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Council disapproves of Obama's stimulus plan

by Shawn Daley

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Apex's elected leaders made it very clear that they strongly disapprove of President Barack Obama's proposed economic stimulus package.

Of course, town council also made it abundantly clear that they certainly want a piece of the pie.

Council voted 4-1 last week to adopt a resolution that proclaims the town's eagerness to accept federal handouts.

However, in an interesting balancing act, council along with Mayor Keith Weatherly struggled to find the right wording for the resolution.

Their intent was to show a willingness to accept funds without displaying approval for Obama's plan.

One of council's biggest concerns was that federal funds would first go to the state before reaching local governments.

The plan would work much more effectively, they argued, if the money went directly from Washington to the communities requesting it.

"If money is being spent I rather see local governments spend it," said councilman Mike Jones."

"Local government will spend it better and be more transparent," agreed councilman Bill Sutton. "Money won't be wasted."

The resolution was presented to council by town manager Bruce Radford on behalf of the North Carolina Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, which represents the 26 largest municipalities in the state.

Each municipality presented the coalition with a list of projects they would complete upon receiving federal money.

The list totaled more than \$2.8 billion worth of projects.

Some towns listed as many as 90 items but Apex decided to focus on just two big ones – the upcoming \$3 million Apex Peakway project and the completion of the regional sewage plant in New Hill.

Weatherly said the stimulus package gave him a "queasy feeling" and worried that future generations would suffer the consequences of Obama's plan. "It's passing the bill onto our grandchildren," said Weatherly.

But town leaders also agreed that if federal funds become available Apex should seek its share.

"We would be wise to go to the trough, too," said councilman Bill Jensen. "If funds are being distributed we should be part of this," said Jones. "But we are not advocating the stimulus package."

Citing his disapproval of earmarks, councilman Gene Schulze voted against the resolution "as a matter of principle."

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