

Randolph County Commissioners

February 23, 2004 Special Meeting

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners met in special session at 6:30 p.m. in the Commissioners Meeting Room, County Office Building, 725 McDowell Road, Asheboro, NC. Commissioners Holmes, Mason, Frye, Kemp and Davis were present. The purpose of this meeting was to hear a presentation on the final proposals and recommendations on the County's Comprehensive Recreational Master Plan.

Chairman Holmes convened the meeting and called on Hal Johnson, County Planning Director, to begin the presentation. Mr. Johnson told the Board that in November 1999, the Board of Commissioners was presented with the preliminary results of the first Natural Heritage and Heritage Tourism Inventories ever conducted in Randolph County. As a result of this study the Board appointed a Heritage Task Force to review the inventories and make recommendations to the Board concerning actions that the County could take to enhance our natural resources. In October 2000, the Board established the Randolph County Heritage Committee and charged it with several specific functions, one of which was to look at the feasibility of a countywide recreation plan that could take advantage of the unique natural resources available in Randolph County and also provide activities for residents and visitors. In October 2002, the Board and the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) approved funding for a Recreation Master Plan for Randolph County. A special master plan steering committee was established. The County hired Woolpert Recreational Planning Consultants to develop an accurate, usable plan that can help guide actions and decisions concerning park and recreation facility development through the year 2020.

Andrew Pack and Carl Armanini of Woolpert gave a two-part PowerPoint presentation outlining their final proposals and recommendations of the Plan. The first part of the presentation concerned the countywide Recreation Master Plan; the second part concerned Randleman Lake recreational planning which included an overview of a prototype district park.

Mr. Pack explained that initially an inventory of existing recreation assets, including facilities maintained by municipalities, was done. This enabled Woolpert to identify gaps and weaknesses in existing facilities based on Randolph County's population when compared to state standards. The Plan identifies general locations within Randolph County (based on population, travel distance and other factors) where additional community parks and district park development might be considered over the next 20 years. Mapping provides the framework for a system of interconnected greenway paths and multi-purpose trails. The Plan identifies areas where the County might seek recreational partnership opportunities that could include municipalities and public schools. The Plan also addresses potential capital funding strategies that might be considered by the County (i.e. one-cent designated property tax; grants, etc.). The Plan recommends that the Commissioners establish a County Parks & Recreation Commission that would serve as an advisory body to the County Commissioners on matters related to recreation and Recreation Master Plan implementation. The Plan recommends that administrative responsibility for recreation planning shall be assigned to the County Planning Director and that a recreation coordinator position be established in the Planning Dept.

The Plan projects a capital improvement cost of \$29,710,000 over a 20-year period. Approval of the Recreation Master Plan does not commit the County to any specific project or

any particular strategy. The Master Plan is designed to provide guidance as decisions and County funding priorities are made by the Board of County Commissioners over the next 20 years. The existence of a County Recreation Master Plan can also be beneficial to municipalities as they seek state and federal grants for city- operated recreation programs.

Mr. Pack and Mr. Armanini presented the second part of their presentation: Randleman Lake. As a special component of the County Recreation Master Plan, the TDA identified the Randleman Lake as a priority project for development of site-specific recreational planning. The impact on tourism of a well planned, environmentally sensitive, recreational component at Randleman Lake could be significant. In addition, development of a multi-purpose/special facilities recreation complex (that is not totally dependant upon lake usage), located between Archdale and Randleman, might provide a unique opportunity to support recreation development as a job and economic development booster. For example, this might also strengthen the future development of a "Hospitality Corridor" (hotels, restaurants and related customer/visitor services) already developing in Archdale and extending into Randleman. Specific development of passive recreation that complements the Randleman Lake and takes advantage of Randolph County's central location and excellent highway infrastructure could be a significant factor in future economic diversification and job creation. Because of this potential, the TDA funded a special add-on to the Master Plan project, which requested specific conceptual planning for a multi-purpose facility that could be located at Randleman Lake. The TDA also asked Woolpert to make recommendations concerning specific recreation activities that might be acceptable on Randleman Lake based on current environmental regulations.

The Master Plan proposes two (as yet undetermined) access points on Randleman Lake located in Randolph County:

1. A district park multi-purpose facility including a youth soccer complex, reserve picnic area, regulation soccer complex, softball/youth baseball complex, picnic pavilions & fishing piers, marina/boat access ramps
2. An access point devoted exclusively to boat launches

Any access points or activities on the Randleman Lake must be approved by the Piedmont Triad Regional Water Authority (PTRWA). Information produced as a result of this Randolph County study will need to be presented to the PTRWA at a later date.

Woolpert recommends the following actions that must take place immediately to start implementation of the Plan:

1. Approve an ordinance to establish a Park & Recreation Commission
2. Hire a Park & Recreation Coordinator (Planning staff position)
3. Appoint members to the Park & Recreation Commission
4. Park & Recreation Commission prepares a funding prioritization plan for implementation
5. Establish a 1-cent recreation tax effective July 2005.

Mr. Johnson said that in December 2003, the Park & Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee and the TDA voted unanimously to approve the draft plan and recommended that the plan be forwarded to the Board of County Commissioners for review and final decision.

Asheboro Mayor David Jarrell spoke in support of the Plan and said that he would support a 2-cent tax increase if it meant that the full Plan could be realized in 10 years instead of 20 years.

Archdale Mayor Bert Stone said that she had served on the Steering Committee and supports the plan and a tax increase in order to implement the Plan.

At 7:52 p.m., Chairman Holmes adjourned the meeting.

J. Harold Holmes, Chairman

Darrell L. Frye

Robert O. Mason

Robert B. Davis

Phil Kemp

Cheryl Ivey, Deputy Clerk to the Board