

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
NOVEMBER 29, 2021**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a joint meeting with the City Council of Elizabeth City on Monday, November 29, 2021 at the EC-PC Senior Center.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lloyd E. Griffin, III, Chairman
Charles Jordan, Vice-Chairman
Barry Overman
Sean Lavin
Bill Sterritt
Jonathan Meads

MEMBERS ABSENT: Cecil Perry

OTHERS PRESENT: Sparty Hammett, County Manager
R. Michael Cox, County Attorney
Sheri Small, Finance Director
Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

Also present were the Mayor, Council members, Interim City Manager, and City staff. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Lloyd Griffin and Mayor Bettie Parker. Following the invocation, everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Griffin and Mayor Parker provided brief opening statements.

1. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

County Manager Hammett requested the agenda be amended to move Item #9 (National Guard Armory) to Item #7.

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Sean Lavin to amend the agenda by moving Item #9 to Item #7. The motion carried unanimously.

2. UPDATE/DISCUSSION – MIDDLE SCHOOL GYMNASIUM LEASEBACK:

County Manager Sparty Hammett called on Deborah Malenfant, Executive Director of Elizabeth City Downtown, Inc. to present.

Ms. Malenfant stated that she is presenting tonight on behalf of a team; herself, Parks & Recreation Director Sean Clark, Interim Police Chief Larry James, Community Developer Kellen Long, Interim City Manager Ralph Clark, and County Manager Sparty Hammett. She explained that there are many players and many pieces to this puzzle for this particular project. There are benefits to many stakeholders and there are some pros and cons, but ultimately this can be a very big win-win for the citizens of our community, both City and County. There is a significant economic impact associated with this project, and a great benefit to the joint Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County Parks & Recreation Department. The project has been in discussion for a little over a year now. She said she will give a quick recap of the history and the timeline of this project.

Ms. Malenfant stated that the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners approved the sale of the former Elizabeth City Middle School on November 16, 2020. The sale and conversion of the buildings to market rate apartments is a transformative project that will have tremendous benefit to the City, the County, Downtown Elizabeth City, and the community as a whole. J.D. Lewis Construction Management, Inc. (JDL) has committed to:

- Convert the existing main building and annex into approximately 84 market rate apartments;
- Lease back the stand-alone gym that is currently being used for the Police Athletic League (PAL); and
- Dedicate a portion of the purchased land to the City of Elizabeth City for the purpose of parks and recreation.

December 2020 to present – There were ongoing meetings/discussion with City leadership and staff; Boys & Girls Club; PAL; SOULS; and J.D. Lewis. On March 21, 2021, Elizabeth City

Council approved Local Historic Landmark Status. On June 7, 2021, Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to:

- Dedicate 12 county-owned parcels of land behind the gym to the City of Elizabeth City for Parks & Recreation usage (approximately 3.5 acres).
- Contribute back to the Boys & Girls Club the full \$150K they have paid in rent.
- Assist the Boys & Girls Club with temporary relocation.
- Recommend a 20-year lease with the City of Elizabeth City (Parks & Recreation for the gym with option to purchase at a predetermined price after 5 years.
- Contribute \$10k to the SOULS program (pending 501c3 status).

On June 14, 2021, Elizabeth City Council approved Conditional Zoning. On September 13, 2021, Pasquotank County Board approved the extension of the closing date to January 7, 2022. August 2021 – The Boys & Girls Club temporarily relocated to the former DayBreak space at Edgewood per request of the Executive Director due to ECMS facility issues. On October 27, 2021, an onsite meeting was held at the gym to review preliminary “wish list” proposed by PAL and Parks & Recreation and included:

- Preliminary presentation of “wish list” items in architectural drawings and estimated cost to complete.
- Revisions made by Parks & Recreation & PAL staff.

County Manager Sparty Hammett explained that the City and County had previously discussed demolishing the annex and rebuilding the gym façade and making the gym a Parks & Recreation asset; however, it was decided that the cost was prohibitive (\$1 to \$1.5 million, not including any gym renovations/improvement). Per discussions with City staff, former City Manager, and Interim City Manager, the consensus was that the best use would be for the gym to become a Parks & Recreation asset for community-wide use. Lease terms would be developed based on the final estimate for the cost of renovations provided by the developer.

The following proposed lease terms were developed:

- Cost of gym renovations/improvements plus interest would be amortized through a 20-year lease agreement between the City (Parks & Recreation) and JDL.
- The lease agreement would include an option to purchase from JDL (at a predetermined price) after five years.
- Annual property taxes specific to the gym paid by JDL would be factored into the lease agreement.

The preliminary cost estimate based upon the Parks & Recreation and PAL wish list is approximately \$2 million. Major components of the renovation include:

- Demolition of the existing locker rooms, boiler room, and incidentals rooms.
- Construction of new locker room and bathroom facilities, kitchen, and office.
- Demolition of existing roof and installation of TPO (Thermoplastic Polyolefin) roof.
- Installing concentric units for heat and air conditioning.
- Painting of all interior painted surfaces.

Mr. Hammett said we are waiting on the revised cost estimate. The draft lease agreement is currently being reviewed by the City and County attorneys. The estimated annual cost of the lease based on the preliminary estimates is \$155,000 to \$165,000 per year (County pays 55% and City pays 45% per Interlocal Agreement). He said although \$2 million is a large sum of money, EC-PC Parks & Recreation badly needs another gym for community use as indicated in their Master Plan. In contrast, the cost of building a new gym would be significantly higher.

The current gym is 17,463 sf. The average cost to construct a gym is \$400 to \$450 per square foot, which would result in a construction cost of approximately \$7 to \$7.9 million. This would be 3 ½ to 4 times the proposed renovation cost. He said this does not include locating and purchasing land. The County will dedicate the 12 County-owned parcels behind the gym on Pearl Street to the City (EC-PC Parks & Recreation). The net effect of the donation of the property, the gym lease, and potential purchase of the gym would be the attainment of a

renovated gymnasium/community center and 3.5 acres of green space as assets to EC-PC Parks & Recreation at a substantially reduced cost, with minimal up-front expenditure (with operational costs split between the City and County per Interlocal Agreement).

Mr. Hammett said the following would be the next steps at the December 6th Board of Commissioners meeting and December 13th City Council meeting:

- Review and approve proposed lease documents with buy-back option.
- Review and approve Interlocal Agreement for shared cost of the facility leaseback and associated cost of gym operations via EC-PC Parks & Recreation Department.

Commissioner Sterritt asked if there is anyone in attendance representing the SOULS feeding program. Ms. Hammett said there is not. Commissioner Sterritt said it is a very good program that does an awful lot for all of us. He said there are at least 29 organizations in the City and County that participate in the program and provide meals for approximately 60-65 citizens per night who would not otherwise be blessed. He hopes that we continue to support SOULS. Mr. Hammett said he has had ongoing discussions with the Executive Director of SOULS. The Board of Commissioners has agreed to contribute \$10,000 to assist them with their moving costs when they receive their 501C3 status, which they are currently pursuing.

3. UPDATE/DISCUSSION – NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY:

County Manager Sparty Hammett explained that the National Guard Armory site is 6.6 acres, and the main building is approximately 17,000 sf. The Boys & Girls Club, the City, and the County were all interested in acquiring the Armory. Retired Police Chief Eddie Buffaloe was trying to obtain the Armory for the Elizabeth City Police Department. Former Emergency Management Director Christy Saunders had requested it for the County through State Emergency Management for County storage needs and as a Backup Emergency Operations Center.

In December of 2020, the County received notice that the National Guard Armory was going to be available, and ownership could be transferred to the County. Upon learning this, he reached out to Interim City Manager Buffaloe to propose City/County shared use, as well as to provide a temporary location for up to 2-years for the Boys & Girls Club while they built a new facility. The Boys & Girls Club expressed interest in the Armory as a permanent location.

Mr. Hammett stated that a determination was made that the County's space needs could be met at alternative County facilities, such as the Pritchard Street Garage site and the new EMS Headquarters. After that determination, he discussed with the former City Manager, former Interim City Manager, and Boys & Girls Club Executive Director the possibility of the Boys & Girls Club making the Armory their permanent location, sharing the facility with the City (ECPD and PAL), and splitting the renovation costs. Everyone agreed that it could be mutually beneficial to both the City and the Boys & Girls Club.

Ms. Hammett said a feasibility study is the first step in determining the best use of the facility and potential costs. He had initial contact with JKF Architecture about conducting a study. JKF indicated a potential shared use of the Armory between the Elizabeth City Police Department and the Boys & Girls Club is feasible. JKF Architecture has direct project experience including: ECPC Senior Center; two EC National Guard Armory projects; and the Boys & Girls Club renovation of a former High School in Edenton. JKF Architecture has prepared a proposal to do a feasibility study for \$23,088. The study would outline the best layout/separation of the facility and the renovation cost.

The Boys & Girls Club has agreed to cover half the cost (\$11,544) if the City of Elizabeth City funds the remaining half. The County will research whether the Armory can be transferred to the City or whether a long-term \$1/year lease would have to be developed.

Elizabeth Mitchell, Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club said she approached Mr. Hammett back in 2019 about the possibility of using the Armory because there were some structural and heating and cooling problems in the old middle school building. She said it will be an ideal location, because of all the surrounding outdoor activities within steps of the facility, such as basketball, spray ground, ballfields, and open space for the kids to run. The interior of the facility is amazing. They can use the big space for a gym, and there is adequate space for

homework and tutoring. She said she is very much in favor of this. She believes it is a win-win for the community.

Interim Police Chief Larry James echoed Ms. Mitchell's comments. He said this move will benefit both the City and County. The Police Department currently houses in the same area as the Boys & Girls Club, and they already work well together. He added that the police department is in great need of storage space, and has been actively trying to find more space.

Mayor Pro Tem Johnnie Walton asked if a committee can be formed to make sure everything is in order to move forward. Mr. Hammett said he feels it would be a good idea to form a project advisory committee for the feasibility study, because there will be multiple entities using the facility, and we need to make sure that everybody's interest is met.

Mayor Bettie Parker asked if the building is structurally sound. Mr. Hammett said the building is structurally sound, but there will need to be some major renovations, such as a new roof and heating and air system.

4. PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION – HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION – NC HUMAN RELATIONS PROGRAM MANAGER GENE TROY:

County Manager Hammett introduced Mr. Gene Troy, who is the Program Manager for the NC Human Relations Commission. He explained that Mr. Troy will be doing a presentation on Human Relations Commissions. One thing that has been discussed is potentially looking at our current Community Relations Commission and possibly transforming it into a Human Relations Commission. Mr. Troy will speak to some benefits of that, such as gaining access to state resources for training and conferences.

Mr. Troy said he reached out to the City and County to talk about the possibility of forming a Local Human Relations Commission (HRC). He explained that the creation of a local HRC is usually done, by Ordinance, By-Laws, Executive Order, Resolutions, or Motion. There are a total of 25 commissions in the state. Sixteen of them are volunteer commissions and nine of them are local commissions that have a local human relations department.

There are two types of Local HRCs. The first type of Local HRC is the volunteer commission. The volunteer commission does not have a local human relations department that is within the city/county government departments. Its members have a direct relationship with the City/County officials. It conducts its own programs. The volunteer commission may have a staff liaison between the commission and the city council and/or the county commissioners. It may have directives that come from the city council and/or the county commissioners. He said if it is going to be a joint effort he recommends there be a staff liaison from both entities.

The second type of local human relations commission is a Local HRC that has a local human relations department. The Local HRD staff conducts and produces the Local HRC's programs. The Local HRD staff handles day-to-day human relations issues.

Mr. Troy explained the role of the commission members. The commission members advise their city council/county board of commissioners on human relations issues affecting their city/town and/or county. The commission members serve as a resource to the community. They ensure that city/county services are implemented fairly to everyone. Lastly, the members may have to provide training on human relations issues to the community.

Commission members promote and provide equal opportunity and diversity appreciation programs. They monitor, study, recommend, and resolve local human relations problems. They monitor, report, and deal with local hate crime and bias activity. They become a crisis intervener of human relations issues for the local community. They are trainers for crisis intervention for local human relations issues. Additionally, they make an annual report to the governing body concerning the commission's events, activities, and trainings.

Some important "to do" items for commissions include: schedule HRC orientation; schedule other commission trainings as needed (fair housing, crisis management response, hate crimes, hate bias, cultural diversity); become a hate violence information network affiliate; attend the statewide meetings with the Local Human Relations Commissions in North Carolina; develop and implement a local human relations work plan; create positive interagency relationships;

reach out to all communities; reach important understandings with groups; and understand the community's history and the present perceptions in the community.

Mr. Troy stated that the by-laws for the current Elizabeth City – Pasquotank County Community Relations Commission are very similar to a lot of by-laws and duties and responsibilities that other commissions have throughout the state. There are only one or two things that might need to be changed or added, but otherwise it looks like it is a very well established Community Relations Commission. He provided a sample ordinance that can be used if the Board/Council decides to move forward. He also provided a list of all the Human Relation Commissions across the state of North Carolina.

Mr. Troy said his office provides local human relations commissions with training (fair housing, local HRC orientation, crisis intervention, hate crimes, etc.), crisis intervention, technical assistance, and hate crime and bias tracking.

Commissioner Overman asked how limited volunteer commissions are in their abilities. Mr. Troy answered they are limited to some degree; however, there are some volunteer commissions that are very effective. Granville County for example is very effective. They have connections with many different organizations across the county. They collaborate with all different types of city and county agencies. They do all kinds of programs. They pull off stuff that staffed commissions don't pull off. They have the pulse of the leaders in mind and the leaders respect them. Commissioner Overman said he thinks this is a great opportunity.

Commissioner Sterritt said he cannot sit here and be quiet when we talk about community relations. He serves on the Local Community Relations Commission. He said they are supposed to meet once a month. Last Tuesday, he was all zoomed up and ready to go, but no one ever sent his code. Finally, he made a call and found out that the meeting was cancelled. He said only seven members are active, which is not good. He said our local commission needs to mirror what these other 25 counties are doing. He thanked the manager for putting this item on the agenda. He stated that we need it badly. He noted that the local commission has three members that are in their late 80s and early 90s. He hopes that something will happen.

Commissioner Sterritt noted that Commissioner Perry sadly could not attend tonight's meeting due to a problem with his flight. He said Commissioner Perry is hoping that the meeting will resolve into something real good.

Vice-Chairman Jordan thanked Mr. Troy for his presentation. He said he heard some great things that he believes will enhance of Community Relations Commission. He hopes it will improve the relationships of all the residents in Pasquotank County.

Chairman Griffin asked staff to schedule a meeting with the City and County Mangers, the Mayor, and the Chairman to discuss how to move forward.

5. PRESENTATION – COAST GUARD MARATHON – VISITEC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CORRINA RUFFIEUX:

Mayor Parker called on VisitEC Executive Director Corrina Ruffieux to present.

Ms. Ruffieux provided a PowerPoint presentation on the upcoming Coast Guard Marathon. She said she hopes everyone has heard of the Coast Guard Marathon by now. It is going to be incredible for our community. It's the first ever sanctioned road race for the United States Coast Guard. The marathon is scheduled for March 3-5, 2022. The event will include a full marathon, a half marathon and a 5K. She said they have been working on the event for over two years now. It has been cancelled at least twice because of COVID.

The event was converted to virtual in 2021. There were over 11,200 participants from 14 different countries and all 50 states. Registration for the 2022 event opened on September 15, 2021 and so far there are over 1,200 registered runners (660 in-person and 570 virtual). So far, there are in-person signups from 43 states (including Alaska and Hawaii), US Armed Forces Europe, US Virgin Islands, Guam, and Canada. Congressman Murphy is signed up to run in person. Only 25% of those registered are locals, which includes Virginia Beach, Outer Banks, and Edenton.

The event has sponsors from all over the nation. This event cannot take place without support and that is why she is here tonight. She stated that if you register for the full or half marathon you get free training with Coastie and Ultramarathoner Coach Shane through the Bird Fitness Coaching app. She said Marathon Foto approached her and asked to be our official race photographer. They are the official photographer for races like London, Boston, New York, and Marine Corp.

Ms. Ruffieux said she is thrilled that part of Race Weekend will include the 2022 Coast Guard Marathon Health & Fitness Expo on March 3-4-, 2022. They are partnering with ECSU for the expo.

Ms. Ruffieux provided maps of the proposed routes. She noted that they are certified by USATF, which means the route has been measured. They are sanctioned and certified as a Boston Qualifying Marathon, which for a first year race is a huge deal. People can now come to our town and qualify to run in the oldest marathon in the world. She added that this race will probably be one of the flattest races in the country.

Ms. Ruffieux provided data from other marathons in hopes that it helps the Board understand the potential significance of this event for our community. Based on COVID, they are projecting 2,000 in-person runners. She received a letter of support from Senator Richard Burr, Congressman Gregory Murphy, and Senator Thom Tillis.

Ms. Ruffieux requested the following:

- Adopt an official resolution of support of the Coast Guard Marathon Weekend
- Separately, declare the first weekend in March “Coast Guard Legacy Weekend”
- Agree to provide in-kind services that will allow the event to run smoothly and stay in budget
- Help raise awareness of this event in any way possible through official City & County channels

Commissioner Overman said he serves on the Tourism Development Authority and thanked Ms. Ruffieux for her enthusiasm and hard work.

Chairman Griffin thanked the City for hosting tonight’s meeting, and asked if there was any further business to come before the Board. There being no further business;

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Jonathan Meads to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 PM.

CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO THE BOARD