

**Item Title:** Approval of Site Acquisition for Wendell Falls Public Safety Building

**Specific Action Requested:**

**That the Board of Commissioners authorizes the County Manager to sign a land acquisition contract with Nash Wendell Falls, LLC in the amount of \$400,000 for a 2.5 acre site off of Wendell Falls Parkway, Wendell, NC for construction of a new Public Safety Building, subject to conditions acceptable to the County Attorney.**

**Item Summary:**

The Board of Commissioners is requested to approve the acquisition of 2.5 acres off of Wendell Falls Parkway in Wendell for construction of a new Public Safety Building. The site is located in the Wendell Falls development off of Wendell Falls Parkway and approximately .60 of a mile from the US64/495 interchange. The proposed purchase price is \$400,000 to be confirmed by an MAI Appraiser. The contract also provides for a \$28,000 contribution to a shared stormwater management system which represents Wake County's prorata share of these improvements.

Wake County will own the property and building. Eastern Wake EMS will operate EMS units out of this facility. The Wendell Fire Department will manage fire response units from this location. The Wendell Fire Department is a not for profit department and is funded by Wake County through the Fire Tax District.

In order for homeowners to receive reduced insurance benefits that go with a Fire Department's ISO rating, they must be within five road miles of the fire station that is responsible for that area. Numerous roadways and parcels will not be within five miles of the current Wendell Fire Station when all phases of Wendell Falls are complete.

For verification, County staff conducted a search of alternative available properties along Wendell Falls Parkway and surrounding the Wendell Falls Community. The search criteria included sites of approximately two to three acres, in close proximity to available water and sewer service, and good access to areas west of the Town of Wendell and quick access onto US64/495.

Based on this search, this site best meets the requirements of appropriate acreage, response time, access, topography and overall cost. Staff has therefore concluded that the sales price is fair and consistent with market prices of nearby properties.

The Town of Wendell has expressed interest in operating a Police substation from this facility. The site is large enough to accommodate this request. Wake County staff will continue to work with the Town of Wendell on this potential partnership and a cost-share arrangement would be established between Wake County and the Town of Wendell if the Town decides to proceed with this effort.

Wake County EMS staff, Wendell Fire Department staff, and Town of Wendell Police Department staff participated in the search process and support this location. This site also has the support from the Town of Wendell Planning Department and the site conforms to zoning ordinances and requirements.

The proposed Public Safety Building is anticipated to be approximately 21,000 square feet. The building exterior will conform to the design elements that exist at Wendell Falls and the plan will incorporate the features necessary for an efficient operation of public safety services. This facility will have four (4) drive-thru bays that will allow vehicle stacking, sleeping quarters, offices, conference rooms, locker and restroom facilities, exercise space, laundry rooms, and community gathering space. Site design will include parking for approximately 64 vehicles, and a shared stormwater management system will be utilized off-site.

Funding for the land purchase is in the current Capital Improvement Program for FY 2017. Preliminary design is underway and schematic design should be ready for the board by spring of 2017. Construction is anticipated to start in the summer of 2018.

**Attachments:**

1. Area Map
2. Wendell Falls Master Plan
3. Parcel Plan
4. Preliminary Site Plan
5. Land Purchase Contract