

**RICHMOND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
RICHMOND COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE BUILDING  
REGULAR MID-MONTH MEETING  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2008, 12:00 NOON**

*The Richmond County Board of Commissioners met for the Regular Mid-Month Meeting on Tuesday, January 15, 2008 at 12:00 Noon with the following present: Chairman Kenneth R. Robinette; Vice-Chairman John B. Garner; Commissioners Pamela N. Dillman, Jimmy L. Maske, Thad Ussery, J. C. Watkins, and Paul Wilson, Jr.*

*The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robinette at 12:00 Noon.*

**ITEM NO. 1 – INVOCATION**

*The invocation was delivered by Commissioner J. C. Watkins.*

**ITEM NO. 2 – APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*The Agenda was approved as presented by a motion of Commissioner Maske, seconded by Commissioner Wilson and unanimously carried.*

**ITEM NO. 3 – CONSIDERATION OF STAY OF DEMOLITION ORDER FOR MR. LARRY ENGLAND**

*The Board began discussion of the Stay of the Demolition Order issued for property owned by Mr. Larry England at 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Safie. The Board had extended the Stay from the January 7, 2008 Regular Meeting until January 15, at which time Mr. England had agreed to provide a letter from a bank authorizing a loan to him to purchase the materials needed to complete work on his house. Mr. England advised the Board that he did not have a bank letter and that four different banks had refused the loan until something was done with the house.*

*Chairman Robinette asked County Manager Haynes to respond. Mr. Haynes advised that the Code Enforcement Officer and the Building Inspector had met with Mr. England during the past two weeks to evaluate the necessary work on the house. Code Enforcement Officer Shannon Brigman advised that each item of the order had been reviewed, and Mr. England had been advised how to correct each item and bring the structure up to code.*

*Commissioner Dillman asked how many violations there were, and Mr. Brigman advised that there were five items that would have to be addressed in order to remove the condemnation, but the house would still not be suitable for habitation. Commissioner Dillman confirmed that Mr. England had this information. Mr. England advised that he is working to secure the porch.*

*County Manager Haynes confirmed with the Code Enforcement Officer that nothing had been done on the house since the Board's January 7 meeting.*

*Mr. England stated that he was in the process of loading debris on a trailer and securing the porch with columns and steel beams.*

*In further discussion, Commissioner Watkins asked if there would be coordination with the Inspections Office on the work being completed each day.*

*Code Enforcement Officer Shannon Brigman advised that a daily log could be kept, and he reported no progress on the house as of his inspection that morning.*

*Commissioner Watkins suggested that inspections be performed when Mr. England is at home, if possible.*

*Commissioner Maske asked if the house could be secured by the weekend.*

*Building Inspector Gary Williams stated that the foundation under the front porch must be secured as well as the back wall of the house.*

*Code Enforcement Officer Shannon Brigman acknowledged that the house could be secured at this time with plywood over the windows.*

*Chairman Robinette felt that the house is actually in worse condition than it was this time a year ago since things have been torn out.*

*Commissioner Dillman confirmed that the house could be removed from the condemnation list if the house is secured by the weekend.*

*Commissioner Maske asked Mr. England how he could obtain the loan that he needs for materials.*

*Mr. England advised that he could get a bank loan on the lot if the house is removed from the condemnation list and could be used as collateral for a loan.*

*Commissioner Dillman questioned Mr. England about completion of the five items by the weekend and whether he had materials needed for the work. Mr. England stated that he needs treated wood.*

*Commissioner Dillman then offered a motion to extend the Stay until the February 4 Regular Meeting date, and that Mr. England is to call Building Inspections next Monday to confirm that the work was completed during the coming weekend. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Maske for discussion. Commissioner Maske asked what would happen on February 4 if the house is not secure. Commissioner Maske then asked Mr. England for assurance of the feasibility to secure the structure by February 4, 2008.*

*Commissioner Dillman mentioned the potential of bad weather.*

*Commissioner Watkins reiterated that February 4 would be the absolute deadline and stated that he would not be in favor of any further extensions beyond that date.*

*A substitute motion was then offered by Commissioner Ussery to extend the Stay until February 4, 2008 and that it would be determined if the necessary work to satisfy Building Inspections requirements has been completed, and the Stay would be removed. The substitute motion was seconded by Commissioner Garner. Commissioner Maske reiterated that the*

structure must be secured in accordance with Building Inspections requirements. County Manager Haynes added that no action would be required by the Board of Commissioners and that a report should be provided by Building Inspections on the status of the work. Commissioner Garner asked if the condemnation order is removed, then what is next for the Board of Commissioners. County Manager Haynes advised that the process would then be between Mr. England and Building Inspections after the order for condemnation is removed.

Chairman Robinette asked what happens if the house is secured but incomplete, and how long would the house be allowed to stand without condemnation. Building Inspector Gary Williams advised that it would be treated as an abandoned house until there are problems with vagrants, etc.

Commissioner Ussery confirmed that when the Stay is removed, then the condemnation order applies. Commissioner Ussery felt that a bank letter should still be required to insure bank financing for Mr. England to complete the work. County Manager Haynes re-stated that Mr. England has been advised of what it takes to have the condemnation order removed.

Commissioner Garner added that the time limit on the building permit restrains Mr. England.

Commissioner Watkins confirmed that no further action is needed if the house is secured.

Director of Community Services B. K. Jones advised that complaints from neighbors is what drew the attention of Building Inspections to this house and that action was taken in response to complaints after vagrants began to occupy the home. Mr. Jones noted that the County does not have an abandoned home ordinance, and that if the County's inspectors are satisfied that the house is secure, then the County cannot take any further action. Mr. Jones noted that the original owner of the property had given the house to Mr. England, who expressed his desire to repair the house and live in it.

Commissioner Ussery restated his substitute motion to give Mr. England the opportunity to secure the house in accordance with Building Inspections requirements, then the Stay would be removed, and then the condemnation order would apply without further Board action if code requirements are not met.

Commissioner Ussery further clarified his substitute motion that the Stay would extend until February 4, 2008 to provide Mr. England time to secure the house to meet code requirements, and then automatically the Stay would be removed and the original Order of Condemnation issued in February 2006 would be repealed if the house is determined to be secure in accordance with code standards..

The vote for the substitute motion carried unanimously.

**ITEM NO. 4 – CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATION FROM COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR NOMINATION TO FILL VACANCY IN THE OFFICE OF THE REGISTER OF DEEDS**

Chairman Robinette recognized Mrs. Svea Strong as Chairman of the Democratic County Executive Committee. Mrs. Strong read a letter which referenced N. C. General Statute 161-5, which states that the Board of Commissioners shall appoint the person recommended by

*the Executive Committee of the political party represented to fill the unexpired term of the Register of Deeds.*

*Mrs. Strong reported that most members of the committee had attended the January 14, 2008 meeting, and having met General Statute requirements, the committee had selected Mrs. Linda Douglas to fill the unexpired term of the Register of Deeds and recommended her appointment. Mrs. Strong stated that the requirement to make a recommendation within 30 days of the vacancy has been fulfilled so as to insure no lapse in service as recommended by the Institute of Government.*

*Commissioner Maske confirmed that this appointment would run in concurrence with the remainder of Register of Deeds Pat McDonald's term through the first Monday in December 2008.*

*Commissioner Dillman confirmed that there would be no problem with this individual running for the office at the end of the current term.*

*Commissioner Watkins stated that this is a historic occasion for Richmond County in that this would be the first time that Richmond County had a person of color in an elected office. Commissioner Watkins further reflected that this date ties in with another historic date in this country in that January 15 is the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King. Commissioner Watkins stated that because of Dr. King's work, alot of people were given the right to vote. Commissioner Watkins stressed that this is a historic time, and he commended the people of Richmond County.*

*A motion was then offered by Commissioner Watkins to accept the recommendation of the County Executive Committee of the Democratic Party to appoint Mrs. Linda Douglas to fill the remainder of the term of current Register of Deeds Pat T. McDonald. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dillman and unanimously carried.*

*County Manager Haynes confirmed that the salary of the Register of Deeds position would establish the filing fee for this office, and he recommended that the salary for this office be set at the first step of the current grade level for the Register of Deeds position.*

*A motion was offered by Commissioner Garner, seconded by Commissioner Maske and unanimously carried to set the salary for the Office of Register of Deeds position at the first step in the current grade level for this position.*

#### **ITEM NO. 5 – REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT RICK SAGO**

*Director of Development Rick Sago referred to a Charlotte Observer article in the Sunday edition about North Carolina Speedway. Mr. Sago advised that he and Andy Hillenburg, the new speedway owner, had recently visited the Vulcan Quarry to select a new rock for the front entrance of the track.*

*In response to a recent inquiry by Commissioner Dillman about the status of the County's Revolving Loan Fund, Mr. Sago provided a detailed summary of how the Revolving Loan Fund works and reported the status of each loan. Mr. Sago explained that the RLF is completely separate from tax dollars and had originally been funded through grant funds*

*which were loaned out with interest and payments collected to refurbish the RLF. Mr. Sago explained that those applying for loans are typically high-risk borrowers who did not qualify for loans through traditional lenders. Mr. Sago reported that \$14,000.00 per month is collected in RLF loan payments, and the program overall has been successful. In discussion of terms, Mr. Sago advised that the maximum term for a loan is 15 years in a maximum amount of \$500,000.00. Mr. Sago further advised that RLF applications are made to the Revolving Loan Fund Committee; applications are reviewed and then recommended to the Board of Commissioners for approval or denial. Mr. Sago stated that the goal of the program is to secure loans with real estate. Since 1986, Mr. Sago reported that 26 loans have been made in a total amount of \$3,000,000.00, with the fund having been established with \$1,000,000.00 in grant funds. Mr. Sago concluded the report on the RLF advising that there is currently an available balance of \$750,000.00 in the RLF, and \$14,000.00 is earned per month in loan payments.*

*Commissioner Ussery asked about the loans that are not in good standing, and County Attorney Futrell advised that he continues to work on collection of these loans.*

*Chairman Robinette emphasized that the Revolving Loan Fund has been successful and done what it was intended to do.*

*Commissioner Maske commended the success of Cortek as a Revolving Loan Fund recipient.*

*Commissioner Ussery stated that Richmond County is the envy of many counties, and he commended Mr. Sago on his successful efforts to secure businesses, and on the success of teamwork in the County and utilization of the programs that are available to us.*

*Mr. Sago noted that in the last four years Richmond County has secured \$5,000,000.00 in grants, and he complimented the great support and programs offered through the Department of Commerce, the Governor's Office, and North Carolina Southeast. Mr. Sago advised that he had been interviewed the prior week by Television Station WRAL in Raleigh regarding the Department of Commerce and programs available to counties. Mr. Sago re-emphasized the importance of the support provided to Richmond County by the State and the Board of Commissioners and the County Manager providing him with the tools necessary for success in his recruitment efforts.*

*Commissioner Maske referenced the tremendous importance of \$3,000,000.00 in Industrial Revenue Bonds which had been approved by the voters a number of years ago.*

*Mr. Sago commended the importance of the partnerships that Richmond County has with Pee Dee Electric, Piedmont Natural Gas, Progress Energy and the local municipalities.*

*Commissioner Garner stressed that teamwork is the key to survival.*

*Commissioner Maske inquired about the status of the shell building project, and Mr. Sago advised that the paperwork with Pee Dee Electric is now in the legal review process, and that construction of a 40,000 sq. ft. building just like the other three shell buildings is planned.*

*Commissioner Watkins advised that he and County Manager Haynes would be participating in the Lumber River COG Planning Retreat scheduled for the coming weekend at Wrightsville*

*Beach, and he emphasized that much of what Richmond County is doing is credited to the County Manager and his good management.*

*Commissioner Dillman asked if the County is working in partnership with the municipalities on any projects. Mr. Sago confirmed that he works with Rockingham on a routine basis. Mr. Sago noted that he typically does not focus on retail and commercial projects, but he recognizes that this is an important part of the overall picture.*

**ITEM NO. 6 – REPORT BY COUNTY MANAGER JAMES E. HAYNES**

*County Manager Haynes advised the Board that Ritz Craft has a new jet and another one on order that the County would like to house at Richmond County Airport.*

*County Manager Haynes reiterated the comments made by Mr. Sago regarding the strong working relationship that Richmond County enjoys with the Department of Commerce.*

*Mr. Haynes advised that he and Chairman Robinette had discussed a planning retreat for the Board of Commissioners on February 18 and 19 at the National in Pinehurst.*

*County Manager Haynes referenced the very good audit report presented during the prior meeting by the County's auditors and the unqualified opinion letter submitted by the audit firm.*

*Mr. Haynes noted that soon after the Board's planning retreat, work will begin on the new budget. In discussion of Revaluation, Mr. Haynes noted that the Revaluation numbers will impact next year's budget, and the tax rate will adjust with values. In further discussion of values, Mr. Haynes advised that the valuation for Pee Dee Electric will increase by \$150,000,000.00 with the new facility.*

*Commissioner Ussery confirmed that the valuation for other utilities will increase by next year, and Mr. Haynes stated that values are at approximately 89% of market value right now. Mr. Haynes further advised that the 4-year Revaluation cycle avoids adjustments for utilities, trucking, and rail. Mr. Haynes explained that sometimes utilities were able to argue that their valuation remained at 100% all of the time and were able to negotiate adjustments in valuation during the first, fourth and seventh years. In an 8-year Revaluation cycle, houses gradually decline below market value during the Revaluation period, but the 4-year cycle saves the County from some of the adjustments.*

*Commissioner Garner suggested that the County Manager explain the Revaluation process during the Board's next televised meeting for the benefit of the public.*

*Commissioner Maske asked the projected completion date for the Progress Energy facility, and County Manager Haynes advised the projected completion is in 2011, with the project to begin in 2009. Mr. Haynes advised that values on this facility would be pro-rated and tax is collected on whatever is on the site at the time.*

*Commissioner Dillman mentioned the proposed mega dump site in South Carolina and whether height restrictions for Richmond County Airport would affect the proposed landfill in Marlboro County.*

*County Manager Haynes advised that glide slope clearance required in the runway area is 7 to 1, and by a distance of one mile out, clearance would be at 700 to 1,000 ft.*

*Commissioner Ussery confirmed that a 26 ft. high bridge has been approved by F.A.A. as part of the new highway project in the vicinity of the airport.*

*In further discussion of the landfill, Commissioner Dillman advised that the proposed South Carolina landfill would join the Richmond County border in the area of Osborne Road. Commissioner Dillman advised that she understood that rail service to the proposed landfill would be through Florence, and she wanted the Board to be aware of the proposed site for this facility. Commissioner Dillman went on to express concern about potential danger to the County's water supply, and she suggested that a letter in opposition to the proposed site should be written.*

**ITEM NO. 7 – REQUEST FOR BOARD APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER FOR AIRPORT HANGAR PROJECT**

*Director of Community Services B. K. Jones advised that Friday morning he had received notification from the Division of Aviation of availability of \$200,000.00 in additional grant funds over and above the other grant. Mr. Jones advised that the additional \$200,000.00 would enable the County to use the funds for hangars – either the 10 units under construction or additional units later.*

*Mr. Jones requested that the Board approve two change orders for the Airport Hangar Project – Change Order #1 to include an office and restroom in one end of the complex to be used by the Division of Forest Resources and all other tenants of the hangars at a cost of \$26,308.00 for the Change Order.*

*Mr. Jones advised that Change Order #2 in the amount of \$91,697.00 is for site work negotiated with Hudson Paving for a second 10-unit hangar complex and would allow for all asphalt work to be completed at the same time.*

*Commissioner Ussery asked whether the office area would be heated and cooled year-round and whether leases would cover the cost. Mr. Jones advised that meters will be installed on each hangar and the restroom facilities would be accessible by all using the 10 hangars. Commissioner Ussery confirmed that the facilities would be locked.*

*Commissioner Ussery questioned pouring the concrete pad in advance of hangar construction, and County Manager Haynes advised that the concrete would only be uncovered for approximately six or seven months, with completion of the new hangar projected by next Christmas. Mr. Jones confirmed that the first ten hangars have been reserved. Commissioner Ussery confirmed that all specifications were designed by the contractor.*

*A motion was offered by Commissioner Garner, seconded by Commissioner Watkins and unanimously carried to approve Change Order #1 at \$26,308 and Change Order #2 at \$91,697.00 with Sedberry Construction, as requested.*

**ITEM NO. 8 – CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING RICHMOND COUNTY MANAGER TO PERFORM ADMINISTRATIVE WORK AND TO EXECUTE DOCUMENTS AS NECESSARY PERTAINING TO CDBG SCATTERED-SITE HOUSING GRANT 07-C-1670 FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

*County Manager Haynes advised that the reporting process on CDBG Scattered-Site Grants has changed so as to notify the Department of Commerce as expenditures are made. For the sake of convenience, County Manager Haynes requested that he be authorized to sign the necessary documents for this project in behalf of Richmond County. Mr. Haynes further advised that Grants Administrator Sandy Ridley is now an employee of the City of Rockingham, but the County would still be able to share her grant administration services with the City with appropriate documentation.*

*A motion was offered by Commissioner Maske and seconded by Commissioner Ussery to approve the following Resolution Authorizing the Richmond County Manager to Execute CDBG Documents for Scattered-Site Housing Grant No. 07-C-1670. Commissioner Ussery confirmed that Ms. Ridley would continue to receive a percentage of grant proceeds for administrative services. Commissioner Dillman commended Ms. Ridley's work, and the motion carried unanimously.*

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING RICHMOND COUNTY  
MANAGER TO EXECUTE CDBG DOCUMENTS**

**WHEREAS**, Richmond County has been awarded \$400,000.00 in Community Development Block Grant funds through Scattered-Site Housing Grant Number 07-C-1670 from the North Carolina Department of Commerce; and

**WHEREAS**, the County Manager is the Chief Executive Officer of Richmond County and is authorized by the North Carolina General Statutes to perform administrative work for the Richmond County Board of Commissioners.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Richmond County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes County Manager James E. Haynes to execute any and all related CDBG documents in behalf of Richmond County for CDBG Scattered-Site Housing Grant 07-C-1670.

Adopted by the Richmond County Board of Commissioners this 15th day of January, 2008.

**ITEM NO. 9 – OTHER BUSINESS**

*There being no further business for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 1:28 P.M. by a motion of Commissioner Watkins, seconded by Commissioner Maske and unanimously carried.*

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*Marian S. Savage, CMC  
Clerk to the Board of Commissioners*