

Minutes
Joint Meeting
Hertford County Board of Commissioners
And Hertford County Economic Development Commission
County Commissioners' Meeting Room
Wednesday, April 2, 2014
11:00 A.M.

Commissioners Present: William F. Mitchell, Jr., Johnnie R. Farmer, Curtis A. Freeman, Sr., and Ronald J. Gatling (also EDC Board Member)

Commissioners Absent: Howard J. Hunter, III

EDC Members Present: Carolyn Bazemore, John Tayloe, June Warren, and Kathleen Wright

EDC Members Absent: Raymond Benthall, Michael Bunch, Michael Harrell, and Tim Newsome

Also Present: County Manager Loria D. Williams, EDC Director Bill Early, Josephine Green, and Shelia W. Matthews

Interested Citizens Present: Dean Myra Poole, Dan Joyner, and Amy Braswell

Chairman William F. Mitchell, Jr., called the meeting to order and provided the invocation.

EDC Vice-Chairman John Tayloe called the EDC Meeting to order and thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to meet together. He shared that EDC Chairman Raymond Benthall was absent due to family medical reasons.

EDC Director Bill Early reviewed a summary of the Draft 2014 Economic Development Plan through a PowerPoint presentation.

The following comments were made by the County Commissioners:

- Stressed the importance of economic development – How does this plan get the County ready? How can we be proactive and move forward? (Gatling)
- Thanked EDC Board Members for serving on the Board and thanked Bill for all his work – Need to study the plan – This is just our first meeting – We will be working collaboratively on this endeavor. (Mitchell)
- These two boards need to be in concert for this plan – Impressed by the “Job Info Section” (losing and gaining jobs) – Commissioners have a goal to not increase the tax rate – Has not been increased in eight years (Farmer)

- Expressed thoughts of having meetings with the Towns as well – As far as transportation (roads), we are in the “black hole” here – Property owners need to be on board when prospective industries are inquiring about land (Freeman)

At this time, Mr. Tayloe informed the group that the Towns and Chambers of Commerce do participate in the EDC Meetings. The Buxton Group Plan that the Towns and County participated in was discussed. As a result of this plan, the single largest deficit is the lack of hotels (major concern of Murfreesboro/Chowan College) and the lack of a family restaurant (concern for Ahoskie).

Mr. Tayloe also expressed the importance of the Draft 2014 Economic Development Plan. As a result of changes being implemented July 1, there will be less resources available.

EDC Member June Warren feels that the EDC Board/Commissioners need to be more proactive in Raleigh and work to get ourselves heard.

At this time, County Manager Loria Williams introduced Mr. Ray Wiggins, the new Assistant County Manager. Ms. Williams would like to focus on things we have the ability to change ourselves and what we can incrementally build upon. We should think differently than in the past. She questioned is the landscape still present that was present when we were drawing industries here?

Commissioner Gatling shared his thoughts on making targets and deadlines so we can see the “finish line” and know we are going somewhere and accomplishing something. He also feels recreation on the waterfront should be promoted.

More discussion was held on The Buxton Group Plan and how to implement the plan was misunderstood. Mr. Dan Joyner, present in the audience, explained that it doesn't happen at the snap of a finger.

The County Manager also discussed the lack of infrastructure.

EDC Board Member Carolyn Bazemore shared that our key to success is working together and marketing ourselves.

Both groups need to push and make progress on getting Highway 158 four-laned.

EDC Board Member Kathleen Wright expressed her thoughts to communicate with legislators collectively.

EDC Vice-Chairman Tayloe thanked everyone for a very productive meeting. Commissioner Chairman Mitchell stated that we would be more focused on direction at the next meeting.

On a motion by Commissioner Farmer and a second by Commissioner Gatling, the Hertford County Board of Commissioners' Meeting was adjourned.

On a motion by EDC Board Member Warren and a second by EDC Board Member Bazemore, the EDC Board Meeting was adjourned.