

**CLAY COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting**  
**Tuesday, September 22, 2009**  
**Community Meeting Room, Clay County Health Department**  
**12:00-1:30 PM**

**Attendance:** Gail Criss, Chair; Ron Guggisberg, Tanya Long, Dennis Myers, Harrell Moore, Keith Nuckolls, Ed Roach, Elizabeth Rybicki; Kristy Carter, NC Division of Community Assistance

**Members Absent:** Joe Davenport, Harry Jarrett, Frank Leatherwood

**Guests:** Vickey Ansley, Director, Child Care Resource and Referral, Southwestern Child Development Commission; Andrew Jones, Director, Clay County Recreation Parks

**I. Welcome, Announcements, and Minutes:**

Gail welcomed committee members and asked them to review the minutes. No changes were noted.

Kristy provided the following announcement:

- Circulated a “Community Meeting Attendance Sheet” to indicate which community meetings committee members can attend.
- Distributed posters and other information about the community meetings and asked people to distribute.
- Let us know if you have questions about your small groups—these need to be done by the end of October.
- The survey is live—take it and encourage others to do the same.

**II. Guest Speaker One: Vickey Ansley, Director, Child Care Resource and Referral, Southwestern Child Development Commission:** Ms. Ansley provided the group with an overview of the status of childcare (birth – pre-K) in Clay County. Highlights from her talk include:

- There are five licensed child care facilities in Clay County. Each facility has a star rating issued by the state—the rating program is voluntary. The ratings are based on education of staff, interactions with children, and environments. Independent people evaluate the facilities before ratings are given.
- Clay County does not have religiously exempt childcare facilities. These facilities are not required to display a license.
- According to the data available, Clay County does not have a shortage of child care slots, but the slots may be unaffordable, and there may be a shortage of infant slots. According Ms. Ansley’s report, “adequate capacity is defined as slots for 50% of population under 5 years of age.”

Ms. Ansley also provided a report titled, "Clay County Early Care & Education Report: September 2009." This report is available on the website. The report provides a good overview of costs, subsidies, and capacity. Other highlights include:

- Income guidelines for subsidized child care: Families of three with an income of \$37,476 or less are eligible for child care subsidy.
- Infant care is expensive, higher than what most families can afford.

Potential Strategies:

- See pages 6 and 7 Ms. Ansley's report for complete list of strategies.
- Maximize funding streams: For example, get those who are eligible for head start in head start (and free up the subsidy that may be going to them for other families).
- Look for way to share expenses across child care centers

Other Highlights:

- All funding sources are being tapped (state and federal dollars). The state childcare dollars are always at risk.
- There are three types of funding available: Head Start (federal), More at 4 (state), and Pre-K (state).
- The chances of getting additional dollars are slim—NC has 30,000 families on the childcare subsidy waiting list.

**III. Guest Speaker Two: Andrew Jones, Director, Clay County Recreation Parks:** Mr. Jones shared the current Recreation Center challenges. A summary of Mr. Jones information is below:

- Space:
  - As soon as the Rec. Center opened, it wasn't big enough.
  - The youth and sport programs are full.
  - All age groups use the Center and its programs: youth, younger people, retirees, seniors, people in rehab.
  - There are lots of things that are not being done due to lack of space (festivals, events, etc.).
  - There are problems with scheduling due to space constraints.
- Space Expansion Options:
  - Land acquisition is the first step for expansion. The land needs to be acquired before anything else can be planned. There are grants available for land acquisition.
  - There is land near the current park that would be ideal for expansion. A Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant could be obtained.
  - The group acknowledge that, due to current economic constraints, now may not be the best time to purchase land. However, it is worth looking at options to be prepared when the timing is right.

- Might be good to explore a lease option for the adjacent land that is currently used as cropland.
- Explore the possibility of meeting some of the water/sewer facility needs by putting things in with the recreation expansion.
- Expansion Needs
  - The community wants a pool
  - There is a need for a parks and recreation master plan.
  - People want a skate park
  - People want more playground areas. There are playgrounds at school. Need more age specific play areas and some lower play elements.
  - If the adjoining property were obtained, it would be good to have an enclosed garage, a cloverleaf ball field with a concession stand in the middle, and a parking area (At the current parking area, cars drive over and bust water and sewer lines.)
  - Expanding to other areas of the county: one complex is ideal for programming and maintenance.
- Personnel and Staff: The Recreation Department lost 38% of its budget in the last budget year—all but one employee was laid off. With the cutback, there was a loss of programs (i.e. yoga) and a scale back in hours. Mr. Jones has two temporary employees funded through JobLink and the Southwestern Commission who help fill the staffing gaps. They also use inmates. People who use the center would like to see hours expanded and some (the evening basketball group) have made offers to help pay for staffing costs.
- Miscellaneous:
  - Spikebuck Mound: There was conversation about who owned the Mound. Kristy followed up with Paul Leek—the county owns the acre of property that contains the mound. According to the deed restrictions, nothing can be developed here.
  - The Chatuge Shores Golf Course is owned by the county. The Clay County Rural Development board oversees the Course. This board is appointed by the County Commissioners.
- Fees:
  - Right now, the facilities at the Rec. Center are free of charge. As recreation programs expand, the County may need to reconsider this decision. Kristy will poll other communities with a recreation center to see how they handle fees.
  - The Rec. Department has started charging for ball field use. The ball fields are pulling in out of town teams—this is a way to generate revenue.
- VFW Relationship
  - The County leases recreation land and facilities from the VFW.
  - This relationship is critical for keeping up with the growing recreation demand.

**Approved 10.27.09**

- The tennis courts are maintained by the County, but the County won't pay for improvements because the courts belong to the VFW.
- Decisions about the park do not remain with the local VFW, the national VFW has to be involved.
- The group suggested that a long-term lease with the VFW be explored so that the county could make improvements to the current facilities.

**IV. Next Meeting:** October 27, 2009--Transportation.