

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

May 21, 2020

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met on Thursday, May 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., as a virtual meeting via Zoom.

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum. Mayor Cauthen, Commissioners Abernathy, Atkinson, Neeley, and Rice stated their attendance. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas was unavailable at this time.

Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance. Commissioner Neeley provided the invocation and pledge of allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda for this meeting. The Town Manager asked that the proposed agenda be amended under the Board of Commissioners section to add a request for a public hearing to formally consider setting the Fiscal Year 2020-21 budget public hearing for June 11th. A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to approve the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas joined the meeting at 6:05 p.m. Commissioner Atkinson, Commissioner Rice, and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted in favor. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor of the amended agenda.

Proclamations

- a. **A proclamation recognizing Memorial Day in the Town of Cramerton to honor those who have given their lives in services of their Country.**
- b. **A proclamation recognizing National Public Works Week and the excellence of the Cramerton Public Works department in the hard work and dedicated public service provided to Cramerton.** Copies of the proclamations will be placed in the minutes book.

Work Session

- a. **Pre-Development Meeting: Presentation and discussion with potential developers (Ken Orndorff of Green Street Land Company) for VCM Phases F and H (Parcel ID# 221178 and a portion of Parcel ID# 227546).** Ken Orndorff with Green Street Land Company spoke to staff about a potential residential development off of Hamrick Road adjacent to the current phases of the Villages at Cramerton Mills community. The property location for the new proposed development is at the end of Hamrick Road, parcel ID #221178, and a portion of Parcel #227546. The total projected area is approximately 82 acres and consists of Phase F of the VCM development as well as a newly proposed Phase H. The property is currently split zoned. The Phase F portion is zoned TND-CUD under the original VCM zoning, and the Phase H portion is currently zoned R-1. The site plan includes 27 townhomes, 204 single-family homes, and three (3) pods of future mixed-use where the applicant would like to plan future commercial with an operation for apartment units on the second floor. The current Phase F as zoned in the existing TND-CUD zoning designation would allow for up to 106 single-family homes and 61 townhomes. If Phase F is included in a Conditional Rezoning as part of this process, it would reduce those numbers down to 87 single-family homes and 13 townhomes, a reduction of 19 single-family homes and 48 townhomes. A traffic impact analysis will be required as part of this process should the applicant choose to move forward.

Ken Orndorff stated he is the general manager for Thornridge Investment Group LLC, a development group out of Charlotte. Information was provided about the project to possibly include connection to the greenway, natural spaces, walkability, on street parking, single-family homes and cottages with porches, and possible neighborhood amenities to include a clubhouse, pool, gazebo, and dog park. Neighborhood lofts in the commercial buildings could be converted to residential units depending on the real estate market. A total of 36 to 40 units could be added in the commercial area. The project could be finished by 2023 or 2024 depending on the real estate market. The partners for this project include Amicus Engineers and Mandrake Capital Partners out of New York. Mayor Cauthen stated his disappointment with the VCM project.

- b. FY 2020-2021 Budget: Follow-up discussion.** The Town Manager stated a balanced budget was presented at the last meeting. Additional items for discussion include the Community Committee's request of an additional \$2,500.00 of funding which would total \$5,000.00; Cramerton Historical Society's request of funding for \$5,000.00; Cramerton Police Department's competitive salary increases (total \$30,000.00); Planning and Zoning update regarding the need for future land use plans as dictated by the state; small landscaping projects including the Cramerton Veterans Memorial and pocket parks; vehicle tag fee perspective; and fund balance in regards to Fleet Fund and Wayfinding Sign Project Phase 2. Commissioners Rice, Neeley, Atkinson, and Abernathy agreed to the requests from Community Committee and the Cramerton Historical Society along with the Police Department salary increases. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas was not available to comment. Mr. Watkins stated due to the COVID-19 regulations the deadline for the implementation of the new legislation for the communities to update their Land Use Plans and Development Ordinances has been extended until August 1, 2021. With this additional information the \$30,000.00 requested for the Development Ordinance updates is no longer needed in this fiscal year. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas stated his approval of requests from the Community Committee and the Cramerton Historical Society along with the Police Department salary increases. Discussion was held about small landscaping projects.

Vehicle tag and tax fee perspective and recommendation: Discussion was held regarding the collection of a possible vehicle tag and tax fee. The City of Lowell and the Town of Cramerton are the only municipalities in Gaston County currently not collecting this fee. The Town Manager recommended collection of \$15.00 per vehicle. Commissioner Atkinson stated he was in support of the \$15.00 tag and tax fee. Commissioner Neeley stated she was in favor. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas stated he was in favor. Commissioner Abernathy stated she was not in favor at this time. Commissioner Rice stated he was in favor but had some reservations about this item. Additional discussion will be held at the next Board meeting on Thursday, June 11th.

Fund balance in regards to Fleet Fund and Wayfinding Sign Project Phase 2: The Board consensus was to delay these items until later. The Town Manager stated he will proceed with preparation of the budget message.

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

- a. Minutes**
- i. April 29, 2020 meeting minutes.**
 - ii. May 7, 2020 meeting minutes.**
- b. Budget Amendments for fiscal year (FY) 2019-2020**
- i. Budget Amendment #2020-12.** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to approve the consent agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Rice. Commissioner Atkinson, Commissioner Abernathy, and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in approval.

Agenda Items NOT Requiring a Public Hearing

- a. Planning & Zoning**
- i. Old Town (Riverside) Development at Stand Pipe Hill (Wilcox Development)**
 - 1. Action Item:** Wilcox Construction has been developing ten (10) residential homes in the Old Town Neighborhood (Riverside) along Stand Pipe Hill and Riverside Drive. This project is an infill development and is surrounded by other houses in a one-hundred-year-old neighborhood. The Riverside infill project is conditionally zoned and the approved site plan included a sidewalk. The contractor has asked to pay a fee in lieu of construction of a sidewalk. Commissioner Atkinson asked why a sidewalk would not be feasible. The Planning Director advised per the original plans the sidewalk was adjacent to the road. During the construction plan phase the engineer recommended the sidewalk be moved further away from the road due to interference with the ditch lines. With this recommendation the sidewalk would be adjacent to the roadway and there would not be any type of buffer. A second car in the driveway would be parked on the sidewalk. The Planning Director stated that this neighborhood has few sidewalks. He recommended the removal of the

requirement for the sidewalk and to take a fee in lieu of from the contractor. Three homes have been completed in this neighborhood along with three houses under construction. It would be costly to have the contractor regrade the lots and remove the ditch for installations of curbing. A second catch basin may need to be installed midway of the roadway. The fee in lieu amount would be placed in the General Fund. Commissioners Atkinson, Rice, Neeley, and Abernathy along with Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupias stated their consent to this matter being handled by the Planning Director.

ii. Carolina Thread Trail (CTT)

1. **CTT Signage Pilot Project update.** The Planning Director stated he is working with Bret Baronak with the Carolina Thread Trail regarding a trail signage pilot program. This sign program would cover all primary Thread Trail routes across the fifteen (15) county region and would tie those trail networks together with a unified theme. The Carolina Thread Trail has asked the Town of Cramerton to host a signage pilot project which would allow signs to be installed along the Thread Trail routes throughout Cramerton and in to the Town of McAdenville. These signs would be temporarily placed and would be removed at the end of the trial period. Input would be gathered from towns, counties, and other organizations of their assessment and this information would be used to develop a final sign program that can be implemented across the region. There will no cost to the town for this signage pilot project. The Board thanked Mr. Baronak for Cramerton being chosen as part of the pilot program.

b. Board of Commissioners

i. COVID-19: North Carolina “Phases 2 & 3”

1. **Action Item: Update from legal counsel, BOC discussion, and feedback regarding logistics of holding future BOC meetings.** Discussion was held about public meetings continuing to be held via Zoom. The first Board meeting in late July will possibly be the first meeting that will be held physically in Town Hall allowing attendees in person.

ii. MT Land Public Hearing

1. **Action Item: Discussion and possible direction to staff regarding next possible meeting to hold the MT Land Public Hearing.** *Note: The developer has asked this question of staff in regards to the next possible in person/ physical location meeting to hold the public hearing.* The Planning Director will need time to prepare for the public hearing and to possibly consider an alternative site to allow for social distancing. Further discussion will be held at the June 11th Board meeting to consider scheduling a public hearing for July 16th.
2. **Action Item: Set the budget public hearing for June 11th at 6:00 p.m.** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to set the budget public hearing for June 11th at 6:00 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy. The Town Manager explained that an ad has to be published about the public hearing to allow citizens an opportunity to offer comments. Attorney Wolter advised that the state is allowing public hearing for budgets and the public can submit comments or questions via email for a period up to twenty-four hours after the public hearing has been held. The Board will then vote on the proposed budget at the next meeting scheduled for June 25th. The Town Manager asked if a special meeting needs to be held for this vote. The Board members agreed there was no need to hold a special meeting.

BIG BOARD: Commissioner Rice stated he has reached out to the Masonic Lodge and they have not been meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic. An email will be sent to the Masonic Lodge parking lot committee regarding a verbal right of way for surveying of the parking lot. Commissioner Abernathy suggested sending a letter to the Masonic Lodge with a firm date as to when paving of the parking lot will be occurring. Commissioner Neeley asked about an update on the Helix R artwork. The Town Manager stated no information has been received from the Gaston County Schools operations center. The Town’s website is complete and has been launched. No recent updates have been received on the Baltimore School. Wayfinding rebidding was successful and placement of signage should occur sometime in the middle of July. The town did not receive the brownfields grant funding. The Town Manager stated he would continue to follow up on this

item with Withers-Ravenel. The McAdenville connector grant funding was \$120,000.00 and is now \$60,000.00. The \$60,000.00 can be used for the early phases of the project and then apply again for the maximum \$120,000.00 in grant funding for construction later

Manager's Report: COVID-19 (Coronavirus): Town Hall will remain closed through June. The gym and playgrounds remain closed. Picnic shelters and the gazebo are open with signage regarding social distancing. Bathrooms are being cleaned frequently. About Face Boot Camp asked about their event permit and they will be allowed to operate as long as they follow all social distancing and gathering rules.

The Town Manager stated Town Hall will be closed on Monday in observance of Memorial Day.

General Staff Reports (as needed)

- **Update from Two Rivers Utilities, Mr. Mike Bynum:** Copy of report will be placed in the minutes book.
- **Police Department:** Chief Adams stated he was very proud of his staff for the investigations that were performed regarding the event that occurred this past week.
- **Finance Director:** No update.
- **Fire Department:** Chief Foulk stated they were monitoring the flood condition.
- **Parks and Recreation Department:** Mr. Smallwood stated that the swimming pool is scheduled to open on June 20th following Phase II restrictions. There will be no swim lessons or pool parties offered this year. The Independence Day Celebration will be fireworks only with no vendors or bands. He stated he plans on inflating a large red balloon prior to the fireworks to serve as a visual aid to show where the highest fireworks will be visible. There are no shelters being rented at this time. Repairs to Goat Island continue and Mr. Smallwood stated he will follow up with the contractor to determine when they will be available to replace the turf.
- **Planning and Zoning:** New Style Communities is planning on proceeding with their project. A public involvement meeting is being scheduled. Commissioner Atkinson asked if they had spoken to him about expanding their project behind the frontage on New Hope Road. The Planning Director stated he has not heard any indication that they are pursuing that property.
- **Attorney:** Nothing to report.
- **Clerk:** Nothing to report.

Topics of Discussion for Each Commissioners:

Commissioner Abernathy thanked all of our military service members that have fought on our behalf. She stated her appreciation to our Community Committee and the Cramerton Historical Society for all the things they have listed and planned. She thanked them for their volunteering.

Commissioner Atkinson thanked Rodney Baker and his crew and acknowledged them for Public Works Week. They do a super job and keep the town clean. He asked if the military flags for each branch of the service could be placed at the Veterans Memorial on Memorial Day. The Town Manager stated he would check with Rodney Baker about putting them out. Flowers will also be placed at the memorial. Commissioner Atkinson commented on the potholes under the underpass. The Town Manager stated he would follow up with Rodney Baker as this area belongs to NCDOT. Commissioner Atkinson asked for a timeline on the paving of Cramer Mountain Road. The Planning Director stated possibly in July. The next MPO meeting is scheduled for May 28th at 6:30 p.m. as a virtual meeting.

Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas had nothing to report.

Commissioner Neeley thanked Rodney Baker and his staff for keeping the town clean. She stated her thanks to the Community Committee and the Cramerton Historical Society for all they do for the town. She wished everyone a happy Memorial Day.

Commissioner Rice stated the town had lost one of its longtime residents in the passing of Don Lineberger this week. He offered his condolences to Joel Lineberger and his family.

Mayor Cauthen had no comments at this time.

Public Comment

Note: The public comment section for the Cramerton BOC May 21, 2020 meeting will be received via email and read during this section of the meeting. Please see the end of this agenda for “electronic public comment” rules. No comments submitted.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Neeley and seconded by Commissioner Rice. Commissioner Atkinson voted yes, Commissioner Abernathy voted yes, and Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor of adjourning at 9:05 p.m.

Mayor William Cauthen

ATTEST:

Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk