

PERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

OCTOBER 28, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT

OTHERS PRESENT

Jimmy B. Clayton

Heidi York, County Manager

Kyle W. Puryear

B. Ray Jeffers

Brenda B. Reaves, Clerk to the Board

Frances P. Blalock

David Newell, Sr.

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Person, North Carolina, met in regular session on Monday, October 28, 2013 at 6:30 pm at the Ceffo Volunteer Fire Department located at 1291 Concord-Ceffo Road, Roxboro for the purpose of holding an informal “Community Conversations” meeting to receive feedback from the community about services and suggestions for improving County Government.

Chairman Clayton called the meeting to order. County Manager, Heidi York welcomed the group. Attendees were given the opportunity to sign up with the Clerk to the Board to address the Board or the option to write down questions or comments to be read. A total of 23 people were in attendance which included Board members, County staff and citizens.

County Manager, Heidi York told the group the Community Conversations meetings were developed to show more transparency in county government as well as give the public a chance to speak to the commissioners about community priorities. Ms. York highlighted the October 2013 handout entitled *What’s Happening in Person County Government?* which was presented to all attendees upon arrival. The handout included updates on stormwater, public safety communication system/broadband, capital projects, strategic plan and announced school recycling grant winners as well as gave an overview of the budget basics which includes neighboring counties’ tax rates, explained where revenue is gained and to which county services or function areas it is spent.

Citizens that participated in the community meeting were:

Marji Stehle of 159 Possum Trot Lane, Semora (and spouse, Al), residents at Hyco Lake spoke of the need for a location within the county for yard waste disposal. Ms. Stehle stated the lake properties are the highest tax assessed properties but the County lacks services, i.e. yard disposal site and Recreation & Senior Center that are available in other communities.

Jerry Winstead of 1736 Concord Church Road, Roxboro, resident at Hyco Lake asked the Board for a tax break noting his disagreement on the recent tax revaluation resulting in lake properties increasing in value supporting the other parts of the County.

Patricia (PJ) Gentry of 541 Byrd Creek Lane, Hurdle Mills addressed the Board on the need for an overall plan for the county, the need to overlap resources, as well as improvements for carrying out the Person Future's Strategic Plan. Ms. Gentry questioned the priority of projects noting the location or timing as the issue and encouraged government to pursue private industry partnerships.

Vicki Holt of 142 Sunset Point Drive, Semora inquired about recruitment of better restaurants for the County.

Daniel Duncan of 705 McGhees Mill Road, Semora asked for an explanation for what the stormwater fees are being used for as well as why his one-half acre value was doubled if the lot size was too small to build.

Elsie Grant of 5517 McGhees Mill Road, Semora had questions related to helicopters in the area and the moving of dirt in the area as well as requested more recreational opportunities in the Ceffo area.

David Clayton of 2061 Morton Pulliam Road, Roxboro requested help from the Board of Commissioners about convincing NC Dept. of Transportation (NCDOT) to lower speed limits on Morton Pulliam Road at and near the Five Forks areas whereby five roads intersect noting there is an unsafe blind curve that poses danger. Mr. Clayton noted he had met with representatives from NCDOT without success.

Responses:

Vice Chairman Jeffers requested Ms. York to find out where the City of Roxboro takes yard waste for chipping.

Assistant County Manager, Sybil Tate and County Manager, Heidi York discussed with the group the steps taken for the five strategic groups to be created by the citizens with the goals determined from input by the citizen groups at public meetings noting an Executive Committee consisting of a member from each group lists priorities to recommend to the Board at its annual retreat. Commissioner Blalock credited former Commissioner Sam Kennington for the current Strategic Plan vision noting over 100 citizens participated to voice ideas. Vice Chairman Jeffers added the low cost or no cost goals have been targeted with action with the larger funding priorities to be included in the Capital Improvement Plan for implementation. Vice Chairman Jeffers stated the idea of a more traditional plan incorporating the Future's Plan for training within the County to match the industry within the County so not to lose jobs outside Person County. Ms. Tate noted she would obtain Ms. Gentry's contact info to include on upcoming strategic input opportunities.

Commissioner Newell explained traffic counts, income variables and population requirements are all hindering factors for restaurants to locate in the City of Roxboro and Person County.

Economic development measures were discussed including improving quality of life for current citizens as well as attracting new industry and residents. Vice Chairman Jeffers explained the steps taken to work toward the citizen's request for a Recreation & Senior Center since the November election in 2008 to identify the most fiscally viable location option with low interest rates for financing of such project. Commissioner Blalock and Ms. York noted a dozen public forums were held receiving public comments related to the proposed Recreation & Senior Center. Vice Chairman Jeffers added the average Person County salary is lower than the average household due to many residents working out of town reiterating his efforts to improve quality of life to keep citizens in Person County.

Commissioner Puryear advocated for better communication with government entities, a lower tax rate with opposition to the state imposed rules for stormwater regulations which have hurt development.

Ms. Tate, Ms. York and Chairman Clayton explained the state mandate for stormwater regulations noting fees are used for membership dues, for access to stormwater consultants and engineers noting water sampling data is also planned to be collected to make the argument that Person County is not the cause of harmful pollutants into the water supply of the Falls Lake. Commissioner Puryear noted his opposition to pass along the fees to the residents of the county noting his preference to use general funds received from property taxes to appropriate the costs of stormwater rules as well as encouraged the idea of requesting a state injunction to suspend implementation until the data is collected. Commissioner Puryear stated his opinion that the consultant firm and the data monitoring will drag on for years.

Mr. Duncan, present in the audience, stated his opinion that the helicopters were spraying the path of the utility lines for weed control and that Duke Energy was moving top soil for use of the clay soil underneath at the plant. County staffs were unaware of the two activities mentioned.

Vice Chairman Jeffers stated the County had heard similar recreational concerns in the Bethel Hill area as Ms. Grant raised and would ask that staff review possible equipment use at the nearby school, Woodland.

Commissioner Newell told the group of the opportunity for citizens to appeal their property values again in 2014.

Tax Administrator, Russell Jones stated the tax schedules of values are based on the January 2013 value with adjustments made for errors, incorrect measurements, and misinformed data. Mr. Jones noted a reduction in taxes might be in order if a property owner's one-half acre lot does not perk or was not grandfathered as a buildable lot that could support a well and septic service.

Chairman Clayton and Ms. York thanked everyone for attending the Community Conversations meeting.

RECESS:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Blalock, and **carried 5-0** to recess the meeting at 8:14 pm until 6:30 pm on November 4, 2013 for the purpose of Closed Session for the purpose of considering appointment of individuals through an informal interview process with applicants of competitive committee, boards, and commissions per General Statutes 143-318.11(a)(6).

Brenda B. Reaves
Clerk to the Board

Jimmy B. Clayton
Chairman