

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

November 5, 2020

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met on Thursday, November 5, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., as a virtual meeting via Zoom.

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum. Mayor Cauthen, Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas, Commissioner Neeley, and Commissioner Rice stated their attendance for the record. Mayor Cauthen determined there was a quorum. The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. Commissioner Atkinson joined the meeting at 6:08 p.m. Commissioner Abernathy joined the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

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. Commissioner Atkinson joined the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

Adoption of Agenda for this meeting. The Town Manager clarified that the information included as part of the consent agenda regarding the voluntary annexation agreements include the annexation of Alberta Avenue and CaroMont. A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to adopt the proposed agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice. The vote was 4 to 0 to approve the proposed agenda.

Note: There will be no General Public Comments Section for this November 5th BOC meeting. The General Public Comments Section for the month of November will be held at the November 19th BOC meeting.

Proclamations

A Proclamation to honor Veterans in recognition of Wednesday, November 11th as Veterans Day. A copy of the signed proclamation will be placed in the minutes book.

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

- a. **Minutes**
 - i. **October 1, 2020 meeting minutes.**
 - ii. **October 15, 2020 meeting minutes.**
- b. **Finance**
 - i. **Voluntary Annexation Agreement concerning assumption of debt of North Carolina rural protection fire district (Parcel #185724; 228059; 228060; 228061; 228062).** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley. Commissioner Atkinson and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas confirmed their approval. The vote was 4 to 0 in favor.

Agenda Items NOT Requiring a Public Hearing

- c. **Board of Commissioners**
 - i. **Veterans Memorial Landscaping Aesthetics Project Bid Proposals**
 1. **Action Item: Review, discuss, and consider approval to finalize a contract with the lowest responsible bidder.** Four (4) bids were received per the Town Manager. The Lawrence Landscape Group was the lowest bidder with a bid of \$20,149.36. Gary Fankhauser stated the bids were higher than anticipated. He advised that contractors are continuing to stay busy and material costs have risen. This project was offered to landscape contractors instead of general contractors since it is a smaller scale project. Rebidding or waiting to begin construction on this project would not change anything and the cost may actually increase. Commissioner Abernathy asked about the limited amount of detail for the quote and also what did “fixtures are not included in quote and are to be provided by the Town of Cramerton”. Mr. Fankhauser stated details were not requested as part of the bid packet and fixtures could possibly be purchased

by the Town at a lower cost with the landscape contractor providing the wiring and installation. A motion was made by Commissioner Abernathy to approve and finalize the contract with the Lawrence Landscape Group as the lowest responsible bidder for this project. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupias. Commissioner Atkinson, Commissioner Neeley, and Commissioner Rice confirmed their approval. The motion passed 5 to 0 in favor. The Town Manager stated that the Lawrence Landscape Group plans to start this project in the next several weeks. Mr. Fankhauser said the timing for the plantings is opportune.

ii. Helix/ R Sculpture

- 1. Discuss and consider possible partnership with Gaston County Schools for a sculpture location.** The Town Manager stated he received an email from Dr. Houchard with the Gaston County Schools indicating renewed interest in possible placement of the Helix / R sculpture at another school property but this is not a viable option at this time. A survey will be available for input regarding placement of the sculpture at the parcel located near the Bennie Cunningham Bridge and the Riverside basketball area. The survey will be available for input for three (3) weeks. The Town Manager stated he spoke with Gary Fankhauser about placement of the sculpture at the proposed area and he liked the idea of this urban sculpture against the natural backdrop. Discussion was held with Mr. Fankhauser regarding future installation of the sculpture.

iii. Cramerton Planning and Zoning Board Appointments

- 1. Recommendation of Cramerton Planning and Zoning Board appointments from the BOC Nominating Committee.** Mayor Cauthen stated that the ad hoc committee met and discussed the proposed three (3) applicants. Commissioner Atkinson stated he met with Gena Goodman today at Town Hall and he was very impressed with her resume and feels the Town will be fortunate to have her continue to serve on the Planning and Zoning Board. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupias stated he felt all three (3) candidates have fully participated as members of the Planning and Zoning Board and recognize the importance of growth. The Planning Director advised that the staggering of terms for the appointments is to make the process of recordkeeping easier as the end of the terms will be December 31st. This aligns with what other Town advisory board and committees are following. Wil Neumann stated he serves as the Chair of the Planning and Zoning Board. He said the current members work well together. Jena Goodman stated she was the newest member on the Planning and Zoning Board and looks forward to continue serving on this board. She stated she works as a planner for the Gaston County Planning Board. Zack Horne is a local builder and serves on the Gaston County Planning Board and a member of the Gaston County Homebuilder's Association. The Board thanked all three (3) members for their service and willingness to continue to serve. The Board thanked these applicants for their service and willingness to volunteer.
- 2. Action Item: Consider approval of the recommendation from the BOC Nominating Committee for the three (3) nominees to the Cramerton Planning & Zoning Board.** A motion was made by Commissioner Atkinson to reappoint Zack Horne with his term ending December 31, 2022; Wil Neuman to be reappointed with his term ending December 31, 2023; and Jena Goodman to be reappointed with her term ending December 31, 2023. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupias, Commissioner Neeley, and Commissioner Rice stated their approval. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

d. Planning & Zoning

i. Villages at South Fork

- 1. Action Item: Phase 3, Map 2 final plat approval.** The Planning Director stated that the final plat for the Villages at Southfork Ture Homes Phase 3 Map 2 has been received. This section includes eleven (11) single-family residential lots and forty-three (43) townhome lots located along Duncan Acres Drive and New Hope Branch Way. The deed for this plat has been recorded at the Register of Deeds office along with the land dedication as part of the rezoning which

included lot #22 along with a portion of the open space for the pocket park and the greenway trailhead. Two Rivers Utilities has several items pending on their punch list. The Planning Director stated he would hold off signing the final document until Two Rivers Utilities is satisfied that all punch list items are satisfactory. A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to accept the final plat with approval to be signed once Two Rivers Utilities confirms the punch list items have been satisfactorily completed. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice. Commissioner Abernathy, Commissioner Atkinson, and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas stated their approval. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

BIG BOARD: The Masonic Lodge parking lot will be discussed later in the meeting. The contractor for the Central Park trails should begin in two (2) to three (3) weeks. Senator Harrington's office has reported that NCDOT will not release the \$750,000.00 in discretionary funding until 2023 due to the massive budget shortfall that NCDOT has experienced. Senator Harrington said she would meet with the Town staff after the after election is over. Buzz Bizzell is working on the technical specifications for the bids for Phase 2 of the wayfinding sign project which includes two (2) monument signs and recreation/trail signs. Commissioner Neeley asked that the wayfinding sign on South New Hope Road near Cramerton Middle School be checked as the back of the sign seems to be incomplete. The Planning Director stated the True Homes pocket park has been placed on the deed. Mayor Cauthen stated he spoke to the homeowner's association president and advised that the Town was still committed to this park project. The Brownfields Grant application has been filed. The Town Manager stated the next step would be to encourage our federal representatives to visit the site and explain why we applied for this grant. Commissioner Atkinson was asked to become involved with this and he stated he would be glad to be part of this.

Manager's Report: CaroMont reported a higher number of hospitalizations a few weeks ago. The Town Manager advised an official study of the Catawba Crossing that the Town is a participant should end around November or December 2021. The Town received approximately \$74,000.00 as part of the CARES funding. The Cramerton Historical Society will hold a Veterans Day ceremony on Wednesday, November 11th, at 11:00 a.m. to be held at the Veterans Memorial. The event will follow the guideline of outdoor gatherings of 50 or less individuals. The Board consented to the December 10th Board meeting to be held as a hybrid meeting.

General Staff Reports (as needed)

- **Update from Two Rivers Utilities, Mr. Mike Bynum.** A copy of the report will be placed in the minutes book.
- **Police Department:** Chief Adams advised that Officer Corum recently passed a two (2) week trainer instructor certification for subject control and arrest techniques. He is the second instructor in the department with this training certification and this will allow him to teach and provide in-house training. The Board offered their congratulations to Officer Corum.
- **Finance Department:** The Finance Director was absent.
- **Fire Department:** Chief Foulk had nothing to report.
- **Parks and Recreation Department:** The Parks and Recreation Director was absent.
- **Planning and Zoning Department:** The Planning Director advised that information regarding the possible commercial opportunities for the proposed Courtyards at New Hope project will be presented at the next meeting. If the Board reacts well to the proposed information then a public hearing will be scheduled for the December 10th meeting. Paul Shriver with MT Land has asked to be present at the next meeting to introduce his development partner.
- **Town Clerk:** Nothing to report.

Topics of Discussion for Each Commissioners:

Commissioner Abernathy congratulated the police department and thanked the officers for the extra time and effort they have put into acquiring their certifications. She thanked the veterans for their service. She asked that staff continue to stay focused on the bridge that connects Goat Island to the Lakewood neighborhood side as she has concerns about inadequate improvements. The improvements have included consistency for the board spacing but the elevation of the boards is still quite uneven and it is not acceptable. She asked that the Mayor, Town Manager, and staff

continue to follow up the improvements in order that we get the quality of product we expect and the end result the Town's taxpayers paid for.

Commissioner Atkinson invited everyone to the Veteran's Day ceremony to be held on November 11th at 11:00 a.m. He invited everyone to come out and support the veterans.

Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas stated the landscape looks great at the Lakewood roundabout. He congratulated Commissioner Rice on his recent win as a judge.

Commissioner Neeley offered her congratulations to Chief Adams and his staff for continuing to acquire certifications. She congratulated Commissioner Rice for his election as a judge. She invited everyone to the River Sweep on Saturday from 9:00 a.m. until noon. She reminded everyone to continue wear your mask, maintain social distancing, and wash your hands.

Commissioner Rice thanked the police chief and his staff for their assistance for a special security check on a local family. He will be sworn in to office as a judge on January 1st, 2021. He stated that serving on this board has been a true pleasure and this board will always hold a special place in his heart.

Mayor Cauthen stated he purchased an oversized poster that was created for the 1940's E-Award. He plans to donate the framed poster to the Town as a gift with it then being placed on loan indefinitely to the Cramerton Historical Society Museum. A motion was made by Commissioner Atkinson to accept the donation of the framed poster and for it to be placed on loan to the Cramerton Historical Society Museum. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas, Commissioner Rice, and Commissioner Neeley confirmed their approval. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor. Mayor Cauthen said there has been a moisture issue with the masonry wall behind the mural at the fire department which will be investigated for moisture abatement in the next few weeks. This repair will be made via private funds with no cost to the Town.

Closed Session

- a. **[N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3)] Consult with the attorney to protect the attorney-client privilege.**
- b. **[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 at 7:31 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atkinson. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas, Commissioner Abernathy, and Commissioner Rice stated their approval. The motion was 5 to 0 in favor of entering into closed session.

Upon return to open session, a motion was made by Commissioner Atkinson to approve the Cramerton Masonic Lodge parking lot lease. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas, Commissioner Abernathy, and Commissioner Neeley stated their approval. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to adjourn at 8:19 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas, Commissioner Abernathy, and Commissioner Atkinson confirmed. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

Mayor William Cauthen

ATTEST:

Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk