

SPECIAL MEETING

The Town Council of the Town of La Grange, North Carolina and the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners met in a joint Special Meeting at the La Grange Rotary Building located at 201 South Caswell Street, La Grange, North Carolina on March 12, 2007, at 6:30 p.m. with the following present:

Members of the Town Council: Mayor Woodard H. Gurley; Mayor Pro Tem Bobby R. Wooten; Council Members Larry Gladney, Walter Ellis, Jr., George Koonce, Elliott Sutton and Jeff Thomas; Town Manager, John P. Craft; Deputy Town Clerk, Wendy S. Morton.

Members of the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners: George Graham, Jr. Chairman; Paul H. Taylor, Jr., Vice Chairman; Board Members Jackie Brown, Earl Harper, Claude Davis, Chris Humphrey; County Manager, Michael W. Jarman; Lenoir County Clerk to the Board, Lashanda Aytch.

Absent: Claude E. Stroud, Lenoir County Commissioner

Guest: Tommy Hollowell, Lenoir County Tax Collector

ITEMS 1, 2, 3: CALL TO ORDER, INVOCATION, WELCOME

Mayor Gurley called the meeting to order and welcomed the La Grange Town Council and the Lenoir County Board of Commissioner to the Special Dinner Meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem gave the invocation and the blessing for the meal.

ITEM 4: DINNER

ITEM 5: TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

ITEM 5A: RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Manager Craft discussed the fact that the Town of La Grange was considering the development of additional park and recreational facilities within the Town of La Grange and inquired as to the County Commissioners willingness to participate in the cost of the proposed project. Manager Craft recognized that the County, through a partnership with the City of Kinston, had some nice recreational facilities but that the distance of these facilities from La Grange made it impossible for some of the residents of La Grange to be able to utilize. Manager Craft also pointed out that the recreational facilities in La Grange are, and would be, used by both Town residents and residents from the County in the area of La Grange. Manager Craft requested that the County Commissioners consider this when appropriating funding in the future.

ITEM 5B: HIGHWAY 70 CORRIDOR PLAN

Manager Craft discussed an email that he received from Lenoir County Manager's Office requesting the Town's support and the adoption of a resolution that would place more stringent regulations on access to Highway 70. This email indicated that the US 70 Corridor Commission had momentum to "retrofit the corridor as North Carolina's next freeway" in that "Traffic Signals and driveways be removed, remaining cross streets will be grade-separated or retrofitted with access ramps, and full access to the freeway will be limited to new interchanges". Craft indicated his reservations as the proposal would basically isolate La Grange from Highway 70, as the Town has begun to see significant development of the area with the construction of Bo Jangles, East Carolina Farm Credit, and the Town was in discussions with another restaurant that was interested in building in the area. Manager Craft also expressed concern over the effects of such a plan on exiting businesses such as the Sandpiper and other retail businesses around Little Baltimore. County Commissioner Earl Harper indicated that Manager Craft should not

work off of hearsay, because that was not the intent of the Commission. Craft again quoted the information that the County had sent to the Town requesting the Town's support. There was discussion between various Board of Commissioners and Town Council Members, although no action or decision was made by either body.

ITEM 5C: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & MARKETING

Manager Craft began the discussion by informing the County Commissioners that the Town was nearing an agreement with a property owner to take an option on some land for a Industrial Park in the La Grange area. Manager Craft recognized the fact that the City of Kinston's Industrial Park had been successful and requested that the County Commissioners ensure that the Industrial Park in the La Grange area be marketed and shown just as the City of Kinston's had been by the Lenoir County Economic Development Director. Manager Craft pointed out that the Town's residential growth was continuing and that the Town needed Industrial development and growth to supplement that growth, as well as to add industrial clients to its utility system as an additional revenue stream. Vice Chairman Paul Taylor asked if the site had rail access, Manager Craft indicated that the site did have rail access, access to Highway 70, water, sewer, electric utilities as well. Vice-Chairman Taylor guaranteed that the County would market and promote the site when the option was finalized. Craft indicated that he would advise the County when the option was finalized.

Manager Craft then moved on to marketing and expressed his disappointment that the County had participated monetarily with the Kinston We're On the Way (WOW) market program which was directed at retirees because the marketing program failed to market La Grange, Pink Hill, or Grifton. Manager Craft stated that he recognized the value of, and supported the branding and marketing of Lenoir County but felt that the County's marketing efforts should benefit the County as a whole, rather than simply one municipality. Manager Craft pointed out that the retirement program mentioned the City of Kinston a total of 55 times, Lenoir County only 11 times, and the Towns of La Grange and Pink Hill 5 times (county the names on a map), and Grifton was not even mentioned. Craft requested that the County's future efforts market the entire County. Manager Craft informed the County Commissioners that the Town planned its own market plan during FY 07-08 and requested support equal to the amount that was appropriated in the WOW retirement campaign, which equaled \$5,931.67. The County Commissioners indicated that they would support such a marketing plan so long as the plan benefited the County as well.

ITEM 5D: OTHER AREAS OF MUTUAL COOPERATION & INTEREST

Councilmember Jeff Thomas asked the County Commissioners about their request to impose an additional ½ cent sales tax to fund the school construction, when the County raised the County's property tax by 5 cent to fund these improvements. County Manager Mike Jarman responded that the County could eliminate the 5 cent tax increase if the sales tax was approved. He further explained that a sales tax would spread the cost of the school construction across the population more equally rather than impose it solely on the County's property owners as the tax increase did. The County Commissioners also pointed out the fact that it was likely that the majority of other counties would increase the sales tax if the measure was approved. Manager Jarman did reserve the right to keep all or a portion of the 5 cent tax increase for other projects at the County Commissioners discretion.

ITEM 6: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Wendy S. Morton, Deputy Town Clerk

Woodard H. Gurley, Mayor