



County Commissioners

Prepared Remarks Given by Joe Bryan, Chairman, Wake County Board of Commissioners for the Opening of the Wake County Justice Center, Monday, July 1, 2013 at 11 a.m.

Introduction

Thank you David. Good morning. It's great to be here today. Unfortunately the weather did not cooperate but am glad you were still able to make it here.

I would like to start by saying a special thank you to my friend and fellow board member Tony Gurley.

Commissioner Gurley was chair in 2005 when the Board first endorsed a 30-Year Justice Facilities Master Plan. He was also chair the following year when the Blue Ribbon Committee on the Future of Wake County recommended that the County develop a new Criminal Courthouse – that we are standing in front of today. He was also chair in 2010 when we broke ground on the Justice Center.

Commissioner Gurley. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the County.

I would also like to thank all of those who served as my fellow Commissioners since the project began. Your dedication to the people, is what we celebrate today.

A dedication that began a long time ago in Wake County's first courthouse back with the County's first public officials in the 1700's and a dedication that will be shared by future commissioners and future generations.

Today is a milestone in the great history of Wake County. It is made possible by, just as Albert Coates said at the dedication of our last courthouse, "the county commissioners who authorized this building, the architects who designed it, the workmen who built it, the officials who work in it, the people who are paying for it."

Thank you all.

Priorities

During the last 11 years, the membership of the Board of Commissioners has changed. However, I am very proud of the fact that some of our highest priorities have remained the same.

Two of these priorities being: Meeting the current needs while adequately planning for the future, and being good stewards of public resources.

Let me first speak about how we continually plan for the future, and how the Justice Center is part of that focus.

Planning

In 2006, when Commissioner Gurley was chair of the Board of Commissioners, the Blue Ribbon Committee on the Future of Wake County recommended that the County proceed with the development of a new criminal courthouse.

We created a steering committee to guide the implementation of the Justice Center. The steering committee members were identified by the County Manager in February of 2007 and met and worked for more than two years.

The schematic design was presented in March 2008. At that time we discussed making the building an environmentally mindful building, and wanted to minimize waste during construction.

By the time that the Justice Center was approved by Commissioners in 2009 there were also clear goals that the building should stay ahead of growth, improve security and be easy for the public to move through.

The building was also determined to be the last new facility in the Criminal Justice Facilities Master Plan. To get here, we had to bring down other buildings to make space, we built a parking deck and expanded our detention center.

With the culmination of this project, we are prepared to meet the Justice needs of our rapidly growing County for the next 50 years. I thank all of the Commissioners for their support of this work.

Through the years Commissioners have also been dedicated to ensuring that the County is a good steward of public resources.

Stewardship

From the initial planning, the Justice center was not only carefully planned for space and security, but also for construction timing. In January 2010, we were fortunate to be able to secure Limited Obligation Bonds at 4.07 percent interest to finance the Justice Center.

The County also took advantage of low market prices in 2010, saving \$22 million from the original construction estimate before we held the groundbreaking ceremony.

Today we are proud to open this building – your building – for you – the members of our community – ahead of schedule for a total construction cost of \$184 million. \$30 million under budget. I want us to pause and think about that number again. \$30 million.

That is excellent work. Everyone in Wake County should be proud of the opening of the Justice Center. It is a monumental achievement.

We are also proud to be good stewards of the environment.

Before the Justice Center could be built, the buildings and parking lot that were on this site had to come down. Nearly all of the materials from the dismantling were recycled.

From the dismantling through today, 97 percent of the project waste was recycled.

The Justice Center was designed to achieve certification by the U.S. Green Building Council. Soon, it will be evaluated and we believe it will receive a LEED silver rating.

LEED features in the building include energy efficient heating and cooling systems, water conservation and natural lighting systems. These systems will all save money over the life of the building. The project also incorporated regional materials to reduce transportation costs associated with construction.

The Justice Center contains 4,600 tons of steel, 1,873 tons of which are from within 500 miles of here.

Almost 50 percent of the materials used in the Justice Center were harvested or manufactured within that same radius. A significant percentage of the materials came from within North Carolina. Here is a small sampling.

- The structural steel was manufactured in Winston-Salem.
- The cherry pews in the courtrooms were harvested in North Carolina and fabricated in Clinton.
- The granite pavers along the exterior are from a quarry in Mount Airy.
- The escalators were fabricated in Sampson County and the stainless steel for the escalators was fabricated in Durham.
- The raw materials for the drywall were extracted from Charlotte and the drywall was manufactured in Mt. Holly.
- And, the precast concrete was manufactured at a plant less than an hour away.

Seventy-nine percent of the total construction contract dollars, about \$118 million went to companies within North Carolina. Nearly all of this - \$103 million – stayed within the North Carolina piedmont, stimulating the local and regional economy.

As we look at the exterior of the building, you can see the granite, concrete, glass and metal panels. These are just a few of the long lasting materials that were used to provide a timeless and durable building.

A building, that like priorities the Board has shared for so many years – meeting the current needs while adequately planning for the future, and being good stewards of public resources – will stand the test of time.

Building

When you walk through the doors, the beauty of the building is inspiring as are the words on the walls. At either entrance, you see the words of the North Carolina State Constitution.

On this side of the building, where many courts visitors will enter, it reads, “All courts shall be open... and right and justice shall be administered without favor, denial or delay.”

As you move into the center of the building, take a moment to look up. You will be in an atrium, filled with windows. They do not just let in natural light but show the transparency that should be the goal of government.

As thousands of people enter the building each day, they will be guided by electronic signage. Building directories, court dockets, special event information, all displayed electronically.

The services that receive the most visitors are on the lowest floors. Disposition Court – where many smaller legal matters are handled – is on the first floor; as is a Magistrates hearing room, the Register of Deeds, the Clerk of Court Criminal Division and the café. 17 elevators, two sets of escalators and a monumental staircase make it easy to move throughout the 11 floors of the building.

As we open the doors today, the Justice Center provides the capacity for the daily function of the criminal courts, public records and county administration. Bringing all of these services under one roof will make it easier for the public to receive the services that they need. It will also bring many of our public services together. The District Attorney, Public Defender and others will be closer to the clients they serve.

Future

As Abraham Lincoln said, “The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time.” This building will serve residents, businesses and others of this great county for many, days, weeks, months and years.

I am proud of the building, and for all that it will include. I am especially proud that it will not only meet the needs of Wake County today, but that it will continue to meet the needs for 50 years or more into the future.

It is the future that we leave our enduring mark on today. A future for Wake County that is bright and open like this building. Built to meet the needs of today and be well prepared for our children and grandchildren.

Closing

Before I go, I would like to offer one more word of thanks. To our staff. The County Manager and his diligent team. Also thanks go out to our Clerk to the Board and our County Attorney and all of the people from:

- Facilities Design and Construction;
 - Recently retired Phil Stout and the project staff:
 - Mark Forestieri, now FD & C Director,
 - Tim Ashby, and
 - Patrick McHugh,
- General Services Administration;
 - David Goodwin and his staff:
 - Kelli Braunbach,
 - Mark DuBois,
 - James Bailey, and
 - Tom Kuryla,
- Information Services;
- The Sheriff's Office;
- Budget and Finance; and
- Public Affairs

that have worked on this project and to prepare for this opening day.

And I leave you with these words, inscribed in the building at the Nash Square entrance. "All political power is vested in and derived from the people. All government of right originates from the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instated solely for the good of the whole."