

**CITY OF LAURINBURG  
CITY COUNCIL AND  
SCOTLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS JOINT MEETING  
SCOTLAND PLACE  
1210 TURNPIKE RD., LAURINBURG, NC  
MAY 8, 2008  
6:00 P.M.**

**Minutes**

The City Council of the City of Laurinburg and the Scotland County Commissioners held a joint meeting on May 8, 2008. The meeting was held at Scotland Place located at 1210 Turnpike Rd. beginning at 6:00 p.m. with the Honorable Matthew Block, Mayor, presiding. The following Councilmembers were present: Rembert DeBerry, Amanda B. Faulk, and Thomas W. Parker, III. Councilmembers Curtis Leak and Herbert M. Rainer, Jr. were absent.

The following Scotland County Commissioners were present: Chairman J. D. Willis, Commissioners Joyce McDow, Guy McCook, Clarence McPhatter, and Leon Butler. Vice- Chairman Betty B. Gholston and Commissioner John Alford were absent.

Also present were: Craig F. Honeycutt, City Manager, Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk, Kevin Patterson, County Manager and Ann Kurtzman, Clerk to the Board.

Shannon Newton, Parks and Recreation Director, Roger Ammons, Schools Maintenance Director and Coach Tommy Britt also attended.

Following a tour of the Scotland County Recreation Complex, Mayor Block called the meeting to order.

Councilmember DeBerry gave the invocation.

**RECREATION**

Mayor Block explained that during the City's Citizen Input Session residents expressed a need for more recreational opportunities in the City specifically dealing with indoor recreation activities for the youth of the City. He stated that during Council's Annual Planning Retreat that there was discussion on the idea of opening school gyms on weekends and during the summer for indoor activities. There was a consensus among Council to meet with the County Commissioners and representatives from the Scotland County School system to discuss the idea.

Chairman Willis stated that with the gang activity or increased gang activity in Scotland County, efforts to find more productive activities for the youth are a good idea. He then stated that the issue is what economically feasible can be done.

A lengthy discussion ensued about the possibility of using neighborhood schools for recreation activities for teenagers. Upon question, Mayor Block stated that the concentrated population area for the City is the northern and eastern area of the City.

Shannon Newton informed the Boards that the Laurel Hill Community Center, which is County property, already has a similar program to that being discussed. She explained that this program came about as a result of efforts made by the Youth Center Task Force several years ago.

Chairman Willis suggested that Ms. Newton, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and representatives from the school system address this concern and develop a plan to open several school gyms for a specific time period which would include a program of work and costs for the implementation of the project. He stated that the report should then be presented to both Boards for review.

Commissioner McCook stated that he serves on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and that there is a possibility that discussion concerning more recreational opportunities could take place as early as next week.

Both governing boards agreed that the recreational activities in Gibson and Wagram as well as at I.E. Johnson and Sycamore Lane Schools be included in the report. Both boards also agreed that the National Guard Armory could also be an option.

Mayor Block stated that City residents, especially those in the northern and eastern parts of the City, consistently express a desire to see in the community a recreational facility offering activities such as those found in a typical YMCA.

Chairman Willis stated that everything has a price tag and that when you talk about taxes the cost factor needs to be considered. He then stated that, if the desire is that a YMCA-type facility be located inside the City limits, then the City should develop a plan to include the City's financial commitment as well as how the County might figure into the plan.

Councilmember Parker stated that revenue for support and continued support of a YMCA-type facility must also be considered.

Commissioner McCook stated that, in the 1990's, the Youth Center Task Force researched the idea of a YMCA in the community, but after looking at capital costs and maintenance of the facility, they determined that it would not work. He then stated that the idea of a centrally located facility is good but that the availability and purchase of property may be an issue if the Recreation Complex is not considered a feasible site.

Chairman Willis stated that the County's priorities include lowering the County's tax rate, bringing more jobs to the area, and completing the Recreation Complex.

Upon question by Councilmember Faulk, Ms. Newton identified all parks in the City/County with the majority of the parks being located north of Highway 74.

Commissioner McCook explained that the County is looking to improve neighborhood parks by soliciting input from citizens to determine what they would like for the parks to be long term. He stated this would include trying to improve the appearance and maintenance standards of the parks. He then stated that attendance was good for the first two community forums.

The City Council and the Commissioners discussed parks in general, methods to improve them, and how to resolve security issues.

Both boards then discussed possible consolidation efforts.

Kevin Patterson, County Manager, stated that the Commissioners had discussed the possibility of combined communications at their retreat and determined that it was not a feasible consolidation at the present time. He explained that an investment in communications consolidation is a good idea, but that it would not save any money.

The City Manager stated that it does make sense service wise, but agreed that it will not save money. He also stated that the way the system is set up; there is redundancy in the systems if one were to become inoperable.

The City Manager and the County Manager reviewed areas that both the city and county were involved in such as the water system, fueling station, GIS, public works working together

Mayor Block stated that he would solicit input from the entire City Council at its next regular meeting on consolidation issues. The suggestion is to develop a one-stop consolidation of services plan involving planning and zoning, inspections, and tax departments for implementation in fiscal year 2009-2010.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Councilmember DeBerry, seconded by Councilmember Faulk, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

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Matthew Block, Mayor

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Dolores A. Hammond, City Clerk