

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

October 1, 2020

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met on Thursday, October 1, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., as a hybrid meeting consisting of in person attendance at the Community Center and virtual meeting via Zoom.

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum. Mayor Cauthen, Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas, Commissioners Abernathy, Atkinson, Neeley, and Rice were in attendance. Mayor Cauthen determined there was a quorum.

Staff Present: David Pugh, Town Manager; Attorney Karen Wolter; Josh Watkins, Planning Director; Police Chief Adams; and Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk.

Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Neeley provided the invocation and the pledge of allegiance was given by all.

Adoption of Agenda for this meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to adopt the proposed agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley. The vote was 5 to 0 to approve the proposed agenda.

Proclamations: A proclamation recognizing Carolyn Helms' service to the Town of Cramerton as a member of the Cramerton Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) Board. A copy of the signed proclamation will be placed in the minutes book.

Public Comment: There will be no General Public Comments Section for this October 1st BOC meeting. The General Public Comments Section for the month of October will be held at the October 15th BOC meeting.

Work Session

a. Helix/R Sculpture

- i. A general review by the Cramerton Board and staff regarding potential locations to place the Helix/R Sculpture.** The Town Manager stated that the school system declined offering space for placement of the Helix/R Sculpture. Locations were discussed for placement in areas around the town such as Goat Island, Riverside Park, Central Park, Woodlawn Avenue roundabout, Lakewood Road roundabout, Centennial Center green space, or the River Link Greenway. Commissioner Atkinson stated this art was designed for a specific purpose. Commissioner Abernathy said she likes the Riverside Park trail area. Mr. Smallwood presented information for possible placement of the artwork next to the Bennie Cunningham Bridge and could be part of a pocket park. This area is already graded. No price points have been determined at this time. Discussion was held about the risk of flooding. Mayor Cauthen stated that a request could be made of Gary Fankhauser to provide a rendering. Commissioner Abernathy suggested placing a survey on the Town's website and Facebook page asking for citizen input and comments. The Board discussed asking for renderings by Gary Fankhauser offering two (2) to three (3) locations showing landscaping options. Josh Watkins, Planning Director, offered information about placement of the Helix/R sculpture in floodways which would require special permission from FEMA. The parking lot and shelter at Riverside Park are on the very edge of the floodway and is prone to flooding. Commissioner Atkinson suggested to have public feedback on just the one (1) proposed location at Riverside Park. Mayor Cauthen confirmed with the Board that the proposed location near the Bennie Cunningham Bridge would be the option offered for feedback from the citizens via social media. The Town Manager said he will contact Gary Fankhauser to provide information regarding the installation cost for placement of the sculpture near the Bennie Cunningham Bridge.

Consent Agenda (Action Item): Consider approval of the consent agenda.

a. **Minutes**

- i. **September 17, 2020 meeting minutes.** A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas to approve the September 17, 2020 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

Agenda Items Requiring a Public Hearing

a. **Public Hearing 1 - A public hearing to consider the request from NewStyle Communities, Inc. to rezone approximately 13.42 acres off of South New Hope Road for a single-family age restricted development. This rezoning request would allow for 37 single-family detached homes.**

- i. **Open Public Hearing:** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to open the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

- ii. **Staff Comments / Developer Comments/ BOC Q&A:** Josh Watkins, Planning Director, stated the property is currently zoned B1. The rezoning request is for conditional zoning (CZ) which allows business park/light industrial under the Town's Land Use Plan. This rezoning would allow for 37 single-family detached homes. This developer is currently constructing the Courtyards at Cramerton. Staff has recommended additional requirements for this proposed community including a fifteen (15) foot perimeter buffer that lies outside of the residential lots. The proposed buffer has required minimum planting requirements to ensure a visual screen. On-street parking areas are shown on the site plan and on-street parking will not be allowed outside of these areas. A future right-of-way has been reserved for the possible future widening of New Hope Road. Staff recommends six (6) conditions be added if this request is approved. The additional recommendations includes annexation into the Town prior to the approval of the preliminary plat; all single-family homes shall use, brick, stone, or cementitious siding on all facades; applicant agrees that monolithic slab-on-grade be used for all homes and all front entrances may be at grade; the development shall be age-restricted and limited to residents aged 55 and up per the requirements of the Fair Housing Act (HOPA); front setback twenty (20) foot, side setbacks zero (0)/ten (10) foot, rear setback fifteen (15) foot zero side setback placement to be determined at preliminary plat approval; zero (0) side setback placement to be determined at preliminary plat approval, each lot shall have one side setback at zero (0) feet and the one side setback at ten (10) feet, and the zero (0) foot setback will always be adjacent to the ten (10) foot setback of the adjacent lot. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas asked about a possible future connection to Warren Street. The Planning Director stated this road would be developed if the adjacent property were developed. The road is platted as a right-of-way and it is not dedicated to the State or the Town. This would be a stub street and would be marked with three (3) red diamond signs and include a metal barrier. Discussion was held regarding the future development of South New Hope as the majority is primarily commercial and business. The applicant, Brock Fankhauser, stated that Del Webb is planning on constructing 809 age-restricted homes in Belmont near this proposed development. He stated the demand for this type of project in this area has accelerated. Mr. Fankhauser stated with a zero (0) setback the fire ratings would be affected as part of the building code. No windows will be exposed to that side of the shared courtyard area. The price point of the homes will be \$400,000.00 to \$500,000.00. The Planning Director stated that the proposed NCDOT changes to New Hope Road will include constructing a four (4) lane divided highway with a possible superstreet design or congestion reduction which would not allow any left turns. The superstreet design would require vehicles to make a U-turn. The development will have a one way in and one way out with only a right turn being allowed.

- iii. **Public Comments:** No one signed up to speak and no emails were received.

- iv. **Close Public Hearing:** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

- v. **Note:** Due to COVID-19, the State of NC is requiring that any municipal government wait at least twenty-four (24) hours after closing the public hearing to make a decision regarding a public hearing matter. Therefore, in compliance with the State of NC Law, the Cramerton BOC currently plans to make their decision on this public hearing at the October 15, 2020 BOC meeting.

Agenda Items NOT Requiring a Public Hearing

a. Parks & Recreation

i. Rocky Branch Park Initiative

1. **Initial Presentation to the Cramerton Board.** Eric Smallwood, Parks and Recreation Director, stated he has been working with the City of Belmont, an Improve Rocky Branch Committee, and Gaston County Schools regarding the Rocky Branch Park which includes a thirty (30) acre mountain bike park and five (5) miles of trails and is maintained by volunteers through the Tarheel Trailblazers. There is a cross country trail at Stuart W. Cramer High School baseball field which is off of the Carolina Thread Trail. This trail extends from the Town of Cramerton to the downtown area of the City of Belmont. The mountain bike trail will only intersect with the trail at three (3) locations. A memorandum of understanding is being discussed with the school system. An enhanced natural surface trail is being considered which would provide a more sustainable design that would attract a variety of users. The trail would consist of a 2.5-mile wooded connection from downtown Cramerton to downtown Belmont. This trail would be a 2.5 mile wooded connection from downtown Cramerton to downtown Belmont with Lakewood Road and Central Avenue being the only crossings. A \$60,000.00 grant application has been applied for improvements to school property. The trail would be maintained by volunteers and should create a minimal impact on the Town's budget. Mr. Smallwood stated that the City of Belmont has dedicated \$50,000.00 to this park and trail in their budget. An application for a construction grant will be presented to the Carolina Thread Trail. The asphalt paving of the area at Stuart W. Cramer High School will be included as part of the memorandum of understanding. The connection point at the South Point EMS facility will remain open. The asphalt area will start at the area near the retention pond and football field at Stuart W. Cramer High School and along the concreted sidewalk at the baseball field and end at the woods. Mr. Smallwood said the enhanced natural surface trail will be a cut trail along the slopes instead of a bench cut. Discussion was held regarding future connectivity with the Timberlake neighborhood area. Mr. Smallwood stated that as part of the Master Parks and Recreation Plan there was discussion about a connection from Timberlake via an abandoned railroad spur that would connect near the South Point EMS station. The Planning Director stated that the Town applied for a CMAQ grant years ago for extension of the sidewalk along Eagle Road to connect to the City of Belmont's sidewalk and that project was not funded. The Town can reapply and resubmit for grant funds. The Board agreed for staff to proceed with following up on the Rocky River Park Trail. The original CMAQ grant application was for \$850,000.00 with a \$220,000.00 match for connection for the sidewalk from Eagle Road to the C.C. Dawson Bridge for a total projected cost at \$1.1 million.

b. Planning & Zoning

i. Land Use Plan

1. **Action Item: Review the recommendation of establishing an ad-hoc committee to review the applicant firms for Cramerton's Land Use Plan update RFQ.** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to appoint Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas and Commissioner Atkinson to serve on the ad hoc committee to review the applicant firms for Cramerton's Land Use Plan update request for quotes. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

c. Board of Commissioners

i. Public Art in Cramerton

General Board discussion regarding public art policies for Cramerton.

There are currently no policy or standards in sign ordinance that regulates murals. Business signs can be regulated depending on the size of the logo but the Town cannot regulate content. Commissioner Abernathy suggested receiving input from citizens and other stakeholders regarding public art. Business owners would not need to go through the same process for artwork. Discussion included several options such as a possible establishment of a subcommittee, allow public input, and use of a formal process.

ii. Cramerton Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) Board

1. **Recommendation of Cramerton ABC Board appointment from the BOC Nominating Committee.** The ad hoc committee stated there had been two applications received for consideration.

2. **Action Item: Consider approval of the recommendation from the BOC Nominating Committee for the ABC Board member appointment.** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to appoint Rick Hargis to serve on the ABC Board for a three (3) year appointment ending October 12, 2023. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor. A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to nominate Jerry Roche to serve as chairperson of the ABC Board. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atkinson. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

BIG BOARD: Mayor Cauthen stated he received information back from the Grand Lodge and the local Masonic Lodge meets next week to include discussion of the proposed paving of the parking lot. Mr. Smallwood advised that four (4) trees were planted at Central Park yesterday as part of the virtual Arbor Day celebration. He is working with an Eagle Scout to plant trees at the bottom of the park and to install benches and bench swings. Trail construction will begin once the recently planted grass fills in the graded areas. Commissioner Neeley asked about the bathrooms at Central Park. Mr. Smallwood stated staff locks and unlocks the bathrooms daily and there is no evidence of anyone living there. The wayfinding signage has been installed and looks great. The larger signage on Wilkinson Boulevard needs some corrections. Installation of neighborhood signage will be the next phase. The Town Manager plans to speak to Buzz Bizzell next week about the proposed renderings with a follow up meeting with the wayfinding signs ad hoc committee. Staff will look at the fund balance to see what funds are available. Sign Connection will be contacted about the warranty period for the signage.

Manager's Report - COVID-19 (Coronavirus): The State of North Carolina is now in phase 3 per Governor Cooper. Commissioner Neeley stated she heard that the City of Belmont would be holding their Christmas parade this year. Commissioner Atkinson stated there had been information about the Town of McAdenville opening up more of their holiday activities. The Town Manager stated the Town's holiday items would be discussed at the next Board meeting. Attorney Wolter stated there is a restriction for outdoor gatherings. The brownfields grant application will be resubmitted the first week in November 2020.

General Staff Reports

- **Update from Two Rivers Utilities, Mr. Mike Bynum:** A copy of the Two Rivers Utilities report will be placed in the minutes book. Mr. Bynum stated he will be retiring next year on May 1st. Kyle Butler will be his replacement.
- **Police Department:** No additional updates.
- **Parks and Recreation Department:** No additional updates.
- **Planning and Zoning Department:** Three (3) of the Haven Apartment buildings and the clubhouse have received their certificates of occupancy.

- **Finance Department.** Mr. Lineberger was absent.
- **Fire Department:** Chief Foulk was absent.
- **Town Attorney:** A meeting was held with staff today to discuss changes to the current ordinance regarding placement of leaves into storm drains and other collection procedures. Information will be presented at the next Board meeting.
- **Town Clerk:** Nothing to report.

Topics of Discussion for Each Commissioners:

Commissioner Neeley stated her appreciation to the staff and the wayfinding signs are beautiful. She stated she was proud to be a part of the Community Committee as they continue to do great projects.

Commissioner Rice advised that the fire department completed their annual pressure testing of fire truck hoses this week.

Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupias thanked staff for following up with Sign Connections. He asked if some of the older signs around the Town could be picked up. He requested that the bricks at the back of Town Hall from the old sign be removed.

Commissioner Abernathy stated she had a satisfying feeling about the wayfinding signage. She thanked Carolyn Helms for her years of service on the ABC Board. She congratulated Roxanne Rankin for being selected as the Gaston County Clerk of Court.

Commissioner Atkinson stated he attended the September 24th virtual MPO meeting and the news from the NCDOT was quite depressing. NCDOT is minus two (2) billion dollars in revenue plus three (3) billion dollars in escalated costs for a total of five (5) billion dollars. Discussion is being held about a bond to offset this issue. Commissioner Atkinson stated he has been part of the Charlotte Regional Alliance Infrastructure zoom conferences and the sessions are very interesting. There is a total of seven (7) sessions and he has attended two (2).

Mayor Cauthen had no comments.

Closed Session: N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6)] To consider the qualifications, competence, performance, condition of appointment of a public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee. A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to enter into closed session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice. The motion was 5 to 0 in favor.

A motion was made by Commissioner Abernathy to return to open session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

Adjournment: Upon return to open session and no action being taken in closed session, a motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy. The motion was 5 to 0 in favor.

Mayor William Cauthen

ATTEST:

Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk