

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

**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

**January 25, 2020**

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met on Saturday, January 25, 2020 at 8:30 a.m., in the G.M. Michael Commission Chamber at the Cramerton Town Hall.

**Board Members present:** Mayor Will Cauthen; Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas; Commissioners Dixie Abernathy, Susan Neeley, Donald Rice, and Richard Atkinson were present.

**Staff Present:** David Pugh, Town Manager; Attorney Karen Wolter; and Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk.

**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:** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to adopt the proposed agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice and approved by all.

**Introduction of Facilitator: Darren Rhodes, Program Manager Rural Economic Development of NC Department of Commerce.** Mr. Rhodes introduced himself to the Board.

**Discussion of meeting format, role of facilitator, and ground rules.** Mr. Rhodes asked the Board members what they wanted to discuss at today's meeting. Commissioner Neeley said she would like to discuss Central Park's upfit and the long-term goals for this park. Commissioner Rice stated he would like to discuss asset preservation and protection. Mayor Cauthen said he wanted to discuss growth. Commissioner Abernathy stated she wants to discuss seeing the historical museum through to fruition. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas stated he wanted to see how projects fit and how are they are to be funded in preparation of setting up conversations for the budget meetings. Commissioner Atkinson stated he wanted to talk about beautification around town and improvements to the railroad underpass and Cramer Mountain Road.

**Discussion of Retreat Goals:**

- a. **Review prior year (2019) goals and objectives.** Discussion was held regarding possible expenditures that would reduce the town's current forty percent fund balance. Paving of streets and purchase of radios could reduce the fund balance. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas and Commissioner Rice stated they like having a forty percent fund balance and agreed it might have to be used due to an emergency or a large capital project expense. Commissioner Neeley said she was okay with the fund balance being reduced for an emergency as long as the fund balance was replenished and returned to forty percent. Commissioner Abernathy stated philosophically the fund balance should be considered for use for catastrophic events. The town is currently under the forty percent balance as we are waiting on federal grant monies to replenish the fund balance.

The Board discussed the pursuit of regional goals. Commissioner Rice stated he attends some of the local municipality commissioner meetings in an effort to connect with other towns. He stated this assists in the sharing of information. Mayor Cauthen stated quarterly meetings are held with the local mayors and managers along with other joint events through the Montcross Chamber of Commerce. The Board discussed the importance of the MPO and staying connected with other local municipalities regarding transportation.

Discussion was held regarding managing future growth and development. The MT Land Project could add 3,100 residents. Other projects including the Village at Cramerton Mills, Courtyards at Cramerton, The Haven and The Groves Apartments, and several other developments will be built out in the next several years. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas asked how the town would continue to add and maintain services to these areas. The Board discussed the importance of having town services such as police and fire already in place to cover the areas of growth. The MT Land Project will have a possible designated area for a

municipal complex to house police, fire, and other town services. Mayor Cauthen spoke about the importance of connectivity and ensuring that residents in areas outside of the downtown area feel welcomed and are a part of the town. The Board discussed maintaining the budget and providing the same level of services.

A five-minute recess was called at 9:50 a.m.

Commissioner Atkinson asked about how the town's services will be affected by future growth and development. The Town Manager stated that he and the Finance Director are working on a timeline with a spreadsheet showing projections that will be presented in March at the budget meeting. Commissioner Atkinson asked if the projected revenue covers the projected expenses and the Town Manager said yes.

The Board discussed promoting a connected and inclusive community. Commissioner Neeley stated a natural trail is being proposed for Cramer Mountain Road which would provide connectivity to town. Commissioner Atkinson stated he would like to see a bike lane on Cramer Mountain Road. Commissioner Abernathy asked about the creation and success of the town's Instagram account. The Town Manager stated Eric Smallwood and Eunice McSwain maintain the Instagram page and they are happy with the feedback being received. Information is placed on the town's Facebook page for administrative items. Sport signup information and upcoming events are placed on the Parks and Recreation Department's Facebook page. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas spoke regarding the importance of connectivity and maintaining the town's identity. Commissioner Atkinson stated that maybe the Board could meet offsite at some of the neighborhoods. The Board discussed contacting various neighborhoods to encourage residents to attend meetings that include items that affect their neighborhoods. The Board discussed contacting neighborhoods to receive input about concerns and issues and placing specific items on the meeting agenda for discussion. The Board asked that a schedule be set up for neighborhoods to be placed on the agenda. Wayfinding signs will assist in offering a feeling of cohesiveness. Discussion was held regarding providing information to new residents offering information electronically on the website.

**b. Discuss goals and objectives for upcoming 2020 year.**

Commissioner Abernathy stated the Cramerton Historical Society remains a priority for her and she wants us to see this project through to its fruition and to be respectful of our priorities and to the historical society's priorities. She spoke on how much time this group has volunteered of their own personal time. The historical society has requested some startup funding and she would like to see this addressed quickly prior to the budget meeting and to end this project in a strong way. Commissioner Rice commented on the importance of giving the historical society a specified set of deliverables and a consensus of the Board regarding expectations for the museum. Mayor Cauthen stated the historical society will be a tenant of the town and should remain independent as a 501(c)3 entity and continue fundraising. Discussion was held regarding support of the museum both monetarily and philosophically. Commissioner Abernathy stated she was not in support of the historical society having the burden of fundraising for the museum. This group is volunteering their own time and working hard to provide something to benefit other people. She stated she was in favor of giving the historical society \$6,000.00 as a startup amount and then \$5,000.00 annually to cover insurance and common maintenance fee to assist in taking the burden of fundraising off of them. Commissioner Atkinson said the historical society plans on continuing to fundraise. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas stated the town offered the historical society a physical space for the museum but did not offer funding or the specifics about times the museum would be open. Details need to be discussed with both groups such as fundraising, hours, and what is going to be displayed. Commissioner Rice asked whether parks and recreation or the historical society members would be contacted if someone or a group would like to visit the museum. The operational concepts were discussed compared to the Mount Holly historical society and the hours of operation and how it is financed. The Town Manager stated the building upfit has almost been completed along with some upgrades per the historical society. The historical society offered their goals for fundraising back in October. The Board discussed a higher level of accountability and possible reporting of how monies are spent by the historical society. Attorney Wolter stated based on the greater amount of funding of the CHS annual budget the town offers then the more oversight the town will need to have to monitor the expenditures and they would need to present a

budget to be in compliance with government accounting and budgetary guidelines. This item will be discussed at a future meeting.

Commissioner Neeley asked about the improvements to Central Park including the bathrooms and possible installation of cameras. A public input meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, and three different plans will be available. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas stated he would like to see the amenities that were approved last year for Central Park.

Commissioner Abernathy left the meeting at 11:00 a.m. She stated she would call in and rejoin the meeting.

The Town Manager distributed an email from Eric Smallwood regarding a possible Land Water Conservation Fund grant. The grant application is due July 1, 2020 and is a 50/50 matching grant. Commissioner Atkinson asked if the project could be split into two projects and have the town agree to go ahead and complete the work on the Central Park bathroom and wait to do the embellishments later. The Board asked that Mr. Smallwood follow up on the grant. Mayor Cauthen and Commissioner Abernathy stated they were not in favor of holding up the Central Park project while waiting on additional information about the LWCF grant. No consensus was reached by the Board. Staff will bring additional information at the February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Abernathy stated she would not be in attendance at the February 20<sup>th</sup> meeting or the March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting.

A five-minute recess was called at 11:20 a.m.

The Board discussed asset protection. The police department is fully staffed and additional hours were approved for the fire department. Discussion was held about the timeline for replacement boards on the Lakewood Bridge at Goat Island Park, placement of signage, Masonic Lodge parking lot, additional lighting for the Veterans Memorial, possible lighting of the railroad trestle and Eighth Avenue underpass, and road paving projects. Commissioner Abernathy excused herself from the meeting at 11:28 a.m. Commissioner Rice commented that another large paving project could be included as part of the bidding for the Masonic Lodge parking lot. The Town Manager stated the Powell Bill would not cover the cost of paving for the Masonic Lodge parking lot area. Discussion was held regarding a timeline for the paving of the Masonic Lodge parking lot area along with getting bid packages out to contractors during the construction season. Staff will work on gathering a street list for the next paving project.

Commissioner Atkinson spoke regarding the paving of Cramer Mountain Road and the possible addition of a bike lane. The Board discussed adding lighting to the railroad trestle.

Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas asked about the proposed trail for the Villages at Cramerton Mills and would it cross into the Baltimore neighborhood. The Town Manager advised this would be a natural trail along Cramer Mountain Road. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas asked if this would connect to the Baltimore pier. Mayor Cauthen stated there are several pieces of property that are privately owned. Mayor Cauthen said the addition of incandescent lighting on Goat Island and up-lighting the railroad trestle would create a significant impact. He said lighting of the downtown railroad underpass would make an impact and be easy to accomplish. Commissioner Rice stated maybe some additional lighting could be added for the downtown mural. Commissioner Atkinson said he would like to see some type of planter area being placed at the backside of the Veterans Memorial which could also provide a seating area. Commissioner Atkinson offered to do a preliminary layout drawing. The Town Manager stated he would provide the most recent survey to Commissioner Atkinson.

Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas spoke about the Highway 29/74 temporary greenway link to the South Fork Village Apartments. He asked if the four items on the diamond graphic should be their guiding principles along with the mission statement. The Town Manager said the Board last year had asked that the mission statement be separate from the guiding principles as a format and not have crossover.

Commissioner Atkinson stated he would be on vacation in April and would miss the second Board meeting in April. Commissioner Rice said he would not be available to meet on March 24<sup>th</sup> for the budget meeting.

Mayor Cauthen stated he spoke to Ted Reece on Monday and he asked that W.T. Queen be recognized by the Board for his contributions to the town. The Board agreed to the presentation of a mayoral proclamation in recognition of Mr. Queen. Additional information will be gathered by the staff for the proclamation.

The Town Manager stated he would amend the diamond graphic and use the guiding principles as the outline and present this in draft form to the Board in March or April.

**Review Results:**

Commissioner Atkinson asked Mr. Rhodes for his feedback regarding today's meeting. Mr. Rhodes stated he likes the way this Board works strategically and how the vision is refined each year. Attorney Wolter commented on how much she appreciates this Board and the town and how even some of the larger cities don't hold this type of meeting.

**Adjournment:** A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to adjourn the meeting at 12:10 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley and approved by all.

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Mayor William Cauthen

**ATTEST:**

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Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk