

MANDATORY REFERRAL REPORT NO. 97-03  
CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG  
PLANNING COMMISSION  
PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL OFFICE SPACE FOR ELECTIONS OFFICE  
FEBRUARY 1997

**PROJECT PROPOSAL AND LOCATION**

The Elections Office is proposing to purchase a 1,850 square foot condominium office space located at 741 Kenilworth Avenue, Suite 200 (Parcel 125-213-32). The property is currently vacant and has been placed on the market for sale. The Board of County Commissioners granted approval for the purchase of the office space at their meeting on January 22, 1997. To date, no contractual arrangements have been consummated.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION**

The Elections Office needs to expand beyond its existing ten year location to accommodate (1) increased workloads associated with past and future precinct additions (2) additional computer equipment (3) permanent and seasonal staffing (4) training space. The office space was rented for a short time by the Elections Office during the November 1996 election. The office space proposed for purchase is next door to the existing location of the Elections Office ( Suite 202).

**RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROJECTS**

The land use recommendations set forth in the Central District Plan and the Midtown Land Use and Urban Design Plan call for a mix of office, commercial and residential at this location. There are no conflicts with the land use recommendations set forth in the aforementioned plans.

**PROJECT IMPACT**

The project would meet growing demands for space and allow for continued effective management of the elections process.

**PROJECT COST**

The total estimated cost for acquisition of the office space is \$231,250.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff supports the purchase of the additional office space.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

Planning Committee unanimously recommended approval at their meeting on February 18, 1997.

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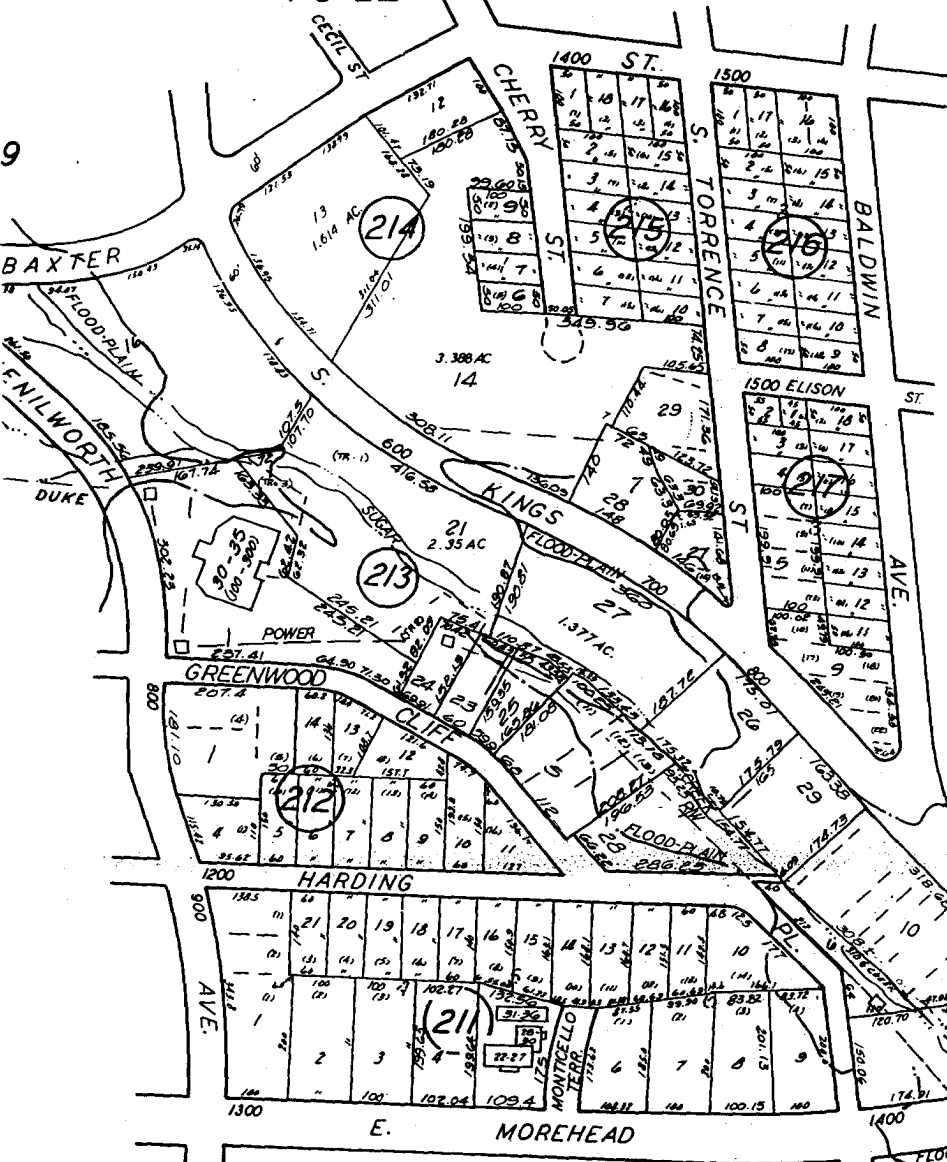
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BK. 153-01

PARK PLAZA OFFICE CONDOMINIUMS	
125-213-30	Unit #100
-31	#102
-32	#200
-33	#202
-34	#204
-35	#300

BK.153-03

TAX LINE MAP BOOK 125 PAGE 21  
MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

# CAPITAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

**Initiating Department:** Elections Office      **Date:** January 29, 1997  
**Submitted by:** William B. A. Culp, Jr.      **Prepared by:** Daniel Binford

**Project Name:** Purchase of Co-Located Office Space for Elections Office

**Location and Description of Project:** We wish to buy the condominium office space next door to us, at 741 Kenilworth, Suite 200, Charlotte, NC.

**Project Justification/Need:** In the ten years since we moved into our existing space, Suite 202, we have grown dramatically. We need more space to continue effective management of the elections process. Our space requirements can be approximated by several measures:

Each additional precinct is an increase in workload, required files, and diversity of tasks. We had 115 precincts in 1986; we currently have 160; this year we will grow to 185 and by the next Presidential election in 2000 we will have over 200 precincts.

We have several systems now which did not exist in 1986, and therefore occupied no space. Our voter registration system came in 1991, complete with the minicomputer, several large, high-volume, printers and attendant supplies. This occupies an entire room! Our electronic voting machines, originally purchased in 1994 and still growing (due for almost a 50% increase within the next year), came with a local area network and lots of peripherals. This occupies another entire room - again not in the original space requirements.

Permanent staffing has increased, and our cost-effective reliance on seasonal staffing to handle workload peaks has really increased. On election days, four times each year, we have between 50 and 80 people in this office - normally the working space for 16 people!

Training has become a topic of interest, and a virtual mandate with the advent of technology for the polling place. We hold numerous training sessions and seminars for our precinct workers - currently numbering over 1000 people. Their job has become more complicated and more technical, and our available labor pool continues to be society's oldest citizens. They typically grasp new technologies slower, perhaps more reluctantly, making the need for training even greater. In a recent BOCC action responding to the long voter lines in the '96 General Election, this need became a requirement! We will be training substantially more than we have been, and this requires space for the classes.

Changes in election laws have prompted increases in seasonal workloads, adding voluminous tasks for absentee ballots and provisional ballots. The workload peaks last longer now too. Last year one of these new tasks took the month of December to complete. This year, the increased volume, for this one expanded task, will require well into March to complete. Additionally the recurring task, maintenance of the voter registration files, consumes increasing amounts of people and space due to changes in the laws (e.g. NVRA.)

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**Status of this request:** We have contacted the owner of the available space, to express our interest. We have been given marching orders, by the BOCC during their Jan. 22, 1997 meeting, to acquire the space. Then we learned of this requirement. No contractual arrangements have been consummated.

**Proposed Development Schedule:** We hope to acquire the space on July 1, 1997, for immediate occupancy. We will be planning the space layout while you consider this request. We need to finish with that sort of task before we get into the next election cycle - due to begin in late July.

**Relation of this proposal to other public projects:** None. Neither is our existing space related to anything else.

**Project cost estimate:** 1,850 sq. ft. @ \$125/sq. ft. totals \$231,250.

**Assistance Funds:** n/a