

# Carter County Commission



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## Minutes of:

### Buildings & Grounds Committee Zoom Meeting

### Special Called Meeting

August 25, 2020 5:00 PM

#### Members:

Chairman Austin Jaynes - present  
Robert Acuff - present  
Mike Hill - present  
Brad Johnson - present

Ginger Holdren - present  
Randall Jenkins - present  
Sonja Culler in for Ray Lyons  
Robin McKamey - present

#### I. Call to Order

The Building & Grounds Committee was called to order by Chairman Austin Jaynes at 5:00 pm.

#### II. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made to approve the agenda by Mike Hill, second by Robin McKamey. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### III. Public Comments

None

#### IV. New Business

##### Purchase of Carter at Main and the adjoining land

Chairman Jaynes informed the committee that he has had a conversation with Ms. Whitehead owner of the Carter at Main and the adjacent property. She informed Chairman Jaynes that she has had an offer on the land portion of the property. She stated that if the county were interested in purchasing the entire property (land and building) she would hold off the potential buyer until the committee could discuss.

Ms. Culler asked how big the property was. Attorney Hardin stated that the tax records show a total of 3.3 acres. Carter at Main sits on a 1-acre tract and the adjacent land is 2.3 acres. He stated that the tax value of the building is \$460,000 and the land is \$82,500, the total tax value is about \$542,100, but this is not fair market value. Mr. Jenkins asked how much the county would be able to offer. Attorney Hardin stated that the offer could not exceed 5% above the fair market value. Mr. Jenkins asked Chairman Jaynes what Ms. Whitehead wanted for the property. Chairman Jaynes stated that she informed him she would not take less than \$1.3 million for both the land and the house.

Patty Woodby asked if there was a federal tax lien on the property. Attorney Hardin informed the committee that there was a federal lien on the property in the past but did not know if there was one at present. There are a couple of liens and mortgages on it. He informed the committee that he would do a full title search if the committee decided that is what they wanted to do.

Mr. Johnson asked if it was on the National Historical Register? Chairman Jaynes stated that he did not know but it being in the Historical District of downtown it probably was. Mr. Johnson stated that if it is then there would be stipulations on what the county could do with the property. Also, the assessed price compared to the asking price is out of line. Mr. Johnson also reminded the committee that the Workforce Development Property is in need of work and the

money that would be used to purchase this property would be better spent on the property the county already owns and would be income for the county with leases.

Mark Tester asked if Ms. Whitehead would be willing to sell the 2.3 acres of land without the 1 acre and house? Chairman Jaynes told the committee that she stated that she would not sell to the county separately.

Chairman Jaynes reminded the committee that the county has the money from the state that was the Covid money that is unrestricted and must be spent by June 2021. If this could be used for the purchase and other projects such as the radio towers could be bonded if needed. Mr. Johnson suggested that if we are going to use the Covid money it should be used on the Workforce Development buildings that way we have a form of revenue.

Mr. Hill suggested that it is a lot like the Sabine Hill property. Also, does it feel like an attempt to run up the price with the threat of another buyer? Chairman Jaynes stated that he did not think so and that she stated that if the county did not buy it, she was going to sell to someone else.

Travis Hill stated that he agreed with Mike Hill and does not think this is a coincidence that she has a buyer now. Mike Hill stated that he did not think the county would want to get into historical restorations.

Chairman Jaynes asked the committee about moving the UT Extension Office over to that building. They expressed several months ago that they were interested in a commercial kitchen. There is one in that building. Mr. Jenkins stated that the upkeep would be expensive. He feels like the county is being rushed into making a decision.

Mr. Johnson asked the committee if anyone knew why it had been voted down 3 prior times in the full commission? Ms. Culler stated that she believes that it was just like now, no one knew what to do with it. You cannot tear it down. Ms. Holdren stated that she believed things should be kept downtown and together. She stressed that the Workforce Development should be a money maker and not hold county offices. Use it for education with Northeast State Community College, Carter County Schools technical training. She also reminded the committee about the Cowen property. These properties are more valuable to us because of the proximity to the courthouse.

Dr. Acuff asked Attorney Hardin if we move the UT Extension to Carter at Main would not the Folsom House have to be torn down as stipulated in the terms of the agreement with the Folsom Family? Attorney Hardin stated that it would be required to be torn down if the Extension office moves out. Travis Hill acknowledged that the Folsom House is a fire hazard because there is now exit upstairs. But could they not look at moving part of the office across the street and not using the upstairs.

Isaiah Grindstaff stated that they would need to have an appraisal before an offer could be made. He along with other members stated their desire to have an appraisal done. Ms. Holdren agreed with Mr. Grindstaff because of the connection to the current properties. She reminded the committee that if the county does not buy it then there can be no complaints as to what goes in there.

Mike Hill stated that he believes that the only way to proceed is a possible partnership with the Historical Society or Friend of Sycamore Shoals that could handle that building and turn it into another historical feature in the county.

A motion was made by Ginger Holdren, second by Robin McKamey to have the property appraised.

Mr. Johnson asked if the title search should be done at the same time.

Attorney Hardin stated that he would do a title search if that was the wish of the committee. The committee would have to get the appraisal and then meet again. Will Ms. Whitehead be willing to wait? Chairman Jaynes stated that he would contact her.

Dr. Acuff asked if Ms. Holdren and Ms. McKamey would entertain an amendment to their motion by adding that the Friends of Sycamore Shoals be contacted about this and see what the interest is.

Ms. Holdren and Ms. McKamey accept this amendment.

A motion has been made and amended to be, an appraisal is to be done and the Friends of Sycamore Shoals will be contacted about the property.

Roll Call:

Mike Hill – Yes

Ginger Holdren – Yes

Brad Johnson – No

Robin McKamey – Yes

Robert Acuff – Yes

Randall Jenkins – Yes

Austin Jaynes – Yes

Sonja Culler – No

The motion passes with 6 yes votes and 2 no votes.

A motion to adjourn was made by Sonja Culler, second by Ginger Holdren. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by

Gwen Crowe