

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF GASTON
TOWN OF CRAMERTON

February 20, 2020

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met on Thursday, February 4, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., in the G.M. Michael Commission Chamber at the Cramerton Town Hall.

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

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

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum: Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas 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 Atkinson and approved by all.

Public Comment: No one signed up to speak.

Consent Agenda:

- i. **January 9, 2020 meeting minutes.**
- ii. **January 23, 2020 meeting minutes.**

A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice and approved by all.

Closed Session:

- i. **NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) Consult with the attorney to protect the attorney-client privilege.** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to enter into closed session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice and approved by all. No action was taken by the Board. A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to return to open session. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas and approved by all.

Agenda Items requiring a Public Hearing

- a. **A public hearing to consider the rezoning application of Gaston County parcels 188559 and 188560 consisting of approximately 3.6 acres located north of 4017 South New Hope Road. The request is to rezone the property from R-2 to CZ, Conditional Zoning District.**
 - i. **Action Item: Open Public Hearing.** A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to open the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas and approved by all.
 - ii. **Staff Comments/BOC Questions and Answers:** A request was made by Richi Lee and Marla Price to amend the existing zoning map for property identified by tax parcels 188559 and 188560. These parcels are 3.6 acres and are located just north of 4017 South New Hope Road. The parcels fronting on South New Hope Road were rezoned from B1 to B2 in 2019 to allow for mini-storage. Originally the request for rezoning to B1 had included these two parcels. The applicant opted to remove the request for B2 on these parcels and pursue a Conditional Zoning. The primary reason for the removal of the properties from that rezoning application was to ensure that a larger more adequate buffer was required adjacent to residential development to the north. The Future Land Use Plan for the Town recommends Planned Mixed in this area, which would be inconsistent with this request. The ability to achieve a full Mixed Planned Use in this area at this time is challenging given the lack of consistent ownership of parcels, lack of coordinated development of multiple properties in this area at this time, and inability for a planned mixed use project envisioned under the Land Use Plan to be served by public utilities.

Staff is recommending approval of the request with the following conditions for the development:

1. Applicant agrees to obtain an NCDOT driveway permit prior to any development activity taking place on the property.
2. Applicant agrees that the rear setback as shown on the plan will be revised to read that it is a 100-foot undisturbed conservation buffer; the existing vegetation will be left in place to provide a screening buffer against the residentially developed property to the north.
3. Applicant agrees to utilize decorative fencing, with a minimum height of six feet and a maximum height of eight feet.
4. Applicant agrees that all building faces that front against a public right of way or adjacent property shall be clad in brick. Building walls internal to the site and not visible from a public right of way or adjacent property may be clad in other materials.
5. Site lighting shall be shielded, cutoff style lighting directed toward the ground to avoid light spillover onto adjacent properties.
6. All outdoor storage must be screened from view from any public right of way or adjacent property.

Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas asked about outdoor storage of RV's and boats behind the buildings during the construction phase. Screening will be provided in the form of an eight-foot wooden fence along with trees. Commissioner Atkinson asked if the conservation buffer is different than a conservation easement. The Planning Director stated an easement is granted to an authority and a tax credit. The conservation buffer will become part of the zoning. The Board asked about sewer connection. The closest sewer connection is located at the school off of Hanna Woods Drive. Commissioner Rice asked about the possible future widening of South New Hope Road. The Planning Director stated that the first four buildings would be removed per NCDOT as this would be a designated area for a bulb out allowing for a U-turn.

- iii. **Public Comments:** Richi Price, applicant, stated he was advised that the funding for the New Hope Road widening project was on hold per NCDOT. Commissioner Rice if the project would be constructed from the back to the front. Mr. Price said it would be constructed front to back. Mr. Price stated due to septic tank issues he plans to construct an office on the property being discussed tonight. The Board asked about removing condition #6 regarding outdoor storage. The applicant asked that this condition remain in place as he is already providing a 100-foot buffer. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas asked if the Board could request the applicant to agree to the condition of only indoor covered storage. Commissioner Rice stated he is okay with the shielded outdoor storage. Commissioner Atkinson stated there is a total of 38 acres and the town's long-range plan is for mixed use. Mr. Price said he owns 14 of the 38 acres and there is no water or sewer infrastructure. This property is located in the town's ETJ. Mr. Price asked if could fence the far side of the 100-foot conservation barrier. Attorney Wolter stated a fence would be generally permitted in a buffer area. The Planning Director stated the buffer would provide sound reduction from the construction and future lighting. Mr. Price stated he wanted to install a fence to protect his property and to stop individuals from riding their four-wheelers. Commissioner Neeley stated the property owners behind this property on Hanna Woods have voiced an interest in purchasing some of the property.
- iv. **Action Item: Close Public Hearing.** A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to close the public hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atkinson and approved by all.
- v. **Action Item: Consider the rezoning application of Gaston County parcels 188559 and 188560 consisting of approximately 3.6 acres located north of 4017 South New Hope Road. The request is to rezone the property from R-2 to CZ, Conditional Zoning District.** A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to approve the rezoning application with the addition of the condition of no placement of the proposed fencing inside the buffer area. Mr. Price did not agree to this condition. Commissioner Rice withdrew his motion. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas asked if the applicant would agree to the condition that all storage units

are indoor storage units without any outdoor storage. Mr. Price did not agree to this condition. Attorney Wolter stated the Board can postpone decision on this request and the applicant will be required to wait a year before having it considered again. A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to table the vote on this rezoning application until the next scheduled Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atkinson and approved by all.

- vi. **Action Item:** Consider adopting a Statement of Consistency that this rezoning is consistent and reasonable with Cramerton's Land Use Plan. No action was taken by the Board.

Agenda Items requiring a Public Hearing

a. Cramerton Board of Commissioners

i. Planning and Zoning Board of Vacancy

- 1. **Action Item:** Consider the P&Z Board Search Committee recommendation fill the alternate vacancy. A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to appoint Jena Goodman as the alternate member to the Planning and Zoning Board with the term ending December 3, 2020. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atkinson and approved by all.

b. Parks and Recreation

- i. **Flood damage update.** Eric Smallwood, Parks and Recreation Director, presented information regarding the recent flood event. This was the fifth worst flood for the South Fork River and the river stayed at the flood peak for twenty-four hours. The dog park fence at Goat Island was damaged. A meeting is scheduled for Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. to discuss repair of the playground turf. The River Link Greenway is open and suffered minimal damage. The bathrooms at the Fire Department have been cleaned and are open. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas asked about the rocking chairs. Mr. Smallwood stated the river rose quickly and the rocking chairs were not damaged. Work will be completed on the Goat Island Bridge on the Lakewood side while the park is being closed for repairs. Commissioner Atkinson asked if there was any damage to the Goat Island Bridge. Mr. Smallwood stated he is going to ask about getting the pedestrian bridges inspected. Costs were discussed for repairs to Goat Island, Riverside Park, boardwalks, kayak launches, and observation decks and piers. Mr. Smallwood said sand on Goat Island will be used to form berms in several areas of the island. These areas will be fenced off to allow time for grass to grow.

BIG BOARD: The Town Manager stated the Planning and Zoning Board met on Tuesday night to discuss the MT Land project. The Planning and Zoning Board recommended approval with the addition of nine conditions. A request for a public hearing to be set for March 19th will be addressed at the next Board meeting. Gaston County School was contacted regarding the Helix R Artwork and information will be given to their operations committee. The final punch list for Town Hall should be completed next week. An update on the bathrooms at Central Park will be given at the March 5th Board meeting. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas suggested having one family style restroom. Commissioner Neeley asked that a changing table for diaper changes be included. The launch date for the new website is March 2020.

The final walk through for the Cramerton Historical Society has not been completed. Commissioner Atkinson asked if he could be included on the walk through. The Town Manager said yes. The resolution for preservation of the historic Baltimore School will be presented at the February 25th County Commissioners meeting. One bid was received for the wayfinding signage. An additional bid has been sent to another company. Commissioner Atkinson stated he met with the Town Manager to discuss different types of packages and lighting being in a separate package. The Board discussed having staff reach out to local municipalities and ask who installed their wayfinding signage.

Commissioner Atkinson asked if the current lease for the historical society included the storage area. Attorney Wolter stated the current lease does not. Confirmation with the Board is needed to see if the historical society can use that area and can be discussed at the March 5th meeting. Commissioner Neeley asked if the storage space the historical society is requesting would affect the senior citizens. Commissioner Atkinson stated the space the historical society is requesting is the area on the left and the seniors have been using the space on the right. Attorney Wolter stated

she will bring the contract with the storage room change back to the Board for review and/or approval.

Manager's Report: The resolution for preservation of the historic Baltimore School will be presented at the February 25th County Commissioners meeting. A stormwater workshop will be held on February 26th in Charlotte. Anyone wishing to attend needs to let the Town Clerk of Planning Director know. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas asked when the last day of vacuum leaf pickup was. The Town Clerk stated Friday, February 28th. The Town Manager stated he would be out of the office on Monday.

General Staff Reports:

Two Rivers Utilities: Mike Bynum distributed his report. The clearing for Phase 5 of the Cramer Mountain Sewer Easement is about 80% complete. The Southeast Sewer Project has been combined with the Southeast Water Project to form the Southeast Utility Project. TRU has acquired all of the right-of-way for Phase 1 of this project. TRU is waiting on the as-built drawings and certifications for the townhome section of the Village at Cramerton Mills Phase 1E. TRU is waiting on comments to be addressed on as-built drawings and engineer's certifications for acceptance of the water and sewer lines for the Village at Cramerton Mills Phase 1B. The PRV installation has been completed for The Grove at Peach Orchard. Water and sewer construction have been completed for The Haven. Construction is complete at the Riverside Drive Development and TRU is waiting on the sewer video reports, as-built drawings, and engineer's certifications prior to acceptance of the sewer lines. TRU has returned comments for the first review of the water and sewer plans for Phase 3 to their engineer and are waiting on revised plans to be submitted.

No other staff reports at this time.

Committee Reports:

Community Committee: Commissioner Neeley stated the Community Committee met on the 11th. Ray Thompson with Carolina Recycling Association attended the meeting and shared information about formation of an alliance with the Community Committee. The Community Committee is collecting empty clean milk jugs. The River Sweep is scheduled for March 28th. A dog show with adoption is planned. The committee is asking for suggestions for neighborhood projects. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas stated he would like to receive information on how recycling should be done properly and to how to streamline the process.

Cramerton Historical Society: Commissioner Atkinson stated a photographic mural has been ordered for the back wall of the museum and a decision has been made on the display system the historical society wants.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: An update was given at the last Board meeting.

Topics of Discussion for Each Commissioner:

Commissioner Atkinson stated he had been contacted by residents concerned about the flooding. He asked if a request could be made to the Army Corps of Engineers to see if the river needs to be dredged due to the large amount of silt deposits due to the flooding. Commissioner Atkinson stated there was some concern about the trees leaning on Cramer Mountain Road. The Town Manager stated this is a state-maintained road and the Public Works Director stays in contact with NCDOT regarding these matters.

Commissioner Rice thanked all of the departments and staff for their hard work and response during the flood. He stated State Highway Patrolman Chris Wooten has been released from the hospital. He reminded everyone that the Primary Election will be on Tuesday, March 3rd.

Commissioner Neeley thanked the staff for all of their hard work during the flood. She thanked Rodney Baker and his staff for cleaning out the stopped-up drains in her neighborhood. She voiced her appreciation of being able to serve as the liaison to the Community Committee.

Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas thanked the staff and asked that everyone remain positive while the parks and closed and cleanup continues throughout the town.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atkinson and approved by all.

Mayor Pro Tempore Demetrios Koutsoupas

ATTEST:

Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk