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Elaney Katsafanas Hasselmann

Public Information and Communications Manager, City of Salisbury

City Hall, 217 South Main Street

Salisbury, North Carolina 28144

Work Phone: (704) 638-4460 / Cell Phone: (704)762-1008

Information: <http://www.salisburync.gov>

Work Email Contact: ehass@salisburync.gov

Salisbury Ready to Move Forward on Downtown Central School Office

Salisbury_North Carolina_June 28 – At the July 2 City Council meeting, the Salisbury City Council will review a proposed schedule and lease documents to partner with the Rowan Salisbury School System (RSSS) on building a downtown central school office. Proposed action for the meeting will be to set a public hearing for July 16 to hear from the community about this project.

Formerly, Rowan County had two separate school systems, a city school system and a county school system. In 1989, the two systems and their respective administrative units merged into one system. For the last 24 years the combined administrative units have not operated out of a combined central school office. During this period, funds have been expended to build new schools.

The new downtown facility would replace the currently occupied Long Street facility. The Long Street facility is crowded and suffers from unsafe conditions. These conditions include bowing floors, failing windows, deteriorating concrete and an inadequate server room.

The Rowan County Board of Commissioners approved funding for the downtown central school office and sent a funding commitment letter to the school system in February 2012. The school system then expended funds designing the facility and bidding the project. A local construction firm won the bid and was ready to construct the project. In February 2013, the Rowan County Board of Commissioners rescinded the funding for the project citing environmental concerns at the site. In April 2013, the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) provided a letter clearing the site for development and resolving all environmental concerns.



After the site was given the green light for development, School Board Chair Richard Miller and Salisbury Mayor Paul Woodson sent a letter to the Rowan County Board of Commissioners asking them to reinstate funding since the site had been cleared by NCDENR. Chairman of the Rowan County Board of Commissioners, Jim Sides, declined to reinstate funding.

The downtown central school office is part of a larger downtown public/private redevelopment project on the 300 block of South Main Street that includes the headquarters of Integro Technologies, which is currently under construction. Integro Technologies is making a \$3.2M investment in downtown Salisbury. The company has an average wage that exceeds \$70,000, which is nearly double the median household income in Salisbury, based on 2010 Census. The combined investment in the 300 Block of South Main Street will exceed \$12M and is part of a new South Main Corridor redevelopment initiative.

Since April, the City of Salisbury and the Rowan Salisbury School System have entered into a working partnership to move the project forward without Rowan County participation, in order to provide safe facilities for school system employees and complete the larger downtown redevelopment project.

The City of Salisbury has a long history of leading public/private redevelopment projects. Past projects include the redevelopment of Towne Mall adjacent to I-85 and several downtown projects, including the Plaza and Gateway buildings, Flowers Bakery, Easy Street and the Fisher Street entertainment district.

The City of Salisbury is an equal opportunity employer with over 180 different job classifications and more than 400 full time positions. For more information regarding the City of Salisbury and its services and departments, please visit us on the web at www.salisburync.gov. To receive updates regarding local initiatives, meetings, programs and events, please follow us on Twitter at www.salisburync.gov/twitter.

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