



## Minutes

### RANDOLPH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

January 26, 2016

The Randolph County Planning Board met at 6:30 p.m., on Thursday, January 26, 2016, in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Meeting Room, Randolph County Historic Courthouse, 145 Worth Street, Asheboro, North Carolina.

1. **Chairman Reid Pell** called to order the Randolph County Planning Board meeting at 6:30 p.m.
2. **Jay Dale**, Planning Director, called roll of the members: **Reid Pell**, Chairman, present; **Wayne Joyce**, Vice Chairman, present; **Chris McLeod**, present; **Phil Ridge**, present; **Jim Rains**, present; **Kemp Davis**, present; **Larry Brown**, absent, and **Ralph Modlin**, Alternate, present (substituting for Larry Brown). County Attorney **Ben Morgan** was also present.
3. **Rains** made the motion, seconded by **Davis**, to **approve** the Minutes of the December 8, 2015 Randolph County Planning Board meeting. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Chairman Reid Pell** advised that there would be a sign-in sheet, and for everyone to introduce themselves before speaking to the Board. Said that if there were any flash drives or assistance needed for presentation, **Jeff York** would be able to assist them. Asked **Jay Dale**, Planning Director to review the requests before us this evening.

(A) **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNTY ZONING ORDINANCE** -  
**Jay Dale**, Planning Director

1. Amend the Unified Development Ordinance, Chapter II. Zoning Ordinance, Article VII District Regulations, Section 1. Intent of Zoning Districts to included:

**HI-CD Heavy Industrial Conditional District**

Identical to the Heavy Industrial District except site plans and individualized development conditions are imposed only upon petition of all the owners of the land to be included in the CD. Industrial parks or integrated industrial districts larger than 400 acres may have within the park or district boundary any retail or service use which is accessory in nature to the industrial park or integrated industrial district.

2. Amend Article VII District Regulations, Section 4. Table of Permitted Uses, to include the following uses, permitted by right, in HI districts:

*Advanced Battery or Fuel Cell Development*  
*Aerospace, Aviation & Military/Defense manufacturing*  
*Athletic fields*  
*Automotive, Truck & Heavy Equipment manufacturing & assembly*  
*Automotive sales*  
*Biofuels Production*  
*Biotechnology, Pharmaceuticals, Medical, and Life Sciences manufacturing*  
*Corporate Offices or Headquarters*  
*Daycares*  
*Distribution or Logistics Center*  
*Drugstores*  
*Educational Facilities & Training Centers*  
*Electronics and Component Manufacturing*  
*Energy Storage*  
*Engine or Engine Parts Production*  
*Fabricated or Primary Metal Manufacturing*  
*Farm Machinery & Equipment Manufacturing*  
*Fitness & Recreational Sports Center*  
*Food Processing*  
*Glass Manufacturing*  
*Household Products Manufacturing*  
*Household Products Manufacturing*  
*Medical/Dental Clinics or Laboratories*  
*Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturing*  
*Professional and Business Offices*  
*Paint & Coating Manufacturing*  
*Paint Shop*  
*Plastics & Resin Manufacturing*  
*Press Shop*  
*Printing Shop*  
*Railroad Rolling Stock Manufacturing*  
*Research & Development Facilities*  
*Rubber Products Manufacturing*  
*Tire Manufacturing*  
*Transportation Equipment Manufacturing*  
*Warehousing & Distribution*

**Dale** presented the request made by the Randolph County Planning Department including a list of proposed uses to be placed in the Table of Permitted Uses under Heavy Industrial Zoning. Due to the fact there was not a lot of Heavy Industrial development in the County at the time the Zoning Ordinance was written (in 1987), the allowable uses were vague. The Planning Department feels that these amendments would help clarify what uses should be allowed in Heavy Industrial zoning. The Technical Review Committee has reviewed the request and recommended that the request be approved.

(B) **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE RANDOLPH COUNTY GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Jay Dale, Planning Director, presented the Board with the existing Growth Management Plan and presented maps with proposed amendments to be considered. Dale said in light of the proposed zoning and the improvements of the infrastructure within the area, including the recent ability to receive water and sewer services from Greensboro, the Planning staff feels that this area would be better served in a primary growth area. Dale explained that the Growth Management Plan is a long range guide for land development and not a zoning map. Dale explained that existing agricultural operations would continue to be permitted in the Primary Growth Area; however, this change will allow property owners additional opportunities for development.

(C) **REQUESTS FOR PROPERTY REZONING:**

**GREENSBORO-RANDOLPH MEGASITE FOUNDATION, INC.,**

Greensboro, North Carolina, is requesting that approximately 1,533 acres located on Browns Meadow Road, Liberty Township, be rezoned from RA/RM to HI-CD. Primary Growth Area. Sandy Creek Watershed. The proposed Conditional Zoning District would specifically allow an industrial park/integrated industrial district as per site plan with the restriction to **prohibit** the following uses: public airports; coal sales and storage; concrete and asphalt plants; junkyards; livestock sales; meat packing and poultry processing; landfills; sawmills and planing mills; carnivals; theaters; tobacco sales and warehousing; and trucking terminals.

Dale presented maps and photos of the property and area of the requested to be re-zoned and concluded the overview of the 3 requests being made.

Ben Morgan, Attorney, explained first the applicant will be allowed to present their request, and then the opposition will be given the opportunity to speak. He announced there would be no time limits and everyone would be given a reasonable amount of time to speak. Afterwards the floor was opened to the Public for those additional citizens that wanted to address the Board in favor or opposed to the requests. Morgan stated that after everyone is allowed to speak, the Board will close the public comment portion of the meeting and vote on each request.

Chairman Reid Pell instructed the public to sign-in on the sheet provided at the podium before addressing the Board.

Bonnie Renfro, (President of the Randolph County Economic Development Corporation) 598 Pinewood Road, Asheboro, North Carolina, addressed the Board and read the following statement into record:

*Good evening Mr. Chairman, members of the Planning Board and citizens of Randolph County. I am Bonnie Renfro, President of Randolph County Economic Development Corporation. For the last 20 years, I have worked with our county's existing industries and to recruit new businesses and industry to Randolph County.*

*I am here to speak in favor of the various applications reviewed by Jay Dale, our Planning Director. In doing so, I would like to provide background information about the efforts to establish a mega site in Randolph County and to explain why we are here tonight and summarize how we got here. Over the last three decades, Randolph County's economy has suffered through the loss of primary manufacturing jobs that sustained our job and income base for most families. The Triad region has also suffered a significant loss of jobs through two recessions in the last decade. Some examples of these changes:*

- From 2000-2014, Randolph County lost jobs and wages fell more than 5.1%*
- Between 2001-2013, the Greensboro High Point MSA that includes Randolph County had net job creation of 1%, while Charlotte and Raleigh grew by 19 and 26 percent.*
- Since 1999, announced county layoffs total 7,757 jobs, according to our records*
- Most people moving out of the County are in the 18-24 (college) age group, with only about one in ten people in the 30-34 age group moving back after college.*
- One in four children and one in three pre-school age children in the County live in poverty.*

*For these reasons, there is a critical need to take bold proactive steps to recruit an advanced manufacturing facility that will generate a large number of new well-paying jobs and create spinoff opportunities for growth. Such an employer can help to provide both manufacturing and service jobs to reverse this trend.*

*Four and one-half years ago, the Board of the Piedmont Triad Partnership proposed a bold solution to create an advanced manufacturing mega site that could be marketed to advanced manufacturers, such as an automotive assembly or aviation manufacturer. This strategy built on existing competitive assets that include the region's manufacturing heritage, strategic location, transportation infrastructure, reliable low-cost utilities, a workforce seeking new opportunities, and a business friendly and well-regarded region and State.*

*The expectation was that the location of an advanced manufacturing facility in the region would create a significant number of high paying manufacturing jobs that would in turn lead to the creation of other businesses and jobs for suppliers. Today, this vision has the support of State economic development leaders and is one of the State's priorities. Using conservative numbers, Dr. Michael Walden of NC State University estimates that the location of a major employer in North Carolina such as an automotive assembly operation would create 1,750 direct jobs and 4,445 other jobs, totaling 6,195 jobs.*

*A number of steps have been taken over the last several years to make the vision a reality. The Piedmont Triad Partnership engaged the services of a land planning and engineering firm to identify possible mega site locations in the twelve counties of the Triad, using specific mega site criteria. Mike Solomon of The Timmons Group coordinated this effort.*

*One of the sites identified in this process was the approximately 1,600 acres located in Randolph County, which are the subject of the rezoning applications. The site evaluation was based on industry standards commonly used by companies and their site consultants when evaluating sites for large advanced manufacturing uses. As Mr. Solomon will explain in his presentation, the site in Randolph County is by far the most attractive and compelling potential mega site location of all of those identified in the study. In fact, we believe the site is one of the best sites in the entire Southeast and one which will be competitive with any other site that may be offered by those States. Auto manufacturing is an example of "advanced manufacturing", but the site would be suitable for a wide variety of advanced manufacturing uses. Soon after the study was completed, the Piedmont Triad Partnership began the efforts to obtain options to purchase the various properties comprising the Randolph County site. The Joseph M. Bryan Foundation of Greater Greensboro, a non-profit corporation, provided financial support to PTP and its affiliate NC Megasites in the efforts to enter into contracts to purchase the various properties. In this regard, the contracts of purchase provided for significant due diligence payments to the property owners that agreed to sell their properties.*

*Additional site evaluation and systematic planning began at this time. The Randolph County site has been visited and evaluated by two industry consultants that were involved in the location of new automotive assembly plants in North America as well as by site consultants that have successfully worked on the location of new plants. They provided feedback that has informed the planning process and concluded that the Randolph County Mega Site is a viable site for automotive assembly operations and will be competitive in the Southeast.*

*In 2012, the State of North Carolina awarded a grant to Randolph County to assist with the cost of property control for the Randolph County mega site. The grant award was \$1.67 million.*

*The Randolph County Economic Development Corporation obtained a grant from Duke Energy and completed the environmental assessment of the property. Those reports are available on the Randolph County website. Infrastructure planning continues and includes a commitment from the City of Greensboro to extend water and sewer service to the site and commitments from the various private utility companies to extend the necessary utilities to the site. Evaluations are also underway concerning how best to provide access to the site from US Highway 421.*

*Because the PTP is a regional economic development entity with multiple economic development projects across eleven counties, the leadership of the PTP and the Bryan Foundation concluded in early 2015 that the pursuit of the envisioned mega site could best be supported by a new entity whose sole purpose would be to assist in the assemblage of the mega site properties. A new non-profit entity called the Greensboro Randolph Mega Site Foundation Inc. was formed and the PTP assigned to the Mega site Foundation many of the existing contracts of purchase that had been executed and the Foundation assumed those contracts and the responsibility for obtaining contracts on the remaining properties.*

*In early 2015, Randolph County agreed to participate in the creation of the proposed mega site. In February 2015, the County held a public hearing and agreed to purchase approximately 255 acres in the site, using the State grant and other County controlled funds. In June 2015, the County held a second public hearing and agreed to an additional purchase of approximately 170 acres. The County currently owns 19 parcels of approximately 425 acres within the area that is the subject of the rezoning applications.*

*The Mega Site Foundation now owns nine parcels with approximately 60 acres and holds contracts to purchase over 1,000 acres of the remaining properties. The North Carolina Railroad Company has expressed support for the creation of the mega site and has agreed to purchase 875 acres of the properties currently under contract.*

*North Carolina is one of the few states in the Southeast that does not have an automotive assembly facility. Although the State has a large number of automotive suppliers, truck, and aviation facilities, past efforts to recruit a large automotive assembly plant have not succeeded. Historically, there have been two reasons why. First, there have not been many attractive competitive mega sites that could be delivered to users within the required time frame. Second, North Carolina could not or would not offer competitive economic incentives.*

*Today, Governor McCrory and members of the General Assembly have publicly stated that the attraction of a high impact employer such as an automotive assembly plant is their number one economic development priority. The State has made improvements to the business climate in the tax and regulatory area. In its last Session, the General Assembly enacted legislation that will permit the State to grant significant economic incentives to an advanced manufacturer that locates in the State. Called the North Carolina Competes Act, the legislation provides enhanced incentives for a high yield project, defined as a minimum of \$500 million in private fund investment and 1,750 new jobs. North Carolina has signaled to the world that we are ready to compete aggressively to attract significant advanced manufacturing facilities.*

*The Randolph County EDC, the Mega Site Foundation, and the North Carolina Railroad are now working to complete the assemblage of the properties for the mega site. We are working to complete the planning and other steps to ensure that this competitive site can be made available to a user within the required time frame. The site is very flexible and would be suitable for a wide variety of advanced manufacturing uses, in the transportation and defense sectors. We have been advised that a mega site must be prepared and ready for delivery when prospective users start the site selection process. As noted, Randolph County has already purchased properties, the North Carolina Railroad has agreed to purchase 875 acres and the Mega Site Foundation has agreed to purchase the remaining acreage that comprises the mega site.*

*We are in the midst of site certification, a detailed third party verification and documentation of the site's development readiness for potential investors and site selection consultants. The Greensboro Randolph Mega Site Foundation has engaged the services of KPMG's Global Location and Expansion Services to certify the mega site. The Randolph County EDC is coordinating the site certification process on behalf of the Foundation and Randolph County. Their approach includes review and analysis of site ownership, environmental due diligence, site characteristics, topography, zoning, transportation access, utility availability and capacity, and timing considerations. One of the requirements for mega site certification is verification that the site is zoned or may be rezoned for industrial use. The Foundation has been advised to pursue the rezoning of the site as an important step in the site certification process.*

*The first item for your consideration this evening is the text amendment. Randolph County's current United Development Ordinance setting forth permitted uses within the Heavy Industrial zoning districts was written for traditional industries in an economy that doesn't exist like it used to in the United States. Regardless of whether the properties comprising the mega site*

*are rezoned, the Permitted Use Table of the current ordinance needs to be modernized and updated. These new uses are to bring the Table of Permitted Uses into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The proposed amendment to the text of the Unified Development Ordinance would be applicable across Randolph County's zoning jurisdiction and would help the efforts to attract these users to our County.*

*The permitted uses to be added to the Permitted Use Table pursuant to the proposed text amendment include:*

- 1. Aerospace, aviation & military / defense manufacturing*
- 2. Automotive, truck and heavy equipment manufacturing / assembly*
- 3. Engine and engine parts production*
- 4. Household products manufacturing*
- 5. Railroad rolling stock manufacturing*
- 6. Transportation equipment manufacturing*

*These uses are consistent with the key advanced manufacturing industries targeted by the North Carolina Department of Commerce and the Economic Development Partnership of NC, for retention, expansion and recruitment. Many also reflect permitted uses in our municipalities in Randolph County, including Asheboro, Archdale and Randleman. Finally, the Randolph County EDC has completed two Target Industry Studies, one in 2004 and most recently in 2010. Most of these sectors are represented in both studies, as industry sectors for which Randolph County has a competitive advantage and assets. I urge your favorable consideration of the text amendment.*

*Our broader community—business leaders, government leaders, and ordinary citizens—have cumulatively worked thousands of hours to address ways we can move our economy forward. These collective efforts to establish the proposed mega site and to recruit an advanced manufacturer to Randolph County constitute a bold proactive aggressive action plan to deal with the loss of manufacturing jobs in our County and to improve the economic well-being of the citizens of this area.*

*We realize that nothing as bold as the envisioned mega site will receive the unanimous approval of all citizens. Nothing of this magnitude ever does, and that's what makes leadership difficult. No matter where a mega site may be proposed to be located, there will be some, including those nearby the site, who will oppose it. We have great respect for those who are opposed to this proposal, but we disagree with them about whether the establishment of the proposed mega site should be pursued.*

*About 160 miles down Interstate 85, we have a real world example of the transformational change that the location of a mega project can bring. In 1992, BMW selected Spartanburg County for its first North American automotive assembly operation. The economic history of that area prior to*

*1992 was very similar to that of Randolph County and the Piedmont Triad area. Manufacturing jobs, primarily in the textile industry, had been lost and the economy was stagnating. The plant opened in 1994 and has expanded several times since. The results are impressive as shown in this 2014 economic impact analysis. More than 30,000 new jobs and \$1.7 billion in new annual income have been a game changer for the upstate region of South Carolina.*

*We are convinced that the proposed mega site has the physical characteristics to be competitive with any site in the Southeast, that the State of North Carolina is now willing and able to provide a competitive economic incentives package and that the proposed mega site can be established and delivered to a potential user within the time frames required. We have committed partners. We are confident the efforts to recruit an advanced manufacturer to Randolph County will be successful. The rezoning applications being considered tonight are an important step in that process. We would be grateful to you if you found in favor of these requests and recommended them to the Board of Commissioners for adoption.*

**Chairman Reid Pell** asks if any of the Board members have any questions. None were asked.

**Morgan** announced any slides or thumb drives used during presentations will be made part of the record.

**Mike Solomon**, 803 Jefferson Wood Avenue, Greensboro, North Carolina, Civil Engineer with Timmons Group, explained that he manages economic development activities for their clients. He submitted his presentation as part of the record. Solomon explain that he was hired in summer 2011 by Piedmont Triad Partnership and began to gather data of the area such as environmental data, land records, background data, infrastructure, risk profiles, etc. He presented slides of this data. He said all of the data is significant information for the approval process. He personally traced every inch of railroad which is critical for a project of this size. He assessed streams and wetlands, and presented the Board with those maps (including transportation maps). Next he reviewed the requirements needed for a site to achieve national recognition.

He said the required environmental work has been done. The availability of utilities has been determined, the geology studies have been completed, and the proximity to a rock quarry has been determined (which is a negative for a site this size). After much time the Randolph County site was vastly ranked above the other 11 sites. Solomon said he then met with a major site consultant, Jeannette Goldsmith with McKellam/Sweeney in Greenville/Spartanburg which validated his opinion. Solomon presented the sites to EDC. Randolph County was vastly superior to any of the other sites. He also evaluated utilities and put together a

package of information for Keith Chrisco to take to the Federal Trade Commission to help validate the site.

In Spring 2012, Bonnie invited the N.C. Railroad and others to tour the site. Newell Baker (Norfolk Southern Railroad), stated that this sight just may be the best site in the South. Solomon said he felt his opinion was validated.

He presented a drive study of the site that presented the site as centrally located between 3 different airports, in close proximity to local community colleges, etc. He presented a perimeter map showing the site's proximity to the railroad system. Since the beginning of all these studies, the site size has been reduced from approximately 2000 acres to 1600 acres with approximately 800 acres for development. He presented conceptual plans showing POD sizes and flexibility of the types of development. He showed the Board maps of the site and how it would appear if the existing automotive manufacturing facilities such as Honda Auto Plant, Hyundai Auto Plant, Mercedes Auto Plant, and the Boeing Plant (in Seattle) would fit on this site. He presented illustrated conceptual plans to show over 10 million sq. ft. of development possibilities.

He said this would be a superior site on the nationally recognized megasite registry. He said Timmons Group is looking at other sites in the State. He described one site as ideal for a distribution center. Another site would lend itself to being a data site. A third site would be best used for a microchip plant and the last site would be best suited for a sports arena. He presented the site map of wetlands and streams and advised the Board they will be meeting with Corps of Engineer to mitigate a plan.

**Garrett Walker**, 300 N. Greene Street, Greensboro, North Carolina, spoke on behalf of the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite Foundation and said he believes that the site will provide significant manufacturing opportunities. The Megasite Foundation is a NC non-profit Corporation formed in February 2015 by Jim Melvin, President of the Joseph M. Bryan Foundation. The Bryan Foundation was left a sizable fortune with instructions that the money be used for the betterment of the people of Greensboro and the surrounding area. The mission of the Megasite Foundation is to work with others to establish an advanced manufacturing facility site. Participants in this project are Randolph County Economic Development Corporation (non-profit organization), Randolph County, Megasite Foundation, (also a non-profit), City of Greensboro and the NC Railroad.

The purpose of the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite Foundation, Inc. is to improve the local, regional, and state economy. He said our economy used to be driven by tobacco, textiles, and furniture manufacturing which no longer exist, due to the failing economy. The vision is to try to replace those jobs lost. This project is not for personal profit, it is for the greater good. This project is first and foremost for

Randolph County with active participation by Randolph County's Economic Development Corporation.

He said there are no guarantees of success for this site. The location and physical characteristics however, make it one of the most appealing sites in the Southeast. He said we do not have the luxury of waiting, until a user is actively looking for a site, to begin assembling a site. He said there are risks, but we must be proactive. A user will NOT come if the site is not ready. If we do not build it, they will not come. He said it doesn't matter what we think of the site, but rather what the user thinks of the site. The user will select the site that it wants. He said although other sites are available in North Carolina, this is one of the most attractive sites in the Southeast.

Megasite Foundation has concerns that there should be appropriate landscaping buffers between buildings on the site and adjoining property owners. He said they are working on a specific buffers proposal for properties along Troy Smith Road and Julian Airport Road which will be available at the County Commissioners' next meeting. He said the buffers should be at least 100 ft. of vegetation that will be maintained by the foundation. They submitted a conceptual site plan to the Board showing the possible location of the landscape buffers. The Megasite Foundation desires to attract a major, responsible, manufacturing facility that will be sensitive to the needs of the people in the community.

He said a historic choice is confronting us. Recruitment to the Megasite of an advanced manufacturing facility would significantly improve the economy of Randolph County, the Piedmont Triad and the State. An advanced manufacturing facility would have a transformative effect on the County, tax base, its schools, and its economy. The project could alter, for the better, the history of the County, the region and the State. He said re-zoning the site would help ensure that when advanced manufacturers, anywhere in the world, are looking to locate a manufacturing facility in the Eastern United States, the site in Randolph County will be on the short list of sites that are considered. On behalf of the Megasite Foundation, he asked the Board to vote to recommend approval of the request.

**Ben Morgan** confirmed with **Walker** that the conceptual plan given to the Board would be entered into the record as an amendment to the request.

**Chairman Reid Pell** asks if any questions.

**Ralph Modlin** asks if there are any incentives or commitments from the state. **Walker** said they believe that the NC Railroad, which is 100% owned by the State, is committed to assisting with this project. He said he was reluctant to speak on their behalf but there is someone that will be speaking later. He said at this point, with the NC Railroad's support, they have the funds available to at least acquire the properties. He said they have the commitment from the City of Greensboro, that if a user is recruited, the water and sewer will be extended. Last

February, the Goldenleaf Foundation announced that they had reserved 50 million dollars to support the attraction of an automobile manufacturing plant to the State. He said but they do not want to limit the site to only allow an automobile manufacturing plant. He said they are seeking an advanced manufacturer. It could allow aviation manufacturing or another large manufacturing facility. He said they want the jobs that come with large advanced manufacturing

**Modlin** said his question was more from the Legislator. **Walker** said the Legislature enacted the NC Competes Act. This Act authorizes an appointed committee to make grants of the employee withholding taxes of up to 35 million dollars for 20 years to ANY advanced manufacturer who commits to invest 500 million dollars, of its own funds (in construction and equipment) and agrees to create at least 1750 jobs.

**David Joseph**, 3515 Primrose Avenue, Greensboro, North Carolina, attorney with Sparrow, Dennis and Medlin, said he has primarily working with property owners and business owners for the assembly of properties. The site is located in the Liberty/Julian area which is a varied community. The Megasite itself is located exclusively in Randolph County, but because of the location, people in this community work, play, shop and eat in Randolph, Guilford, and Alamance Counties. He described land uses in the area to include single family homes, mobile homes, abandoned homes, foreclosed homes, a mobile home development, forestry and clear-cut properties. He said there is a lot of vacant land (not used for residential purposes), in the area, used for recreational purposes such as hunting, model airplanes, camping, fishing, etc. He said there are several de facto junkyards, old cars, tractors, and barns that have been abandoned. There are small farms and hobby farms in the area. There are two commercial farms (one is an organic tobacco operation and the other is feedstock for dairy products) in the area. He said there is a small wood-working shop, a cell tower, an auto repair business, Julian Trading Post, and a nursery in the area.

He said throughout this process, his benefit has been getting to know the wonderful people in the area. He described them as people being proud of the history in their community who care about their community, and are concerned about their future. There has been a lot of job loss throughout the Triad and the population has continued to decline. He said children go off to college and don't return because there are no jobs. He said there is not an active real estate market, but this project has allowed property owners to sell their properties if they choose. This has provided opportunities (for those who sell their property) such as ability to relocate near family, start businesses, get out of debt, and obtain a newer home; all of which have been positive unforeseen benefits.

First they sat down with property owners, fully informed them of project (who is involved, why the foundation is undertaking the project, etc.) and how they might be impacted. He said they encouraged property owners to get a real estate agent or an attorney to assist them through the process. Most of them obtained an

attorney to help them through the process, before signing a contract. He said they have been transparent in the process, and careful that everyone is making and informed decision. There has been no coercion.

He said baseline pricing for obtaining these properties has been 2 ½ times the Randolph County tax value. He said this has provided property owners the opportunity to move on with more than a fair market share of their property's value.

Joseph said they have met with the opposition to answer any questions and have made themselves available for any questions. He said they have even developed a website to help with questions/answers. He said there are no private investors involved and no plans for Guilford County to take over this site. Randolph County and Guilford County have an amazing relationship.

He said when they first started trying to obtain properties, there was a young family with 10 acres that didn't want to sell. Later the property owner received a job offer and came back to us and asked if we would still honor our offer. He said of course we did and it allowed them to transfer and start work in another city. Another family was transferred to another State with a job opportunity. One family owned a specialized recreation site and said if they could find another property that would meet their needs, they would consider moving. He said they were able to find them another location after months of looking, and the Foundation assisted with the re-location and they couldn't be happier.

Joseph said they have created financial alternatives, assisted property owners with relocation, and objectively assessed every item on their property. We have tried to be as transparent as possible. He said he is proud of accomplishing becoming patriots with these property owners.

**Richard Wiley**, 6 Heather Court, Greensboro, North Carolina, consultant with the NC Railroad, said he has worked with state economic development since 1992. Our state has worked to recruit an auto assembly plant for the last 25 years. NC Railroad has assisted State, Regional and local allies in these efforts for many years. The NC Railroad line runs from Charlotte to the port terminal in Morehead City. Several Triad sites have been considered for projects over the years. Potential sites along the rail line in Davidson and Alamance counties have been lost to other industrial land use and development. He said that North Carolina has an excellent chance of attracting such a project, as this, in the Triad region. He said most professionals agree, North Carolina has been unsuccessful in attracting such a transformational project primarily because we either didn't have a site fully ready or we weren't willing to be as aggressive with incentives as our out-of-state competitors. He said NC Railroad engaged a site consultant in early 2015 to assess the state's current inventory of possible sites for an auto assembly project. The NC Railroad's management and Board of Directors objective was to assist and improve North Carolina's chances of attracting such a transformational

project. He said the NC Railroad's assessment identified the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite as an attractive candidate. The Greensboro-Randolph Megasite has many competitive strengths including access to rail, interstate highways and multiple airports along with favorable topography. He said the site is just 12 miles from the NC Railroad's line in Greensboro, but the site also faced a unique challenge in sustaining assemblage of the land. He said after recognizing the strong local and regional collaborative efforts of Randolph County and its partners, the NC Railroad Board of Directors considered the opportunity to help secure the site through joint ownership. Wiley said NC Railroad is pleased to confirm its intent to acquire approximately 875 acres and invest approximately 13 million dollars to support this initiative by Randolph County, the Bryan Foundation and the City of Greensboro. He said they also continue to support the statewide efforts to attract transformational projects that will create jobs and have a significant positive impact on the local community, the Triad region and our State economy. NC Railroad feels Greensboro-Randolph Megasite is an important asset to assemble as a key site in our State's inventory. He asked the Planning Board to recommend approval of this request. He said rezoning is an important step in obtaining site certification and necessary for opening the door for making a transformational project a reality in Randolph County.

**Reid Pell** asks if there are any questions.

**Jim Rains** announced that he has been keeping a list of questions and will ask his questions later.

**Joe Millikan** asked to speak in favor of this request. **Ben Morgan** explained that the appointed leaders of the proponents and opposition will speak first and then the floor will be opened for everyone else to speak.

**Alan Ferguson**, 4794 Troy Smith Road, Liberty, North Carolina, showed the Board where his residence is (on map) in relation to the proposed megasite. Ferguson congratulated the proponents on a wonderful demonstration, and said he was ready to approve the site himself after hearing it. He said he doesn't represent anyone there other than himself and his wife. He said he would like to answer a few of the questions that Rains asked and some of the issues that have come up at this meeting. He said he would not be reading from the long statement that he had prepared, but asked the Board to take a look at it. He said he is the David in this David and Goliath story right here. He said he realized there are people that were paid and happy to be paid. He said Lord knows that he and some of the people present in the audience would have loved to have been paid but none of us were. He told the Board, they were going to be left behind and be marooned here. He said it doesn't mean anything to him for the text amendment to be amended. He said it is what it is. But it's important because this County has a zoning plan that they have all relied on. The Foundation, the Railroad, and Randolph County have spent a lot of money. He said but they've

spent a lot of money too. He said they warned them (the County) not to buy into this project. He said he grew up in Mecklenburg County and he was one of the people that came here. He said he left Charlotte, so despite what has been said about how horrible it is in Randolph County, he doesn't believe it. He said if he had the thousands of dollars that have been spent, he could have supplied all of the beautiful presentations that have been offered here. He said they have a few signs around and the signs will stay around. The difference in resources of the 2 efforts that have been made here are unbelievable. He said this is what big Government looks like.

He said there have been a lot of comparisons of how poorly we compare to Raleigh & Charlotte, but everyone is doing bad compared to Raleigh and Charlotte. He said Charlotte is going to the Super Bowl, and Randolph County could never go to the Super Bowl.

He said we have all heard about the recessions, and we have lost a lot of jobs, but so has everyone else in the U.S.

Ferguson said it's true that North Carolina does not have a car plant. He told the Board he has visited the BMW and has looked at the States that have paid these incentives. He said the kinds of incentives that it takes to get one of these plants are around 600 million dollars. He said it costs about \$200,000.00 per job just to get jobs here. He said there has been more talk about the BMW plant at this meeting, and how it is now the biggest plant in the BMW system. He said that plant sits beside an airport and their roads run right from the airport to the plant, uniquely situated. He said it bears no resemblance to this site or any other site in the US. He said it has been a success but their unemployment rates are no better than ours. He said Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee and South Carolina, all are in business with car companies. He said none of these states can be show that they have better civilization than we do.

He said this money could be spent on the University of North Carolina. He said it has been rated best education money can buy for your value. UNC came in #1 for the last 18 years. University of South Carolina was rated 232<sup>nd</sup>. He said if we want to bad mouth North Carolina for not agreeing with the fad, then we should compare. He said we are envied by all of them.

He said let's talk about the desirability of the site. He said he was not a zoning or development expert, he's just a guy. He said the railroad that runs along the northern edge of the property is owned by Norfolk Southern line. NC Railroad has committed to spend 13 million dollars on the project. He advised the Board not to mistaken, the railroad along this property is not on the NC Railroad line. He said we've heard the Norfolk Southern Railroad guy told the Foundation's engineer that this is probably the best site in U.S. He said that, but they didn't invest in it. The audience cheered. Ferguson said money talks, and they didn't even see the need to invest in it when their railroad is the one that would benefit

from it. He said he agreed that this is a great piece of property, he said this is where he lives. He expressed concern for the ground water with the uncertainty of the development. Ferguson said the City of Greensboro has plans to run water and sewer to the project, but it is stated in the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite fact sheet that there can be NO other hook-ups.

Ferguson said if you believe that it is likely for the State to approve 600 million dollars in incentives, you need to talk to the Legislators.

Ferguson referred to his prepared notes and explained that Site Selection Magazine has identified 187 sites (excluding Mexico & Canada) located in the U.S. that is larger than 1000 acres and available as a major manufacturing site. This list doesn't include the megasite located 9 miles down the road in Chatham Co. These sites have been certified and marketed for several years and are still vacant.

Ferguson said the term megasite is not in the Bible. He described it as a term that has been made up from the people who develop Megasites. He said according to page 2 of the document taken off the site selection webpage (passed out to Board before the meeting), there are 13 sites available in North Carolina. He said he had no idea if those sites are better or worse, but asked is it reasonable for this Board to conclude that this site will jump to the head of this entire line. He said he hopes this is the truth if we spend this amount of money. He said he should be happy if this doesn't work. He said maybe this will be the next greatest thing to happen to this community if this site becomes the next State Park. Ferguson said this would make them rich instead of their property values ruined by something heavy industrial. He said this ungodly ordeal that this has been for he and neighbors, he wanted each Board member to consider "the cost to them". He said he likes money too. He said he's not a "not in my backyard guy". He said he's not a "hobby farmer". He just wants to be left alone to live his life. He read the definition of HI from *Unified Development Ordinance* to the Board. He said his house is one of those little red dots on the map and so are these people here tonight. He said currently HI zoning is only about 500 acres in the County now. He told the Board they were being asked to add 1500 acres to this number. He said if there has ever been an example of a use of land that is out of character, this is it.

Ferguson said this area will be ruined. He said we've heard a lot of talk about eminent domain, and how eminent domain will not be used. He said so where's the road going to be? Where's the interchange going to be? He said this Board saw maps with the proposed road changes on it during the cell tower meeting last year. He said but you don't see it on these maps. He said he knows that NCDOT told this Board that they currently don't have any plans, but somebody drew up those plans for the cell tower. He asked where the water and sewer lines are going to be. He said eminent domain is an 800 lb. gorilla that will be turned loose in the room. He said that day will come and those people will not go quietly.

Ferguson asked the Board to look at exhibit B on page 15 of the document he gave them. He said this should explain why the neighborhood got excited about in the beginning of this process. He said when they got this information from the State when they filed for a "freedom of information request." He said a consultant, initially with the Megasite, wrote this memorandum that stated that two of the biggest complaints that are received, from those who live near automotive assembly plants, are the volume of cars and trucks (2000 per day) and the smell that comes from the paint booths. The memo also stated development needs to be planned so that the residents do not unfairly complain about the site. He said this is why he feels it is not compatible with the area and why it shouldn't be approved. He said that there would be no total winners. He said we would all be losers.

Ferguson thanked the Board and said that there are many people that will speak in opposition to this request. He asked the Board to please leave the zoning in place and leave the people in this community in peace. He said they only want to be left alone and to pay their taxes. He asked the Board to please listen to the people here in opposition to this request.

**Ben Morgan** said for the record, Mr. Ferguson's written comments will be made part of the record.

**Chairman Reid Pell** announced that there would be a 10 minute break.

**Ben Morgan** announces that we will now hear anyone that would like to speak for or against. Same rules apply. We have had over 2 hours of testimony. He thanked everyone for the courtesy that was shown and advised Pell to reopen the public hearing.

**Reid Pell** re-opens the public hearing.

**Guy Troy**, 3507 Troy Estate Road, Liberty, North Carolina, said his appreciation of the Board's position especially since he served on this Board many years ago. I am unhappy that we don't have anyone from the Northeast part of Randolph County on the Board. I would like to address 3 points.

Troy said he would like to discuss the County Growth Management Plan. He said he was on the committee when the first plan was created. He said at that time, the Plan was carefully decided upon. He said to change and modify all that without thorough study is a mistake. He said he would like to see, when the "bedrock" of the County is modified, a committee established to work on any changes.

Troy discussed the strategic planning committee. He said he knew three of the Planning Board members are on this committee, but he would like for all of all the members to be a part of that committee. He said that the consensus that came out of their last meeting was "Quality of Life," which includes education, jobs, etc.

He said there was no mention of the megasite. He said he was surprised, that agriculture was the main thing that people wanted to maintain. He said he used to be a farmer but now he leases his land. He said he was surprised by the support of agriculture by the people on that committee. He said he thought that the issues the Board are important. He felt the way the proposed amendments to the HI zoning district are written were faulty. He said if the County wants to preserve agriculture, why would saw mills be prohibited. He questioned why a mobile saw mill wouldn't be permitted. He asked why theatres would be prohibited. He asked why prohibit airports in an HI zoning. He said the County would probably want to allow a private runway for executives. He said he thought it should be written differently.

He said in his summation that he was realistic enough to know that if Mercedes wanted to come to Randolph County, this Board could come up here in a day and modify the zoning as needed. He said let's not rush into this. He asked why change things now when you can change it any day. He asked the Board to table this until there's a real need for it.

**Andy Stevens**, 2109 Leona Drive, Greensboro, North Carolina, said he is one of the neighbors outside the county and he is opposed to this request. He said the 600 million dollars will not be there. He said Randolph County will see more expenses but how much will Randolph County benefit. He said the travel map shows how easily it will be commute to this area. He gave examples of incentives that have been granted in Guilford County and how many commute to Guilford County to work. He said if a non-profit organization obtained the properties, the remaining property owners in Randolph County will have to carry the cost (taxes not collected from these properties) of government services. He said that the Commissioner of Agriculture has warned if we continue to lose land we will not be able to keep up with the need for food. He warned that the people opposed to this will continue to stymie the project. He said the legislature did give some funds and it was the very last of the giving from the General Assembly. He said he works in the General Assembly and he is a gun rights guy. He said he would continue to work aggressively to replace and run out the type of people running Greensboro and Guilford County.

**Jim Meredith**, 5326 Ramseur Julian Road, Liberty, North Carolina, said that Northeast Randolph County is blessed with countryside and a quiet rural lifestyle. He said we have a community with a unique character which includes farms, Lions Club, milling company, small shops and restaurants. Shiloh Church and its cemetery are 100 years old. He said people who live here like this way of life, just the way it is. He said things come at a cost and this speculation is a calculated risk. He said if it takes 10 years, will it be worth the price. He said if this is rezoned to HI their property values will decrease. He said he believes this is a bad idea and he doesn't want to see their community change. He said he wants jobs for this area too, but he doesn't promote placing all our eggs in one basket. He said if you plop down the megasite, the changes that need to be made,

will disrupt their community. He urged the Board to deny this request.

**Ben Morgan** noted a letter that was provided to the Board a letter from Nancy S. Brown that will also be made a part of the record.

**Jimmy Shelton**, 4948 Troy Smith Road, Liberty, North Carolina, said he raises beef cattle. He said if an automobile company comes, he will be put out of business. It would be detrimental to drive farming equipment up and down the roads retrieving hay for cattle when over 6,195 people are trying to make it to work next door. He said his cattle operation is his 401K. This would be stealing his opportunity to make money. He is one of many farmers in the area of which all would be negatively affected. He objects to the noise, odor, dust, etc. He reviewed the Special Use Requirements and said this would not meet any of those requirements. He said to rezone this property would not meet any of the Special Use requirements.

**Reid Pell** clarifies that this is not a Special Use permit.

**Shelton** asks what requirements or guidelines do you have to look at for Heavy Industrial.

**Morgan** answered the Zoning Ordinance itself.

**Shelton** responded by saying “no details then huh?” He said it would be good to use the special permitting process for it. He said there was a whole lot of time and effort given on the Cell Tower (that was approved in this area recently) using this Special Use process. He said this request has a \$10,000.00 application fee, and asked how much more specialized can you get. He then thanked the Board for listening to him.

**Bobby Ferguson**, 8703 Old 421 Road, Julian, North Carolina, said he adjoins this property. He considers this a privilege to share these thoughts with the Board. He said he didn't think there was anyone here opposed to economic development. He said just as Alan pointed out there is going to be winners and losers here and they will be the losers. He said he understood that the Planning Board only makes a recommendation to the County Commissioners, but each Planning Board member is appointed by the County Commissioners. He said he realized this Board is in a delicate position and it would be hard for them to vote no. He thanked the Board for their efforts to be objective. He said this megasite is one of many drawing cards for an automotive company. He asked what could the County “take to the bank” as the complete truth. He said we've all been told this is about good jobs for Randolph County and anyway you “cut it” 20,000 jobs can be a game changer in good and bad ways. He said he has lived here almost all his life and this all came about without any input from the community. He said what has “tripped his trigger” is it came about without any input from this community. He said it is worthy to note that this project is in its 5<sup>th</sup> year without an automotive

company in the wings. He said being competitive does not mean that you will always be a winner, it means you compete. He said if you lose by 1 run or 20 runs, you've still lost. He said that if you're a paid consultant, you will find all of the positive benefits for whom you are working. He said the Chatham-Siler City site is already certified by the State. He said he didn't understand why we aren't seeking State certification, especially when we are asking the State to come forth with funding. He said we are only pursuing international certification, maybe for the national visibility, but we certainly need certification from the State in which we are trying to help.

Ferguson said the Chatham site was zoned over a year ago and is ready to go. He said a sliver of the Chatham site is in Randolph County. He asked why didn't we reach out to Chatham County and work together. He said we could have been much further along if we had partnered with Chatham County as a joint effort. He said he has been told, by Randolph County leadership, that they are in effect, our enemy. He said he struggles with that remark.

Ferguson told the Board that this project was started by Piedmont Triad Partnership 3 to 5 years ago and because of "financial irregularities", they were told that they were taken out of the picture. He said then Greensboro-Randolph Megasite was developed. On that Board, there are 4 members from Greensboro and only 1 member from Randolph County which is Hal Johnson, Randolph County Manager. He said he didn't see how this is more favorable for Randolph County when we only have 1 member on the Board. He said this all comes back to jobs, jobs, jobs, and he has his doubts. He said this is in the corner of the County adjoining 3 other counties and you can bet that some of the jobs will be filled by people from other counties as well. He feels there is an underlying agenda for this project that the community has not been told. He said that he has heard this is a major thrust for Greensboro to run water lines and he thinks Greensboro plans to annex into Randolph County. He asked the Board to at least look to see that there may be other factors here other than jobs, jobs, jobs. He said maybe this has a little bit of the overture of Randleman Lake. He said first, all these properties that are being asked to re-zone are in the Secondary Growth Area and in order to do this you have to change the property to primary growth area. He said Randolph County Manager, Hal Johnson, started leading an effort a few months ago (committee of about 70 people), to revamp our growth plan and he doesn't understand why it is being changed before we get a recommendation from this committee. Heavy Industrial is the worst possible zoning for the County citizens' quality of life. Heavy Industry brings with it, dust, pollution, noise, etc. He asked the members if they would want that to be their next-door neighbor. The Growth Management Plan notes *that sustainable economic development, environmental protection, and quality of life shall be pursued together as mutually supporting public policy goals*. He said he didn't think the Board had all the information they needed to make a correct decision. He asked are we stepping above and beyond the requirements to maximize the quality of life for our citizens. He asked the Board to close their eyes and asked them to imagine re-

zoning property in their neighborhood and asked if they would want to live in the worst possible zoning area.

**George T. Gale Jr.**, 4793 Troy Smith Road, Liberty, North Carolina, said that he is opposed to any government that thinks they can use tax monies to speculate. He is opposed to changing the Growth Plan and opposed to rezoning the property to HI. He said that the reason we are creating this megasite is to help with the poverty in the area by creating jobs. He said we've been told of the potential of 6000-30000 jobs. He asked what percentage of those jobs will be given to those people in poverty. He said we've been told if we don't take this chance we won't have the opportunity. He said a few days ago we made that decision with the lottery and realized if you didn't buy a ticket you didn't have a chance to win. He said he thought the odds were about the same. He told the Board he wouldn't want their job in making these decisions. He said he didn't think it mattered what the Planning Board does, the Commissioners would do what they damn well pleased.

**Chris Huber**, 5274 Lamina Lane, Liberty, North Carolina, said that Solomon stated that Hwy 421 was an interstate or maybe it should become one and she didn't see where the money is going to come from to make this an interstate. She said that Mr. Walker stated that this was primarily an "older population" and she takes exception to that. She has heard talk about all of the services that will be given when someone comes and all the jobs that will be created for the citizens of Randolph County, she said they are not going to be duped by this kind of talk. She said we all know that this talk of automotive manufacturing is a fantasy. She said despite the fact that Randolph County has an abundance of vacant industrial sites and that the County has yet to attract any of these manufacturers in the past. She said Dr. Robert Shackelford just stated that a \$256.00 per year surcharge per student is needed for the Community College to be able to "prepare North Carolina's workforce for in-demand jobs". She said he specifically cited manufacturing as in-demand jobs. She said he didn't say *better* prepare or *continue* to prepare, he said *to* prepare. She said we do not have the *ready* workforce for manufacturing jobs so they would not consider locating here. She said they feel that this is a personal grab for Guilford County to excel their economy. She thanked the Board for their time.

**Sandra Young**, 2400 Wildflower Court, Asheboro, North Carolina, spoke on behalf of her parents, and showed the Board where their property is located on the maps. She said that 7 generations of her family has lived here on their 100 acres parcel. She said that her father's request is that the County leave their home and property out of the "purple area" and put it back to in the "yellow area." She said she went with my parents to the County to appeal their tax value increase of \$100,000. She said her dad asked why his dirt in the backyard was so much more valuable than it was before. She said they won their appeal thankfully, but it worries them of what will happen to our property values if this is approved. She said they have always been in agriculture and they are concerned about noise, air,

and water pollution. She said they have people that hunt on their property and something like this will make the deer leave. She said she has spoken to the Board before and in the past, there was a local development company that wanted to put a mobile home development in that area. She said the Board turned down that request because it would disturb this beautiful, rural area. She said they don't want to be in primary growth area. She said she didn't understand why they would propose buffer on the east and west sides of the development, and not the south side.

**Joe Layton**, 7332 Old 421 Road, Liberty, North Carolina, said that he has lived here all his life. He said he pulled hay and tobacco all over the place in those "blue and grey" areas on the map. He said he was concerned about their corner of the County. He said they have patiently listened to why they need their community turned into something other than why they moved here. He said No doubt the road to economic regeneration will be hard to find, but this is a big chance we are taking. He said all the plans they have heard just don't seem to add up. He said he just doesn't believe in, "*if we build it they will come.*" He said he didn't know the answer either, but doing the same thing in the same way and expecting different results is just plain stupid. He asked who will benefit here and if we fail what price do we pay. He said he felt this was a foolish move. He said we are at a point of destiny and asked that the Board proceed thoughtfully and prayerfully. He said we are living in some tough times and that will determine our immediate future. He said our forefathers before us, had faith in God and themselves and they had freedom. He asked the Board to give this a lot of thought, because their destiny is their hand.

**Joe Millikan**, 2014 Naomi Road, Randleman, North Carolina, said that he is here for the working people. He said he rode around and saw all the megasite signs a couple of years ago. He heard that it might be an automotive plant with jobs \$35,000 to 60,000 in salary and most people in this County don't make \$35,000. He said to him this would be a great opportunity for our children and grandchildren. He said he has heard how great our universities are, but we have no jobs for our kids to come home to. He thanked each board member for how much time they put into this Board and the decisions that are made.

**Charlene Howson**, 5000 Rolling Hills Avenue, Julian, North Carolina, said that she is not opposed to jobs, but she is opposed to the re-zoning because it is not consistent with the neighborhood or the Growth plan that is currently in place. She said she has a good quality of life and would like to maintain that. She said governments don't create jobs and shouldn't speculate with tax money. She said they haven't seen anything that shows that Randolph County citizens would obtain these jobs that don't even exist. She said they started by saying it would be auto makers and now it sounds like the County will take anything. She said if there had been more transparency during this process, there would be more people here in opposition. She said the last time she heard of transparency, she heard it in '07 by Obama and she didn't believe it then and she doesn't believe it now.

**Carole Gale**, 4793 Troy Smith Road, Liberty, North Carolina, said that she is a taxpayer, resident, and voting citizen of Randolph County. She is opposed to the rezoning because of the negative interruptions that it will cause to her family, neighbors, animals and crops. She said Randolph County should keep our lands for crops and livestock. She said if North Carolina wants this Megasite for this dream auto manufacturing facility, let them go a few miles away on an already approved site. She said if Guilford County wants this site for their fame and fortune, let them put it in Guilford County without disturbing Randolph County. She asked the Board to care for Randolph County people and be there for them and do not vote for rezoning HI.

**Marjorie Beeson**, 5500 Troy Smith Road, Liberty, North Carolina, said that she operates a beef and poultry farm. She said her father said *when you hear something too good to be true, it usually is*. She said she was recently at a meeting when a representative from Randolph County came to speak to all of them regarding the strategic plan. She said he also talked about what the impact it would have on our farms and agriculture. She said he laughed and said the Planning Board would vote to approve it because the County has spent this money. She told the Board that they can rubber stamp this, but they could also just not recommend anything and the Commissioners can't look at the Planning Board as their cover. She said she hoped the Board would listen to the people that have spoken and said *just because you can rezone doesn't mean you should*. She asked the Board to do the right thing for these citizens and vote against this rezoning.

**Devon Shelton**, 129-C Steinbeck Way, Mooresville North Carolina, said that she owns a vacant parcel in the "purple" and they haven't built their home because they haven't had time to build on it yet. She said this is wonderful land and that is why they bought it and want their home here. She said she was born and raised here and it is paradise to her. She said if this land is so special and unique for a megasite, why is it just now being sought after? She said if it is so perfect and desired, then a company will wait a day or so for the rezoning. She said the engineer has said his firm is currently working on 5 Megasites in NC. She asked how many of those sites already have a committed company. She said working in a utility herself, She knows every area is working on putting together a megasite whether it is certified or not, and the competition is stiff. She said she has heard Randolph County has put in money, but what has Greensboro committed to the project financially. She said Greensboro has "top billing" on the name and they control most of it with a majority of the people on the Board. She heard people speaking about Greensboro's commitment for extending water and sewer to the site when infrastructure is in place. She asked who is funding the water and sewer extension. She said Greensboro said they are committed but they didn't say who is going to pay for it. She said she knows incentives are not put into place unless there is a return on investment when they are trying to lure companies in. She said she doesn't understand the return, she said that she knew that a Certified

Manufacturer does not have to pay sales tax on their utilities and sales tax on shipping, shipping materials, machinery costs, etc. She said if those tax dollars are not going back into Randolph County, are we just relying on the return to come from the proposed new residents. She questioned if these new residents would even be here in Randolph County. She questioned the expenses of new roads, schools, and other infrastructure. She said that it is not necessary to re-zone this property at this time. She said she will be praying for the Board in their decision and asked them to please vote no to the re-zoning.

**Chairman Reid Pell** asked the Board if they needed to take another break.

**Ben Morgan** asks, by show of hand, how many more people are planning on speaking to the Board to determine if another break is needed. A couple more citizens raised their hands.

**Bobby J Allen**, 3861 Osborn Mill Road, Asheboro, North Carolina, said that he is not a neighbor but he realized that this was not a good idea and asked the Board to vote against the zoning.

**John Yow**, 4798 Pearl Ferguson Road, Liberty, North Carolina, asks if the growth area passes to primary growth, how much will taxes go up and the value of the property go down.

**Chairman Reid Pell** asks if anyone else would like to speak. He closed the Public Comment portion of the meeting and announced the Board would be taking a 5 minute break

**Ben Morgan** announces that we will get started again.

**Chairman Pell** asked the Board if they had any questions that need to be answered.

**Jim Rains** had some questions and needed some clarifications from anyone that may have the answers. He wanted to hear more about incentives; he wanted to know if the State has made a firm commitment and if we would be in the "ballpark" with other States.

**Bonnie Renfro** answered that all incentives in North Carolina and from the local levels are uniquely based on number of jobs, investment, wages, and benefits, etc. She said North Carolina has a 15 million dollar cap given as a payroll tax rebate with a \$15 million cap payroll tax rebate to the client for 20 years. She said The Golden Leaf also has incentive funds available for infrastructure. These funds can be used for building training facility and equipment. She said these funds are available today. She said we are working together both public and private partnerships.

**Rains** said he wanted to know more about water and sewer commitments, permits that have been applied for, and what agreements are in place.

**Renfro** answered that Greensboro has invested 2.3 – 2.4 million to cover the cost of design and engineering plans for water and sewer extensions to serve the site and it's in a high volume. They are 60% complete with the design at this time and they expect to finish that process by April or May of this year. She said this is the planning stage of this, it does not mean the construction will commence.

**Rains** said there perennial and intermittent streams in the footprint of buildings and there are development blocks that go right over the streams. He asked how these streams will be dealt with.

**Brian Maas**, Engineer with ECS Carolinas, said they were hired to delineate streams and wetlands associated with the property. He said clearly there are some intermittent and perennial streams. He said they make every attempt to minimize disruption and avoid streams. He said if they can't be avoided, there is a permitting process handled through the Army Corp of Engineers that will take place.

**Rains** said that the drawings that were shown, during their presentation, didn't appear to avoid streams.

**Solomon** explained that the detailed drawings, in the packet given to the Board, showed on concept #1 the buildings to be completely out of stream mitigation area. He said there is a possibility of mitigating streams where the rail can come in and there is an extremely large building in one of the last drawings that impact some of the streams. He said these plans are conceptual and meant to be used just as examples of development possibilities. He said this is as a tremendously flexible sight with massive development possibilities.

**Rains** asked what the possible effects to the groundwater were.

**Maas** said when you talk about streams, you are referring to surface water. He said it certainly helps recharge the groundwater but North Carolina has very specific regulations to help with storm water control and retaining water on the site. The plan for the southern end of the site is not for development but maintained in wetlands due to large amounts of floodplain.

**Rains** asked if they would be required to meet all NCDNR requirements and if they would have to manage water quality control within the site itself.

**Maas** answered absolutely

**Rains** asked about buffers. Rains said comments in some of the consultant's information, were that the ideal buffers would be around 1500 feet from homes,

buildings and structures. He said some of the drawings only provide for buffers within a 200 - 400 ft. range. He asked what the anticipated buffer would be for this project with a typical footprint.

**Renfro** said she first wanted to clarify a statement from an earlier question. She has a copy of the bill and it states that the incentive is 15 million dollars for 20 years is the cap that is written from legislation. She said that what she recalls from the report and a verbal conversation with Mr. Caldwell is that a paint booth be located no less than 1500 ft. from residential area. She said he also said that railways, highways and of course there is a large pond on the property, are natural buffers that create a separation from use and neighbors.

**Alan Ferguson** answered that Mr. Caldwell's exact statement says that it would be ideal to maintain a 1500 ft. buffer from any buildings on this site to the property boundary.

**Rains** said he was confused about differences of the railroads. He said there is a rail line shown on the documents that needed to be clarified.

- **Richard Wiley** said Norfolk Southern owns the rail that comes from Greensboro down this way and adjoins the site. Traffic from this line would flow into the corridor of the NC Railroad system – Clearly, Norfolk Southern is involved in this project and are the railroad indicated on the map.

**Rains** said he is curious about the comments that have come from the opposition of the folks that are being left behind. He asked why we were looking at property of this size and what are the future intentions for the property that is shown on the perimeter?

No answers were given.

**Chairman Pell** asked if there were any additional questions.

**Phil Ridge** asked if all the land within the request for rezoning is either owned or under contract. **Jay Dale** confirmed.

**Chairman Reid Pell** asks if anyone had questions for Ben Morgan before the Board votes.

5. **Morgan** said there are 3 separate items that require attention this evening. Mr. Dale went over those briefly before the meeting. The first item is the proposed amendment to the County Zoning Ordinance.

(A) **Proposed Amendment to the County Zoning Ordinance**

**Kemp** made the motion, seconded by **McLeod**, to recommend to the Board of

Commissioners that the Zoning Amendments be **approved** as presented. The motion passed by a vote of 6 to 1 - **Rains voted against the motion.**

**Morgan** said the next order of business would be to consider the proposed amendments to the Growth Management Plan. **Davis** asked if the property is currently being used for farming could the owners continue to do so. **McLeod** said it wouldn't affect the current use. **Dale** said that is correct.

**(B) Proposed Amendment to the Randolph County Growth Management Plan**

**McLeod** made the motion, second by **Joyce**, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that the Amendments to the Growth Management Plan be **approved** as presented. The motion passed by a vote of 6 to 1 - **Rains voted against the motion.**

**Morgan** said the last issue for consideration is the **Greensboro-Randolph Megasite Foundation Inc.** rezoning request.

**(C) Greensboro-Randolph Megasite Foundation Rezoning Request**

**McLeod** made the motion, seconded by **Joyce**, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that this request be **approved** as consistent with the Growth Management Plan. The motion passed by a vote of 6 to 1 - **Rains voted against the motion.**

6. **Dale** presented the Board with the following Determination of Consistency for their consideration.

**DETERMINATION OF CONSISTENCY** of the proposed amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance to expand the uses allowed in Heavy Industrial districts and the proposed rezoning from RA and RM to Heavy Industrial – Conditional District.

The proposed amendment of the Unified Development Ordinance and the proposed rezoning are consistent with the **2009 Randolph County Growth Management Plan** in numerous ways.

I.

Amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance

The following is submitted as a **Determination of Consistency recommending approval of the request to amend the Unified Development Ordinance Table of Permitted Uses to expand the types of uses allowed in Heavy Industrial districts.**

**Policy 1.2** The county will encourage new and expanding industries and businesses which: (1) diversity the local economy, (2) utilize more highly skilled labor force, and (3) increase our residents' income.

*Consistency Summary: The UDO's Table of Permitted Uses has been adequate to serve a more traditional, 20<sup>th</sup> century economy and the uses which were common in the 1980s and 1990s. However, some of the emerging and more modern industries which Randolph County must be able to attract and recruit are not listed. The county cannot compete with other states or regions unless it specifically provides for a complete mix of 21<sup>st</sup> century industries.*

The following provisions in the Growth Management Plan support and are consistent with the proposed amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance:

It is one of the main objectives of the Growth Management Plan to "encourage quality and sustainable growth." (Page 1)

The GMP notes that "national and global recession certainly has negatively affected the economic condition of the Triad." (p. 3)

"Our County has long been recognized the need for job development and diversification." (p. 3)

New companies are the lifeblood of economic growth. (p. 4)

The GMP recognizes the "continued challenges of providing a high level of public services while keeping taxes at a reasonable level." (p. 8)

*Approval of the amendment to the Unified Development Ordinance District would therefore be consistent with the Randolph County Growth Management Plan.*

## II. Rezoning

The following is submitted as a **Determination of Consistency recommending approval of the rezoning request to Heavy Industrial – Conditional District**. This Determination of Consistency also supports a change in the 2009 Randolph County Growth Management Plan to reflect that area north of Highway 421, Randolph County, as a **Primary Growth Area**:

**Policy 1.1:** Sustainable economic development, environmental protection, and quality of life, shall be pursued together as mutually supporting public policy goals.

**Consistency Summary:** *Job creation and other economic development benefits anticipated as a result of this rezoning is balanced with the environmental site certification studies that have been completed and will help maintain quality of life.*

**Policy 1.3:** The benefits of economic development should be balanced against the possible detrimental effects such development may have on the quality of life enjoyed by area residents.

**Consistency Summary:** *Randolph County has lost almost 9000 jobs in the past ten years with the Piedmont Triad experiencing job loss of 90,000. The N.C. Triad Region, including Greensboro and Randolph County, are pursuing an economic development opportunity that may bring thousands of new jobs to this region. The proposed rezoning is planned as the home of major employers that would provide new manufacturing and supporting job industry benefiting the entire Piedmont region of N.C.*

*The proposed rezoning site has undergone one of the most intensive site certification environmental studies ever conducted on such a large land area in Randolph County. The environmental studies include: Traffic impact studies, Stream and wetland reports, Wetland delineation reports, subsurface exploration, Phase 1 & 2 Environmental Reports, and Archeological/Endangered Species Studies.*

*The proposed rezoning is to classification Heavy Industrial – Conditional District. This Conditional District classification would provide development flexibility which could allow the Board of County Commissioners to address concerns from adjoining neighbors, including the imposition of enhanced buffers. This Conditional District could also be used by the Board of County Commissioners to exclude land uses which would not be compatible with the economic development project or surrounding community.*

**Policy 1.6:** Randolph County will support coordination of economic development resources with various local agencies and seek regional coordination and interaction between areas with a shared economic interest.

**Consistency Summary:** *Numerous local, regional and state agencies have worked together in planning and preparation for the economic development opportunity over a multi-year process. Both public and private entities have provided input and resources in support of this project, including the Randolph County Economic Development Corporation, Randolph County, City of Greensboro, Greensboro/Randolph Mega Site Foundation, Piedmont Triad Partnership, NC Department of Commerce, NC Department of Transportation, Duke Energy, Norfolk Southern Railroad, and Piedmont Natural Gas.*

**Policy 3.1:** Industrial development should be on land that is physically suitable and has unique locational advantages for industry. Advance planning for the identification of such land should be encouraged.

*Consistency Summary:* The proposed site meets and exceeds widely accepted industry standards for large industrial or mega sites. These standards include large size, highway access, rail access, ability to secure robust utility services, proximity to an international airport, environmentally clean, and regularly configured land. The site is more than 1,500 acres, located on US 421, a four-lane divided highway with limited access less than 10 miles from the Interstate highway system, bordered by a rail line, able to be served by public and private utilities sized to meet large industrial demand, is less than 30 miles from an international airport, meets environmental standards for non-contamination and developability, and is rectangular in land area.

**Policy 3.10:** Site specific development plans shall be submitted that reduce stormwater impact by designing new development in a manner that minimizes concentrated stormwater flow using vegetated buffer areas or sediment retention ponds.

*Consistency Summary:* Environmental Studies, including stream/wetland reports, wetland delineation, and subsurface exploration, help insure that new development will be in a manner that preserves natural buffers and minimizes concentrated stormwater flows. Early studies indicate that much of the stormwater can be handled by a pond already on site. Site specific development plans will be required at the permitting stage.

**Policy 3.11:** New rural industrial development should provide site specific development plans along with vegetated buffers or other landscaping designed to reduce substantial impacts to adjoining property owners.

*Consistency Summary:* Environmental studies and site certifications are a critical component of the proposed rezoning. Potential facility locations have been selected that would provide distance from adjoining property lines in efforts to minimize substantial impacts to adjoining land uses. The applicant is proposing extra buffers to reduce impacts to adjoining owners.

**Policy 8.2:** Public involvement is encouraged in decisions on land use and development by making the public aware of proposed developments at the earliest opportunity, and fostering communication between landowners, the development industry, the public, and Randolph County government.

*Consistency Summary:* Over the last three years, Randolph County has hosted presentations about the proposed economic development opportunity and site at regularly scheduled meetings that are open to the public and widely covered by the news media. Two public hearings have been held and citizen input welcomed.

*The County website includes a link to a website – [www.greensboro-randolphmegasite.com](http://www.greensboro-randolphmegasite.com) that offers information and the ability to submit comments or questions via a toll free phone number and email. A public information meeting has been held to provide utility information with all property owners that may be impacted notified by US mail. Information has been shared in public meetings, widely accessible electronic media, news accounts in print and broadcast, and by mail.*

**Page 10, 2009, Randolph County Growth Management Plan:** “Randolph County Zoning and Public Policy recognizes that individual zoning decisions are dependent upon the scale of the proposed development as it relates to the specific site and location. Sustainable rural economic development, environmental protection, and rural quality of life, shall be pursued together as mutually supporting growth management goals. With appropriate site conditions, one goal does not necessarily exclude the other”.

***Consistency Summary:** This site lies between a railroad and an interstate highway and is bisected by a large power transmission line, each of which help make this a sustainable development site, and each of which have partially defined the character to the site prior to this requested rezoning. The anticipated positive job creation and other economic development impacts for the county and region, along with the extensive environmental studies required for site certification, enhance quality of life issues for citizens.*

**Page 14, 2009 Randolph County Growth Management Plan:** “A key principle in the Growth Management Plan for Randolph County is to approach development decisions not as isolated individual issues, but as a larger interconnecting framework of building sustainable growth with the county”.

***Consistency Summary:** Sustainable growth in 21<sup>st</sup> century economic climates requires that all development decisions be viewed as interconnecting with other social and economic conditions within the Randolph County community. A successful recruitment of a mega industry will not only create new jobs, but may generate support for businesses that would insure long term sustainable jobs and growth for Randolph County and the region. To insure that this development is not considered as an isolated individual issue the Randolph County Board of County Commissioners have commissioned a countywide Strategic Planning process focusing on the interconnected local government responsibilities of protection of the public health, safety, and well-being.*

**Page 42, 2009 Randolph County Growth Management Plan: Board of County Commissioner Adoption Resolution, Intent # 2:** Recognize that growth management policies should afford flexibility to County boards and agencies that will enable them to adapt to the practical requirements often necessary for rural development.

**Consistency Summary:** *In 2009, the Randolph County Growth Management Plan was updated to reflect the challenges of 21<sup>st</sup> century development. This area of Northeast Randolph County currently under consideration for rezoning was a relatively low density, agricultural area, with scattered rural commercial/industrial land uses. In 2009, this northeastern Randolph County land area was placed in a Growth Management "Secondary Growth Area" which anticipated its continued use as a residential subdivision/agricultural area, with scattered industrial/commercial rural developments.*

*Since 2009, the 1500+ acre site of the proposed rezoning has been identified by professional engineers and consultants as containing all the attributes of a major mega industrial/manufacturing site. Some of these studies have identified this proposed site as the #1 Mega Site in North Carolina. The City of Greensboro is currently making preparations for water and sewer service to this site. Randolph County has commissioned a water/sewer feasibility study in preparation for expected residential/commercial growth in this area of the county.*

*Over the past four years, events relating to the possible development of a mega industrial site in this area have changed future projections for expected growth and development in northeastern Randolph County. Some of the reasons for change in planning and development projections include:*

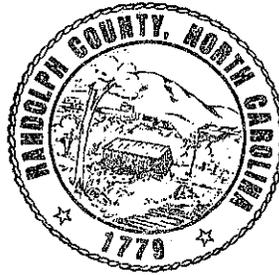
*The anticipated provision of water and sewer, excellent interstate and highway systems, size of the rezoning request either purchased or under contract at 1500+ acres, lay of the land, favorable site certification environmental studies, work force availability, close proximity to the Piedmont Triad International Airport, regional public/private support for this economic development project involving substantial allocations of monetary resources for land purchase and acquisitions from Randolph County, Greensboro/Randolph Mega Site Foundation, and the City of Greensboro, **support the rezoning of this site to Heavy Industrial – Conditional District.***

*Approval of the rezoning for the above reasons would also be consistent with a **Determination of Consistency** to support an amendment to the 2009 Randolph County Growth Management Plan reflecting **the area north of Highway 421, Liberty Township, Randolph County, to be designated on the current Randolph County Growth Management Plan as a Primary Growth Area.***

**McLeod** made the motion, seconded by **Joyce**, to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that this request be **approved** as consistent with the Growth Management Plan. The motion passed by a vote of 6 to 1 - **Rains voted against the motion.**

7. The meeting adjourned at 11:25 p.m. There were approximately 61 people present for this meeting.

**RANDOLPH COUNTY  
NORTH CAROLINA**



*Gay Doll*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Planning Director**

*Green Wood*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Clerk to the Board**

*Kim Heizer*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Deputy Clerk to the Board**

*2-16-2016*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**