

Land sale, job expansion win OK from board

by Della Batts

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HALIFAX — Bringing hundreds of new jobs to the area, helping two companies open facilities and ensuring longtime business matures were the major steps taken at the Halifax County Board of Commissioners meeting on Monday.

The board members held public hearings on all three ideas before voting to approve each plan. Two of the proposals are part of the growth of Halifax County Industrial Park off Highway 903.

The first hearing concerned selling three acres in the park at \$10,000 an acre to a trucking company. Later in the meeting they passed a resolution for the conveyance.

A second hearing was held on the board's intentions to enter an economic development incentive contract with a manufacturing company.

County Attorney Bill McBlief outlined for commissioners a resolution of findings to support a decision to offer the incentives totaling more than \$1 million over the next five years. Those grants could start as early as 2010 and will be used to invest in the business. If all goes well, that company will also be located in the Industrial Park.

In return for the incentives, the company will construct a 325,000-square-foot facility over the next three years and make taxable investments of more than \$25 million over the next 10 years. The company intends to create at least 500 jobs over the next five years paying at or above median income.

Economic Development Director Cathy Scott said she expects an official public announcement about the new firm within the next few weeks. The funds for the incentives will come from the general fund.

Commissioners also held a hearing to determine the public's opinion on their intention to authorize an appropriation to Nash Brick Company of nearly \$114,000. The county will pay the company nearly \$23,000 each of the next five years, contingent upon retention of 90 percent of their workers and maintenance of taxable investment in the county by the company.

Nash Brick is one of the oldest businesses in the county, boasting more than 100 years of service. It employs 36 people and has taxable investments of more than \$4 million. The money would aid in Nash Brick's operations and growth.

Scott reported applications for the Halifax Corporate Park are being prepared for submission to the North Carolina Rural Center, the Economic Development Administration (EDA) and the N.C. Department of Commerce. Pre-applications conferences are scheduled and an application has been submitted to Golden Leaf through the Community Assistance Initiative for interior road preparation and site prep.

Foam and Steel Technology Associates (FASTA) Inc., the new company moving into the Littleton Industrial building, is still in motion. Scott said Halifax County's portion and the Littleton storm water and pavement improvements are complete.

Economic development is still working on finalizing the purchase of a former wood product sites near Enfield and Halifax is still at the top of the list for aa aerospace related project, Scott told the board. A proposal has also been submitted for a 25-acre site for a five mega watt solar production facility.