



The Clayton Tribune

THURSDAY, April 4, 2019

theclaytontribune.com

Vol. 122, No. 14 ■ \$1.00



Megan Broome/The Clayton Tribune

Clayton Mayor Jordan Green, left and County Commissioner Scott Crane answer questions about the 2019 Rabun County Joint Comprehensive Plan at a town hall meeting on Monday.

Citizens, officials exchange ideas on Joint Comprehensive Plan

By **Megan Broome**
Staff Writer

CLAYTON— Rabun County residents and public officials came together to discuss the 2019

Rabun County Joint Comprehensive Plan at a public meeting at the Northeast Georgia Food Bank Teaching Kitchen on Monday.

The meeting was hosted by the Rabun County Democratic Party and the Rabun County Coalition for Good Government and gave residents an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about details of the comprehensive plan.

A comprehensive plan is a document used to coordinate capital

improvement projects and ensure compliance with state policies and programs. The plan will be supported by the Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) as it is developed between March and October.

GMRC is an organization that assists with monitoring and implementing local comprehensive plans.

Jordan Green, mayor of the City of Clayton, and Scott Crane, county commissioner, were the main speakers and gave comments and answered questions during the meeting.

“A comprehensive plan is a good thing,” Green said.

He noted, though, that the city of Clayton has a few mixed feelings about the plan because the Service Delivery Strategy (SDS) is not completed yet.

Green said that the comprehensive plan can be found online for anyone to view. The most recent plan is from 2014.

Crane encouraged attendees to go to their city council and county meetings and said that the intent is to be as open as possible with the public.

“You all have asked us to be more transparent and that’s exactly what we are doing,” Crane

Please see **PLAN, A3**

PLAN

■ CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

said about answering questions at the public meeting.

The reasoning behind how county and city projects are prioritized was a significant topic during the meeting.

Crane said that from the county's perspective, the focus is on what the largest need is and what affects the greatest number of citizens at that particular time.

He said that these needs can change throughout the years, and even 10 years from now something else might take priority.

Crane used the recent Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) projects of the Sheriff's Office and jail expansion as an example. He explained that the thought process is to decide what is more urgent to begin first. Is the jail overcrowded to the point where that needs to be completed first? Or does the new Sheriff's Office take priority because deputies are currently getting sick from mold?

"I have to weigh those options," Crane said.

Crane clarified that he wasn't speaking for all of the commissioners, only from his opinion.

Green said that he welcomes and encourages input from citizens for the comprehensive plan.

"We want you to start giving us capital improvement plans," Green said.

Some citizens also asked how unincorporated towns would be included in the comprehensive plan.

Crane said that the comprehensive plan is "being done for Rabun County to include cities."

The comprehensive plan is completed all at once and aspects that

are relevant to each city and area will be incorporated to some extent in the plan, he explained.

"Whatever holler you come from, you have a voice," Crane said.

Another topic debated was the development that is planned to occur downtown and how the buildings will be preserved. Specifically, the new complex that is expected to be built on East Savannah Street.

Some attendees expressed concern that the current buildings will get completely torn down when they should be preserved.

"The buildings that are going to get torn down are dilapidated beyond repair," Green said.

He said that they are too far beyond repair to be saved.

Green also brought up the question of what the definition of "historic" is when determining which buildings are preserved.

One person pointed out that people in the community put a lot of work and dedication into helping create a plan in 2005 and wants to bring some of those ideas to this 2019 comprehensive plan.

"Let's go back there and bring it back to life," the attendee said.

Another resident commented that she sees positions for various boards being filled, but never sees them advertised. She wanted to know how these members are selected and how they know about the positions.

Green said that they usually hear about positions from word of mouth and several names are taken to the Board of Commissioners to be voted on.

The resident made a point that other counties advertise the positions, and Green said he would look into what other counties do and compare.



Megan Broome/The Clayton Tribune

A large crowd attended a town hall about the 2019 Rabun County Joint Comprehensive Plan at the Northeast Georgia Food Bank Teaching Kitchen on Monday. The event was organized by the Rabun County Democratic Party and Rabun County Coalition for Good Government, and these residents asked public officials questions about the comprehensive plan as well as ongoing projects in the community.

One citizen questioned the passion and enthusiasm elected officials have for new ideas to move the towns and county forward and noted that something needs to be done so people are inspired to go to meetings.

Who has an idea exciting enough to fill up meetings? Who has a vision? Who gets excited and has a dream for what happens in this county, the citizen asked.

Crane said that his goal is to listen to every person in the community, whether they go to the public meetings or not. He mentioned that just because someone does not go to a meeting does not mean they do not care.

"I'm trying to listen to every person in the community," Crane said. He said he tries to listen to everyone and not just one particular group, but that different areas

might have different visions of what projects they want completed.

For example, one area might want a fire station while another wants potholes fixed. Each area has a different vision for the comprehensive plan and Crane said he listens to all of these opinions.

Ara Joyce, Clayton

City Council member, said that the comprehensive plan and projects have to be a shared vision among everyone. She explained that it might not have everything that everyone wants, but there is a little piece of everyone's vision in it.

This town hall to

discuss the 2019 Rabun County Joint Comprehensive Plan was a way to bring public officials and residents together in order to move the county and cities forward so there is a united front, rather than the "Us. V. Them" mentality, organizers said.

LARGE SELECTION OF USED FIREARMS 

COUNTRY BOY SPORTS
WWW.COUNTRYBOYSPO RTS.COM

PRICE DROP \$230 \$205
WITH FACTORY REBATE
STARTING 3/28/19 - 5/31/19

22 ROUGH RIDERS
STARTING AT **\$135**

Smith & Wesson
PISTOLS
STARTING AT **\$300**

PRICES EXPIRE 4/26/19

783 CAUDELL RD • HOMER, GA • 706-677-3394

SPECIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PRICING!

K&L

BLUE LABEL

Smith & Wesson

Country Boy Arms