

Minutes of the PCEDC Meeting
Person County Economic Development Board Room
303 S. Morgan St, Roxboro, NC 27573
February 25, 2020

Voting Board Members Present:

Mr. Phillip Allen-Chairman
Mr. Derrick Sims-Secretary
The Honorable Ray Jeffers
Mr. Danny Talbert

Mr. Kenneth Perry
The Honorable Merilyn Newell
Mr. Ernie Wood

Voting Board Members Absent:

Mr. Donald Long
Mr. Dale Reynolds-Vice Chairman**

Non-Voting Board Members Present:

Ms. Heidi York, County Manager*

Mr. Brooks Lockhart, City Manager*

Non-Voting Board Members Absent:

Dr. Rodney Peterson, PCS Superintendent
Dr. Pamela Senegal, PCC President
Dr. Claudia Berryhill, Agricultural Representative

ED Staff Present:

Mrs. Sherry Wilborn, ED Director
Mrs. Brandy Lynch, ED Senior
Administrative Support
(Minutes)

Others Present:

The Honorable Gordon Powell-County Commissioner*
Mr. George Willoughby
Mr. Bo Freeman*

*Arrival/Departure Noted

**Called in to a portion of
the meeting**

EDC Welcome and Invocation:

1. At 4:00 p.m., Chairman Allen called the meeting to order.
2. Derrick Sims gave the invocation.

(Brooks Lockhart arrived at 4:01 p.m.)

Approval of the EDC Minutes from the January 28, 2020 meeting:

3. Derrick Sims recognized Sherry Wilborn to address a change that needed to be made in the January 28, 2020 minutes. Wilborn noted the minutes described an email between herself and Mike Russo, however the conversation was by phone rather than email.

Derrick Sims requested a motion to approve the EDC minutes from the January 28, 2020 with amendment from email to phone call.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to approve the minutes from the January 28, 2020 meeting with amendment

Motion: Ernie Wood

Second: The Honorable Ray Jeffers

Bylaws Review:

4. Chairman Allen reminds the board of the January 28, 2020 meeting referencing a review of the bylaws in regard to the election of the Executive Board of the EDC. Chairman Allen and Sherry Wilborn have spoken with Person County attorney Ron Aycock in reference to the elections. Mr. Aycock believes the issue could be resolved with an amendment of the election date in the bylaws. As it stands now the board elects the new Executive Board in August. If the board would amend the bylaws for elections not to be held until January, the problem would be eliminated. Wilborn reminds the board the reason the elections were in August was because the County Commissioners would make committee appointments in June. Now the EDC board has 5-year terms that are staggered. Mr. Wood questions the need to change the bylaws, as this has and would only be an issue if a Commissioner was chosen as an executive capacity. Sims explains his comments at the last meeting were not to avoid County Commissioners being on the Executive Board, however it was to eliminate the issue of losing a Chairman so quickly after the election. Commissioner Jeffers suggest changing the bylaws in terms of the Executive Committees election until January after the Person County Commissioners have been seated. The consensus of the board is to have the bylaws on the consent agenda at the next meeting with changes for review and possible action.

EDC Minutes for February 25, 2020

Next, Chairman Allen would like to address ethics and the need for the board to be aware of ethics laws. Mayor Newell suggest adding an ethics training and review amendment to the bylaws. Ray Jeffers adds the need to have a conflict of interest statement signed yearly as well. Entailed would be a review with the county attorney within 90 days of the EDC board elections, with the availability of the attorney. Later on, in the meeting, the topic is readdressed by Mayor Newell, adding if there were any vacancies on the board and there was an appointment, the new member would need to receive ethics training within 90 days of the appointment.

Staff Update:

5. At the last meeting the board approved the information of an agricultural subcommittee and a meeting of the committee on February 4, 2020. Wilborn provides the board with an update of the meeting, the meeting was in reference to the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Grant. A local company had reached out in reference to the grant opportunity. After a review by the subcommittee of available opportunities, it was determined that Mrs. Wilborn, Cooperative Extension Agent Bo Freeman, and Dr. Senegal would follow-up with the company about resources to support the request.

Wilborn reminds the board that on March 18, 2020 EDC is sponsoring Good Morning Coffee Hour and gives a preview of the speakers and topic scheduled for the event. More information will follow in the coming weeks.

The Research Triangle Regional Partnership State of the Region will be held Thursday May 21, 2020 at 4 p.m. Wilborn received an email with a request to sponsor the event this year. The EDC has sponsored in years past. The cost this year will be \$2,500.00 and that will include ten tickets to the event.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to be a sponsor of the State of the Region at the \$2,500.00 level.

Motion: Derrick Sims

Second: Danny Talbert

The North Carolina Economic Development Association Spring Conference is scheduled for March 24-25 which creates a conflict with the March EDC meeting. There will also be other board members that will be unable to attend the March EDC meeting.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passes to cancel the March 24, 2020 EDC meeting.

Motion: Ernie Wood

Second: The Honorable Marilyn Newell

Solar Discussion for Advise ment to BOC:

6. Chairman Allen turns the floor over to Sherry Wilborn who informs the board that the County Commissioners have requested input from the EDC, Airport Commission, and Farm Bureau on Solar Farms. At the February 18, 2020 County Commissioners meeting, the Commissioners voted unanimously to pursue a moratorium on solar farms until the ordinance could be reviewed and possibly revised. A public hearing is scheduled for March 9, 2020.

The issue of solar farms came to light due to a developer submitting a request for a solar project to the Utilities Commission in the Hurdle Mills, NC area. The request was amended to include additional acreage totaling approximately 800 acres and 80 megawatts of power. The amendment was withdrawn. The Person County Planning Department has not been contacted about this project. Landowners in the Hurdle Mills community brought this to the attention of the County Commissioners. At the February 18, 2020 Person County Commissioners meeting, the Commissioners also heard from county Planning Director, Lori Oakley. Director Oakley advised the Commissioners the request had not come through her office for approval; however, she was aware of the project. Informing the Commissioners that if a permit was requested, based on the site plan, it was possible a permit could be approved at the staff level based on current zoning ordinances.

Wilborn thanked Commissioner Jeffers for seeking input from the EDC. Wilborn reminds the board everyone is looking for proactive ways to decrease need for fossil fuels and would like to recognize the importance of industry perception. There are cleantech and clean energy industries that could potentially look at the Megapark. North Carolina is the leader in the southeastern United States for solar energy and ranked second nationwide. Wilborn conferred with the Person County tax office to retain an estimate on the economic impacts solar has in Person County. There are 132 panelized acres for a value of \$8.5 million or \$64,700 an acre, which ranks 19th in the county's tax base.

Brooks Lockhart stated solar parks can have advantages, for example some land that can never be built on, however that the same land could be acceptable for a solar farm. The city requires commercial zoning for solar farms. He would be cautious of the locations approved for solar farms, staying away from transportation hubs, infrastructure, and subdivisions. Lockhart adds the solar farm ordinance discussions could be evaluated with the future land use plans of the county.

With Lockhart's comments in mind, Wilborn reviews the template for solar farms the planning department will use. This template was put together with extensive partnership from Clean Energy, Duke Energy, NC State, Farmer Bureau and University of North Carolina School of Government to name a few. The template does not list the types of zoning Person County has, which is why the EDC needs to make sure the text regarding solar parks is crafted carefully. The

Megasite, Polywood adjacent expansion parcel, and the possible Hurdle Mills site is zoned as rural conservation.

Wilborn has reached out to the county attorney, who is preparing the language for the moratorium, requesting that the attorney be cautious with the wording in respect to accessory solar, which is solar panels affixed to schools and businesses to reduce costs.

Mr. Wood believes the county needs to continue using the decommission clause in the ordinance.

Mr. Perry cautions if new ordinances are put in place, it could be perceived as "government heavy" or (not?) "entrepreneurial friendly".

Commissioner Jeffers feels there is a need for growth, but responsible growth.

With the advice given by the EDC in the meeting, Ms. York advises an email from Mrs. Wilborn will be sufficient to advise the Commissioners of the EDC input.

Ex Officio Update:

7. Heidi York informs the board of the broadband fiber conference call that took place on the morning of February 25, 2020. Ms. York and Mrs. Wilborn both participated in the call. The project continues to grow and there will be an update given to the Commissioners on March 23, 2020. The county continues to work on the financial model for Person County Schools and Piedmont Community College. York hopes to provide an update to the board in June on the financial model.

Brooks Lockhart begins with a news release that came out announcing the closure of Boise Cascade plant in Roxboro. The closure will be a loss of 29 jobs. The city has begun to work on the budget, March 10, 2020 there will be a planning session. Several topics will be on the agenda, including signage. The tower renovation on Hill St. is ongoing; when the project is complete, Verizon coverage in the area should increase.

Mrs. Wilborn notifies the board Dr. Peterson and Dr. Senegal are at a conference. Dr. Berryhill is out of the country but provided an update to Wilborn, which included her attendance at the agritourism conference in Asheville, which included information on visitors to farms in the last year. The tourism summit in January yielded three areas of work: signage, maps, and a community calendar. The Cycle North Carolina Mountains to Coast Ride announced a stop in Roxboro, which could include up to 700 bikes and cyclist.

(Bo Freeman and Heidi York out at 4:46 p.m.)

(Dale Reynolds was called for Closed Session at 4:45 p.m.)

Closed Session:

8. Mr. Allen requested a motion to enter into a Closed Session pursuant to NC General Statutes 143-318.11(a)(4), To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations and 143-318.11 (a)(5). To establish or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiation agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other materials terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase option, exchange, or lease . To include: Sherry Wilborn, ED Director; Brandy Lynch, ED Administrative Support. Also noting Dale Reynolds would be joining by phone.

Commissioner Ray Jeffers made a motion to enter into closed session. The motion was later amended to included Brooks Lockhart and Commissioner Gordon Powell.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to go into closed session.

Motion: The Honorable Ray Jeffers

Second: Derrick Sims

(Closed Session was entered into at 4:46 p.m.)

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to exit closed session.

Motion: The Honorable Ray Jeffers

Second: The Honorable Marilyn Newell

(Closed Session was exited at 5:46 p.m.)

Chairman Allen requested a motion to study various properties for development.

A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to form a subcommittee for property search.

Motion: Dale Reynolds

Second: Danny Talbert

EDC Minutes for February 25, 2020

With that motion Chairman Allen appoints a subcommittee which will include:

- Sherry Wilborn
- Danny Talbert
- Dale Reynolds
- Ernie Wood
- Phillip Allen
- Kenneth Perry

(Dale Reynolds was no longer on the phone at the end of the EDC Meeting)

Next Meeting:

9. The next meeting date was announced as April 28, 2020 at 4 p.m. at the Person County Economic Development Office Board Room 303 S. Morgan St. Roxboro, NC 27573.

Adjournment:

10. A motion was made, seconded and unanimously passed to adjourn the meeting at approximately 5:50 p.m.

Motion: Ernie Wood

Second: The Honorable Marilyn Newell

2/25/2020
Date Approved

Marilyn Newell
Secretary