

CC Commissioners giveaway \$3,540,000 on Project Sunrise!!! Very Likely a Communist China Owned Company!

*Tried to Keep it a Secret!!?? Eye Witness Report
and Conclusions by Robert A*

Editor's Note: Robert A has always considered the Cleveland County Economic Development Partnership nothing but a big scam on taxpayers' pocketbooks. It always seemed like tons of taxpayers' dollars would go into all these different secret projects and disappear without a trace. That whoever all these so-called "partners" were, would always get in big in, raking in the profits of the deal and the Commissioners would see to it that the county taxpayers were always the only ones putting up the money and taking the risks to finance the deals. This Project Sunrise, that was on the agenda of the August 2, 2023 Commissioner's Meeting, turned out to be just another case of the hogs feeding at the trough. With even more suspicious going-ons.

First, there was some yelling and screaming at a Commissioner's meeting regarding the Commissions NOT following proper protocols regarding explaining tax assessments and taxes.

Then, County Manager Brian Epley resigned earlier this year, taking some key staff members with him, to greener (maybe) and more sane positions in Burke County.

Then Commissioner Chairman Kevin Gordon gets himself put on administrative leave from his high-paying high-level job over

in the Gaston County government-resulting in his (forced?) resignation-that nobody is talking about.

Then, DSS Director Katie Swanson abruptly resigns recently on a very short notice to take a DSS job in Raleigh. (Some say it was a "passing the trash" kind of a deal.)

Then, the Tim Moore "scandal" hits in Raleigh and is now in Cleveland and Lincoln County (according to the Charlotte Observer). That is a story for another day.

Then, just a week or so ago, the longtime CC Economic Development Director, Kristin Reese, abruptly resigns with little to no notice. Telling the Shelby Star that she is now "going to be taking more naps." (Another story for another day.)

On top of all this, a Federal Lawsuit against Cleveland County for refusing to properly pay CC EMS personnel for their overtime hours is about to hit the Federal Courthouse in Asheville. Another story for another day.

As well as the animal rights folks continuously coming to commissioner's meetings and speaking out about the continuing disaster at the CC Animal Services.

All this a good indication of the general state of mismanagement all across the board within the Cleveland County Government. And not even counting the genuine and growing mess at the Cleveland County School Board under Chairman Robert Queen (and his Waterboys Joel Shores, Ron Humphries, Rodney Fitch, Greg Taylor and Walter Scott Spurling) and CCS Superintendent Stephen Fisher. And the Lawsuits against CCS and the CCS School Board. All ongoing as we speak and unfolding more every day.

Even the CC GOP is in general upheaval with Rogue Republicans Mr. and Mrs. Kevin Whisnant recently resigning (likely forced) from the CC GOP Executive Committee with others likely to follow. (It would be nice if Guy Smith, Dennis Bailey and numerous others would do the same.)

And, the never-ending mess at the Catawba Casino near Kings Mountain and the questionable and ILLEGAL payoffs to former Commissioner Eddie Holbrook and former County Manager David Dear. And so many others. Not even counting the potential for organized crime, no wonder that the Project Sunrise on the agenda for the August 1, 2023 Commissioner's meeting is just another screw-up??? Read on for what happened regarding Project Sunrise, Then, YOU decide.

When Robert A received the always last-minute Notice and Agenda for the August 1, 2023 Commissioners Meeting, the very first thing he noticed was the new restrictions the Cleveland County Commissioners were putting on the public to speak during both Citizen Recognition and Public Hearings. New restrictions that were not voted on by the Commissioners or input requested from the public, but put out by the Commissioners to unduly control and provide maximum inconvenience for the public just the same. Sneaky restriction such as having to sign-up at least 10 minutes before the meeting for Citizen Recognition. Having to sign up, at all, in advance of the meeting for Public Hearings. Robert A "smelled a RAT" and signed up to speak for BOTH Citizen Recognition AND the Public Hearing on Project Sunshine. even though not one word of advanced information on the Public Hearing of Project Sunrise was available to Robert A or to the public before the meeting actually started. This precautionary action turned out to be the 1,000% correct thing for Robert A to do. As it turned out, Robert A found what appeared to be a \$3,590,400 cash incentive giveaway by the Cleveland County Commissioners to what appears to be a Communist Chinese owned company. With other incentive giveaways being sought after. This is how it all came down.

Commissioner Chairman Kevin Gordon called on Deputy County Attorney Martha Thompson to present Project Sunrise to the Commissioners. The first thing Marth Thompson did was hand out a package of information to the Commissioners. Packets of

information NOT available to the public. Apparently, the Commissioners were kept in the dark too. Robert A figured this Project Sunrise had some shady stuff in it that was the reason, in some way, the Economic Development Director, Kristin Reese, had resigned. It is certain that the public will never know about that.

Then Attorney Martha Thompson, along with an outside real estate attorney (Jim Wrenn), puts out that this secret "international" company proposes to purchase land for \$22,500 per acre and build a factory in Cleveland County on a 107-acre county owned property that the county has owned since 2011. The company would manufacture composite external insulation products for the power transmission and distribution. This secret company would hire 134 employees over 5 years at an average salary of \$22 per hour. The County and the City of Shelby would split the incentive cost (\$3,590,400) previously noted for the purpose of clearing and grading this property.

At this point, Robert A did some quick and rough "ciphering." This secret company was to purchase around 100 acres at 22,000 per acre. This would amount to around \$2,200,000. Then the County and Shelby would give the company \$3,590,400 to clear and grade the property. Basically, after the secret company paid Cleveland County \$2,200,000 and Cleveland County paid the secret company \$3,590,400 for clearing and grading, the Cleveland County taxpayers would be "in the hole" for around \$1,390,400!! Was this a stupid and backwards deal or what?? We are selling land to this secret company and paying them \$1,390,400 to take it. No wonder Kristin Reese had resigned. These Commissioners; Kevin Gordon, Johnny Hutchins, Ronnie Whetstine, Deb Hardin and Doug Bridges would have to be MORONS amongst Morons to agree to such a stupid deal as this, was Robert A's first thoughts. Then, it was time for the Public Hearing and Robert A was the only person that had signed up to speak. So, Robert A immediately shared those same thoughts, calculations and conclusions (toned down just a little) with

the Commissioners.

Then, Commissioner Johnny Hutchins goes into this spiel that the county had owned this property for years and with the good jobs, property taxes and Shelby paying half and all, it should only take five or six years for the County to get that much money back. Then Commissioner Hutchins makes the motions to accept the deal as is and ALL the commissioners vote 5-0 to approve this crazy deal with this secret company with NO Questions asked.

Of course, Robert A was thinking, "if I were a duly elected Cleveland County Commissioner, there would have been NO WAY that I would have ever voted to approve such a nit-wit waste of \$1,390,400 in taxpayers hard earned money.

And, as usual, this was not over for Robert A. First, he wondered why the silly Cleveland County Commissioners had bought this piece of land that was so sorry it would take \$3,590,400 to clear and grade the property prior to it being suitable for use. Next, Robert A wondered, who would be the clearing and grading contractor that would probably end up with tons in cash profits after only having to clear and grade maybe 15 to 25 acres of the 107 acres to accommodate a manufacturing plant suitable for 134 employees?? Offices and parking included.

Then, Robert A did some research on who this secret company might be that was going under the Cleveland County name of Project Sunrise. So, he googled "composite insulation products for the power industry and distribution." Surfing around a bit and found the ideal fit. A company named SHEMAR seemed to fit all the descriptions and circumstances that were available. However, pinning down the headquarters for SHEMAR took a little more research. But not enough to hide from Robert A.

The headquarters of SHEMAR is located in the heart of the Jiangsu Province of the Peoples Republic of China. The Peoples Republic of China is Mainland China which is under the rule of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and considered by many to be

the most dangerous present-day foreign enemy of the United States of America.

And, these durn "fool" Cleveland County Commissioners, every damn one of them, have just most likely given aid and comfort (and \$1,390,400 in Cleveland County tax dollars) to our worst economic enemy in the whole wide world. And, they all never asked one single question in the process. Robert A, and everybody else in America with good sense would have rejected this deal with about two seconds of thought. Maybe only a half-second of thought. THOUGHT being the key word here.

Editor's Note: Wake up Cleveland County. Robert A needs some help cleaning up this mess called the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners. Robert A and two more like-minded citizens, elected to the CC Commissioner's Board in 2024, can put a stop, a cold and hard stop, to this kind of silly shenanigans from the present batch of foolish CC Commissioners. And reform the CCS School Board too. Stop corruption, eliminate waste, lower taxes and run off the incompetent in the process.

Stay Tuned Cleveland County, YOU Ain't seen nothing yet!!!

PS: By the way, Commissioner Johnny Hutchins, Kevin Gordon, Ronnie Whetstine, Deb Hardin and Doug Bridges the Project Sunshine's 134 jobs making \$22 per hour average as "good jobs." The average wage in Cleveland County was almost \$22 per hour three years ago. So, Commissioner Hutchins, et. al., these good paying jobs are really only AVERAGE paying jobs. Nice jobs for all are desired, And, that \$1,390,400 incentive y'all just wasted could have helped pay for better job training in Cleveland County so our Cleveland County workers could move up from average to those "good paying jobs" you mentioned.