

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

**August 22, 2019**

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met on Thursday, August 22, 2019 at 6:00 p.m., in the G.M. Michael Commission Chamber at the Cramerton Town Hall.

**Board Members present:** Mayor Will Cauthen; Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas; Commissioners Donald Rice, Dixie Abernathy, and Susan Neeley were present. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas arrived at 6:04 p.m. Commissioner Houston Helms arrived at 6:27 p.m.

**Staff Present:** David Pugh, Town Manager; Attorney Kevin Bringewatt; Brad Adams, Police Chief; Josh Watkins, Planning Director; and Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk. The Finance Director was absent.

**Call to Order and Determination of Quorum:** Mayor Cauthen called the meeting to order and determined there was a quorum.

**Adoption of Agenda for this meeting:** The Town Manager asked that the proposed agenda be amended to add a closed session under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) consult with the attorney to protect the attorney-client privilege. A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to adopt the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley and approved by all.

**Public Comment:** No one signed up to speak.

**Proclamation:** A proclamation for Labor Day (Monday, September 2, 2019) to honor American labor and the contributions that workers have made to the development, growth, endurance, strength, security, prosperity, productivity, sustainability, and well-being of the country. A signed copy of this proclamation will be placed in the minutes book.

**Work Session Topic Items:**

- a. **Discussion regarding Town Development Grants in the Downtown Area.**

Information was presented regarding the town's participation/partnership of stormwater and/or road improvements in the area during development of the Wilcox Property located in the Riverside neighborhood. (Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas arrived at 6:04 p.m.) Discussion was held regarding curb cuts and the repairs to the street. The current street is considered to be in good condition. The developer would need to patch any cuts to the roadway and then place a thin layer of paving as an overlay. The Town Manager stated consideration of stormwater improvements at the corner of South Main Street and Riverside Drive has been discussed for over a year as a significant area to target to the town's upcoming stormwater CIP. (Commissioner Helms arrived at 6:27 p.m.) Mayor Cauthen stated this piece of property is unique and is part of the town's history. It was formally part of the textile mill and was known as standpipe hill. The Board asked if other developers had asked for this type of assistance. The Town Manager stated this was a unique situation. Commissioner Helms requested that additional discussion be held with the developer prior to setting any precedents for this type of policy. The Board asked that the developer provide specifics and costs for this project. Mayor Cauthen stated he wants to continue to have communication about façades including areas outside of the downtown area.

**Consent Agenda.**

a. **Minutes**

- i. **Consider approval of the August 1, 2019 BOC meeting minutes.** Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas made a motion to approve the August 1, 2019 BOC meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley and approved by all.

### **Agenda Items Requiring a Public Hearing.**

- a. **A public hearing for the Rezoning Case #RZ19-02: Gaston County parcels 188571, 188566, and 188565 consisting of approximately 7.27 acres located at 4017 South New Hope Road. The request is to rezone the property from B-1 and R-2 to B-2.**
  - i. **Open Public Hearing.** A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to open the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley and approved by all.
  - ii. **Staff Comments/BOA Q & A.** The Planning Director stated this rezoning request was presented about a month ago. He stated the applicant has requested a change from the original request for a reduction in the number of parcels to be considered for rezoning. Staff recommended approval of the applicant's request with the reduction of parcels as this is consistent with the zoning on both sides of the property and also addressed the concerns that were voiced by the Planning and Zoning Board members. Richi Price, applicant, stated the proposed structures are 70'x140'. He stated Warren Street has been closed for about ten years and there is no intent to open it. Ron Owensby, contractor, stated there will be a locked gate with no through traffic allowed. Traffic will enter and exit through the front of the property. The buffer to adjoining properties will be the ten-foot brick exterior of the storage structures. Mr. Price stated he will be following the guidelines per the Planning Director. He stated he plans to have two buildings constructed at a time as the structures are rented by customers.
  - iii. **Public Comments.** Mike Grant, 1006 Middleton Court, stated as a property owner he is not opposed to this project. He stated he would like to see a wooded buffer kept in place with any future development of this property.
  - iv. **Close Public Hearing.** A motion was made by Commissioner Helms to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice and approved by all.
  - v. **Action Item: Evaluate and consider approval of statement of reasonableness and consistency.** A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to approve the statement of reasonableness and consistency. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley and approved by all.
  - vi. **Action Item: Consider approval of the Rezoning Case #RZ2019-02: Gaston County parcels 188571, 188566, and 188565 consisting of approximately 7.27 acres located at 4017 South New Hope Road. The request is to rezone the property from B-1 and R-2 to B-2.** A motion was made by Commissioner Abernathy to approve the request for approval for the Rezoning Case #RZ2019-02: Gaston County parcels 188571, 188566, and 188565 consisting of approximately 7.27 acres located at 4017 South New Hope Road and the request to rezone the property from B-1 and R-2 to B-2. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helms and approved by all.

### **Agenda Items Not Requiring a Public Hearing.**

- a. **Parks and Recreation**
  - i. **Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update**
    1. **Action Item.** Per staff recommendation, consider approval of the firm for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update. Eric Smallwood stated that a request for qualifications was issued and he recommended the town entering into negotiations with Withers Ravenal. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked Mr. Smallwood about his recommendation. Mr. Smallwood stated he liked that Withers Ravenal listed their innovative techniques for feedback from the community to gather active information. Commissioner Neeley stated she liked that they have an employeestock ownership plan. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas made a motion to approve entering into negotiations with Withers Ravenal for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helms and approved by all.

- ii. **South Fork Village Fishing Pier Update.** Eric Smallwood advised that the fishing pier and kayak launch were damaged by the recent flood and are not covered by insurance. He is speaking with Blue Ridge Trail Works regarding repair costs. Estimated costs range from \$15,000 to \$27,000. Options include demolishment of the current fishing pier and kayak launch; complete repair with the pulling of all required permits; or modify the fishing pier and kayak launch by reducing the length of the fishing pier and modifying the pier with a fishing platform and replace the stairs on the kayak launch. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked if there was a better location along the river to reconstruct the fishing pier. Mr. Smallwood stated moving the pier and launch further down the river would place it in a more secluded area. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked if there were other building materials that could be used for durability or possibly constructing the pier higher above the water level. Mr. Smallwood stated a floating dock could be considered. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked if reduction of the size of the pier would require any permitting. Mr. Smallwood stated no. Repair time for this project would be several months per his discussion with Blue Ridge Trail Works. The Board consented to continued discussion for reduction of the fishing pier and repairs to the stairs for the kayak launch with Blue Ridge Trail Works. The Town Manager stated a budget amendment could be presented at the September 5<sup>th</sup> Board meeting.

**Big Board:** A letter has been sent to the Masonic Lodge. The Town Hall mortar placement is proceeding well. The Town Manager stated the contractor will need to dig the trench drain deeper to keep water out of the basement. Mr. Smallwood stated the roofing at the Community Center is finished and the exterior contractor is working with the interior contractor. Due to restrictions on the CaroMont property, the Helix R artwork needs to be discussed for placement at a different location in town. The Board discussed various areas around town for possible placement of the artwork. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated that the high school has a small roundabout area that might be suitable. Commissioner Abernathy stated that the Cramerton Middle School might also have an area that would be suitable. Commissioner Helms recommended discussions with developers for possible sites. The fog line on North Main Street has been completed and can be removed from the Big Board list. NCDOT made road improvements to the Wesleyan Drive side of Wilkinson Boulevard this week. Commissioner Abernathy commented on how beautiful the Goat Island Greenway Trail looks. She asked if the split-rail fence would encompass the entire length of the greenway. Mr. Smallwood stated yes. The Town Manager stated that MT Land has not submitted any paperwork this week. Paperwork should be submitted in the next week or so. A meeting was held with Mr. Bizzell to discuss wayfinding. Information was provided regarding signage for kayak and canoe for the downtown area to indicate areas for parking. Mr. Bizzell will be looking at the town's trails on Monday. Commissioner Neeley asked about the Baltimore area for historical designation. The report on the school has been sent to the Department of Archives and a response should be forthcoming to the property owner.

**Manager's Report:** Mr. Pugh stated the South New Hope widening project has been postponed until next year due to budget restrictions. Mayor Cauthen stated that this Board needs to take an official position stating that this project is necessary. Staff will prepare a resolution to be presented at the next Board meeting. He stated four citizens attended the storm preparedness meeting last week. He plans to hold another session at a later date. A new format is being used for the code enforcement for better readability. Commissioners Rice and Neeley stated they would like to attend the Gaston County Regional Chamber meeting scheduled for Thursday, September 5<sup>th</sup>. The Town Manager advised the Board that an ad will be published in the Gaston Gazette newspaper this weekend regarding the nominations for the ABC Board. The public notice is also on the town's website. The last day for applications to be received is September 5<sup>th</sup>. The Town Clerk will make copies of all applications and include in the September 19<sup>th</sup> agenda packet. The nomination committee agreed to meet on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, and October 1<sup>st</sup> to meet and interview applicants. The committee will meet on September 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. to review applications.

## **General Staff Reports:**

**Update from Two Rivers Utilities:** Mike Bynum was absent.

**Police Department:** Chief Adams stated the information in the police department report is formatted differently as information is now being gathered from the New World software system that was recently implemented. Commissioner Neeley asked about the traffic study for Mayflower Avenue. Chief Adams stated aggressive police action is being taken in this area. The Colt Armor Class was held at the police department and included participants from Louisiana, Tennessee, New York, and Virginia. Chief Adams stated it is advantageous for the police department to host the Colt Armor Class and the Glock classes here as this allows the town's officers to participate at no cost and to receive their certification.

**Parks and Recreation:** Eric Smallwood stated the survey has been completed in Central Park. A meeting is scheduled for Monday to meet with the contractor regarding the repairs to the interior of the community center. The turf installer for the playground area on Goat Island will be on site sometime between Monday and Wednesday. This area will be closed for ten days. Mr. Smallwood stated Parks and Recreation will place signage advising of the closure.

**Planning and Zoning:** Nothing else to report.

**Town Clerk:** She advised the Board of her recent NCAMC Summer Conference in Wilkesboro and thanked them for the opportunity to attend.

**Legal:** Attorney Bringewatt had nothing to report.

## **Committee Reports:**

**Community Committee:** Commissioner Neeley stated the committee met on August 13<sup>th</sup>. The committee is working on the Isle of Enchantment free family event. Fred Miller is heading up the Tiny Door/Window project. The back to school supply drive has been completed. Several applications have been received for the "Citizen of the Year". Riley Lewis is taking the lead on working on an Instagram Take Over project.

**Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:** Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated the committee is excited about the Parks and Rec Master Plan Update. The next meeting is scheduled for September 9<sup>th</sup> due to the Labor Day holiday.

## **Topics of Discussion for Each Commissioner:**

Commissioner Neeley had nothing to report.

Commissioner Rice stated he participated in the Spartan Race in Asheville along with Officers Corum and Pena. He stated Officer Pena was in attendance at the BOLO kickoff that the City of Gastonia police department is spearheading as school starts on August 26<sup>th</sup>. He stated he will begin his campaigning soon and will bring back to the Board any concerns he receives from citizens.

Commissioner Abernathy had nothing to report.

Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas distributed information for the NC Recycle Right program. He asked if the speed limit sign at Kirkland Road and Cramerton Road could be cleaned as it is covered with ivy.

Commissioner Helms commented on how well the crape myrtles look since they were pruned. He thanked Eric Smallwood and David Pugh for allowing his son to volunteer with the Parks and Recreation Department.

Mayor Cauthen stated there is a lot of interest in development in Cramerton and this is going to be an exciting time for us.

**NCGS 143.318-11(a)(3) To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged. General policy matters may not be discussed in a closed session and nothing herein shall be construed to permit a public body to close a meeting that otherwise would be open merely because an attorney employed or retained by the public body is a participant.** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to enter into closed session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy and approved by all.

Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas made a motion to return to open session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice and approved by all.

**Adjournment:** Upon return to open session and no action taken in closed session, a motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice and passed by unanimous vote.

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Mayor William Cauthen

**ATTEST:**

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Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk