



# Morrisville Board of Commissioners

Work Session

July 31, 2006

## **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Faulkner called the work session of the Board of Commissioners to order at 6:30 pm. Present for the meeting were Mayor Pro-Tem Martin and Commissioners Murry, Johnson, Lyons, Snyder and Holcombe. Also present were Frank Gray/Town Attorney, John Whitson/Town Manager, Diana Davis/Town Clerk, Stacie Galloway/Public Information Officer, Tony Chiotakis/Director of Community Services, Julia Ketchum/Director of Resource Management, Ben Hitchings/Planning Director and Todd Wright/Fire Chief.

*Mayor Faulkner* opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

## **WEB PAGE**

*John Whitson, Town Manager* presented the new website for the Town of Morrisville. He pointed out the Access 24/7 feature that provided a means for citizens to report concerns at any time. Stacie Galloway and Bo Singleton worked to find the software for this program, which also provided a tracking system.

*Stacie Galloway* stated as different employees responded to an item, an update email was sent to the citizen each step of the way. This program increased positive customer service.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITY**

*Mr. Whitson* stated that staff would like to receive guidance from the Board and move forward. One consideration included pursuit of a project that eliminated the need for portions to be reworked when other projects were completed in the future. When citizen comments regarding traffic were addressed, subsequent complaints surfaced. There was \$4 million in bond authorization for road improvements that would expire in 2011. This portion of road improvements was guaranteed to be completed with no tax increase. Potential projects included preparation that included installation of storm water culverts, land acquisition, design and plan implementation. With the Morrisville Carpenter project, medians required by NCDOT would restrict left turn capability from Page and Church. Street E could be completed, which would provide access to Town Hall Drive to Morrisville Carpenter, for less than \$4 million. Culverts could be placed along Morrisville Carpenter near Town Hall Drive to accommodate road widening and storm drainage. The railroad crossing at Morrisville Carpenter and Hwy 54 could be completed through NC Railroads. This project would have to be overseen by NC Rail. The bridge for Crabtree Crossing extension could be started. The intersection of Town Hall Drive and Morrisville Carpenter could be completed. Construction that could cause traffic pattern

shifts and affected neighborhood connections would have to be intact and ready for increased traffic.

*Commissioner Murry* asked if there was money reserved for the Morrisville Carpenter/Town Hall Drive intersection.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that there was spot safety money secured by Representative Capps, from North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) set aside for a traffic light, which could be placed at Morrisville Carpenter/Town Hall intersection. This would cover about 75% of the cost for signalization of the intersection.

*Commissioner Snyder* asked if a traffic circle could be located here.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that Franklin Upchurch Sr. Road was not proposed for reactivation and this intersection would require a multi-lane traffic circle. At the corner of Hwy 54 and Morrisville Carpenter, the Hartness house could be moved back versus installation of a retaining wall, which would reduce the overall costs for Morrisville Carpenter improvements. A right turn lane at Hwy 54 and Cary Parkway could be installed to alleviate traffic back up on Chapel Hill Road and the surrounding area. Extension of International Drive at Airport Boulevard would provide another connection between Airport and Aviation. This intersection could be signalized. Fire Station Number One was a potential project. Apparatus could navigate in and out of the station after road improvements were made. However, parking would be lost and a new parking lot would have to be constructed on the property to the west where a home was currently located. Renovations to extend the life of the station would have to be completed.

The Stewart Engineering building was discussed as an option for a public safety building location. An offer was made and a counter offer was received. The counter offer agreed to the \$3.9 million offered with the condition that their office remain in the main bay as a tenant for 18 to 24 months. One bay would remain for immediate use by the town. Street F could be completed with the Stewart Engineering Building purchase, which would run between the Chamber and the Police Station. A parking lot would have to be built behind the Chamber/Stewart Engineering building if Street F was built. A funding option included a package of properties to be submitted to the Wake County Open Space Committee to request funding. This could potentially pay for half of the properties. These projects would be in preparation for express construction of a major project. The Board needed to decide if funds should be spent on DOT maintained roads.

## **BOARD LEADERSHIP**

*Commissioner Johnson* asked if the design work was completed for a bridge at Crabtree Crossing.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that the design work for a steel bridge was completed. The engineers recommended a concrete bridge, which would be less expensive and would include a new design fee.

*Sam Brindis, Parsons Brinkerhoff* stated that there was less material costs related to the concrete bridge.

*Commissioner Snyder* asked which product would last longer.

*Mr. Brindis* stated that concrete had a longer life span. The maintenance was also comparable.

*Commissioner Holcombe* stated the \$4 million in bond funds should be spent on a project with immediate impact.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that a potential issue was that Morrisville Carpenter could potentially be included on the TIP, which could be completed by the Town and reimbursed by NCDOT.

*Commissioner Holcombe* stated that Parsons Brinkerhoff estimated intersection improvements at Morrisville Carpenter and Hwy 54 to be \$1.5 million. The town currently estimated a cost of \$2.8 million.

*Mr. Brindis* stated that at the time the \$1.5 million estimated was stated, it was a rough estimate and did not include impact to the Hartness property or land acquisition costs.

*Commissioner Holcombe* stated that the Hartness house move would cost roughly \$50,000.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that a portion of the design costs included a retaining wall at the Hartness property.

*Mr. Brindis* stated there were also additional costs associated with utility movement.

*Mr. Whitson* stated the estimates presented were liberal and the goal was to complete projects under the estimated costs.

*Commissioner Murry* asked how much Street F and the Morrisville Carpenter/Hwy 54 Intersection would cost. Additional traffic should not be sent through Downing Glen Subdivision and Street F would alleviate this potential issue.

*Mr. Whitson* stated there was a verbal agreement for a parking lot to be built behind the Chamber/Stewart Engineering building in exchange for right of way for Street F. The estimated cost would be about \$3.7 million just for the road improvements.

*Commissioner Murry* stated the parking lot could be completed with bond money for the public safety facility.

*Mayor Faulkner* asked if the debt service for \$9.7 million was included in the budget.

*Mr. Whitson* verified that it was.

*Commissioner Holcombe* asked what properties were located at or near the project location of Street F.

*Mr. Whitson* stated there were homes, town property and a small property or cemetery owned by a church.

*Commissioner Holcombe* stated that the road could not be built by a developer unless the town property was sold.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that the property located near the cemetery and church would remain as open space as part of the Downtown Plan.

*Commissioner Murry* asked what the proposed use was for the property owned by the town.

*Mr. Whitson* stated there would be offices located there for two employees: Senior Director of Community Services and the Risk Manager.

*Commissioner Johnson* asked what the details for the improvements at Hwy 54 and Morrisville Carpenter included.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that included the railroad crossing, left turn from Hwy 54 to Morrisville Carpenter, left turn from Hwy 54 to Morrisville Carpenter, moving the Hartness house and utility relocation and coordination.

*Commissioner Lyons* asked if the property owner wanted the house moved.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that the property owner was not opposed and was a positive step for the town in terms of historic preservation.

*Commissioner Johnson* stated the project should include a right turn from Morrisville Carpenter south onto Hwy 54.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that would include an additional cost of an estimated \$494,000.

*Commissioner Holcombe* asked if a vehicle could turn right on red off of Morrisville Carpenter south onto Hwy 54.

*Mr. Whitson* stated it would not be permissible due to the location of the rail road tracks.

*Commissioner Holcombe* asked how many additional cars could be in the stacking lane or turn lane from Morrisville Carpenter south on Hwy 54.

*Mr. Brindis* stated that an average of 20 additional vehicles could be located in the stacking lane.

*Commissioner Lyons* stated a potential improvement could include widening of Morrisville Carpenter for an additional lane between Church and Page.

*Commissioner Murry* stated that the property in front of Town Hall along Morrisville Carpenter could also be widened.

*Commissioner Johnson* stated that the project should have the biggest affect with the available funds.

*Commissioner Snyder* stated it may be less expensive to complete as much as possible at one time.

*Tony Chiotakis, Senior Director of Community Services* stated a dedicated left turn onto Town Hall Drive and a straight ahead lane could be constructed.

*Mr. Whitson* stated this pavement improvement could not be made until the storm drain culverts were replaced to widen the embankment.

*Commissioner Snyder* stated this portion should be completed when/if Morrisville Carpenter was on the TIP.

*Mayor Faulkner* stated there was discussion in the past that regarded a greenway trail in that vicinity.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that would be an expensive project. There was an interest in an underground greenway and while the culvert was being completed, an excellent opportunity for completion would exist. However, the Police Department would not support the effort, due to safety and surveillance issues.

*Mayor Faulkner* stated that project appeared to be a future project and focus could be on Morrisville Carpenter/Hwy 54 intersection improvements. She asked which project could possibly be put on the CAMPO TIP.

*Mr. Whitson* stated the intersection improvements at Hwy 54 and Morrisville Carpenter and the Morrisville Carpenter widening.

*Mayor Faulkner* asked if it would be possible to get them on the TIP in October.

*Mr. Whitson* stated the town could potentially intercept the TIP and get the Morrisville Carpenter project included. Potentially, current project 12 (McCrimmon widening from Perimeter to Evans) could be requested to be replaced with Morrisville Carpenter (currently project 25). This could probably occur by October.

*Commissioner Murry* asked what the estimated cost was for the McCrimmon project being replaced.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that Morrisville Carpenter was less expensive.

*Mayor Faulkner* stated projects on the TIP could be completed ahead of schedule by the town, and could receive reimbursement.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that the debt capacity would be maximized until the funds were reimbursed by NCDOT.

*Mayor Pro-Tem Martin* stated that a project should be chosen that could be completed with the \$4 million in bond funds available.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that Morrisville Carpenter widening could be on the TIP in October.

*Commissioner Holcombe* asked how much time would transpire between a decision for road improvement being made and bond funds being available for use.

*Mr. Whitson* stated the answer was variable. Some projects could be fronted by the town with reimbursement from bond funds later. A bond sale could be held up for a combination of funds from a potential future bond sale. If total debt was below \$10 million for the year, the bank interest rates would remain low.

*Commissioner Holcombe* stated that some bond funding was necessary for the RTP park property.

*Mr. Whitson* stated if RTP was the only project, bond funding may be unnecessary. A PARTF grant was received in the amount of \$500,000 and RTP Foundation was willing to accept no interest payments for the property.

*Commissioner Holcombe* asked if there was still consideration given to the additional 5.8 acres near the Indian Creek Greenway.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that the numbers involved with that property were estimates and further negotiation would be necessary.

*Commissioner Snyder* asked where the rest of the funds would come from if the project chosen for completion was over \$4 million.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that another bond referendum would have to occur. Some projects, not related to the initial project stated during discussion of the bond referendum in 2004, would require a tax increase. The park bond money for the pinwheel park could be postponed if necessary until after reimbursement from DOT.

*Commissioner Johnson* asked if funding from the NCDOT representative for a Small Urban Construction Project would be received.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that the representative had indicated the Town of Morrisville could receive \$200,000 per year over two years for the same project, which could potentially start next fiscal year.

*Commissioner Holcombe* asked about International Drive being offered for completion by the Town in exchange for a switch of the TIP projects Morrisville Carpenter in place of McCrimmon, the current number 12 project. This would take \$2.6 million to complete.

*Board Consensus* was that although International Drive may improve traffic, it would not be offered at an additional cost to the Town as incentive to switch projects on the TIP, unless necessary.

*Commissioner Johnson* asked if the town could still be reimbursed if the Morrisville Carpenter project was not pushed to the 12<sup>th</sup> position on the TIP and work was started.

*Mr. Whitson* stated it was highly probable that the spent funds would not be reimbursed. The funds may be reimbursed if the project construction had just started. If an agreement was made, it would include interest.

*Mayor Pro-Tem Martin* stated that the project should be completed regardless because money should be spent on road improvements.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that some tax payers may feel that they are paying taxes twice to complete this project.

*Mayor Faulkner* stated that the Board should decide what the project would be.

*Commissioner Murry* stated that a decision should be made after this project to only fund state roads that are on the TIP.

*Mayor Faulkner* asked how long the process would take and if the project would line up with the adoption of the TIP if the Board decided to complete improvements on Morrisville Carpenter/Hwy 54 intersection.

*Mr. Whitson* stated this project was part of a larger project for Morrisville Carpenter already approved by DOT. If the design was not drastically altered, certain parts could be approved quickly.

*Mr. Brindis* stated that portions of the original submittal would have to be taken out and redesigned. Since DOT already saw the information previously, the approval process should be quick. The shortest estimated time would be three to six months for approvals.

*Mayor Pro-Tem Martin* stated that if the process was started now, the results of the TIP Morrisville Carpenter project shift could be available at the same time that approvals were received.

*Mr. Brindis* stated construction could start next spring.

*Mr. Whitson* stated the Board should also consider if the park bond should be postponed until a later date. The park bonds could be not utilized thereby easing a potential future bond referendum.

*Commissioner Snyder* stated that if all of Morrisville Carpenter was considered for improvement, there was still right-of-way to be negotiated with Progress Energy in front of Addison Park.

*Mayor Pro-Tem Martin* asked if there was money designated.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that \$250,000 was available and was collected from Grace Park developers.

*Commissioner Holcombe* asked about a roundabout on Morrisville Carpenter. This may be a potential attractive alternative for traffic off of Church and out of Morrisville Square.

*Mr. Whitson* stated there was textbook design for a multi-lane roundabout. They reach a point where they do not work if there is too much or too little traffic. The function and goal of a roundabout was to keep traffic moving safely and slowly. They were more expensive than a traffic light initially, but less expensive over time, giving the roundabout a more cost saving benefit over time.

*Commissioner Murry* stated that the loss of a left turn at Morrisville Square could be alleviated by a roundabout.

*Board consensus* was to start the Morrisville Carpenter and Hwy 54 intersection and continue with the process to get Morrisville Carpenter on the TIP as the 12<sup>th</sup>.

*Mr. Whitson* stated there was cash to pay the up-front part of the project such as the design cost. Reimbursement should always be pursued. The first portion of the project would be to contact the railroad, who would need to execute their portion of the project.

*Mayor Pro-Tem Martin* stated that the Board should receive continual reports from staff.

*Mr. Whitson* stated a project manager would be assigned and the Board would receive frequent updates.

*Commissioner Murry* stated that the Board should receive an estimated cost for a traffic circle at Morrisville Carpenter and Town Hall Drive.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that consideration should be given to potential back up due to traffic that would temporarily break down the circle at this location. With the proposed improvements and future proposed road widening, there would be more capacity. The capacity between the traffic circle and the intersection would double with an additional lane.

*Commissioner Murry* stated it would be helpful to vehicles being affected by blocked turns due to the medians.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that more volume would come when Crabtree Crossing was completed.

*Mayor Faulkner* stated there should be expert opinion on this topic.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that another major artery should be constructed to reduce the load on Morrisville Carpenter Road.

*Commissioner Johnson* stated that Cary should be involved in the traffic situation.

*Mayor Faulkner* stated that a meeting was being set to discuss this issue.

*Mr. Whitson* stated there was recent joint transportation planning.

*Commissioner Lyons* asked if Barbee Road would be closed.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that if this project was completed, Barbee Road would be closed in exchange with NC Rail for another lane on Morrisville Carpenter at Hwy 54.

*Commissioner Snyder* asked if the town could request NC Rail to analyze the situation.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that the NCDOT Rail Division had verbally agreed to help with negotiations with the railroad company. Potentially a future closure date could be agreed upon that would permit the road to stay open for a period of time.

*Commissioner Snyder* stated that a light at Church and Hwy 54 installed by the Shiloh Crossing developers could help.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that when these projects were submitted to NCDOT, a median may be required.

*Commissioner Murry* stated that Street F could be completed to alleviate traffic from blocked turns from median installation. Street F would permit a portion of public safety bond funds to be used to construct a parking lot located behind the Chamber/Stewart Building if the town purchased the building.

*Board consensus* was to negotiate purchase of the Stewart Engineering building.

*Commissioner Holcombe* stated after further review, she may be ready to commit to purchase the building.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that the building purchase was estimated to cost \$3.9 million with \$500,000 needed for construction of a parking lot. A parking lot would also need to be completed at the fire station. The part of Street F in front of the public safety building and the parking lots could be covered by the public safety bond funds.

*Commissioner Snyder* stated that a little less than \$2 million in bond funds would be left.

*Mr. Whitson* stated only the necessary bonds would be sold and the left over authorized bond amount could be applied elsewhere with no tax increase. The contract for the Stewart Engineering Building will be brought back to the Board for approval. Estimates on the parking lots and Fire Station renovations will be presented to the Board.

*Commissioner Lyons* asked if all of this work could be completed with no tax increase and a potential tax increase in the future when more funds may be necessary.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that the \$4 million in traffic and the \$5.7 million in bond funds would be utilized with no tax increase.

*Mayor Pro-Tem Martin* stated that the Chamber should pay rent for the land if the town owned the land.

*Mr. Whitson* stated the land would no longer be taxed because the land was public property.

*Commissioner Murry* asked what lost revenue would be if the town purchased the property.

*Mr. Whitson* stated according to Wake County Tax Records, the taxes were \$8,918 per year.

## **IMPACT FEES**

*Commissioner Murry* stated that all revenue could be discussed.

*Commissioner Holcombe* stated that the amount of building permits for 2005 based on the 2005 financial report were used to determine potential annual revenue from transportation impact fees. Holly Springs collected \$1000 per building permit. This would amount to \$2 million in revenue for the Town of Morrisville over five years. The actual revenue would be higher because the fact that multi-family was classified as commercial was not considered. Cary charged about \$1250 per permit. Apex, Durham, Raleigh, Cary and Holly Springs charged transportation impact fees. Some citizens resided in Morrisville for a long time and should not pay the same amount of money as newer residents.

*Mayor Faulkner* stated all options should be considered.

*Commissioner Murry* stated that one consideration could be a one time charge per car. Every person with a car would travel on the roads. There was not a lot of land left to develop and there would not be sustainable revenue provided by transportation impact fees.

*Commissioner Holcombe* stated after build out there would not be a dramatic influx of vehicles.

*Commissioner Snyder* stated that other communities would contribute additional traffic.

*Mayor Pro-Tem Martin* stated that new growth should pay for itself, but more information should be obtained before impact fees were considered.

*Mr. Whitson* stated that the Board could consider a request to be permitted to collect impact fees, but did not currently have authorization.

*Commissioner Murry* stated that impact fees were highly debated. Sales tax options might not be as highly debated.

*Mayor Pro-Tem Martin* stated sales tax could be considered a hidden fee by taxpayers and impact fees only affected home owners.

*Commissioner Murry* asked when was the last time legislature granted authority to levy impact taxes.

*Ben Hitchings, Planning Director* stated that there were 22 local government entities that had impact fee authority in North Carolina. Dunn was the last to receive this authority in 1991. This has been an issue with the growth rate in recent years.

*Commissioner Murry* stated that the Blue Ribbon report claimed that with the \$1000 charge per permit in impact fees by Wake County created \$200 million dollars. A one cent local sales tax option would create \$3.4 billion in revenue.

*Commissioner Holcombe* asked what the future population estimate was set at for 10 years in the future.

*Mr. Whitson* stated there was acreage available and density was a factor.

*Commissioner Holcombe* stated that there may be some changes at the legislator that could affect this issue.

*Mayor Faulkner* closed the work session meeting at 9:00 p.m.