

Carroll County Lands and Annex Subcommittee

Date: December 12 2023
Location: Carroll County Annex
Time: 3:00 pm
Present: Subcommittee Chairman Mark McConkey
Representative Richard Brown
Representative David Paige
Commissioner Bill Nelson
Mellisa Seamans, Executive Coordinator

Public: David Babson (Zoom)
Dallas Emery

MOTION: Approve September 22 2023 meeting minutes by Rep. Paige, 2nd Rep. Brown. Passed 3-0

Rep. Paige: The Committee toured Children Unlimited in Conway to learn how the center works, why it is sustainable, the layout. They have diversified revenue stream because they are a combination of childcare, family support, and clinical services. Their catchment area is as far as Concord and Western Maine. No Committee discussion about the County operating a childcare center but rather providing land/space and partnering with a childcare organization.

Rep. McConkey: Centers we have visited decreased enrollment due to staffing ratios. Single story centers are preferable.

Rep. Paige: Whoever we work with it should add childcare openings not just relocate current ones.

Rep. Brown: If people do not have childcare options they will not be able to work.

Mr. Emery: The County should not get rid of land; continue to farm it, harvest it.

Rep. McConkey: We don't have a current building at the County that will meet the standards for a childcare center. We could increase capacity of available childcare in the area, it's a legitimate conversation. We need to get off the pot and stop talking about the same thing. Water and sewer would be an expense to the developer for housing. We have a sewer system - what grant would replace what we have? We waited two years on the water study to tell us we are at capacity. People in the village should put in their own water supply then we could use the capacity here. There hasn't been the energy from the Commissioners to do that. The rates haven't been changed in forever. Nearsighted when the new nursing home was built we never added a mechanical room, laundry, etc.

Rep. Brown: The Commissioners have a plan for the Annex that the Delegation is generally in favor of. But there are 900 acres of land that could support childcare and housing with continued farming and forestry. The portion we would look at for childcare would not be prime farmland. Same with housing. There is a great shortfall of childcare in the State.

Rep. Paige: Most centers have a 40+ waiting list which means parents not in the workforce.
Ultimately it is up to the Commissioners what use of land moves forward.

Rep. Brown: Thank you to Comm'r Nelson for being involved. Next will be feedback from the citizens.

Rep. McConkey: Hoop house out there we are not using. Inmates no longer "work the farm".

Rep. Paige: Is the Commission as a whole interested in continuing to pursue this?

Comm'r Nelson: I believe they are

Rep. McConkey: The feds are swimming in money they can't give away for water system improvements. The problem is we can't get anyone here to think forward.

We found out today we have 20% unassigned fund balance which is too much. Why don't the Commissioners consider moving more of that to the capital reserve fund.

Waiting for an answer to the question – when the new nursing home was built, did we keep the water capacity for the Annex?

Comm'r Nelson: Possibility of grants for installation of solar on the Annex roof. Suggest chicken farming to provide food for nursing home.

UNH Food Access presentation held at Annex recently. Interest in commercial kitchen, incubator for farming, use of land

Action

- Community Forums
 - Address misconceptions
- Brown - Digitize County Maps – Progress – Wendy Scribner
- McConkey – Will reach out to NH DES to see if there are technical grants to study County sewer system
- Survey of County Employees – work on this at next meeting
- McConkey – Contact Shawn Jasper re: relocating blueberry bushes
- Paige – List of all daycare agencies and capacity in the County
- Mellisa – send food access survey to committee members; invite the group to next Lands meeting

Minutes approved on _____

Rep. Mark McConkey, Committee Chairman