

Greetings Neighbors,

Our Communities of Northwest Stokes (OC) wishes to update its neighbors about recent and upcoming events related to the Francisco Elementary School (FES) property: [approval process for new ownership; Francisco FarmFest; and playground access \(end of the update\)](#).

Following two years of investigation related to the possibility of transferring the property to the Our Communities of NW Stokes Foundation (OCF), we informed the Stokes County Board of Commissioners (BOCC), in June, of the OC [decisions](#) made following its many public meetings:

(1) We could not uncover a way to financially support our dream to develop a campus center for economic development, recreation, community events and continuing education, and

(2) We support a job creating light manufacturing use / local investor, consistent with the OC vision for community and economic development, following extensive discussions with that potential owner during the April and May OC public meetings.

Next Steps

Since that time, the Board of Commissioners has moved forward to find a way to ensure that the property will continue to benefit our communities.

Such a property transfer decision-making process is now underway. Below you will find a calendar outlining the series of public meetings related to that transfer and links to related documents. We encourage you to attend and continue to support this process.

- Zoning Hearing [Preview Meeting](#) was held on [8/31, 5:30 pm](#), at FES for neighboring property owners and others. The County provided info and answered questions about the light manufacturing (woodworking and metal fabrication) production facility being considered and the rezoning process. OC representatives communicated OC's discussions / decisions from its April, May, and June public meetings.
- BOCC Special Meeting & Hearing on [9/5, 6:00 pm](#), 2nd floor chambers in Reagan Building, at Government Center in Danbury. Subject: The economic development incentives contract created to attract the prospective owner of the Francisco School property.
- Zoning Hearing on [9/28, 7:00 pm](#), at Government Center location shown above. Subject: Change zoning from R-A to M-1-CZ (light manufacturing - conditional zoning).
- BOCC Hearing on [10/3, 6:00 pm](#), at Government Center location shown above. Subject: Zoning Decision.

Document links:

Link to OC FES Repurposing Task Force Report: <http://ocnwstokes.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Task-Force-Final-Report.pdf>

Link to OC Letter notifying BOCC of the OC decision to decline property transfer to OCF: <http://www.thestokesnews.com/opinion/10485/letter-to-the-county-commissioners-regarding-francisco-school>

Link to County Notice of BOCC Hearing about the property transfer economic development contract: <http://www.co.stokes.nc.us/bocc/scbocccpublicnotice.htm>

FarmFest - Save the Date!

Given the above calendar, it is not yet confirmed who will own the property at the time of Francisco FarmFest; therefore, OC is working with the County and with the prospective new owner for use of the property that day as planning for FarmFest proceeds.

Thus, we are moving forward with planning for the [Francisco FarmFest 2017, Saturday, October 7th](#) from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., on the Francisco Elementary School grounds. Your help can make a difference. Please volunteer to help with planning and / or to help during this special community event by contacting Texie Jessup at 336-351-4142. The [next FarmFest planning meeting is on Wednesday, 9/6, at 6:30 p.m. at FES.](#)

Playground - Public Access

For public access to the playground, OC will need to work out liability challenges, costs for insurance, how OC pays for those costs, and a lease agreement. [We look forward to your participation in that decision making process. Stay tuned.](#)

Things are now moving quickly, so we fully expect and should understand that [the new owner may need to put up "playground closed" or "no trespassing" signs as early as Sep 6 and until OC decides if and how it wants to proceed and a lease is approved.](#) That decision will, in part, be based on plans for playground use and a community commitment to volunteer and financial support.

As a member of the community, the prospective new owner is focused on making things work; knowing that OC will need time to discuss the above issues in a public OC meeting, followed by an agreement that meets the needs of both parties.

Thank you from:

Our Communities of Northwest Stokes

Please visit: www.OCNWStokes.org