Warren County Board of Commissioners

Strategic Planning Board Retreat

Vance-Granville Community College – Community Meeting Room

Warren County Satellite Campus

210 W. Ridgeway St., Warrenton, NC 27589

Wednesday, March 23, 2011

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Warren County Board of Commissioners

Strategic Planning Board Retreat

Chris Aycock, Facilitator

March 23, 2011
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Suggested Agenda

10:00 am – 10:30 am	Introduction of Retreat and Ground Rules
10:30 am -11:00 am	County Manager's Report on Previous Plan
	Successes and Ongoing Items
11:00 am – 12:00 pm	Warren County Internal and External Assessment
	External: Opportunities and Challenges *Internal: Strengths and Challenges*
12:00 pm -12:30 pm	Lunch on Site
12:30 pm – 1:30 pm	Review Mission Statement
	Affirm or Revise Mission Statement
1:30 pm-2:30 pm	Identify Priorities and Create Goals
	The Board of Commissioners will identify the priorities for Warren County and create goals.
2:30 pm-3:45 pm	Create Measurable Objectives to Meet Goals
	The Board of Commissioners will create measurable objectives to ensure that goals are accomplished.
3:45 pm-4:00 pm	Summary and Adjourn

Helping Organizations Plan for Success
THE AYCOCK GROUP
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Strategic Planning • Leadership Retreats • Organizational Development
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The Aycock Group consisting of Chris Aycock, a skilled and experienced strategic planner and facilitator and Ron Aycock, the retired executive director of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners has facilitated successful annual retreats and strategic planning retreats for many counties including: Buncombe, Montgomery, Nash, Robeson, Northampton, and Richmond.

The Aycock Group recently facilitated a successful economic development strategic planning joint retreat with Vance County and the City of Henderson which involved the county, the city, and business leaders. In these difficult economic times, when counties have limited resources to address economic issues, good planning with wide participation is critical.

"I believe our retreat was quite successful. Chris, thanks for your extensive involvement, execution, and leadership."
Jerry L. Ayscue, Vance County Manager

The Aycock Group has over 40 years of experience, and specializes in strategic planning, leadership retreats and organizational development.

Please contact us at 919-834-2313 or by email.

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Chris Aycock, MPA President

KEY ISSUES

AND

SHORT LIST OF MAJOR GOALS

IDENTIFIED

IN DECEMBER 2007

What are the key issues requiring the Warren County Board of Commissioners attention for 2008-2010?

- Decisions that need to be made
- Directions that staff need to receive

(These comments were provided by all the participants in the retreat: Commissioners, staff, and citizens.)

Infrastructure
• Make GIS mapping more user-friendly. Too many user-errors for non-county users • Maintain Wi-Fi on courthouse square • IT problems on getting things done in timely manner • Increase broadband service to 100% of households (currently approaching 80% coverage) • Equity of access to information • Universal water/sewer/gas service • Adequate public facilities ordinance or similar document • Public access TC: use to broadcast county meeting and for public notification • County is now able to do its own building maintenance • Increase IT support • Upgrade AEL @ SEMAA to maintain SOA status; no longer "state-of-the-art" • Need IT • Complete Finance Building • Infrastructure at HUB site to support industry/business • Improvement in fire prevention • Bike routes (safety, public awareness) • Adequate office space for agencies that are not in county buildings • Improve communication practices within county government; plan for getting information to all staff, not just department heads • More funding from state and federal government for state roads: maintenance and new roads • Tourism coordinated countywide to attract groups • Municipalities and county coordinate efforts on a larger scale • Do estimate of roads, water, sewer, etc., for each change considered • Have a person for all skills on county committees, boards, etc.

Human Resources

- Recruit and retain qualified applicants and existing staff (i.e., deputy sheriff, PHN)
- Enhanced benefits package
- Training (planning for it in every department)
- 401K employer match
- Need to update and expand personnel policies manual
- Need additional HR staff
- Health coverage after retirement
- Need employee wellness program
- Increase HR department by .5 or 1 position
- Teacher recruitment and retention
- Support development of teacher housing
- Get Board of Equalization & Review in place for tax office
- Grants officer
- Identify retirees in county with professional training to recruit as volunteers
- Support job retraining at VGCC
- Support VGCC 100%; all aspects of community college success; strengthen interaction between county and CC system
- IT director and support staff
- Grant writer (contract? Part-time?)
- Qualified teachers

Environmental Resources

- Water!
- Water rights!
- Recruit and retain quality staff
- Staff training
- Enhanced/improved local regulations on protecting natural resources
- Make sure properties vacant are not contaminated
- Zoning issues on clearing areas near lakes
- Support VGCC 100%
- Weed control on lake
- Update land development regulations
- Consider preserving natural areas as green space; reduce natural hazards
- Local citizens group to work on land development issues
- Replacement crops/industry for tobacco crops for farmers
- Conservation of water is vital to everyone
- Local citizens group to work on growth management to protect natural resources
- Increase water resources due to population growth and water shortage
- Promote county as sporting destination and promote agri-tourism
- Coordinate with neighbors on protecting natural resources (regional effort)
- Potential for additional outside water resources
- High gas prices and heating fuel prices

Growth and Community Development

- More shopping opportunities (strip mall, Wal Mart)
- High density development on lake
- Workforce housing needed
- Housing – impact fees
- Putting in natural gas lines
- Economic growth/development
- Affordable housing
- Increase services in lake areas
- Education scores
- Local growth management program for lake area, whole county
- Local citizen's group to work with planning department on growth management
- Widen 158 in county from I-85 to I-95
- Zoning in high growth areas and industrial corridors
- Capitalize on Warren County's unique niche (determine what that is)
- Business revitalization
- Transportation
- Downtown revitalization (Norlina & Warrenton)
- Landscaping downtown and courthouse square
- Attract new industries by feeding off of adjoining counties' success
- County-wide municipal sewage (not feasible now)
- Coordinate with local COG on programs to promote growth and community development
- How county can benefit from Roanoke Rapids Randy Parton theater
- Widen 158 bypass into Roanoke Rapids (I-85 to I-95)
- More state/federal grant funds to supplement county efforts
- Promote bike/hiking trails; make them safe!
- Promote Rails-to-Trails program
- Utilize the retirees expertise base in Eastern Warren County

Education

- Pay (pray) for new high school(s)
- Improve test scores
- Improved pay for teachers and Sheriff's Department
- Safer schools
- Technology is good, but remember the positive and negative sides. Acknowledge what it is and is not.
- Better working relationship with school board and superintendent with BOC
- Lower drop out rate
- Doing a good job but needs improvement
- Parenting classes mandatory for criminals (recognize they are a client group)
- More on-line classes for lifelong learning
- Educational incentives and benefits for county employees
- Stronger support for vocational departments in schools
- Require parent/community involvement in schools
- Accelerated programs within schools
- Steer students to higher education

Key Relationships

- Continue to improve
- Board and department heads; manager and staff
- Information sharing with other counties
- Involve larger number of volunteers
- Citizens group/advisory committee to coordinate with planning board/BOC/BOA on land development and to enhance communication
- Improve dissemination of information to public
- State/local/national government
- Continue to work with local government and building relationships
- Strengthen University presence and make VGCC attendance more accessible
- Use relationships already existing with state and federal representatives more effectively
- County government and nonprofits
- County and municipal governments
- Develop PIO responsibilities for each department to interface with public

Economic Health

- Jobs; good jobs and good pay
- Income producing work for farmers, unemployed mill workers, cottage industry, retraining
- Available continuing education locally
- Enhance tax base, thus lowering rate to promote industry recruitment and other development
- SCORE Team at VGCC
- Increase awareness in health care
- Community education about local health risks and indicators. Make it relevant.
- Interest rate
- Abandoned manufactured homes
- Economic health stats at birth
- Funds for K-12
- Technical training
- 21st Century classrooms
- Work on making one Warren County (not fragmented)
- Workforce training and development
- Improved/increased local businesses
- Citizen group County will support for development/growth
- Recapture some commercial to R-7; some commercialism on opposite side or road from residential, in a sub-division
- Oil prices
- Housing starts
- Students compete internationally via Internet
- Depressed economy
- Educate citizens and county employees to promote county when traveling or assisting visitors
- Partnerships with outside medical agencies to provide increased medical services to citizens

Quality of Life

- Health care (hospital) in local area
- Literacy issues, including computer literacy, for older citizens
- Improved EMS services
- Improved Public Safety county-wide
- Housing for low to moderate income
- Perception of lack of services county-wide
- Improve citizen wellness
- Cultural opportunities: music, art, shows
- Housing standards
- Land development regulations locally to protect property and manage growth
- APF or document to promote workforce housing (MPDU)
- Declining Medicaid and Medicare revenues; decrease in operating expenses
- Declining health related grant to counties
- Recreational events for county
- Affordable and decent housing
- Improving education choices and IT
- Fitness programs for all ages
- Increased youth funding
- Illegal immigration
- 911 calls may not get you the service needed quickly
- Sheriff coverage to areas outside Warrenton
- EMS not split between states; fire is
- Abandoned vehicles, homes, singlewide's (target areas)
- Signs: too many, ugly, abandoned
- Community actively involved in sheriff, fire, EMS
- Cell phone service (both incomplete coverage and risk of becoming a cell tower farm)
- Expose under-privileged youth to other cultures and interests
- Mandatory boat safety
- More presence of authorities on water; cooperate with Sheriff and NC Wildlife
- Lake fire boat; otherwise the tax base may burn down

Long list of possible major goals (not listed in order of priority)

- Develop local regulations to protect and manage environmental resources, maintain adequate public facilities, mandate percentage of workforce housing.
- Develop zoning regulations, particularly in the lake region
- Manage local water resources
- Develop protocols and process for dealing with contaminated or abandoned properties, particularly when considering purchase of the properties
- Encourage the successful transition of the agricultural economy away from tobacco
- Promote Warren county as a destination for agri-tourism and sporting tourism
- Consider the county government's conservation and "green-friendly" practices to serve a model for whole community
- Get DOT's attention for hwy.158 expansion & railroad development
- Convene a multi-jurisdictional comprehensive assessment to strengthen the public safety response in the lake region
- Consider options to better identify and use volunteers in county departments and on boards or commissions
- Conduct overall Human Resources assessment to consider issues such as updating and expanding HR policies and benefits, 401 K match, health insurance benefits for staff and retirees, tuition reimbursement to encourage staff development, recruitment and retention of employees, adding staff to HR department
- Build in planning and budget for employee training for all departments throughout tenure, not just for new employees
- Create a employee wellness program
- Provide creative support to encourage teacher retention
- Expand Information Technology capacity and support services
- Expand grant writing and administration capacity
- Engage in succession planning for staff and elected officials
- Create more shopping and business opportunities
- Extend natural gas lines
- Prioritize development of workforce housing
- Build or expand relationships for economic development purposes
- Identify attributes of living in Warren County, and develop strategies to promote it to others
- Promote educational opportunities for all residents of Warren County; support a variety of lifelong learning options
- Nurture relationship between Board of Education and Board of Commissioners
- Recognize that "school success" = "county success"
- Increase the tax base, not tax rate
- Recognize the gap between natives/newcomers, haves and have nots
- Support workforce training and development
- Partner to strengthen access to medical care and mental health services
- Develop uniformity in access to public safety services across the county
- Consider needs of the aging population, particularly medical care and assisted living opportunities
- Deal with illegal immigration (especially criminals in the jail)
- Recognize the challenges of managing the increasing diversity in the county

Short list of major goals (BOC votes shown)

- (4 votes) Issues related to zoning or regulations for growth, development, and environmental protection; contaminated or abandoned properties; enforcement of regulations
- (4 votes) Make decision to proceed/not proceed with building projects; finish existing projects
- (3 votes) IT capacity and support
- (3 votes) Employee and citizen wellness
- (2 votes) County personnel issues: salaries, benefits, training, retirement, recruitment, retention, HR policy updating, retirees' benefits and insurance
- (2 votes) Increase tax base, not tax rate
- (1 vote) Enhancing or expanding County's strategies and tools for outreach to public (language, culture, media)
- (1 vote) Consider how to partner with nonprofits to meet county goals
- Convene new or participate in existing discussions related to
  - Health care services and accessibility
  - (1 vote) Diversity/immigration
  - Public safety uniformity and accessibility
  - Transition of economic base
  - Lifelong learning and educational opportunities
- Enhancing County's use of volunteers
- Water resource management
- Oversight/participation in HUB site development

COUNTY MANAGER'S STATUS REPORT OF COMMISSIONERS' 2007 SHORT LIST OF MAJOR GOALS

COUNTY MANAGER'S STATUS REPORT

SHORT LIST OF MAJOR GOALS
WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RETREAT
DECEMBER 12, 2007

1. Issues related to zoning or regulations for growth, development, and environmental protection; contaminated or abandoned properties; enforcement of regulations

   STATUS:

   Please see attached memorandum from Ken Krulik, Planning and Zoning Administrator, which gives an update on the County's Abandoned Manufactured Home Program and Potential Expansion of Zoning Countywide.

2. Make decision to proceed/not proceed with building projects; finish existing projects.

   STATUS:

   Since 2007, Warren County has:
   a) Constructed a new Library
   b) Renovated the former Armory Building as a Civic Center and EDC Offices
   c) Constructed an addition to the County Courthouse and renovated the former Tax Office Annex Building as a Judicial Office Building
   d) Renovated the Clerk of Court and Register of Deeds Offices in the Courthouse
   e) Renovated the former Library on Courthouse Square to house the Tax Office
   f) Renovated the former Mental Health Building to house the Finance Department, with additional accessibility renovations ongoing in the lower level of the building to make more accessible office space available for county offices
   g) Construction of an EMS Satellite Facility in the Afton Community is approximately 99% complete
   h) Construction is beginning on an EMS Satellite Facility off of Hwy 58/43 in the Grove Hill Community
   i) Begun renovations to the former Doctor's Office Building on the Health Department Campus to house County Administration
   j) Begun renovations to the EMS Base and Ambulance Shed

k) Begun renovations to the John Graham Gymnasium

3. Employee and citizen wellness

   STATUS:

   a) Employees are encouraged to participate in wellness initiatives offered through the group health insurance plan that encourage healthy living and also serves to reduce health insurance premiums
   b) Employees and citizens are encouraged to utilize the wellness center at the County Health Department
   c) Warren County has assumed operation of the Senior Center which offers expanded opportunities for wellness activities and provides access to fitness equipment for seniors
   d) The County Recreation Complex that was dedicated in October 2007 is well utilized by county employees and citizens

4. County personnel issues: salaries, benefits, training, retirement, recruitment, retention, HR policy updating, retirees' benefits and insurance

   STATUS:

   a) Due to the economic recession, the County has not been able to give pay increases to employees for the past three years
   b) The State has increased the county's share of employer's portion of employee retirement for the past two years further affecting the County's ability to reward employees with increases in salary and benefits
   c) The cost of employee group health insurance continues to rise annually which has necessitated changes in the benefits line-up for the past two years. The changes will place more burden on the employee to help pay for healthcare services.
   d) Recruitment and retention continue to be a challenge as we are not able to financially compete with neighboring and surrounding jurisdictions
   e) The HR policy manual has not been updated; however, it is on the list of policies to be revised and updated
   f) Training continues to be a challenge as departmental budgets for travel have been reduced annually over the past three years in an effort to reduce operating costs. However, the County continues to pay for employees to maintain and secure necessary certifications.

g) The County has implemented a Retiree Health Insurance policy that offers retiring employees the opportunity to participate in the county's group health plan. However, 100% of the cost to participate is borne by the employee.

5. Increase tax base, not tax rate

   STATUS:

   The Octennial Revaluation was conducted in 2009 at the beginning of the economic recession. After the revaluation was completed, the County opted to reduce structure values countywide by 15% in an effort to equalize real property values with the then current economy. Growth in the tax base has been minimal in the two years since the revaluation was completed and numerous property owners have been before the Board of Equalization and Review and the State Property Tax Commission requesting reductions in property valuations.

   The County continues to make efforts to promote economic development activity as our lack of an industrial and commercial tax base has placed the majority of the tax burden on the County's residential property owners. We are hopeful to turn this challenge around in the next few years.

   As our revenue stream continues to be compromised by the recession and more unfunded mandates are passed down from the State and Federal governments, it will become increasingly more difficult to hold the line on tax increases. In the long term, tax increases will be the better option as opposed to severely reducing fund balance to balance the General Fund budget.

6. Enhancing or expanding County's strategies and tools for outreach to the public (language, culture, media)

   STATUS:

   a) We are advertising public meetings and public hearings in English and Spanish for our federally funded housing and infrastructure projects.
   b) We have identified bilingual employees in our Health and Social Services Departments to aid in providing services to non-English speaking citizens.
   c) Law Enforcement has an arrangement in place to connect via telephone a non-English speaking caller to the E-911 Center

with an interpreter to aid in responding to emergency calls for assistance.

7. Consider how to partner with non-profits to meet county goals.

   STATUS:

   a) Warren County has an ongoing partnership with Warren Family Institute, a local non-profit, to develop a residential subdivision (Ephraim Place Subdivision) with 19 single-family housing units, utilizing a mix of Community Development Block Grant and USDA funding. The CEO of the Warren Family Institute is serving as the Project Administrator. The County's involvement in this project is scheduled to be completed in September 2011 with the construction of four of the 19 homes that will meet the benefits requirement of the Community Development Block Grant.
   b) Additional work needs to be done on this goal as we must find more economical and efficient ways to deliver and provide services to our citizens. Forming partnerships with local non-profits and other entities in and surrounding our county may be an option as we move forward into the future.

8. Convene new or participate in existing discussions related to:
   - Health care services and accessibility
   - Diversity/immigration
   - Public safety uniformity and accessibility
   - Transition of economic base
   - Lifelong learning and educational opportunities

   STATUS:

   a) No discussions have taken place regarding these issues and concerns.

9. Enhancing County's use of volunteers

   STATUS:

   a) The County has adopted a Volunteer Policy and encourages the use of volunteers and interns in County departments and agencies. We have numerous Boards and Commissions that require citizen volunteers to successfully operate. As operational costs continue to soar, volunteers will continue to

play a major role in helping to maintain the County's current level of service provision.

10. Water resource management

STATUS:

a) As a partner in the Kerr-Lake Regional Water System, Warren County has adopted conservation and water use policies as required by federal and state legislation to protect our drinking water source.
b) We strive to be good stewards of our water resources including Lake Gaston that provides over 50% of our County's assessed property valuation.
c) The County has annually funded the requested allocation from the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council to help treat noxious weeds in Lake Gaston.

11. Oversight/participation in HUB site development

STATUS:

a) Warren County is one of the four counties: Vance, Warren, Granville, and Franklin that have entered into an Interlocal Agreement to develop industrial sites in the Triangle North Regional Economic Development Project.
b) Our Triangle North Warren site has the capability of expanding to 1,000+ acres, which would potentially be the largest industrial site in the State.
c) A non-profit was established to provide oversight, management and direction for the project. The non-profit also serves as the marketing arm for all of the Triangle North sites.
d) Due to the ongoing vacancy in the EDC Director position, Warren County has not been able to independently market and promote our site or to make necessary infrastructure improvements to enhance our site's marketability.
e) We are moving forward to make critical repairs to our Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant that would provide wastewater treatment for our Triangle North site.

Planning/Zoning and Code Enforcement Department
542 West Ridgeway Street
Warrenton, NC 27589
(PH) 252-257-7027 (FX) 252-257-1083

To: **Warren County Board of Commissioners and County Manager**
From: **Ken Krulik, AICP CZO - Planning and Zoning Administrator**
Date: **March 17, 2011**
Re: **Summary on County Abandoned Manufactured Home Program (AMHP) and Potential Expansion of Zoning Countywide.**

Potential Zoning Expansion:

As of the March 14, 2011 Board of Commissioners meeting, potential expansion of zoning in the County is pending. The four options before the Board are:

- ***Option 1*** - Maintain the current zoned areas/boundaries of Kerr Lake and Lake Gaston.
- ***Option 2*** - Proposed corridor zoning per the Board of Commissioners.
- ***Option 3*** - Proposed phased zoning to include the areas north of 158 and Warrenton Road, joining the lake areas and the gap between the ETJ's of Warrenton and Norlina **(Recommended from the Citizens Advisory Council-Land Use and staff-provides fair administration of zoning).**
- ***Option 4*** – Proposed countywide zoning to encompass all un-zoned areas (Town of Macon and Haliwa Saponi Tribal Community to adopt an agreement to either administer their own zoning or have the County administer zoning for their respective boundaries).

If the options above are chosen, two more subsequent public hearings would be required (one for the ordinance and one for the map) All necessary work to create the revised document and map have been completed, current department resources are in place to handle the administration of the ordinance without extra costs. Expenses would be incurred for advertising the public hearings and notices being mailed to property owners living outside of Warren County. In development of this project, five public information meetings were held in November and December 2010 to inform residents. The Citizen's Advisory Council-Land Use worked with staff from June 2008 (when appointed) to July 2010 (monthly meetings, extra work sessions) to complete the proposed draft ordinance/map. The draft ordinance/map provides a more current, user friendly document. It expands opportunities for property owners and it gives the County a means to manage development while protecting residents from negative land use impacts.

Abandoned Manufactured home Program (AMHP):

In February 2010 Warren County's AMHP started through a grant with the State's Solid Waste Trust Fund, this grant provides $40,000 to the County in an effort to deconstruct and dispose of abandoned manufactured homes. As of March 17, 2011 there are 55 identified units as abandoned and notices sent to the property owners.

Of the 55 units, 11 have been either deconstructed or are in the process of deconstruction through the County's contractors. The remaining 14 have either been removed by the owner or set-up for use. This leaves 30 units (complaints received or field verified, in addition to those identified as abandoned in the County's Housing Survey) for follow up with verification as being abandoned and abated. Of the $40,000 in the grant, $2,500.00 went to administration of the program with $37,500 for deconstruction of units (price of $1485.00 per unit was established through a bid process). As of March 17, 2011 there has been $13,124.73 paid to the contractors from the grant, which leaves $24,375.27 available. There has been $2,744.55 in permits and tipping fees collected and the contractors have reclaimed an additional $1,746.42 in recyclable materials sold.

WARREN COUNTY MISSION STATEMENT

Mission Statement

"The mission of the Warren County Board of Commissioners is to provide leadership and support for an effective county government that seeks to enhance the quality of life for the people of Warren County."

This is the current Mission Statement for Warren County Government as adopted by the Warren County Board of Commissioners several years ago. It is presented for the Board's review to affirm or revise as it sees fit.

NOTES: