

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING WITH THE FAYETTEVILLE CITY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 24, 2002, 7:30 AM
AMBASSADOR HOUSE RESTAURANT**

PRESENT: Chairman, Breeden Blackwell
Vice Chairman Talmage Baggett
Commissioner Jeannette Council
Commissioner John T. Henley
Commissioner Billy R. King
Commissioner Lee Warren
Mayor Pro Tem Mark Kendrick
Councilman Jimmy Keefe
Councilmember Mable C. Smith
Councilman D. J. Haire
Councilmember Lois A. Kirby
Councilman Curtis Worthy
Councilmember Juanita Gonzalez
Councilmember Anne Fogleman
County Staff
City of Fayetteville Staff
Press

ABSENT: Commissioner Kenneth Edge

Chairman Blackwell and Mayor Pro Tem Kendrick called their respective boards to order.

Chairman Blackwell noted Commissioner Edge was out of town.

Chairman Blackwell reviewed the actions of the Legislature last evening. He noted the ½ cent sales tax passed the House by a vote of 60 to 55. Two delegates from Cumberland County did not support the sales tax. A key vote will be taken today at 10:00 AM.

Councilman Worthy advised that Mayor Pitts was out of state.

Chairman Blackwell stated that the Strategic Planning Group is working on some of the items listed on the agenda. Those items include:

- Status of sales tax distribution formula decision
- Status of projects for City and County working together for the best delivery system, such as parks and recreation, joint Appearance Commission, joint Human Relations Commission
- Loss of County revenue from City of Fayetteville Annexations
- Status of Blank Paper project

He noted it was his opinion that these items are still being worked on by the SPG and proposals will soon be brought to the governing boards.

City Manager Roger Stancil advised the work on the Parks and Recreation issue and the others is going very well. He stated Phil Boyle has been a tremendous help in the process. He noted the distribution of the City of Fayetteville Strategic Plan to all the Commissioners prior to the meeting today.

Mayor Pro Tem Kendrick stated a strategic planning session involving both boards would be beneficial.

- Rural water systems and participation of PWC in rural utilities

Vice Chairman Baggett asked that this item be placed on the agenda. He stated the County's water system is moving forward. Participation from PWC is needed with these projects and that requires approval from the City Council. He hopes PWC will be a county-wide provider and not only for the City of Fayetteville.

Tom McNeill of PWC stated that it has always been the mission of PWC to look at utilities on county-wide basis.

Councilman Worthy stated PWC will continue to support the County's water and sewer efforts.

Vice Chairman Baggett stated there must be water and sewer in the County in order to have industrial development.

Mr. Stancil noted that the City's Strategic Plan notes the need to consider urban water and sewer needs. More sewer lines in rural areas mean city growth.

Councilmember Fogleman noted the need to control urban sprawl.

Chairman Blackwell noted that the Human Relations Commission is included in the item dealing with joint delivery of services. The Strategic Planning Committee is not working on this issue.

County Manager James Martin advised he has spoken with the City Manager about a joint Human Relations Commission. The County Manager stated he has had problems with the increased cost to the County that would be involved with a joint commission. The City has offered to cover the costs of a joint Commission for the first year and then decide on financial distribution. He has been reluctant to look at this item because of the increased costs to the County at a time when cuts are being made in other areas.

Chairman Blackwell stated that the Human Relations Commission is something the Board has discussed since the late Commissioner Bacote was on the board. He feels this is a matter the County needs to look into.

Commissioner Council also noted her interest in the Human Relations Commission. This is one area the City and County can work together and send a positive message to its citizens. If the City has agreed to fund a joint commission for one year, then she feels the County should consider the matter.

Chairman Blackwell asked Commissioner Council to see that this issue is moved forward for consideration by the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Warren noted his support of the Human Relations Commission and suggested that this matter be discussed by the Commissioners' Policy Committee. Commissioner Council is the Chair of that committee.

- Tapping and protecting the resources of the Cape Fear River Basin, including development along the river, access, protecting natural resources

Mr. Stancil noted this is an item identified in the Council's strategic plan. The Council wanted to share some of the items in the plan with the Board of Commissioners during this meeting.

Councilman Worthy advised the Council wanted to make the Commissioners aware of some of these issues before there is discussion by the Council for possible action. He noted a study requested by Mayor Pitts of how best to foster the resources of the Cape Fear River.

Commissioner Warren noted the Cape Fear River is a valuable resource and any development should be carefully studied and planned.

Chairman Blackwell advised the Commissioners have spoken with the Town Boards of Wade, Godwin and Falcon and stressed the importance of orderly growth. Much growth will come to those areas when the I-95 Interchange is completed.

Mayor Pro Tem Kendrick noted he would like to see plans developed during a work session involving the Board of Commissioners, City Council and other municipalities.

Councilman Keefe stated that many areas along the river have been identified as green space. The development of these areas will be a function of the City and County. The merger of the City and County Parks and Recreation will play a major role in this development.

- Group Homes

Chairman Blackwell asked for an update on Senator Rand's bill concerning this matter.

County Attorney Grainger Barrett advised that Senator Rand's bill is in the House and he has not heard anything further and has no knowledge of a vote to be taken on it.

Vice Chairman Baggett noted the number of calls he receives from citizens concerning the location or potential location of a group home in their neighborhoods. It is difficult to explain the lack of County control in this matter to citizens. He would like the County and City to have some control with regard to licensing these homes. He noted the need for the Boards to support Senator Rand's bill.

Mr. Barrett advised that this issue may be examined further as a legal claim. All comments made by officials may be used in a legal claim.

Commissioner Warren stated he feels group homes should be viewed as a commercial endeavor. He would like to see the Boards be able to look at these homes as a commercial site and development.

Councilmember Fogleman stated the Boards must also consider the fact that someone wishing to open a group home can "stake out" an area in an undeveloped or proposed subdivision and apply for a permit.

Chairman Blackwell stated the County has a subcommittee that has been meeting to discuss issues with group home providers, Mental Health and others.

Commissioner King stated that due to changes at the State level, it is safe to say more group homes will be proposed in the future.

Mr. Barrett stated most group homes and the citizens they serve do not usually create apprehension among the residents where they are located.

Mr. Stancil noted a meeting he had with County Manager's staff, the Department of Social Services, Mental Health, Health Department and law enforcement. The State is taking and cutting back revenues. They have asked these agencies to share what is happening to them so that appropriate action can be taken early on.

- Providing convenient access to the outside world, including east-west highway connections, loop development consistent with smart growth, rail link for passengers and goods and tapping I-95 as a resource

Mayor Pro Tem Kendrick noted the Council's endorsement of light rail and road improvements. It continues to push the connection to Charlotte. He also noted the closing of traffic through Fort Bragg.

Commissioner Henley stated that if Fort Bragg needs a section of Bragg Boulevard cut off, then there should be support for a complete section of the loop and this area should request the necessary funding from the State and Federal government.

Mayor Pro Tem Kendrick noted that plans are for Highway 13 to go all the way to the All American Expressway.

Councilman Keefe stated there are requests for a fast track on this project. There is discussion of this area being a southeast economic development zone. Access to this area is needed in the form of road, rail and air. The County and City need to be prepared for industry.

Mayor Pro Tem Kendrick stated the Boards need to encourage growth of what is already here. This is as important as new industry.

Councilman Haire noted the Highway 13 project will put more traffic in the corridor of Country Club Drive, Pamalee Drive and Murchison Road. There is a need to fast track plans for the widening of Murchison Road. There are many vacant properties in this corridor and they need to decide what to do with them. Ways to get off Murchison Road and onto Bragg Boulevard and Ramsey Street must also be looked into.

Commissioner King noted the need for a road from Murchison Road to Bragg Boulevard. He stated there is property in that area that could be developed if there was access. He would like to see the Managers look into this matter and find out what can be done. There could be business and residential development in this area.

Mayor Pro Tem Kendrick noted the existence of wetlands in that area. He also feels this issue must be explored.

- Assistance from the City of Fayetteville with School crossing guards

Vice Chairman Baggett stated he would like the City of Fayetteville to consider sharing in the responsibility of providing school crossing guards. This is an important issue. He feels it would be appropriate to begin discussion about the City and County sharing this expense.

Councilman Worthy stated he would like to discuss the fact that the City of Fayetteville taxpayers already pay for this service.

Commissioner Henley stated this matter would be one that could be part of the strategic plan along with annexation and taxation.

Vice Chairman Baggett stated the boards need to look at this as a safety issue and not a school issue. There are traffic issues and he would like the Boards to have a conversation about it.

- Providing leisure opportunities for all neighborhoods and generations with convenient access, developing more recreational facilities and supporting arts and festivals

Chairman Blackwell noted the Parks and Recreation merger issue will be finalized soon.

Mr. Barrett noted the Tourism Development Authority that was created by the General Assembly. He noted the allocation of a percentage of the hotel/motel tax that is to be distributed to The Arts Council as a part of the legislation creating the TDA. He advised the contract for funding to The Arts Council had been completed and this additional funding will help stimulate arts and festival activities.

- The City's Smart Growth Plan including annexation, incentives for development in the core city and rural water

Mr. Stancil advised that an update on this issue should be coming to the City Council in October.

Commissioner King asked if this plan would include some incentive for businesses to develop in the City of Fayetteville.

Mr. Stancil advised that there would be some incentives.

Councilmember Kirby noted the problems of zoning land for businesses located in or near residential neighborhoods. She feels there needs to be a closer look at the 2010 Plan. The Boards need to do a better job of protecting neighborhoods.

- Status of I-295/North Fayetteville Plan

Councilman Keefe invited everyone to the meeting at Pine Forest Senior High to hear the presentation of the Joint City/County North Fayetteville Study. This meeting will begin at 7:00 PM tonight. He noted north Fayetteville has a great opportunity in this area with the development of Highway 13. He feels there will be great economic growth in this area. Citizens want strategic growth to occur.

Mr. Martin noted a sub-committee is working on the Parks and Recreation project. A report is due to the City-County Liaison Committee at its October meeting. Several options will be presented. There were slight differences in the resolutions adopted by the City Council and Board of Commissioners on the Parks and Recreation issue. When the two groups came together, they wanted to look at how best to provide recreation services.

- Other matters of mutual interest

Commissioner King noted the joint efforts of the County Commissioners and the City Council on the sales tax issue. He felt the work done by the boards on this issue was important and noteworthy.

MOTION: Commissioner King moved to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners.
SECOND: Commissioner Baggett
VOTE: UNANIMOUS

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 AM.

Deputy Clerk