



**MOORE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2019, 6:00PM**

The Moore County Board of Commissioners convened for a special meeting jointly with the Town of Carthage Board of Commissioners on Thursday, August 1, 2019, at 6:00pm at the McDonald Building, 207 McReynolds St., Carthage, NC. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on options for the new court facility.

Commissioners Present: Chair Frank Quis, Vice Chair Catherine Graham, Jerry Daeke, Louis Gregory

Commissioners Absent: Otis Ritter

Others Present: County Manager Wayne Vest, County Clerk Laura Williams, County Attorney Misty Leland, Assistant County Manager Janet Parris, Capital Projects Manager Rich Smith, Jason Hopkins (Senior Associate Lead Architect with Moseley Architects), Tucker McKenzie (engineer with Withers Ravenel), Howard Warren (retired architect and member of the Courthouse Facilities Advisory Committee), Jaymie Baxley (The Pilot newspaper), Mayor and Board of Commissioners for the Town of Carthage, Town Manager Tom Robinson, Town Clerk Dorothy Dutton, Town Planner Kathy Liles, two citizens

Chairman Quis called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Introductions were made by all present. County Manager Wayne Vest provided the invocation and Town Manager Tom Robinson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Capital Projects Manager Rich Smith reviewed the purpose for the meeting, to share and discuss options regarding the new courthouse to be built, and then introduced Mr. Jason Hopkins, Senior Associate Lead Architect with Moseley Architects and Mr. Tucker McKenzie, Engineer with Withers and Ravenel, to review schematic designs. Mr. Hopkins provided a presentation of the options and discussed the potential of closing a portion of Dowd Road to make the building more efficient. Mr. McKenzie discussed traffic patterns as they related to the options presented. Mr. Hopkins reviewed the option to leave Dowd Road as it currently was and said that the footprint of the building would be very restrictive and would go right up to the property lines. It would require the lobby of the building to be about half as large as it was programmed to be, and it could be less efficient, less safe, and less secure. Also, because it would be built to the property lines, more cost would be incurred for the foundation system that would be required. The second option, to close a portion of Dowd Road, would allow the footprint of the building to be slid over and would allow for an urban plaza to be added. It would better unify the existing facilities and the building would be attractive from all sides and could be sized as programmed.

Mayor Lee McGraw inquired regarding whether there was an option to build up on the current court facility. Mr. Hopkins indicated that structurally, this was an unlikely possibility. Commissioner Gregory inquired about the expense of the two options presented by Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Hopkins indicated they would be similar in cost. There was discussion regarding whether Dowd Road could be left open as a one-way street and Mr. McKenzie indicated this could be less safe for pedestrians. Discussion followed regarding current traffic congestion and how it may be exacerbated by the closing of part of Dowd Road. There was also discussion regarding parking availability and the possibility of a parking garage. Commissioner Graham discussed the large expense for the garage and how the parking would need to be secure. There was a comment regarding

locating the courthouse where the jail was located. Mr. Smith discussed that there was not enough space, and County Manager Wayne Vest clarified that discussions for that area in the past were for an administrative building. Mr. Vest talked about departments that may be relocated to the Currie Building when the District Attorney was moved to the current court facility and options for parking at that time.

There was a comment against closing off Dowd Road. Mr. Vest said that the Town of Carthage had been a great host for County facilities and the County was very concerned with anything it did in how it would impact the Town, and the County wanted the Town to be proud of the County facilities located within its limits. He discussed that whatever direction the project went, the County did not want it to be a nightmare for the Town, and that is why they were here meeting. Mayor McGraw commented regarding various rumors he had heard, which Mr. Vest clarified to be untrue. The mayor asked the Board to consider all options and asked whether the County was already set on the street closure option. Mr. Vest said no, that the project was far enough along that the architect determined if there was flexibility to close part of Dowd Road, it would make things easier to address. However, if this was not something the Town was in agreement with, it would not be forced. Mr. Vest said this was an idea sharing meeting. There was a comment regarding the ability to still go around the right side of the historic courthouse and the closure not affecting truck traffic as much as was being implied. There was further discussion regarding parking and use of existing facilities.

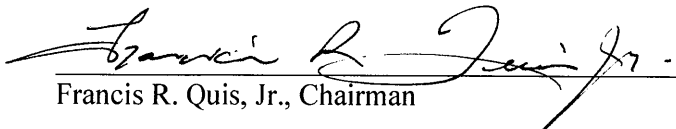
Mr. Smith said the option to close Dowd Road did a better job and was more aesthetically pleasing. He said the County was prepared to be the Town's partners and do what was right for everyone, but felt the closure option was better. Mr. Vest asked if the Town would be opposed to the County asking the Department of Transportation to do a traffic study and there was no opposition stated. There was discussion regarding the concerns of citizens living along Dowd Road with regard to its partial closure and it was indicated their concerns were about getting into town as well as changing the characteristics of the Town. There were comments regarding balancing growth and the desires of the citizens. Commissioner Graham asked if the DOT study was done if it would be helpful to include the option to close only half of Dowd Road and Town officials were favorable to studying that option as well. Commissioner Graham commented that municipal citizens are also county citizens and the commissioners represented them all and wanted to be good partners with all the municipalities. Mr. Vest asked if the section of Saunders Street between McNeill and Dowd being closed was completely out of the question and Town Manager Tom Robinson and Mayor McGraw both responded negatively to that option. Mr. Vest said it would not be brought up.

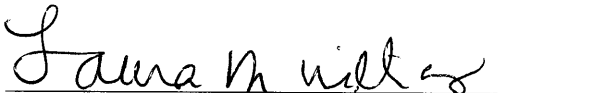
Mr. Robinson asked about the width of the sidewalk proposed on Dowd Road and Mr. Hopkins said it was not yet determined but would be at least five feet. Mayor McGraw discussed the cost of plans provided by the architects. Chairman Quis proposed presenting the two court facility location options (Dowd Road open versus Dowd Road closed) around town for citizens to review and provide feedback. Mayor McGraw commented regarding not having a lot of options and his desire for everyone to be open-minded. (He exited the meeting at approximately 7:20pm.) A citizen present at the meeting offered comments regarding the lack of knowledge of this project and citizens' right to know when the landscape of the Town was being changed. There was further discussion on sharing the plans with the public and a question regarding how long it would take to complete the DOT traffic study. Mr. McKenzie indicated it would be a couple of months because school would have to be in session for completion of the traffic counts. There was discussion regarding potentially holding a public hearing on the options and Mr. Vest said the County was glad to do so.

Mr. Howard Warren, retired architect and member of the County's Courthouse Facilities Advisory Committee, offered that the courthouse had to be built and there were two options, strict confines or better design with more flexibility. Mr. Hopkins discussed that the building could not be taken off the proposed site without more costs as the plan was created to use the existing building as well. He said closing half of the road could help, though all of it would be better. He noted also that he was not 100% sure of the ramifications of shrinking the building.

Chairman Quis said a traffic study would be on the way. He said the commissioners preferred not to build the courthouse (being required by the Chief Justice), but they wanted to do it right because of the need and for the Town. Mr. Robinson commented regarding putting the options out for the public to review and the importance of letting people know no decision had been made. He said he preferred to have the traffic analysis done before holding a public forum.

There being no further business, upon motion made by Commissioner Graham, seconded by Commissioner Daeke, the Board voted 4-0 to adjourn the August 8, 2019, special meeting of the Moore County Board of Commissioners at 7:32pm.


Francis R. Quis, Jr., Chairman


Laura M. Williams, Clerk to the Board

