

Special Meeting
December 12, 2005

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners met in special session to receive recommendations for a Recreation and Park Plan, as prepared by Dr. Robert Wendling and a team of students from East Carolina University.

Present: Jimmy Alligood, Louis Belfield, Ralph Cole, Jerry Downum, Bill Gardner, Wayne Goodwin, Harry Lee Winslow.

Chairman Wayne Goodwin called the meeting to order and introduced Recreation Department Director Robbie Laughton. Mr. Laughton said that the County contracted with East Carolina University Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies to examine existing recreational facilities and programs in Chowan County, and survey the needs and interests of the public to recommend facility and program expansions.

Areas examined by the students included: cultural and natural resources available, demographics of residents, projected population growth and projected land development patterns, public input, existing recreation and park opportunities, public schools availability for recreational use, diversity of existing recreational opportunities, handicapped accessibility of recreational facilities, and condition of recreational facilities and parks in terms of maintenance, vandalism, user impact on vegetation and soil limitations. Comparisons were also made of park and recreation opportunities, operating expenditures, per capita expenditures, and recreation programs/facilities with counties of similar size.

Recommendations included: increased funding for operations and capital improvements for staffing, facilities, programs, equipment and land acquisition; cooperative working relationships should be continued, developed and /or expanded; and state and federal grant assistance should be investigated. A telephone survey revealed that 84% of the respondents support user fees and tax dollars being used for recreation programs. A recreation tax was suggested. More neighborhood and community parks were recommended. A public pool was frequently identified as a need in the public meetings, the phone survey and the school survey. Options that might be available include a cooperative effort between the County, the schools and the hospital – to provide recreational and academic programs and health and therapeutic programs.

Improvements to facilities recommended included: restrooms, paved parking lots and entry roads, fencing, and better maintenance of fields.

The report recommended that programs and facilities be distributed throughout the County and that a transportation service be considered for senior citizens, disabled, children and low income citizens.

The Chairman thanked Dr. Wendling and the students, Katie Miller, Natalie Lucas, Chad Merritt, David Shaeffer, Matt Clair, Justin Baker, Steven Roberson and Mark Taylor. He

noted that the report covered all the important areas and gave the County a lot of information to work with.

County Manager Cliff Copeland thanked Dr Wendling and the students also and noted that many of the items included in the report is in the county's five-year capital outlay plan proposal.

Chairman of the Recreation Advisory Committee Billy Elliott noted that it is good to have a neutral team survey the County's programs to aid in planning for growth.

OLF

The County Manager requested to present a resolution seeking expansion of the ongoing Supplemental Environmental Impact Study to include two additional alternative sites within the Cherry Point Marine Corp Air Station geographic area.

By motion of Commissioner Alligood, the following resolution was approved.

Ayes 7

No 0

Resolution

WHEREAS, the United States Navy announced in July, 2005, a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement process that will re-examine five potential OLF sites in Perquimans County, Bertie County, Hyde County, Washington and Beaufort Counties, and Beaufort and Craven Counties; and,

WHEREAS, the Final Environmental Impact Statement completed by the United States Navy in 2003 clearly demonstrates that the location of an OLF at any of these five sites will result in condemnation of approximately 30,000 acres of land and the displacement of farm families located in the targeted buy-out area; and,

WHEREAS, the location of an OLF in these stated counties that is separate and apart from any other military asset is viewed as a negative economic impact; and,

WHEREAS, the importance of an OLF to the State of North Carolina and the Cherry Point MCAS is recognized as an investment in infrastructure that will bring the economic benefit of Super Hornet home-basing to the counties of Craven, Jones and Carteret; and,

WHEREAS, this point of view is motivated not only by the need of the United States Navy to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, but also by the issue of economic fairness on behalf of the counties and the State of North Carolina.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Chowan County Board of Commissioners does hereby urge the United States Navy to include for study in the ongoing SEIS appropriate alternatives in the Cherry Point MCAS economic region including Open Grounds Farms (Carteret County) and Oak Grove OLF and surrounding acres (Craven and Jones Counties).

Adopted today, December 12, 2005, by the Chowan County Board of Commissioners.
Nancy B. Morgan, County Clerk

The meeting was adjourned.

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