PRESS RELEASE

Charles Parks, County Commissioner

As has been publicized, for some time now, I have wanted to have a series of Town Hall Meetings to receive input on local government issues from citizens in the various parts of our county. One of the places I selected for this town hall type meeting was Carolina Trace which was geographically convenient to one area of our community and had a nice meeting facility. After the initial advertisements were made of this public meeting, I became aware of the fact that there may be problems related to North Carolina's Open Meetings Law. In fact, the County Attorney gave me certain advice related to this issue and provided me with a method of addressing certain access issues if I decided to proceed with the meeting.

After reviewing the County Attorney's memo and realizing that people had already planned to attend, I decided it would be best to go ahead and have the meeting in that it was already scheduled and announced and to attempt to implement the necessary access safeguards to insure compliance. As it turned out, for a variety of reasons, despite my best efforts, problems did arise and for this I am sorry. However, a good faith attempt was made to comply with the Open Meetings Law and no Board action was taken at this meeting.

Finally, realizing, from experience, the difficulties in having a public meeting at a privately owned location, it is my intention to never call such a meeting again in the future. If my plan of holding geographically disbursed Town Hall Meetings is to continue, they will occur in publicly owned facilities.