutes. Ms. Newbern moved for approval; Mr. Innes seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Chairman Burwell entertained a motion for approval of the May 22 minutes. Mr. Collins moved for approval; Ms. Newbern seconded the motion. Motion carried.

## **Item V. Presentation by Ginger Sikes of the Animal Assistance League**

Ginger Sikes and Frances Walker, representing the Currituck County Animal Adoption Center project, came before the board to present their plans for a relocated shelter facility when the Airport Road property is taken for airport taxiway construction. With the schedule of the taxiway construction coming in about 2 years, the group is planning ahead for a new facility. The group would like to have 8 acres of land, and prefer to be at the base of the newly developed Maple Industrial Park, taking 2 lots on the preliminary sketch plan. This is because of the cluster location of the Cooperative Extension Building, Central Elementary School and proposed Recreation Center.

The current Animal Shelter facility is 3,800 SF. The shelter has 120 animals currently and is entering "busy season." It is undersized and without amenities. The facility's main goal is to take stray animals received by Animal Control and find adoptive homes for them. The adoption rate last year was 90%, one of the highest ever known, according to Ms. Sikes.

Ms. Walker handed out information on other adoption centers throughout the state, with corresponding information on regional population served and cost estimates for construction. According to Ms. Walker, shelters are required to house up to 10% of the pet population. Due to the growing population and estimates on pet ownership, that number is fast increasing, and requires more space.

The proposed building, which is about 14,000 SF, would provide modern facilities, classrooms, medical rooms, grooming facilities, indoor/outdoor cages, and an interior play area / run. The total cost of the project is projected to be \$200 / SF for the building. Director was surprised at the high cost of the facility. Ms. Sikes described comparable facilities the group toured and hearing about undersized buildings sought to ensure this facility was planned for the future. Ms. Sikes also touted the possible economic development benefits of the facility and the growing pet industry.

The group asked for the EDAB's support in securing a specific parcel of land for the shelter project and also to urge the Board of Commissioners to expedite the project so that the group can solicit donations and work on funding / staff.

Bob Kohler, on the committee for the Animal League, underlined the responsibility of the County to provide a facility as the current one is scheduled for demolition.

Chairman Burwell thanked the group for their presentation, and asked the director about the progress of the Maple Industrial Park, where the group would like to be granted 8 acres. Director responded that the park project is slated for the July 19 TRC, August 12 Planning Board, and September 2 Board of

Commissioners meeting. Director reiterated the Board of Commissioner's commitment to locate the facility, but without an exact parcel at this time.

Chairman Burwell also wondered if the group had presented to other advisory boards for support, such as the Tourism Board. Ms. Sikes responded that the group was in the public information process and that they planned on seeking the support of the Tourism Board and other county officials along the way.

## **Item VI. Discussion on Economic Development Vision**

Director offered the agenda item in response to discussion about the selection of a marketing firm to help market the county as a business location and the ongoing efforts of the strategic planning committee. The discussions on each item begged the question: Without a clear view of what the "end goal" is for the county, what is the value in developing a plan?

To this end, the Director offered several items for consideration in the discussion: type of industry/business to target; where to locate businesses within the county; architectural standards for the corridor that will enhance the image of the county; the relation of UNC study to future marketing plan and targets.

Mr. Collins inquired about the role of the marketing consultant in this process – would the consultant develop a plan and have the group make decisions? Or would the group provide insight and opinions on a vision; the UNC study and the group take some consensus back to the community?

Mr. Converse concurred, and sees a lack of consensus of the EDAB / community on the UNC study findings, natural resource protection and allocation – what should be agreed on or protected? What about small versus large company recruitment?

Director suggested that the EDAB, along with the marketing consultant, gather for a single day retreat to discuss all of these issues, including the UNC study, and develop a list of values and goals for the county (short and long-term) that frames our processes in the future. This retreat and resulting consensus would then shape how the marketing plan and strategic plan will form.

Chairman Burwell supported this action, comparing the Tidewater area tours and the discussion that came from that experience as a good indication of the type of progress that a retreat could have. Within less than a day, the members who attended shared numerous ideas regarding development and opinions on what they saw and experienced that day. Mrs. Kugler stressed the importance of different perspectives on other county areas and geographies and what that may mean for industry recruitment.

## **Item VII. Discussion on Foreign Trade Zone proposal**

Chairman Burwell, through his position at the Port of Virginia, works directly with Foreign Trade Zones (FTZ). FTZ's are areas designated by the US Treasury and Commerce (through a collective entity, the FTZ board) provide duty relief or 'inverted tariffs' for US-based assembly or light manufacturing firms importing and exporting goods. FTZ's must be located within 60 miles or a 90-minute drive from a US Customs Port of Entry. In Currituck's case, this is the Port of Virginia. Also, federal statutes allow any state that is served by a customs port to establish their own FTZ. Currently, the nearest FTZ to Currituck is at the Global Transpark.

The FTZ can be a large benefit to existing firms and a marketing tool for attracting new firms within this industry. Given this tool, Currituck County would be able to leverage its location near the port and its available land for development even better.

The FTZ board receives applications for new zones and sub-zones and makes decisions on whom to grant the authority to establish a regional FTZ. If Currituck County were to apply for and receive an FTZ, the Board of Commissioners would be the entity vested with the authority to establish and activate acreage for FTZ – dependent clients. The FTZ can be floating, covering numerous buildings and land throughout the region; it is not geographically restricted to a specific county, industrial park, or area.

The application process is 18 months and would generally involve working with a consultant. As the Director and Chairman Burwell have experience with FTZ, they will work together in forming an application on behalf of Currituck County for a zone. Director and Chairman Burwell will provide updates throughout the process. Initial areas of interest include the Airport area and Moyock area with rail access.

## **Item VIII. Action on meeting location policy**

Director presented at the April and May meetings the process to change board policy to reflect the change in regular meeting location to the Bank of Currituck, Grandy from the Historic Currituck Courthouse.

Chairman Burwell entertained a motion to approve the change to the EDAB policy officially moving the regular meeting site. Mr. Collins moved that the language be changed as presented at the April meeting. Mr. Converse seconded the motion. Motion carried

## **Item IX. Tidewater Industrial Park tour report**

David Palmer suggested that the EDAB take a driving tour of commercial and industrial sites in the tidewater area of Virginia to see the types of developments and get ideas for our community as we progress with planning, visioning and marketing. The tour looked at the Edinburgh development in Chesapeake, through the I-64 beltway corridor, and through Suffolk and Isle of Wight Counties where several major firms operate distribution and storage facilities.

The highlight of the driving tour was a physical tour of the Wanchese Fish Company, a family-owned corporation in Wanchese / Roanoke Island. The facility, which is over 140,000 SF with 40' high ceilings, worked as a sub-leased cold-storage facility and seafood processing area. The temperature ranged from -35 degrees to 40 degrees inside (it was very, very cold).

The owners of Wanchese Fish Company helped develop the industrial park with Suffolk. They stressed the importance of the partnership with the government and getting the utilities together for the entire site. The location was important for the company because of the transportation access, water and wastewater availability, and proximity to I-95.

The director will be providing minutes for the tour.

## **Item X. Director's Report**

Horizon Group Outlet Mall: Director assisted in a presentation to the Cavalry Temple Church of Norfolk who owns a 60-acre parcel of land in Moyock the group is trying to purchase to develop an outlet mall. The group informed the church community present about their developments and provided photos, while the Director discussed job and tax benefits from the mall in Currituck. Horizon and the County left the presentation feeling confident in the project and that the church would support selling the property. Development time frame is about 2 years for this property.

Grave Digger / Live Nation: Director visited with Henry Cross, the operations manager for the Live Nation group which builds and services monster trucks for the Monster Jam events worldwide. The company had a back-taxes issue that is being resolved. Director also discussed the expansion of activities at the site with a new facility, which would need to be built by Dennis Anderson, who is separate from Live Nation.

Moyock Town Center: Mr. Innes, owner of this property, has gotten a contract for a hotel project on this property and is also working with an Assisted Living Facility on another parcel, which is awaiting a closing of public comment on their project to move forward.

Regional Medical Facility: A local hospital system has engaged the county and is in due diligence to explore opening a local facility that would give urgent care and possibly provide other general practice or specialty care for county residents. Director is preparing an information package for this client including data and possible sites.

Paint-Spraying Importer: A Chesapeake-based company which imports and exports industrial paint spraying equipment has contacted the county for information on properties and build-to-suit options for relocation to Northern Currituck. Director is preparing an information package for this client including data and possible sites. This would be an FTZ related type of firm.

Bio-Fuel company: A biofuel manufacturer has contacted the planning department and director regarding possible sites for a facility which makes biodiesel from organic compounds. The client is looking at making a text amendment to the UDO to allow their specific use in the county.

Sysco: Director has contacted Sysco Food Service and a land owner concerning trucks and trailers parked along the highway near Bells Island Road. The intent is to discuss possible permanent facilities for parking vehicles, which is a direct result of the large increase in diesel fuel costs.

Intern: Sarah Restaino has joined our department as an intern and is assisting on two projects. The first project is a catalogue of available properties and facilities in Currituck. The second project is work on the Incentive Policy, specifically researching small business assistance loans or grants offered in similar jurisdictions.

## **Item XI. Committee Reports**

- a) **Marketing** – Tameron Kugler: Mrs. Kugler reviewed the minutes from the last committee meeting. Much of their discussion was covered tonight, and the group developed a list of recommendations for the Board of Commissioners. These items include sewer development, permitting length and process (director mentioned discussions were underway regarding fast-tracking), incentives for existing businesses and beautification of the corridor and perhaps offering assistance in doing so. Clear indication of villages through signage could also be another way to beautify the community and give identity to these hamlets and the county as a whole. Mrs. Kugler also offered images from her former hometown's website to the board to consider as we move forward with revamping our site and working on marketing.

- b) **Strategic Planning** – Kevin Burwell: The discussion this evening ties into strategic planning, and Kevin has a good base for a strategic plan. The retreat will be an excellent place to discuss this effort further.

## **Item XII. Other Business & Announcements**

Mr. Converse updated the group on the NC Coastal Federation and the Horse Farm. Mr. Converse is a member of the board. The group actually visited the site and was very encouraged by the site and is in the discovery stage for possible trails, observation areas, birding features, etc. There are grant dollars available for this project, and Mr. Converse will update as they progress.

Director reminded the group about the Fourth of July celebration at the Whalehead Club, the Tourism department puts on an excellent show, and all should try to attend.

Chairman Burwell thanked the audience for their attendance. Mr. Gregory thanked the board for their hard work.

### **Item XII (a). Closed Session**

Mr. Collins moved to adjourn to closed session to discuss “matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in Currituck County, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by Currituck County in negotiations.” Ms. Newbern seconded the motion; motion carried. The meeting was adjourned to closed session.

Mrs. Kugler made a motion to adjourn closed session. Mr. Collins seconded the motion; motion carried.

### **Item XIII. Adjourn**

Mr. Collins moved to adjourn. Mr. Newbern seconded the motion. Motion carried.