

Exhibit A

John Cleaveland expressed concerns about the estimated costs for both construction and operation of the proposed recreation facilities stating he felt the numbers were not correct. He added that he felt the Board was at risk of putting the county into debt, the only way to pay was through taxes, that the County is a great county and the Board should be careful not to tax people to death. Mr. Cleaveland expressed appreciation to the Board for their willingness to serve.

Bill Crawford stated he attended school in Macon County, is a retired school teacher from the Macon County School System, now drives a bus, he and his children had all participated in sports in Macon County, that he opposed the proposed recreation bonds and he wished to make three points: (1) there isn't much demand for racquetball courts in Franklin; (2) if there was a year round swimming facility on the Franklin High School campus that was open to the public that would take care of all the swimming needs; and (3) a public facility that replicates private facilities is a bad idea.

Ed Rewis stated he was representing several youth league sports groups and was in favor of the proposed recreation bond referendum. Mr. Rewis stated the girls youth leagues are overwhelmed with the lack of gyms and if facilities aren't available the leagues are going to have to start turning children away. He stated he was also representing church and co-ed leagues and there is a critical need for additional adult fields. Mr. Rewis stated he could not address the cost just the dire needs and that the County needs to provide for kids and families who cannot afford to join a gym by providing facilities.

Sloane McDowell, Tori Dragoo, Emily Esterwood, Kyle Ratsch and Gretchen Wilde, all Macon County School students, requested a "yes" vote for the recreation facilities. Comments made were that new facilities could provide additional sports leagues, year round practices, and a "home" for the swim team which could improve an already strong swim program.

Bethany Steiert representing the divers of Macon County stated the lack of diving local facilities creates a real hardship on divers, their families and coaches. She stated they have to travel to Western Carolina University or Asheville to get practice time that is usually limited to an hour or less. Ms. Steiert asked that when discussing new facilities to please keep divers in mind.

Narelle Kirkland stated she had listened to the young people and advocated the importance of competition which is a good teacher and builds self reliance.

Dwain Picou, swimming coach, expressed appreciation to the recreation park, Franklin Golf Course and Franklin Fitness Center for use of their facilities but stated the swim team has out grown all local facilities and needs a larger facility, giving statistics on the number of swimmers in the various leagues. Mr. Picou expressed the opinion that sports saves kids lives and if no sporting programs are available the kids just "hang out". He requested something be done for these extremely talented kids.

Mike Steiert stated he is the father of a diver and these kids need a place to practice and compete. He stated as a diver his daughter would not benefit from the proposed facilities but we needed to think of the kids coming on.

Larry Stenger stated if everyone had not visited the new SCC and Library facilities they should and that the facilities were visions six years ago. He added that people make an investment when they pay their taxes for which the Board of Commissioners is the watch dog and six years ago they made a tough decision which was about the quality of life in Macon County. He stated the people of Macon County work together to be the best we can be and the County needs these new recreation facilities. He stated the Board has an opportunity to make an investment for the future of Macon County.

Fred Haller stated he was the local president of Senior Games who registered over 300 participants this year. He expressed the opinion that the County should have facilities for youth and seniors adding that the current recreation park is thirty years old. Mr. Haller stated in the County Recreation Master Plan everyone asked for an indoor pool. He added that the County has one of the lowest tax rates in the state and asked that the County be brought up to other counties around us.

Charles Shelton stated he was all for recreation but he believed that cost projections were low and that the County should not compete with other private facilities. He stated when estimating building costs a lot of things need to be looked at and asked the Board to make sure they were looking at the total costs.

Debbie Stewart stated she is the parent of a member of the Mountain Swim League and of home schooled children. She stated because her child is home schooled he is not eligible to participate on the high school team and dropped from first to fifth ranked because of lack of practice facilities. She added that her daughter plays basketball and due to lack of facilities has late practices. Ms. Stewart stated her support of the recreation bond referendum.

Barbara Morris, co-owner of Franklin Health & Fitness Center, stated she and her husband had raised three children who were very involved in sports and she understood what all the parents were saying but that the number of people in the Franklin area that would use indoor pool facilities is very limited and she would question building a new facility for that limited number. She also stated the pool temperature for competitive swimmers and senior swimmers is about 8 degrees difference and it can take two days to change the temperature of a pool 2 degrees. Ms. Morris suggested covering the county recreation park pool stating she had received estimates of \$53,000 for a cover and heater. She also suggested it would be cheaper to buy Middle School swimmers memberships to the Fitness Center adding that the high school swimmers already have use of the facility.

Tony Baro stated his mother-in-law has Alzheimers and utilizes the Senior Services Center. He explained the service is great, the staff phenomenal, the facility immaculate and it's a joy to be able to leave a family member there knowing they will be well cared for but the facility is just too small. He supported the referendum for a new Senior Services Center adding to also give the kids what they need.

Susan Norton stated she and her husband have been residents of Macon County for two years and prior to that time she had been a caregiver to her mother for five years. She added they are now caregivers for her mother-in-law who has dementia and she goes to the Senior Services Center. Ms. Norton stated they are extremely pleased with the facility and they have watched it outgrow the current space. She stated the need for additional space and expanded bathroom facilities is a serious situation in need of serious consideration. Ms. Norton stated she hoped the Board would put full thought into a new senior center, continue to expand services for seniors and expressed appreciation for the new Macon Early College her son attends. She added that she is not afraid to pay her share of taxes for needs of the County.

Ed Morris, co-owner of the Franklin Health and Fitness Center, stated he was at a meeting last week and received a flyer outlining what the citizens can expect to get for \$9.4 million. He expressed concerns about the reduction of the square foot building cost to \$54 per square foot as compared to the estimated cost of school construction at \$164 per square foot. He added concerns about the projected operating budget being less than the current operating budget, limited parking and grading estimates. Mr. Morris stated that with around 1800 members the Fitness Center has a very small profit margin and if they lose fifty members they could be forced to close adding that with the closing of the private facility the County will have a pool with eight lanes instead of five lanes to serve all the taxpayers plus swim teams. Mr. Morris requested

serious discussions with the Recreation Commission about realistic costs estimates.

Janet Holt stated she had been employed by Senior Services and after retirement volunteers there. She stated the clients there are very important, that she remembered when the facility was enlarged they didn't think it would fill up and now they have outgrown it. She explained the area is congested, closed in and larger facilities, especially restroom facilities, are needed.

Martin Wardiwitz, Chief Operations Office with Angel Medical Center (AMC), stated AMC worked with Healthy Carolinians on the Recreation Master Plan and endorses the new recreation facility. Mr. Wardiwitz quoted statistics on sedentary life styles and how exercise can offset some of these. He added that with inactivity it is even more important to provide facilities to provide opportunities for a variety of activities. Mr. Wardiwitz stated he is also a parent of a member of the swim team and support their efforts. He requested the Board to keep the hospital in mind as a resource.

Chairman Leatherman thanked everyone for becoming involved and for their comments and then adjourned the hearing.