

Closed Session II (Project Liberty) — November 2, 2015

At 7:10 p.m., the Board convened closed session on a matter relating to the location or expansion of business in the area, pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(4). Commissioners Frye, Kemp, Lanier, Haywood and Allen were present. Also present were County Manager Hal Johnson; Assistant County Manager/Finance Officer Will Massie; County Attorney Ben Morgan; Associate County Attorney Aimee Scotton; Amanda Varner, Clerk to the Board; and Bonnie Renfro, Randolph County EDC President.

EDC President Bonnie Renfro introduced Richard Wiley, Consultant with the NC Railroad.

Mr. Wiley stated that the NC Railroad is the oldest private corporation, founded in 1849, and is citizen owned. They are a large property owner in the state. They have no trains but lease their rails, which run from Morehead City through the Triad to Charlotte, NC. He said he feels the rail is a core component and that the NC Railroad is a partner in economic development for North Carolina.

He stated they had investigated all the competitive sites in the state and feel like the Randolph County site has potential and is very competitive. He said their role is to be helpful with the site assembly and, through a partnership, ultimately secure an industry. Plans are well underway to negotiate with landowners for the purchase of 700-900 acres of land located within the mega site.

Commissioner Allen asked what they hoped their return on investment would be. Mr. Wiley responded that they were not in the business of buying and selling land but hoped to deliver a free site, if necessary, to attract a large manufacturer. He said they judge their success by landing a project that promotes economic development, gains a long-term tax base for the County, and he hopes that the company has a need for rail service.

County Manager Johnson asked when the announcement would be public. Mr. Wiley said there is a meeting of the stakeholders on November 12th to decide when and how to announce but asked that confidentiality remain until all the pieces are in place to make the announcement.

Commissioner Lanier asked Ms. Renfro for an update on certification. She replied that the process is already underway without all of the property under ownership and that DOT is currently reviewing transportation planning proposals.

*At 7:46 pm, on motion of Kemp, seconded by Haywood, the Board voted unanimously to end closed session and to return to open session.*

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Darrell L. Frye, Chairman

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Phil Kemp

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Arnold Lanier

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Stan Haywood

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David Allen

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Amanda Varner, Clerk to the Board