

**NORTH CAROLINA
GRANVILLE COUNTY
CITY OF OXFORD**

**OXFORD CITY HALL, BOARD MEETING ROOM,
MONDAY, JULY 31, 2006 AT 5.45 P.M.**

The Mayor and Board of Commissioners of the City of Oxford met for a Special Session in conjunction with the Agenda Session at City Hall, 300 Williamsboro Street, at the above-mentioned time and place.

Present: Mayor Alvin Woodlief, Jr.
Mayor Pro Tem Howard G. Herring, Sr.
Commissioner S. Quon Bridges
Commissioner Stephen C. Powell
Commissioner Robert Shope
Commissioner Robert B. Williford, Sr.

Absent: Commissioner Paul Kiesow
Commissioner A. Chance Wilkinson

Present also were City Manager Thomas S. Marrow and Deputy Clerk Donna B. Hosch.

All members of the board and local news media were notified of the time, place and purpose of the meeting.

Mayor Woodlief called the meeting to order.

AGENDA SET – AUGUST 8, 2006

The Board of Commissioners set the agenda for the August 8, 2006 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT – DORWIN HOWARD

Mr. Dorwin Howard of 106 Shadow Lane, Oxford, asked did the City intend to expand its wastewater treatment plant onto any residential properties as had been done in the past. The Mayor assured Mr. Howard that the City has adequate property for any future expansion of the plant, including covering the lagoon if necessary. The

Mayor informed Mr. Howard that there would be a grand opening of the new facility and that the public would be invited. Mr. Howard thanked the Board for their time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Woodlief adjourned the Agenda Session. The meeting was continued to Tony's Country Cottage, 5593 Tabbs Creek Road, Oxford, where the City Commissioners would meet in joint session with the County Commissioners.

* * * * * *Reconvene* * * * * *

Mayor Woodlief thanked everyone for being at the joint dinner meeting. Thanks were given to the County for their monetary gift of \$22,486.00 to assist with expenses the City incurred in relation to the SOC.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Mayor Woodlief recognized that the County started the GAP, and a certain amount of funding has been given to the City. The City now has a five-year recreational plan that it wants to share with the County (including the central and northern parts), particularly since participation from the County is at 60-70%. The Mayor solicited comments from the County Commissioners on their current view of recreation and where they see it going in the future.

It was stated that Commissioners Lumpkins and Gooch are the County's recreation liaisons. It was proposed that the City and County committees get together to discuss the issue. Many years ago there was a South Granville Athletic Association in the southern part of the county that provided recreation through volunteers and contributions. Many good programs were run through the association. However, in the future, there should be consideration given to the northern part of the county in terms of where future facilities and activities will be located.

It was noted that future activities should address the aging population of the City and County. It would be nice to have a complex where our senior citizens would feel safe, and to have this complex in a central location. The City of Oxford cannot afford to construct a recreational facility by itself; the City needs the effort to be joint between them and the County. South Granville will possibly get a YMCA which could address some of the older population. It is important to understand that people want recreational activities to be close to their homes.

It was decided that the two Managers would, within the next 30 days, coordinate ensuring that the recreational committees of each board meet and subsequently set up a meeting of each advisory council to receive guidance from the two boards. The next meeting for the County will be August 4th at 4:00 p.m. at the GAP.

WATER AND SEWER SERVICE TO CREEDMOOR

The Mayor asked what the County thought would become of Butner as it is now a part of the South Granville Water and Sewer Authority, i.e., how will Creedmoor be affected. It was reported that as of last week, the Governor signed off on a Bill which will turn over to SGWASA all assets of the Butner water and sewer plant, including the lake, between now and January 2007. It is undetermined how this will affect Creedmoor, but they are now buying some water from Butner. It was felt that Butner signing the Resolution of Support was a driving factor in the Bill being passed. The seven Commissioners have been working pretty well together, even though there has been some unknowns in the midst the last few years. Over the last 12 months, a management-type contract has been in force with the State; but in the near future, that will be changed since the assets of the plant have been turned over.

NEW WATER DISTRICT FOR ANTIOCH

The City asked was there anything Oxford could do to help. It was stated that Creedmoor would probably be looking for sewer services at some point in the future. The City board looks at water as also equaling sewer; there is not one without the other. When the City ran the new waterline around the loop, preparations were made in case Antioch would need water in the future. That community has had problems in the past, maybe because of old piping. A “plug” was placed in the new piping in order for the City to be able to sell water in the future. It was stated that Creedmoor might have a water problem in the next ten years or so, complaints are continuing to be received about bad water in areas of that city. Oxford is prepared to provide water to the 6-800 houses that may need it in the future.

CONDEMNATION OF OLD BARN/DILAPADATED RESIDENCES

It was stated that when coming into the City on Hwy 15, there are several bad looking properties on that road as well as bad properties behind the County meeting room and the City firehouse. By the end of this year/the first of next year, the City intends to take care of the eyesores, particularly in the downtown area. It was noted that the housing on 15, which Mr. Moss owns, technically do not violate the Ordinances because there is no trash accumulation. However, there is no one living in several of the houses; and some have been condemned by the building inspector. The City will ask the County for assistance and support in condemnation efforts when the time is right.

RENOVATION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUILDING

It was stated that the Economic Development building is in dire need of repair – the back of the building is sinking and there is a crack in the floor. Repair costs of the building are estimated at \$45,000.00. Since moving in, Leon’s rent has not been

raised. He is a good tenant, and he likes where he is. The building is in a neutral location, which is good because prospective recruits cannot be easily seen. The City asked was there any hope of assistance from the County in repairing the building or would it prefer Leon's rent being raised to help pay for repairs. It was asked how would the City feel about Leon being moved. While the City would be able to utilize the building should Leon leave, the City feels there are more positives than negatives to leaving Economic Development in the building.

The City stated that the inside and outside of the building need facelifts, and major repairs definitely should be made within the next few months. Consensus was that the building probably is the best place for Economic Development, and the City Manager will discuss the building issues with the Property Committee.

CREATION OF A NEW FIRE SERVICE DISTRICT

The City and County Managers have discussed creating a new fire service district adjacent to the City's corporate limits. The City offers service to industry not within the City limits for which they are charged according to property value. These funds are paid into a fire fund. The insurance commission will be taking over the ICO ratings, the ratings now going from a 4 to a 10, which will skyrocket insurance rates. With the State and County allowing the formation of a fire district, service will continue as is at present and the industries will keep the lower ICO rating. The creation of the districts will need to be approved by the County; there will additionally be some residences within the districts.

The City Manager has spoken with the League and the City is allowed by General Statutes to provide service and to redesign districts. The City wants to preserve its relationship with the industries, and there was no forewarning of the change in rating. When the City and County Managers stumbled upon this

information, they spoke with the League. The rating will never be better than a 5 because of the old buildings downtown, and the new ladder truck did help the rating a bit. If the situation gets to be a bit too contentious, a Plan B could be to seek out legislative relief while continuing to do what the City is now doing. This is a Department of Insurance driven change; a call possibly should be made to the Insurance Commissioner. If the City cannot service the industry area, it looks to loose about \$275,00.00 a year. The City nor the County (because of the protection the City provides the County) can afford to loose this money.

COMBINING ESSENTIAL CITY AND COUNTY SERVICES

It was stated that the Mayor and City Manager have discussed redoing the Police Department's third shift supervisor function to be more in line with that of the Sheriff's Department. This would involve putting a phone at the door and using 911 a little more efficiently. A fire department annex will probably need to be added because of Oxford Park. The station at the hospital could use a little help. It was suggested that possibly a structure could be built to house services that both the City and the County provide, the cost being shared between the two. The City thought a good location would be somewhere on the Loop Road.

It was stated that the City now has a dog catcher and that the City and County officers are working together, something the City hopes to see continue.

It was stated that there is a concern about the track at Webb High School. The asphalt is old and is now causing injuries to occur. This will probably be the last year track meets will be held at Webb, because other teams do not want to risk running on that track. This could become a legal issue as well as a health issue if not addressed.

It was stated that the library property is ready to be transferred. The City has heard comments from people being glad that the library is staying where it is because it is a big part of downtown. The City will do its part in keeping up the back area.

RAILROAD TRACKS IN OXFORD

Oxford continues to be serviced by railroad, that service ending on Industry Drive. The remainder of the tracks in the City are not being used. The railroad company's home office has stated they have no tracks in Oxford except for the ones at Certainteed. The City board has been asked to approve placing two inches of asphalt over all the tracks that are not being used. The tracks are overgrown with grass; the crossings are bumpy, ugly, and dangerous. A little work had been done by the railroad on the tracks, but the work stopped when they ran out of money. It was decided that a joint letter would be written to the railroad home office informing them of the intent to cover the tracks with asphalt because of hazards resulting from the railroad not keeping up the tracks.

GROWING HISPANIC POPULATION

The last time the Mayor ran for election, there was only one Hispanic registered to vote. The City has published in English and Spanish a sheet listing services offered by the City. Also, signage pointing to various service organizations has been posted. It was stated that Hispanics in the school system have been doing very well, a number of them topping the reading list. More Hispanics are now using Social Services and numerous births are occurring in the hospital. It appears the population has gone from seasonal to family-structured units.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The County expressed its appreciation for the City's support of the resolution with Creedmoor, that doing so was probably a factor in the getting the Bill passed.

The County will continue to have an open ear to Oxford for providing water and sewer at some point in the future. It was stated that the City would like to be the lead in providing these services to the central and northern portions of Granville County. Because of the new WWTP and the addition of water lines, the City would be able to provide water just about anywhere in the county.

It was noted that a second, dual line has been placed into Kerr Lake which extends to the City of Oxford. The Corps of Engineers is currently making more electricity than they have previously, and they plan to continue to capture this market. There is a concern not about the amount of water going out, but the quality of water which will be pumped in. In an agreement with the Corps, the City has assurance that this water quality will not be compromised.

Appreciation was expressed to the City for its being prepared to supply water to Antioch.

Appreciation was expressed for the City and County being able to move on and work together.

It was stated that meetings such as this are a good opportunity for the two entities to get together and plan for the future. If we don't plan, then we fail. Together the City and the County can make Granville County a good place to be.

It was hoped that the two managers would get together and discuss the issues which were brought forth, that they not be allowed to fall by the wayside, and that both sides would be kept informed of progress.

It was reported that the County has set up a working group to examine what the options are in the wake of losing the impact fee lawsuit. A committee recommendation will be forthcoming. A complicated ordinance (but one which has been supported in the courts) is being looked at which will address services not being

able to be fulfilled if adequate facilities are not available. The County offered what it felt was a fair giveback of \$2,000.00, but a court decision raised that amount to \$400,000.00. If the County does not get an answer to this situation, money is going to be drained from the school systems. The logic of the courts decision still eludes Granville County, although other counties have been allowed to do what Granville County was doing.

Appreciation was expressed for the two boards getting together as well as the board committees getting together.

It was stated that the school situation in Granville County is going to become astronomical to the taxpayers if preparation is not started now. With the impact fee situation being one that is not quite clear, it was suggested that the issue be jointly approached on the federal level. Possibly a lobbyist could be hired. There is money available; it's just not coming into Granville County.

It was suggested that each board drop in on each other's meetings every now and then since the information which would be passed would be beneficial.

Dudley was wished well in his new position! It was hoped that the stigma of the two boards not working together could be overcome, especially since the boards do work together. If they did not, there would not have been a state hospital at Butner. It was also expressed that several schools have gotten a bad name, and that work is being done to get them back to par. This type of reputation hurts not only the county but the city as well.

It was mentioned that the City has its website up, and has received about 25,000 hits in the past few months. Schools and the crime rate are key issues for web searchers, and the City is in good shape on both these issues.

The Mayor stated that the County will be losing a good fellow when Dudley leaves. He has worked very well with the City, everyone has learned from him, he's a little too tight (chuckle, chuckle), and he will be a hard act to follow. The Mayor expressed his appreciation to Dudley and wished him and his family well in Winston-Salem.

Dudley expressed his appreciation to all in attendance and stated he will miss so many things about Oxford. It is a caring community and will always be home to his family.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the Mayor thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.