

**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF GASTON
TOWN OF CRAMERTON**

May 21, 2015

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met in workshop session on Thursday, May 21, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the G.M. Michael Room at the Cramerton Town Hall.

Board members present: Mayor Ronnie Worley; Mayor Pro Tempore Will Cauthen; Commissioners Demetrios Koutsoupas; Tammy Lawrence; and Sandra R. Ware. Commissioner Carpenter was absent.

Staff present: Kevin Krouse, Interim Town Manager and Planning Director; Bill Brown, Town Attorney; Chief Greg Ratchford; Joel Lineberger, Finance Director; and Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk.

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum: Mayor Worley called the meeting to order and determined that a quorum was present.

Adoption of Agenda for this Meeting: Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen made a motion to adopt the proposed agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lawrence and approved by all. Mayor Worley thanked the Planning and Zoning members for being in attendance at tonight's meeting.

Public Comment: No one signed up to speak.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION OF AGENDA ITEMS NOT REQUIRING A PUBLIC HEARING:

Presentation from NC Certified Arborist, Mr. John Suggs, who will report the findings of the Tree Inventory conducted in Cramerton: Mr. Suggs stated a tree inventory had been completed last October. He stated the tree inventory was funded by matching grant funds from the NC Department of Agriculture and Forest Service to develop a tree management program for evaluation of the Town's trees. The data collection included identification and condition of the trees to assist in improving pruning, removal of trees, and other comments. Conditions listed includes problematic issues such as injuries to trees, leaning trees, decay, and what type of pruning may be needed. Mr. Suggs stated the Parks and Recreation Department received information on proper mulching and pruning techniques.

Mr. Suggs stated the top ten species included crape myrtle, box elder, red maple, flowering pear, Carolina silver bell, wax myrtle, sycamore, and loblolly pine. There are 700 trees listed in good condition, 260 in fair condition, 48 in poor condition, and 11 trees are dead. Mr. Suggs stated there are 1,109 total trees and 69 percent of the forest is in good condition. He explained that the first year's funding is traditionally spent on pruning and tree removal. Commissioner Lawrence asked about the pruning of crape myrtles. Mr. Suggs stated these would not be topped.

Mr. Krouse stated the tree inventory was completed using a trimble unit and a phone app from the U.S. Forest Service called Talking to the Trees which allows identification and location of trees and would be accessible through our website. Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen asked if recommendations would be given regarding the additional plantings of trees and what species. Mr. Suggs stated recommended species would be given based on the infrastructure. Mr. Zach Horne asked about canopy cover requirements and the effect on builders and contractors. Mr. Suggs stated the tree canopy needs to be increased and larger trees should be considered for planting in areas where there are no utility lines or infrastructure. Mr. Krouse stated the Town has a Tree Board and it is part of the Planning and Zoning Advisory Board. Mr. Jim Gaddy stated the older trees need to be protected. Mr. Suggs stated there were several heritage trees that needed to be preserved. Mr. Charles Oliver asked if the inventory was taken of trees on public property only. Mr. Suggs stated yes.

Mr. Suggs stated the information collected contains data and maps. Mr. Suggs stated he will be working on the Urban Forest Management Plan and it will not be completed until the summer. Mr. Krouse stated that Mr. Suggs will be assisting in training of the public works and parks and recreation staff regarding pruning techniques and how to utilize the maps. The Board thanked Mr. Suggs. Commissioner Ware asked if Dixie Lawn would be part of the training. Mr. Krouse stated he would ask that one of their personnel be involved.

Presentation from Mr. Demetri Baches who will present the Draft Downtown Master Plan: Mr. Baches stated it was important to understand where the Town was going and to have a vision and the

importance of maintaining goals and objectives. He stated the growth cycle will include Cramerton, Belmont, McAdenville and this area needs to be prepared for increased vehicular traffic. He stated that Pineville was in the last growth corridor and now is suffering from lack of planning.

Mr. Baches stated traffic will continue to increase on Wilkinson Boulevard and Interstate 85. The current down town center is set up similar to a shopping center. He encouraged a riparian buffer clean up, construction of a sitting walk/sidewalk on Eighth Avenue, intersection improvements at Ninth and Main Street, two way traffic on Center Street and Ninth Street, the purchase of the Masonic Lodge and Hampton Meadows apartments, fire department relocation study, Ninth Street property analysis, Norfolk/Southern pedestrian tunnel, and completion of the code rewrite in order to encourage the use of the town center area as the primary focus.

He stated the Goat Island Bridge looks great and is the connection between the down town area and the Lakewood community and encourages future progression into the down town area. Mr. Baches stated the town needs to offer variety. He stated the current fire department could become a destination point if converted to a restaurant. He stated Phase III of the master plan would encourage people to spend the day and this would generate revenue. Mr. Baches stated a hotel would be utilized when day long events are planned. He stated a variety of housing would be needed and a trolley line or light rail would be possibly available in the future as more commuters will live in this area. Mr. Baches stated developers have looked at this area and multi-family housing has been discussed along with a parking garage which the Town could operate. The fire department structure could become a destination restaurant with canoe and kayak rentals available on the bottom floor. The area at the fire department and bridge could be utilized for statues and memorials.

The North Main Street area would be striped for parking and landscaping would include tree plantings. A train station for commuters would be implemented. Mr. Baches stated the Town's Land Development Code would include more graphics. The City of Belmont has already started the process and Mr. Baches recommended the Town of Cramerton to join in. Mr. Krouse stated once the plan is adopted it will be placed on the Town's website. Mr. Jim Gaddy stated he was excited about this information and was looking forward to hearing additional information at the Planning and Zoning Board meetings. Commissioner Ware commented that the traffic currently between Charlotte and Gastonia was an issue. The Board thanked Mr. Baches for his presentation.

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve a Resolution of Support for the TIGER Grant

Application: Mr. Krouse stated the City of Belmont has agreed to pay for the entire application fee of \$20,000.00 for the TIGER grant application. Mr. Baches stated Beaufort received this grant six years ago for a corridor study. They were awarded \$13 million. Mr. Baches explained that Beaufort received their grant because they had a story to tell and a plan prepared for implementation. They also received support for the citizens and elected officials. Mr. Baches stated that the Town does not have a rail line for commuters and Wilkinson Boulevard is the main traffic thoroughfare. The TIGER grant is awarded yearly and application requests can be resubmitted. Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen asked how the monies would be distributed if the City of Belmont was awarded the grant. Mr. Baches stated without the Town's financial support of the grant then the City of Belmont would be the decision makers. The Town would receive one third of the funding when the grant is awarded to apply to projects within a six year time frame. Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen asked about the probability of receiving this grant. Mr. Baches stated the Town had a fifty percent chance of receiving the award. Commissioner Ware stated many of the state and federal grants are no longer available. Commissioner Lawrence stated she liked the concept of being able to repeatedly submit the application. Commissioner Ware made the motion to approve support of the TIGER grant application for the amount of \$6,600.00. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen and approved by all. Mayor Worley stated he had a discussion last night with the Mayor for the City of Belmont.

A motion was made by Commissioner Koutsoupas to approve the resolution endorsing application for the Wilkinson Boulevard redevelopment district implementation of the TIGER Grant for the City of Belmont, Town of Cramerton, and Town of McAdenville. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lawrence and approved by all.

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve Proposed Demolition Ordinance: Officer Belinda Robinson stated the property located at 564 Baltimore Drive needs the sewer line repaired, seal holes in the foundation walls, immediate repairs to the rear left foundation corner, side deck needs to be replaced, and a complete roof replacement. The cost to repair is greater than fifty percent of the home's property value including the land value of \$38,000.00. A hearing was held regarding demolition of the home including an inspection by Brian Sciba, Director of Building Inspections for Gaston County. A

motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen to approve the proposed demolition ordinance for 564 Baltimore Drive including the tax parcel identification number. Commissioner Koutsoupas asked what the cost for demolition would be. Chief Ratchford stated it could be \$3,000.00 to \$6,000.00 based on past demolitions. Mr. Lineberger stated he would contact John Jenkins. Attorney Brown stated a lien would be created. The Fort Foundation owns four homes in the Baltimore neighborhood and repairs were made to three of the homes. Attorney Brown asked if the home was inhabited. Officer Robinson said the home had been unoccupied for the last four years. Chief Ratchford requested that the parcel identification number be added as 195197. Commissioner Koutsoupas seconded the motion and it was approved by all.

Discussion and Possible Action to Approve the Proposed April 23, 2015 and May 5, 2015 Meeting Minutes. A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen to approve the proposed April 23, 2015 and May 5, 2015 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Koutsoupas and approved by all.

Presentation of Proposed Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Fee Schedule. Mr. Krouse stated there had been some minor changes to the proposed fee schedule. Mr. Lineberger stated the fire department had not been awarded funding to replace the 1978 brush truck. The cost to replace the brush truck is approximately \$35,000.00. Chief Foulk stated a second grant is pending and award notification would be received in December. The fire department would also like to purchase a UTV to be used by first responders. Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen stated the brush truck needs to be replaced. Chief Foulk stated the skid unit along with several other components on the current brush truck could be removed and installed on a new truck. Commissioner Ware asked if the proposed cost is a fleet price. Chief Foulk stated yes. Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen stated he would like to see the brush truck and UTV funded. Chief Foulk stated the purchase of this equipment would solidify their motorized vehicle fleet.

Discussion of Proposed Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Budget: Mr. Lineberger stated there was a nine percent increase from last year's budget. He stated three canoe portages and piers were being constructed and the 2016 NC Wildlife Grant had been received. The ordinance codification will be paid in 2016. The greenway trail cost has been increased due to the change due to trail width from eight foot to ten foot for paving. Mr. Krouse stated \$61,000.00 of grant funding has been received. Mr. Lineberger stated no resurfacing projects for streets are included. The current budget total is \$4,244,000.00 with \$466,500.00 to be appropriated to fund balance. Commissioner Ware asked about the Powell Bill fund. Mr. Lineberger stated there is \$290,000.00 currently available and \$126,000.00 to be added later when received. Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen asked if the ten foot trail requirement could be reduced based on a variance. Mr. Krouse stated the project has to meet guidelines. Mr. Krouse stated a legal ad will be placed in tomorrow's newspaper regarding the public hearing for the budget. Mayor Worley stated the greenway needs to be completed. Mr. Krouse stated patching is to begin on Front Street along with cutting and patching of Center Street.

STAFF REPORTS:

Two Rivers Utilities: Mike Bynum with Two Rivers Utilities announced there would not be an increase to the Town's water and sewer rates. He stated TRU completed 47 weekly checks for lift stations, responded to eighteen water meter related service requests, and repaired two water leaks, and installed one new irrigation service. Mr. Bynum stated to Commissioner Lawrence that the backflow inspection for Cramer Mountain would occur tomorrow.

Town Attorney: Attorney Brown stated that the closed session regarding a potential legal claim that would require a short session.

Police Chief: Chief Ratchford stated he had nothing to report.

Fire Department: Chief Foulk addressed parking at the fire department by visitors to Goat Island. He stated the fire department uses their parking lot to test equipment and do not want the boat access blocked. A loading zone area could be striped. Chief Ratchford stated signage for the fire department spaces has been ordered and an ordinance is already in place. Chief Ratchford stated the police department would place warning cards on windshields and after a designated timeframe begin issuing citations. A parking space would be available for the loading and unloading of canoes and kayaks.

Finance Director: Mr. Lineberger stated the loan closing for the Goat Island project is scheduled for June 18th. The paving of the parking lot on the Lakewood side will be completed in two weeks. The pier projects by Rowboat should be completed in several weeks. A proposal for irrigation may be

presented in the future by Cam Carpenter. A payroll audit has been completed by Collis and Associates with no adverse findings.

Planning and Zoning Director: Nothing to report.

Town Clerk: The Municipal Citizens Academy will hold their graduation at the next Board meeting at 6:00 p.m. Mr. Rick Houser and Ms. Susan Neeley will be recognized for the Order of the Longleaf Pine Award. Mr. Kaleb Setzer and Mr. Bonham Ekleberry will be recognized for their Eagle Scout projects that were completed as part of the Goat Island project.

Town Manager's Report: Mr. Krouse stated computer upgrades are being performed. Authorization for the NCDOT Cramer Mountain sidewalk will occur in July and completion of the project will be in December 2016. A meeting was held to discuss safety improvement to the Wilkinson Boulevard corridor. Mayor Worley stated the representatives who supported this project needed to be thanked.

Mr. Krouse stated the preliminary plans for the Lakewood Greenway are ready to be presented to NCDOT and the Catawba Land Conservancy is assisting with the land purchase. Grant funding of \$61,000.00 has been received.

Mr. Krouse stated the transition areas for the Lakewood Road to Eagle Road sidewalk is being discussed. Chief Ratchford stated he had safety concerns regarding the sidewalk leading to the Carolina Thread Trail as this is a wooded area. Mayor Worley stated school children travel it as a pathway to Stuart W. Cramer High School. Mr. Krouse stated this transition area would have been a good site for a roundabout. Mayor Worley stated a roundabout was part of the original plan for Lake Road and Lakewood Road.

BUSINESS ITEMS/TOPICS OF DISCUSSION FOR EACH COMMISSIONER:

Commissioner Ware had nothing to report.

Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen had nothing to report.

Commissioner Koutsoupas asked Chief Ratchford if the police department could increase their presence on Goat Island. Chief Ratchford stated he would ask the patrol officers to increase spot checks.

Commissioner Lawrence had nothing to report.

Mayor Worley stated there had been comments from citizens about the speeding on Cimarron Boulevard and the possible installation of traffic calming devices. Mr. Krouse stated he would review the Town's policy.

CLOSED SESSION: A motion was made by Commissioner Ware to enter into closed session to discuss a potential legal claim. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen and approved by all.

ADJOURNMENT: Upon returning to open session, and there being no further business, a motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Cauthen to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lawrence and approved by all.

Mayor Ronnie Worley

ATTEST:

Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk