

Unsealed by Board of Commissioners 01/13/2020.

MINUTES
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
February 26, 2018 – CLOSED SESSION

Per NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (5) To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease, closed session was entered into at 9:30 p.m. Present were Chairman Chapman, Commissioners Chappell, Hawkins, Lemel (via conference call) and Phillips, County Manager Jaime Laughter, County Attorney Misti Bass, Transylvania Economic Alliance Executive Director Josh Hallingse, Transylvania Economic Alliance Board Chairman Jeremy Owen, member of Board of Directors of the Boys and Girls Club of Transylvania County and former member of the Transylvania Economic Alliance Parker Platt, and Clerk to the Board Trisha Hogan.

Commissioners were informed that Brevard College is interested in selling property it inherited from the Pickelsimer estate. The property is the old airport property off US 276 S and is located behind the Boys and Girls Club off Gallimore Road. It consists of 55 acres. Brevard College wants the property to be used for the good of the community. The Boys and Girls Club also has interest in the property, which could lead to a partnership opportunity should the County show interest as well. The Manager was informed the current tax value is \$300,000, but an appraisal would be needed. (Since this meeting occurred, staff learned the tax value is actually approximately \$690,000.)

Transylvania Economic Alliance Executive Director Josh Hallingse pointed out that product development has historically been a struggle for the County. The first phase in dealing with that issue is the Ecusta Road project currently underway. A GIS analysis was conducted to determine the top sites for industrial growth. This process identified 78 total sites, but with most needing some type of improvement to make usable from a business standpoint. Due to this fact, the number of sites was narrowed down to 10 sites on which to focus. Transylvania County does not have a lot of developable property because of its terrain, so some of the most valuable land available is publicly owned land. Mr. Hallingse noted that the County cannot solely focus on the Davidson River Village site because it will only appeal to certain users. Therefore, there is a need for more options for product development purposes.

This need led to a focus on the current County owned Parks and Recreation property off of Ecusta Road which could be master planned for a 50+ acre business park that happens to be adjacent to an existing industrial area. This involves transitioning recreational property for industrial use and repurposing the old airport property into parks and recreational use. The old airport property is in the floodplain. Floodplain property can be developed for parks and recreation purposes because specific site work can mitigate flooding. Mr. Hallingse met with both a hydro engineer and civil engineer to determine possibilities on this property and they developed a preliminary site drawing that includes all of the elements of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Mr. Hallingse pointed out there are other options for transitioning parks and recreation uses, but in this case, there is a landowner willing to sell. This opportunity presented itself and Mr. Hallingse, along with the Manager, wanted to inform the Board and determine if there was enough interest to move forward with approaching Brevard College.

Chairman Chapman noted the importance of engaging the City of Brevard. Mr. Hallingse reported he intends to contact them to get on their Council's agenda.

Parker Platt, a representative of the Boys and Girls Club and former member of the Transylvania Economic Alliance, informed the Board that the organization is not in a position to purchase capital. However, the club has over 100 youth on a waiting to list to join and therefore needs space. The development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan on the old airport property could help alleviate their space issues by partnering with the County. With

that said, the club has an immediate need for space and has considered renting the airplane hangar on the property for elementary school children. He pointed out this property is important to many people.

Commissioner Lemel who was participating via conference call stated this property is important to all of Transylvania County and she would love to see the County pursue the property. The County has a need for recreation facilities, fields, and other opportunities and she was supportive of moving forward with next steps.

Transylvania Economic Alliance Board Chairman Jeremy Owen stated that job creation properties are limited in Transylvania County. The old airport property cannot be developed for industrial use so transitioning the parks and recreation property for industrial use makes sense and allows for replacing the fields on the old airport property. Mr. Platt noted this is also an opportunity to recognize Brevard College President Dr. Joyce and Mr. Pickelsimer, the original owner.

Mr. Hallingse reported that Brevard College has conducted an appraisal on the property. He was not at liberty to share the appraisal amount.

Commissioner Phillips pointed out how wonderful and important the Boys and Girls Club is as an organization. Commissioner Lemel agreed and stated this opportunity would allow the County to build an amazing recreational complex to serve all citizens. The Manager added that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan includes a multigenerational center which would provide major opportunities for partnering with the Boys and Girls Club in terms of programming and facility needs.

Commissioners were in consensus to direct staff to move forward with ordering an appraisal on the property and beginning discussions with Dr. Joyce about potential selling costs and an opportunity for naming rights. Mr. Platt pointed out Brevard College has an interest in agricultural programs and this could be used as a negotiating point. Nonetheless, the County needed certainty from the College about their willingness to sell to the County before moving forward with next steps to determine how to mitigate flooding on the property.

Mr. Hallingse, in response to Chairman Chapman, noted there are grant opportunities for mitigating wetlands and for industrial projects in rural areas. The Manager noted there is currently \$390,000 in reserves for parks and recreation purposes.

Commissioners Chappell and Hawkins requested getting more refined figures from the engineers in terms of maintenance and construction costs. They were fine with approaching Brevard College to inform them of the County's interest, but with the caveat that the County would like time to complete its due diligence.

A discussion occurred about a potential offer to Brevard College. The Manager suggested an offer of \$275,000 with naming rights, although Commissioners felt that \$300,000 was reasonable. The Manager will move forward with getting an appraisal to determine if tax value and appraisal value are out of line.

Chairman Chapman moved to leave closed session, seconded by Commissioner Phillips and unanimously accepted.

Larry L. Chapman, Chairman
Transylvania County Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:

Trisha M. Hogan, Clerk to the Board

02/26/2018