

MARLBORO COUNTY COUNCIL

PUBLIC HEARING

MARLBORO COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BUILDING

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2014

5:30 P.M.

CHAIRMAN	RON MUNNERLYN
VICE-CHAIR	DR. CAROLYN A. PRINCE
ADMINISTRATOR	JIM HAYNES
COUNTY ATTORNEY	HARRY EASTERLING, JR.

COUNCIL:

JASON STEEN,
RON MUNNERLYN,
DR. CAROLYN PRINCE,
STEVE BLACKMON, AND

WILLIE GLADDEN,
CORRIE H. PLATO,
KEN ALLEN,
ANTHONY WOODS *

* Absent

INVOCATION – Mr. Jason Steen

PUBLIC HEARING

ORDINANCE # 731 – AN ORDINANCE TO APPROVE THE LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN MARLBORO COUNTY AND CRANEMASTERS, INC. OF THE PROPERTY ADJACENT TO THE FARMER'S MARKET

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, Chairman, called the meeting to order and opened the Public Hearing. Mr. Munnerlyn stated that the public hearing was being held to discuss Ordinance # 731 – An Ordinance to approve the lease agreement between Marlboro County and Cranemasters, Inc. of the property adjacent to the farmer's market. He stated that this matter had been discussed at several prior meetings. He stated that Council members had before them a copy of the map of the property being considered for lease as well as a map with slight modification of the property to include a portion of the railroad to be included in the lease. Mr. Munnerlyn recognized Mr. Jim Haynes, County Administrator, to make further comments on why this public hearing is being held.

Mr. Haynes stated that public hearing is to receive public comments as to whether Council should enter into a lease agreement with a company who would like to bring a business here. He stated that the question before Council is whether or not they wish to lease this property to a company that will be in the business of repairing railroads.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, Chairman, stated that he would like to have comments from Council members first on this and recognized Mr. Willie Gladden.

MR. WILLIE GLADDEN stated that when this Ordinance was first discussed and at the first reading, not much information was available and we were told that more information would be available prior to the second reading. He stated that when the second reading occurred, they still had many questions and no answers. Mr. Gladden stated that he visited the company's offices in Richmond, Virginia, and after talking with the personnel there he found out that the hours of operation would be from around 7:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. rather than all through the night. Although, the company will be on call 24 hours a day seven days a week, the hours of working at the location in Bennettsville will be set during the daytime. Mr. Gladden stated that he did not feel that the noise level would be a problem as most of the work would be done during the daytime hours. He stated that he understood from talking to the personnel in Richmond, Virginia, that no jobs would be created the first year, but that after the first year, the company would begin training and hiring. Mr. Gladden stated that after visiting the Richmond, Virginia, location, he found the place of business to be clean and thought that having the business in Marlboro County would be a good idea, but he certainly did not feel that way at first.

MR. KEN ALLEN stated that he had information that he needed now and wished to hear from the public to see how they felt.

MR. STEVE BLACKMON stated that he did not see a problem with the company leasing the property and thought it would be a good thing.

DR. CAROLYN PRINCE stated that she agreed that our county needed all jobs that we could get but that we just could not compete for high paying technology jobs. She stated that her concern was that she felt like the location was not good for Marlboro County with the location being between Jennings Street and Broad Street. Dr. Prince stated that the business will be hauling equipment more than 100' long and stated that that the legislature is now discussing transferring state owned road to counties. She stated that with the large equipment that will be using these roads, we will inherit the problems and the requirements for repaving and upkeep of the roads. Dr. Prince stated that she was concerned because the small industrial park in the Boro complex was not even shown to the company and she felt that would be a better location. She stated that she was also concerned that the company would be located so close to the farmer's market. She stated that she understood the company would not bring in any jobs for the first year and no taxes would be received by the county other than 25% of tax for the building. She stated that for the reasons stated above, she felt the company would be of no benefit for her district.

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MR. JASON STEEN stated that he was fine with the information provided.

MS. CORRIE PLATO stated that her only concern is the area which is congested with people and residents. She felt that the trucks would be too much for the area and the fact that no jobs being offered the first year, she did not feel that it would benefit the county.

MR. RON MUNNERLYN stated that he thought leasing the property to the company would be a good fit in what has been presented and especially with what Mr. Gladden has presented since his visit to the Richmond, Virginia, location. He stated that he did not feel that the noise level would be a problem and the highway department would have to approve the access of the large equipment on the state roads. He stated that the county railroad system has been a big part of the county's budget and that the county has used the proceeds generated by the railroad for general funding. Mr. Munnerlyn stated that this company would support the industries in the county that use the railroad and he thought it was a good idea to have the company here.

Mr. Munnerlyn stated that the citizens who signed up would be recognized and limited to three minutes to make comments. He asked the public speakers to try and limit their comments to that time frame.

Mr. Munnerlyn recognized the following citizens:

MR. RONNIE CROW – thanked Council for having the public meeting and commented on the beautiful chamber where council meetings are held. He stated that a lot had changed since the years ago when he served on County Council. He assured Dr. Carolyn Prince that traffic will not be a problem in the area. He stated that his first involvement with the proposed company was through his involvement with the County Transportation Committee. He stated that he asked a lot of questions and got answers that he needed. He stated that railroads are the future of Marlboro County and that Willamette (the paper company), Flakeboard and Mohawk Industries now use these railroads and the felt that he would be good to have a company to make repairs when needed. Mr. Crow stated that he understood that this would be a three million dollar investment for the city of Bennettsville and that this is the first investment of this kind since the City lost the Firestone plant. He stated that he would like a unanimous vote by council to lease this property to the company. He stated that it is worth what it will mean to Marlboro County in the future.

MR. MICHAEL O'TUEL – stated that he had no comments.

MR. JIMMY FRAZIER – stated that he owns property in the area. He stated that the trucks used by Sopakco he thought would be much more frequent on the highways than the company we are talking about. He stated that activity spawns activity and he felt that this new company would encourage new businesses in the area. He encouraged Council to welcome Cranemasters to our area.

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MR. KEN HARMON – stated that he was the Executive Director of the Bennettsville Downtown Development Association. He stated that the Executive Committee recently met to discuss the proposed railroad service company coming to Bennettsville and locating near the farmer's market. He stated that the property in question is located in the city limits of Bennettsville. He stated that the property is zoned U-1, industrial use by the city. He stated that the procedure for any business or industry locating in the city limits were required to submit plans for approval to the City Planning Department and go forward with applying for all needed utilities and purchase the business license. He stated that buffers including landscaping and/or fencing would be required.

MR. CALVIN HICKS – stated that all of his questions had been answered.

MR. FRANKIE FRAZIER – stated that he was the son of Jimmy Frazier and business owner in Marlboro County. He stated he would hope that Council would consider voting unanimously on approving the lease to the railroad company. He also thanked Mr. Willie Gladden for going to Virginia to get answers that he felt they needed. He stated that it took a fine quality of a man to go that far to get answers he needed in order to make a decision like this and he was appreciative.

MR. KEN STROMAN – stated that all of his questions had been answered.

MR. JOHN PEARCE – stated that he understood that the visual aspect was a concern to some for the residents and tourists and stated that council should consider including in the lease agreement language about landscaping and fencing for visual purposes.

The Public Hearing was closed due to no further comments.

Mr. Ron Munnerlyn, Chairman, stated that no vote would take place by Council until tomorrow night, November 18th, at the regular scheduled Council meeting.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS

No items were heard.

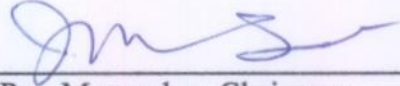
ADJOURN

Motion made by Mr. Steve Blackmon, seconded by Mr. Willie Gladden, to adjourn the meeting. Vote in favor. Unanimous. Motion carried.

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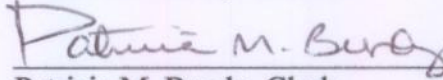
The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:50 p.m.

(SEAL)



J. Ron Munnerlyn, Chairman
Marlboro County Council

ATTEST:



Patricia M. Bundy, Clerk
Marlboro County Council

Adopted: December 9, 2014