



Perquimans County Board of Commissioners

Biennial Retreat

March 27, 2018

The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners held their 2018 retreat on Monday, March 27. Objectives for the retreat were to:

- Assess progress towards meeting goals established at the 2016 annual retreat;
- Identify and discuss influences in the community over the past two years that may have affected progress to date or could affect progress going forward;
- Affirm, modify, and add to previous goals and strategies in order to further the county's mission over the next two years.

Decisions Reached At the 2016 Retreat

Following thoughtful discussion about the county's demographics, workforce, economy, and school achievements, the commissioners agreed to adopt the following goals for 2016-2018:

1. Enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Perquimans County;
2. Strengthen economic development with a focus on job growth;
3. Develop long-term plans for the county's future infrastructure needs and built environment;
4. Promote education and innovation; and
5. Sustain effective county leadership at all levels.



To set the framework for discussion of new goals and objectives in 2018, County Manager Frank Heath gave a summary of goals and achievements since the 2016-18 retreat:

1. Enhance the Quality of Life
 - a. Restart conversations with the hospitals and YMCA about partnering with the county for a Wellness Center. **While this remains an objective of the Board no significant progress has been made at this point.**
 - b. Talk with the staff about commissioners' interest in upgrading Emergency Medical Services to Paramedic status; ask the staff to develop a cost estimate and timeline. **The County now enjoys county wide paramedic service.**

2. Strengthen Economic Development & Jobs
 - a. Invite Bob Peele to a commissioners' work session to brief the commissioners on the status of the Marine Industrial Park, especially with regard to a proposed funding plan. (Frank Heath on behalf of commissioners) **Has been completed.**
 - b. Meet with the county's legislative delegation to discuss the importance of the Marine Industrial Park to the county's economic goals. (Board of Commissioners) **Has been completed.**
 - c. Meet with NC Department of Transportation, the Regional Planning Organization (RPO), and the Highway 17 Coalition to stress the importance of the highway location on the future of commerce in the county. (Board of Commissioners)
The objectives noted have been accomplished and work continues on the development of the Marine Industrial Park. This work was discussed further as part of future goals.



3. Develop Plans for Long-term Infrastructure Needs
 - a. Discuss in greater detail the development of a Capital Facilities Plan to implement and execute the county's Vision.
 - b. This discussion can take place during the commissioners' regular work session.
This objective remains ongoing as part of the county's overall financial plan.

4. Promote Education and Innovation
 - a. In the fall, invite the Board of Education to participate in a joint discussion about the school board's and county's strategic plans.
 - b. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss common issues and concerns and brainstorm joint options and strategies in a non-budget setting.
Discussions with the Board of Education are ongoing and are recognized as a vital part of efforts to ensure the County's future.

5. Sustain Effective County Leadership
 - a. In the near future, schedule listening meetings for the commissioners in different locations throughout the county.
 - b. Invite citizens to participate in discussions about county government issues that are affecting their quality of life (examples might include broadband availability, water quality, recreation needs, jobs, etc.)
 - c. Ask the Ruritan Club, Rotary Club, and other community leaders' groups to help promote these meetings and encourage attendance.
While meetings in various locations have not taken place Board efforts to ensure community input have continued.

6. Update Summary for Prior goals:
 - **The commercial boat ramp at the Marine Park has been completed.**
 - **The new library has opened and has enhanced library services in the County.**
 - **The County now has a fulltime tourism director.**



- **Water system operational improvements continue to be implemented.**
- **Efforts to implement new software for tax and finance are being finalized.**
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Relationships & Communication

Commissioners discussed the importance of having constructive working relationships between and among each other. They talked through the differences between the role of the manager and staff in the day to day operation of the county, and the role of the board in setting the direction and overall policy goals for the county. They also discussed the leadership roles they each play in having open honest dialogue on the diverse issues that come before them.

Current Issues

The Board discussed past challenges, which remain ongoing, as well as future objectives:

County Facility Needs- The County currently has space needs in departments such as DSS and Administration/Courthouse and Elections. At the same time space has become available at the old library as well as possibly the Albemarle Commission. After a lengthy discussion regarding the merits and shortcomings of each space in regards to new occupants it was agreed that



the County needed to retain the services of an architectural firm to develop a facilities study that would assess and determine the best use for County facilities based upon their condition and the cost of required renovations and upgrades. The County Manager will contact the library architect to see what such study might entail and the cost. Also, it was noted that any facility discussions should take into account the long-term goal of a new judicial complex.

Marine Industrial Park Development – This Park remains a significant priority for economic development efforts in the County. Changes in the County's relationship with the North Carolina Industrial Park Authority and how these changes impact the Park's future will dictate how the county will proceed in regards to its development. The property will be returned to the county and the grant proceeds for further improvements will be administered by county staff. Funding sources include 2.85 million from the State of North Carolina, 1.5 million from Golden Leaf and potential funding from an EDA grant, which has been submitted. It was the consensus of the Board that efforts to develop and market this project must continue to be a priority of the County. In addition the County must continue to stress to



other entities, such as Golden Leaf, that the boat basin is the County's number one priority at this point.

Individual Board Member Issues – the following ideas were offered by individual commissioners, but no consensus for action was established.

- The need to revisit the development of a wellness center.
- The naming of track at the high school sports complex.
- Explore changing the election of commissioners from "at large" to districts.
- The need to have ongoing joint meetings with County municipalities

Conclusion

The commissioners' closed their retreat with a brief evaluation of the day's accomplishments. The next retreat will take place in 2020.