

The Council of the City of Villa Rica met in a special dinner meeting with the Carroll County Commission on Monday, March 14, 2005, at Torline's Restaurant. Those present were Mayor J Collins, Councilmembers Perry Amidon, Verland Best, and Danny Carter; City Manager Bob Zellner, City Clerk Jane Chastain, and City Attorney David Mecklin; Carroll County Commission Chairman Robert Barr, Commissioners Trent North, Rusty Dean, Jimmy Godbee and Bill Head;. Councilmember Woody Holland was absent with notification. There were two other persons in attendance

Mayor Collins led in a blessing and after everyone had eaten, he opened the meeting for discussion.

Commission Chairman Barr commented on the success of a similar forum, a quarterly mayor's meeting, where attendees cover items of interest to the various agencies. Chairman Barr addressed the rate of growth in Villa Rica and Carroll County and encouraged the continued planning to meet those demands. He stated the importance of communication between agencies in the planning process.

Commissioner North called Villa Rica a "key component" in the success of Carroll County and offered any assistance he could provide. Commissioner Dean, whose constituency includes Villa Rica, agreed with Commissioner North. He called Villa Rica the "gateway to the County" pointing out that "everything important comes through Villa Rica" when coming into the County. Commissioner Dean said the two agencies should try to avoid duplication of effort on services. By working together, the agencies "could simplify each other's lives".

Commissioner Godbee agreed that cooperation is the only way to achieve the agencies goals. He said it is important to communicate and to stay in touch for the good of both agencies.

Commissioner Head, who reported he is in his second term, said he has learned one "cannot always do what you want to" as an elected official. Commissioner Head said he once resented another city agency "gobbling up the county" but now understands this issue. He commended Villa Rica for enforcing the Sign Ordinance, square footage requirements, and other important zoning and code issues. He added that cooperation between Villa Rica and Carroll County is vital.

Councilmember Best agreed that the issue is not "I" or "me" but "we". He suggested the two agencies can "take it forward step by step" and if one does not like what the other is doing, there can at least be an understanding of each other's positions. Councilmember Best cautioned that elected officials must vote using the head rather than the heart. This would allow the agencies to "get the right things done" for both the City and the County. Councilmember Best passed on some suggestions from his constituents that the County consider a North Annex in the Villa Rica area where citizens could conduct county business such a paying taxes and making tag purchases. Citizens would also like to see a Sheriff's Department precinct in this area. Councilmember Best said he

would like to have an open line of communication whereby suggestions from citizens could be passed between the agencies.

Councilmember Amidon said he sees the biggest problem to be communicating to the public. He stressed that the agencies must realize they represent a group, rather than individual pockets of people.

Councilmember Carter said he is relatively new to the area, having moved here only five years ago. He complimented both agencies for “going about it the right way” by having commissioned the study and design which, among other things, specified an Urban Growth Area for future consideration. Councilmember Carter stressed that if and when the design changes or needs to change, the two agencies must be able to communicate their positions to one another.

City Manager Zellner expressed his appreciation to both agencies for this exchange of good will. He pointed out that, in his experience elsewhere, this air of cooperation is not always present.

Mayor Collins thanked the County for laying the groundwork for the growth Villa Rica is experiencing. He encouraged the County to keep the Wolf Creek area a County system rather than let Douglas County provide services in Carroll County.

Chairman Barr agreed that, whether its two years or twenty years, water and sewer will be the issue. He said elected officials must devote a lot of attention to such services. This issue should also be raised in the public relations arena so that citizens will understand it. When asked about the time frame of the Water and Sewer Assessment Committee, Chairman Barr said he expects to have the committee’s findings within a couple of months. He encouraged the agencies to “speak with one voice” when it is time to approach the necessary State agencies for approval of whatever infrastructural implementations the committee recommends. Commissioner North agreed. He said the agencies should be prepared for when the committee presents a recommendation because there will be roles for each agency to play then. He encouraged everyone to begin now to take the necessary steps such as financial requirements, determining from where monies will be appropriated and other variables. He stressed the importance of continuing to work together as a body when the final recommendation is submitted.

Mr. Zellner pointed out that no matter how the issues of water and sewer were addressed, the Highway 61 Corridor in general must be addressed because that is where Villa Rica’s next growth will be. Councilmember Carter agreed, telling the Commissioners that “there will come a time when we will want to expand south” and expressed hope that the County would be understanding at that time. Commissioner Head said the County’s job is preparing for future generations with what is best for them. Councilmember Best said the City has some decisions to make in which it will be looking to the County officials for guidance on where to stop the southerly growth. He suggested the realistic possibility that the City of Carrollton will grow north to whatever point the City of Villa Rica stops. Knowing where to end the southern boundary will be important in determining where the City will put another sewer treatment plant.

The Council and Commission discussed the new Comprehensive Plans. Chairman Barr said the County's current Comp Plan is "a far better product" than what the County had. Chairman Barr, who is a former Villa Rica City Manager, told those present that Villa Rica was the first agency in the State to have a Comprehensive Plan. The agencies agreed the PlanningWorks design was a success, especially in regard to the Urban Growth Area on the Highway 61 Corridor.

Concluding, the agencies agreed on the need to continue open communications in order to be informed enough to speak with one voice to both the State and to constituents in order to show "why" and "where" for the various infrastructure needed. Chairman Barr related a definition of the word "consensus". He said a consensus is reached when everyone in the group can say "I can live with that...I would not die for it, but I can live with it."

Members of the two agencies agreed to continue working together for the benefit of their mutual area. The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

---

J Allen Collins - Mayor

---

Robert Barr – Commission Chair

ATTEST:

---

Bob Zellner – City Manager

---

Susan Mabry – Executive Assistant