

February 25, 2014

The Carroll County Board of Supervisors held a meeting on, February 25, 2014 in the Board Meeting Room of the Carroll County Governmental Center.

Present were: David V. Hutchins  
W.S. "Sam" Dickson  
Dr. Tom Littrell  
Joshua A. Hendrick  
Phil D. McCraw  
Bob Martin  
Gary Larrowe, County Administrator  
Nikki Cannon, Asst. County Administrator

Mr. Hutchins called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. He told that we are here to listen to a presentation of a feasibility study that we had asked for some months back.

Mr. Dickson led in invocation and pledge.

Mr. Hutchins told that he has had a request and would like to see if it is okay with the Board. He told that Dr. Littrell has asked that we add one item to the agenda which is an appointment or replacement from Pipers Gap to the Recreation Commission.

Dr. Littrell told that there has been a vacancy in the Recreation Commission from the Pipers Gap District for a two year appointment ending December 31, 2015 and he would like to appoint Chris Goad who is a State Farm agent, lives on Breezy Ridge Road and has two children who are heavily involved in recreation for the last several years and he thinks he would make an excellent member of that committee.

Mr. McCraw seconded the motion.

VOTES

Mr. Hendrick	Yes
Mr. McCraw	Yes
Mr. Hutchins	Yes
Mr. Dickson	Yes
Dr. Littrell	Yes
Mr. Martin	Yes

Mr. Hutchins told that we are happy that you are here and we are excited about it and are looking forward to the presentation. He told that he would like to set the format, this is not a public hearing, we are here to listen to these who have spent a lot of time working with the county. He told that it is an informational session and once they have finished, in an orderly manner we will accept some questions from the audience and from the Board members. He told that he would also like to recognize Mr. Dickson and Mr. Hendrick who have worked as a subcommittee on this.

February 25, 2014

Mr. Dickson told that it took a little longer than we thought to get this but sometimes if you hurry things up it doesn't work out right. He told that he is glad we are at this point and he is very anxious for everyone to see what is possible and we will hopefully find a way to fund it and make it worthwhile. He told that he has looked at an old copy and he thinks it is going to be pleasing to the public.

Mr. Hendrick told that he would like to thank everyone for coming out and the public interest. He told that he is looking forward to seeing the comprehensive results.

Mr. Hutchins told that he would like to recognize Sam McClendon our Recreation Director and he has put a lot of hard work into this.

Mr. Jim Emr introduced himself and the others he brought with him. He thanked Gary, Nikki and Sam for their guidance through this process. He told that they were charged with putting together a feasibility study for an aquatics center in Carroll County and they had a market study done by Mr. Harrollson and out of that study came some project perimeters of what the facility might contain to make it viable and attractive and they used that information to evaluate the two sites, they developed concept plans for both sites and developed costs of construction, cost of operation and potential revenue and they are here tonight to present those findings. He told that he would get right into the meat of the matter, the bottom line it looks like the budget for the project is around \$3.6 million and there will be a lot of supporting data as we go through to explain what those things are. He told that they looked at how that might be financed either in 10 year or 20 year bond with rates from 4% to 6% so the longer term at the minimum rate would be \$261,000 annually or 6% would be \$309,000. He told that a shorter term of 10 years at 4% would be \$437,000 or 6% at 479,000. He told that they look at what the total annual cost would be and for years 2015 through 2019 the projected revenue would range from \$467,000 in year one to \$640,000 in year five. He told that the operating expenses are projected at \$590,000 to \$680,000 in 2019 and it would eventually level off with a higher rate of attendance. He told that the net operating loss could be various options with the financing and he went over what those are. He told that they have included some maintenance in those figures and in addition to that there might be some refurbishment of some of the components like slide repairs, etc. He told with the numbers aside for a moment, he will review what features were decided to make the facility successful.

Mr. Almy told that he is an aquatics designer and he has been working with Jim's firm for about 20 years and the only thing he does now is water parks and swimming pool designs. He told that he is going to show some of the elements that they are trying to include in the water park that they know will help it be a successful project. He reviewed the pieces that they would like to include.

Mr. Emr told that with the idea of what the park might contain they are now looking at the two sites. He told that the Ballpark Dr. site is at the County Park and the Woodlawn site is off of Carrollton Pike on Woodlawn Road. He told that looking at the sites the Ballpark Drive site has less difference in grade and may be easier to work with than the

February 25, 2014

Woodlawn Road site. He told that at the Woodlawn site they had to look at demolishing some of the building there. He told the Woodlawn site is about 19 acres and you would be looking at about 2.3 acres. He told the Ballpark Drive site is larger and they are looking at about 2 acres which is the location of the old pool. He showed diagrams of the sites. He told that these are conceptual at this point and they are very workable. He told with the Ball Park Drive site the cost would be a little over \$3 million and with the Woodlawn site there would be some cost consideration for demolition and it would run around \$3.5 million.

Mr. Harrollson told that he did the market and financial feasibility study for the project. He told that he over the past 33 years he has lost track of how many water parks he has done and several of them have been in Virginia. He told that a feasibility study is a market study which measures demand and a financial study which measures performance. He told that a water park has to be a balance and if you are going to have 1000 people in the park you need a certain amount of entertainment elements and you also need a parking lot, restrooms, etc. He told that if you put 1000 people out there and don't have shade they will go home. He told that they have found that the outer limits for a water park is probably 50 miles and in some cases it is less than that. He told that people within 5 miles are going to go more often. He told that they have not found that income is a factor that encourages or discourages people from attending. He showed the population table and reviewed some of the slides regarding income, ethnicity, etc. He told that weather is a very important factor and they gathered information from this area. He told that you would have very little competition and Randolph Park's participation is about 50,000 per year. He told that the peak month is usually July and there will be an average of 4900 people there and the peak day is Saturday with around 1200 people on that day. He told that he has been involved with projects that didn't have a feasibility study and end up with not enough parking spaces. He told the last section is the feasibility analysis. He told that he has used some of the projects that he has worked on before and they are all similar scale and makeup. He told that he compiled financial data on three parks to help them plan a budget for your park. He told that they all three have a positive income and we are not projecting that for your park and he will come back to that in a minute. He told that they worked with your staff, Gary, Nikki and Sam and they bounced some of this around and your staff told us that they would like to see what it looked like if they had a resident discount and it is pretty substantial. He told that the reason he points that out is because this park operates at a deficit and we have made one of the assumptions is Carroll County residents will get in for \$4.00 as opposed to anybody else who comes. He told that he wanted to point this out and from what we were told by your staff is let's look at this as a quality of life issue another words what good is it having a water park if our residents can't pay to get it and whether you adopt that in the long run is yours but it helps explain why. He reviewed slides on how they came up with their projections. He told that they have included a line item for heating water since we understand that it could be a problem here and if it turns out that it is not necessary then there can be some savings there.

Mr. Emr told that we are back to where we started and he went over the interest rates and financing. He told that in conclusion these are the two concept plans and what they

February 25, 2014

will require to build and the cost. He told that they have covered every base that they could and asked if there were any questions.

Mr. Hutchins told that if anyone from the public wants to speak they can come to the podium.

Ms. Georgette Lasorso told that she opposes this. She told that we have Lakeridge and the Wellness Center and we have Galax Parks and Rec and people have their own pools. She told that in 2009 there was a pool there and she was told that it was a very nice pool but she wasn't here. She told that it needed a heat pump or something and you didn't have the money for it and in 2011 it was torn down. She told that the pool is still there but it is filled in. She told that you couldn't keep Woodlawn open but that is the other place that this would be. She told that this is a depressed area and we have Wildwood sitting up there with no jobs what so ever. She told that we have the Industrial Park with beautiful buildings up there and she thinks all of them are vacant. She told that we need employment with decent salaries not minimum wage. She asked how long would this be open cause it wouldn't be in the winter.

Mr. Dickson asked how many days they projected the facility to be open.

Mr. Harrollson told that it would be open about 100 to 110 days. He told that when schools are back in session it doesn't make any sense to have the water park open because the primary market would be the students that are in school.

Mr. Carol Hill told that he loves the presentation, they did a great job but his question is where is the money coming from real estate taxes, taxes on food, how is this park going to be paid for and asked if the Board can answer that.

Mr. Hutchins replied at this time no. He told that we are just here to listen tonight.

Mr. Hill asked if we are going to have an open debate about this and are they going to be able to vote on it in November and let the people of Carroll County decide on it.

Mr. Hutchins told that would be the decision of the Board and right this minute he can't tell you what five others would do.

Mr. Hill told that he would hope you would allow the people of Carroll County vote with something with this much money and the possibility of taxes going up. He told that there is so many people in Carroll County on a fixed income retiring from the furniture factories and with inflation he wishes you would consider letting the people of Carroll County vote on this.

Ms. Lisa Delp thanked Mr. Harrollson and his group for doing the feasibility study and the only thing she would question is the Randolph Park because that is what started this mess. She told that it was because they had to drive 45 minutes or so one way to get a birthday party in the summer time and it does take a lot of money from the citizens who

February 25, 2014

enjoy water. She told that when you are looking at money there are several ways it could be funded because there are grants and she thinks the way this is proposed it is if we fund it all and with all of the extras. She told the other thing people should consider is there is a possibility of corporate sponsors and Verizon gives out money each year and US Cellular does as well. She told that we have a 33% obesity rate in Carroll County. She told that we have a sports program in Carroll County, little league and football and we don't even sponsor soccer. She told that she would challenge too when you are thinking about this to think about how many people have said there is nothing here. She told that you have to look at tourism and it is very rare that people come in and stay at a hotel and until we get something that will attract big businesses to come here we are not going to survive. She told to look at FDR who used the Parkway to turn around depression but her biggest question is can we consider corporate sponsorships and grants and possibly take away some of the fluff.

Ms. Judy Turman told that she lives in Laurel Fork. She told that she was born in Williamsburg and it is a big tourist town with Bush Gardens and Williamsburg and Water Country. She told that she is really opposed to this project because it is self serving to a small minority of this county and it is a lot of money. She told that we have already filled in one swimming pool and businesses suffer here because we don't have the density and population. She told that this is not going to bring people in from the outside and people that stop off of 77 are not going to use this water park. She told that she knows personally of Olde Mill Golf Courses struggles because they can't get people to play on it or people up here can't afford to play golf. She told that we have plenty of water in Carroll County and there is creeks and streams and ponds and places to play. She told that we have plenty of yards and can have birthday parties in our back yards they don't have to be at a water park. She told that she has 10 grandchildren and she feels like this money could be used to entice businesses come in. She told that water parks are not a bad thing she has just never seen one be successful. She asked how come the pool was filled in. She told that she thinks it is the same issue that will happen with this and to make it a go you will have to charge \$25 to \$30 a person.

Ms. Clarissa Chappell asked if they have considered an enclosed water park that could operate year round. She told that it was her son's 15<sup>th</sup> birthday and they had looked at the water park in Charlotte that has the motel and it was completely booked so they went to Myrtle Beach and she could have spent that money here. She told that she has two children one is almost 2 and the other is 15 so it is hard to find something that they both can do. She told that she can't swim so going to the river, she doesn't trust taking her children and risk them dying because there is no life guards and she can't save them. She told that she is all for it, anything for our children and hopefully it will bring jobs.

Mr. Martin told that you mentioned Montgomery County are you talking about the aquatics center there.

Mr. Harrollson told that they were talking about Montgomery County Maryland.

February 25, 2014

Mr. Larrowe told that the one in Christiansburg is one of the comparables that was in the report.

Mr. Martin told that he doesn't guess it is feasible to do some kind of inflatable. He told that the center at Radford College is inflatable.

Dr. Littrell told that he is a little concerned about the projected attendance days and it was mentioned that it probably wouldn't be open when school is closed. He told that typically get out toward the end of May and go back in August so that is about 2 months or 75 days. He told that Galax is considering some changes in their school calendar and are condensing some of the summer days and spreading their vacation throughout the year. He told that he wondered if the 100 to 110 day operation is really a valid spread of time.

Mr. Harrollson told that it is typical. He told that some cases it would be less than 100 but its based on the school year and the weather.

Mr. Hendrick asked about the percentages of the radius from 0,5 to 15 and from his math the projected 76% of the attendance is coming from 15 to 20 miles and asked if that is normal. He told that he might drive 25 but he is not going to drive 50.

Mr. Harrollson told that they are basing it off the research they have done.

Mr. Hendrick asked if that is on existing water parks.

Mr. Harrollson replied yes.

Mr. Hendrick told named all of the places that you can be in 50 miles.

Mr. Harrollson told that more of the people are going to be 25 miles away more than 50 that is for sure. He told that they are trying to draw a reasonable outer limit to the market. He told that he has seen people where they have used studies with 75 or 100 and that is to far.

Mr. Hutchins asked if the population of the other test markets similar to our numbers.

Mr. Harrollson told the best example he can give is Randolph Park, they are very similar. He told that they are right at 50,000.

Mr. Dickson told that we are at the very beginning of this and we have a long ways to go. He told that he knows people will drive 38 miles because he has himself to Randolph Park. He told that he saw a lot of Carroll County people there and several from Galax. He told that it is going to take a lot of studying to figure out if we can afford it. He told that we have a pretty good drug problem and will this help it he doesn't know but he knows we need to look and see what we can do. He told that you only have one generation that you can help. He told that there are a lot of days that are longer and when

February 25, 2014

they get out of school at 3:00 they could still come and swim and market to what we have. He told he was glad you mentioned the heated pool. He told that the other pool didn't have that and our kids turned blue. He told that the reason the pool was closed, it leaked so bad and you couldn't heat it so no one came and he doesn't blame them. He told that they didn't want to see it closed but they couldn't afford to fix it. He told that he does like to idea of possibly putting it on the referendum but he doesn't know if that is possible. He told that he doesn't think everything we do needs to go to a referendum. He told that is where we are and pray for us that we will make the right decision.

Mr. Martin told that he is sort of with Sam and he doesn't know if we can afford a Cadillac plan but could something like this be developed in stages.

Mr. Harrollson told that ordinarily he would say yes this is the case where you may be running the risk of if you do much less than what we have recommended you don't have enough to achieve your objectives and you end up in worse shape.

Ms. Delp asked if there is any way in the feasibility study to measure the trickledown effect like for people getting sunscreen.

Mr. Harrollson told that you are talking about an impact study, they did not do one they were not asked to but there is some of that if people drive from the other reaches of the market area.

Ms. Chappell told that you said residents would have a discount and it would be \$4.99.

Mr. Hutchins told that is not a fact, that was one of those assumptions to use as a basis for the calculations. He told that it could be \$9.95 or \$7 or \$6 or \$2.

Ms. Chappell told that she pays \$6 to go to Home Place in Dobson and they just have a rope to swing off of, a small slide and the diving boards so she is willing to pay more.

Mr. Hutchins told that he is sure there will be some consideration. He told that he thinks Galax has a plan for their residents.

Ms. Turman told that with the one in Dobson we would be taking people away from them and that sounds really good but it is like two beauty parlors right beside of each other, you are just cutting each other's throat. She told that we just don't have the density.

(Order)

## **ADJOURN**

Upon motion by Mr. Hendrick, seconded by Mr. McCraw and passing, the Board adjourned until March 10, 2014.

February 25, 2014

VOTES

Mr. Hendrick	Yes
Mr. McCraw	Yes
Mr. Hutchins	Yes
Mr. Dickson	Yes
Dr. Littrell	Yes
Mr. Martin	Yes

(Order)

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Chairman

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Clerk