

**Kings Mountain Not-So-Secret Meeting draws a packed house!!! Large Crowd not fooled by “too much information” tactics!!! Crowd overwhelmingly demands more meetings!! and MORE information in advance of the meetings!!! County’s Role in KM’s PROJECT SOUTH is Downplayed??? I predict a dark side of Corrupt Cleveland County Politics is involved!! Eye Witness Report, Conclusions and prediction by Robert A. Williams**

I arrived early for the Secret Meeting called by the City of Kings Mountain, The County Commissioners and the Town of Grover and found a crowd already lining up for seats at the large Conference room at the Patrick Center in Kings Mountain.

More chairs were brought in and there were still people standing around in the back. It turns out that my article, that was widely shared on Facebook, alerted large areas around Kings Mountain and even into South Carolina and they turned out in force. I liked the fact that independent minded people will turn out when they figure that government agencies are trying to pull one over on them.

As for the sponsors of the meeting, they must have anticipated that, once the word was out, lots of people would show. So, they developed a "strategy.". They would talk and talk and talk and talk about how good this project was, how everyone would benefit—a win-win-win for everybody. But a close listen to the details told the tale on the tale tellers.

The people in attendance included Betsy Wells, Mary Accor, Ronnie Whetstine, Jason Falls, me and many others. Many farmers in bib-overalls and ball caps. Environmental activists and people who just wanted to know what the heck was going on. The KM City Council and their lawyer Mickey Corry. Two groups of sewer system and waste water engineers. The KM Mayor, etc. Even some people from across the line in South Carolina were in attendance. It was a diverse crowd and it appeared everybody was very seriously concerned about their lack of advance information and the impact this would have on them.

After the meeting introductions were completed, handouts were passed around and various people took turns describing the project. Most of the topics are described below.

- The Project South would include sewer piping around Dixon School Road, down the I-85 Corridor from Mile Marker 8 down to the State Line, to the aged and outage prone Grover Sewage Treatment Plant (which would be abandoned and Grover's sewage would be pumped to the new state of the art Treatment Plant which is also not yet located. Sewage lines would follow the contours of various creeks but the actual routing has not been determined.

- “Project is a \$45 Million project that was funded by the

State for assistance in population growth and economic development value.” Note that this statement is part of the Project South Overview handout, but immediately raises questions. Like, how was this \$45 Million determined when so much of the project has yet be determined? Is it like the Cleveland County School Board Auditorium Project and that the money provided by the State was only about half of what the Auditorium bids turned out to be??? Now that CCS project is stalled because CCS doesn’t have the funds to even start the auditorium project. Keep that thought in mind for later.

Also, it was stated many times in the meeting that the Casino was NOT a part of this project. That the Casino sewage would be pumped North around Kings Mountain and to the existing KM Sewage system and all costs would be paid for by the Casino. That may be the stated intention originally developed before this Project South was conjured up. But now this plan seems so wasteful and the Project South details are so preliminary. I would certainly NOT be surprised to see the sewage service to the Casino slipped through the back-door politics going on and be included in this project at taxpayer’s expense.

A large amount of the meeting time was spent informing the public about the minute details of the sewer water treatment processes and equipment. Me, being a technical person, found this interesting. But I suspect nobody else in the room cared one whit about this kind of mumbo-jumbo. I came to this conclusion during the presentation, especially when they began to describe the materials used in the plant construction and the generation and then the disinfection of the microbiological “bugs” that digest the waste and then are discharged from the plant with the wastewater into a local stream at the rate of 4 million gallons per day. Later to be increased to 6 Million Gallons per day. Too much information I thought. And, nobody yet had the opportunity to ask questions, make comments or even give an opinion.

But things were warming up to what most people were concerned

about.

The discussion turned to rights of ways, easements and such and how much the Project would pay the land owners for those easements and rights of ways.

When the talk was that Kings Mountain would decide what they were going to pay the landowners, and take the landowners to court under "eminent domain" if they didn't voluntary take what was offered, I began to understand why the presentation was so long on superfluous details. The presenters were trying to run out the clock before answers to questions would have to happen. They did not succeed in running out the clock.

What was becoming obvious to me was that this was the old time "shuck and jive." The land developers, speculators and such were going to profit even more when the land they purchased before sewer was available would increase in value when tax dollars were used to put in sewer service to their property. And the landowners of the property where the miles of sewer lines pass thru their farms and along their creekbanks would have to give easements and rights of ways for those pipelines and see their property values go down. I expected those landowners were going to "howl" when they had their chance to speak. I was not disappointed. I further noted that the developers and speculators, like Eddie Holbrook, were unmistakably absent from this meeting. Apparently the "fix" is already in (as it always is in this kind of Cleveland County Wheeling and Dealing) and they didn't care to hear those folks getting screwed complain about it. And they did complain about it.

One landowner asked "when y'all come in to fix something on the pipeline and tear up my property, who is going to pay to fix it?"

Another said "Y'all are lying and I am trying to find the truth."

Another said "This is all about Kings Mountain making money. This is all lies."

A farmer stated "Farmers and other land use people don't want all this 'economic development.' Those in the ETJ have no representation on the Kings Mountain City Council. It's 'for us, but it's NOT for us.' There are no thoughts about farmers, the ones that feed us all."

One lady said, "Somebody wants money."

A man next to me said, "there is nobody here at this meeting that benefits by this project." Echoing my thoughts about Eddie Holbrook and his buddies.

When the meeting was drawing to a close the presenter asked if another meeting was needed. A man up front asks "Are you going to tell us about it next time?" The presenter asks for a show of hands and almost everyone in the audience, including me, raise their hands.

It remains to be seen if another meeting is called. If so, I will do my part in seeing that the meeting is NOT a secret.

The presenter stated KM would pay landowners for rights of Way and easements in a onetime payment arrived at by a formula that Kings Mountain had calculated. And "eminent domain" laws would be enforced if a landowner refused to accept the offer. My thought was that landowners did not have to give up their land to just whatever Kings Mountain says they will pay. The landowner can demand and get a fair market value price. Besides, "eminent domain" is NOT typically available for economic development purposes like the KM Project South presenter must think. Or maybe the eminent domain threat is just a bluff? We will see soon enough about that.

And, another thought is, this fair market price doesn't necessarily have to be a one time shot. The property owner that will lose property value because of a sewer line crossing

his property might be able to demand a fair share of the developers and speculator's profit when their land values go up because of the sewer availability that caused the farmers land value to go down. Wouldn't that be a "hoot?" When a developer and speculator like Eddie Holbrook have to pay a fair share to those he is more than willing to screw over if he gets a chance!!!

Yet another thought folks. **Where are the Cleveland County Commissioners in all this Kings Mountain sewer stuff?** Especially that part outside the City Limits of Kings Mountain. Is this the beginning of a COUNTY SEWER SYSTEM? Kind of like the County WATER system that used to be called the **County Sanitary District** that could have and should have been the precursor of a county-wide SEWER system as well as a county-wide water system.

My prediction is the Commissioners, led thru the nose by County Manager Brian Epley, are too corrupt to look out for the best interest or ALL of Cleveland County. My prediction is that everybody involved with this Project South knows already that this \$45 Million from the State is NOT enough to do what they eventually plan to do. So, when the \$45 million State Money runs out, the Taxpayers ALL OVER CLEVELAND COUNTY will pay the rest. Not just Kings Mountain taxpayers.

Folks, I agree with the farmers down and around Kings Mountain. This is all a planned scheme and a scam from the git-go.

Stay tuned folks. We will be watching this so-called Project South closely.

And, don't forget, money and corruption out-weigh freedom and justice in Cleveland County. Just like the cartoon shown below.

