

COUNTY FACILITIES COMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 21, 1995

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Billy R. King

Rollin Shaw
Marshall Faircloth

OTHERS:

Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager
Juanita Pilgrim, Asst. County Manager
Cliff Spiller, Asst. County Manager
Danny Higgins, Staff Attorney
George Vaughan, Planning Director
Larry Philpott, Director, Recreation & Parks Department
Staff from: Jobs Training, Mental Health, Health, Social
Services, NC Cooperative Extension Service
Fayetteville Generals Staff: Matt Perry, Charles Padgett

1. Report of Fayetteville Generals/J.P. Riddle Stadium

Mr. Strassenburg, County Manager, pointed out that the cost of construction of a new stadium would be about \$6.5 million dollars, which does not include the cost of land.

Mr. Matt Perry, who is doing some consultant work for the Fayetteville Generals, told the Committee that if the County is willing to make a commitment to building a new stadium, it may be possible to secure waivers in order to remain in the J.P. Riddle Stadium until construction is completed. He said that this team is one of five who are not in compliance as far as facilities are concerned. He noted the importance of the county having a "game plan" if a waiver is pursued. Mr. Perry said he believed a new stadium in an area closer to the population center is necessary.

Mr. Charles Padgett told the Committee the Fayetteville Generals have been here for nine years and have yet to make a profit. He said they could not continue in this no-profit situation. He said they had expended \$100,000 this year in order to make the stadium more "fan friendly". However, he noted the media blitz did not seem to make a difference. He said unless they can attract the "white collar" fan, they will not be able to make this work. He said he did not think renovations and upgrading at the J.P. Riddle Stadium is the answer. He called this a band-aid approach to the problem. He suggested the Board of Commissioners will have to look at this from a business perspective and decide if the investment that will have to be made is worth it. He said the Fayetteville Generals could not continue this non-profit course. Mr. Padgett stated he did not want the committee to perceive they are threatening the Board; however, he said he must make a business decision, and so too must the Commissioners.

It was noted the Fayetteville Generals will be here in 1996.

Mr. Perry stated location is a big issue. He reviewed the recommendations from the Committee that was established to look at this issue. He said he believed the Committee was working toward a solution, but that the focus became cloudy when discussion involved moving the stadium to the downtown area. It also increased the cost of construction. He also noted the City did not seem too interested in becoming involved. He stated the best location from an operator's standpoint

would be a location more in line with the growth area and he felt it would be less problematic if we looked for a site out of the downtown area.

Chairman King said this matter should go to the full Board of Commissioners to make a decision about our commitment to this project. Chairman King noted the County is involved in a lot of big projects right now, and even though the baseball stadium is important, he is not sure where it lies on our priority list.

Mr. Perry eluded that we would probably not be able to get another franchise to come to this area if we are not willing to build a new stadium.

2. Report on Family Resource Center Project

Mr. George Vaughan, Planning Director, reported to the Committee some recommendations on the placement of these centers throughout the county. The Human Services Study team discussed the concept of these centers, where they should be located, how many centers are needed, the cost to the county, etc.

This Ad Hoc Human Services Study Team recommends that four centers are needed prioritized as follows:

1. Spring Lake
2. Stedman
3. Hope Mills-Grays Creek
4. Wade

The Ad Hoc Committee also recommends establishing an advisory council of residents in each area to keep in touch with the specific needs of each community.

The committee then looked at the issue of facilities for these center. They discussed using existing community buildings, renting vs. buying and new construction.

The Committee looked at a total of four existing buildings. The community building in Stedman was not large enough and it appears that the Stedman Middle School may be utilized to some extent by the Stedman Elementary School students. However, they may be a possibility of sharing some space. In Spring Lake, the Committee looked at the Masonic Building; however, renovations may make it cost prohibitive and it appears the building would be too small. An acceptable building in Spring Lake is in the Cedarwood Shopping Center. It has about 13,000+ square feet and is open space. The major costs associated with this facility would be constructing lavatories and adding partitions. East of the River, the Committee looked at the old Cedar Creek School which was recently operated as the Countryside Cultural Center. It has about 9 acres of land. The building has a kitchen, classrooms and an auditorium. The County Recreation Department would be able to provide some recreational programs at this site. The Committee noted this site would work well if a second center is to be located east of the river in the central or northern part.

In addition, the Committee looked at the Swan Creek Elementary School. This building could present an unique opportunity. It is owned by the County and leased to a community group at this time. This site and building would allow for

recreation programs and space for the NC Cooperative Extension Service.

Mr. Vaughan asked the Facilities Committee for guidance on the next step.

As the first priority area is Spring Lake, the Committee directed the Administrative Staff to take a look at the space in the Cedarwood Shopping Center to ascertain cost to lease, rent, lease with option to buy, etc., and report back to the Facilities Committee.

3. Update on Status of Recreation Plan

Mr. Larry Philpott, Director, Parks and Recreation, reviewed the Phase I Improvements for Fiscal Year 1996 as follows:

1. Hall Park Facility: They are in the process of finalizing the agreement so they can get started with the reconstruction of 3 athletic fields with lights.
2. Honeycutt School: Project is on go to construct 2 new athletic fields with lights and a restroom concession building.
3. Pine Forest Middle School: Construct 2 new athletic fields with lights and a restroom/concession building.
4. South View School (Off Legion Road) Because the Legion Road Elementary School property backs up to the South View property, some of the parking will be located there.
5. Stedman Middle School: Because the students will not be moved to the new Cape Fear Middle School this year, there will be a delay in constructing the two new athletic fields at this site. They will probably not be able to start construction until after Spring of 1996.
6. Arnette Park: Installation of new lights on three fields.
7. Fayetteville Fish Hatchery Park - Working on engineer and architectural design and will begin clearing the land. Note: This is the first year of a 5-year development plan. It will probably be the Spring or Fall of 1997 before any real recreation activities will take place.

4. Discussion: Parking

Mr. Strassenburg presented the Committee with a range of options for consideration for the parking problem here at the courthouse as noted below:

A. Implement measures to achieve greater utilization of existing facilities:

- (1) ⁺Intensify enforcement of parking regulations;
- (2) Reduce the number of "reserved" spaces;
- (3) Redeploy publicly owned vehicles to existing off-site locations (i.e. old armory, CMF/BMS site)

- (4) Create an incentive program to encourage employees to car pool;
- (5) Install structural controls (gate) and institute parking fees.

B. Lease Space in existing parking lots within "convenient" walking distance:

- (1) City's Franklin Commons parking lot;
- (2) City parking lot on the corner of Russell & Donaldson Streets;
- (3) Additional space from First Presbyterian Church
- (4) Private parking lot

C. Acquire property within "convenient" walking distance and construct surfact parking Lot; (One acre yields 100+ spaces; surface parking costs \$800 - \$1000/space for construction plus land)

- (1) General overflow parking
- (2) Dedicated use parking - employee parking, juror parking, publicly owned vehicle parking

D. Construct a parking deck over the existing Courthouse parking lot (Parking deck costs \$5,000 - \$7,000/space for construction. Would be a major disruption during construction; likely to require leasing temporary parking space)

The consensus of the Committee was to instruct the County Manager to further finetune the suggestions in A as noted above and bring back some recommendations to the Committee at the next meeting.

Mr. Strassenburg shared with the Committee an idea about the establishment of a "Sports Commission" whose goal would be to bring different sports franchises to this area, market sports events and act as a clearing house for attracting different sports events to this area. He noted an organization such as this could perhaps address the "baseball" issue we are currently facing. Commissioner Shaw suggested that perhaps Mr. Strassenburg discuss this idea with the Chamber of Commerce and/or our Convention and Visitors Bureau.

MEETING ADJOURNED