

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF GASTON
TOWN OF CRAMERTON

July 16, 2020

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met on Thursday, July 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., as a virtual meeting via Zoom.

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum. Mayor Cauthen, Commissioner Abernathy, Atkinson, Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas, Commissioner Neeley, and Commissioner Rice stated their attendance for the record.

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

Adoption of Agenda for this meeting: The Town Manager asked that the agenda be amended to schedule the public hearing for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for August 6, 2020. A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to adopt the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice. Commissioner Abernathy voted in favor. Commissioner Atkinson voted in favor. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted in favor. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor of adoption of the amended agenda.

Work Session

- a. **Presentation regarding “Caring Cupboard” (Little Free Pantry) at Cramerton Town Hall by Kathryn Cupp.** *Note: This project is a “Gold Award” project, the highest award honor in Girls Scouts.*
 - i. **Action Item: Consider a consensus to allow a “Caring Cupboard” at Cramerton Town Hall.** Kathryn Cupp presented information regarding her proposed “The Caring Cupboards” project: The cupboard would contain free non-perishable food and toiletries to those in need whenever they need it. A laminated list of acceptable items along with unacceptable items will be placed on the box. Ms. Cupp said she would monitor the first six months the cupboard is in place and then responsibility will be turned over to the property owner or designated committee. The cupboard would be located on Town Hall property. The Board consented to the placement of the “Caring Cupboard” on Town Hall property.

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

- a. **Minutes**
 - i. **June 26, 2020 meeting minutes.**
- b. **Budget Amendments for fiscal year (FY) 2020-2021**
 - i. **Budget Amendments #2021-01; #2021-02.**

A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Atkinson. Commissioner Abernathy asked if she could ask a question regarding one of the items on the consent agenda. Mayor Cauthen stated the consent agenda would need to be taken off the approved agenda. Commissioner Abernathy stated she would address her question later in the meeting. Commissioner Abernathy voted yes. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes. Commissioner Rice voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

Agenda Items NOT Requiring a Public Hearing

- a. **Board of Commissioners**
 - i. **Veterans Memorial Landscaping Additions**
 1. **Action Item:** Gary Fankhauser provided information regarding two renderings of options for landscaping for the Veterans Memorial. Commissioner Atkinson stated he would like to see lighting included with the budget for this landscaping project. The proposed project would be a thirty (30) foot linear wall at the rear of the memorial. Construction of a two (2) foot tall retaining brick wall will create an area for seating similar to the current downtown bike area. Discussion was held regarding ADA accessibility and other landscaping options. A hybrid drawing will be created that will have two taller trees at each end. This information will be sent to the Town Manager for distribution to the Board. Mr. Fankhauser

recommended any landscaping plantings be completed in the fall around mid-September through the month of December.

ii. Parks and Recreation Master Plan Public Hearing

- 1. Action Item: Set public hearing for the Parks and Recreation Master Plan for August 6th.** A motion was made by Commissioner Atkinson to set the public hearing for the adoption of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley. Commissioner Abernathy voted in favor. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted in favor. Commissioner Rice voted in favor. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

b. Planning & Zoning

i. MT Public Hearing

- 1. Overview of the public hearing process by legal counsel.** After discussions with the applicant, the Town will conduct the virtual public hearing for the MT Land rezoning applicant on August 6, 2020. Attorney Wolter reviewed the new laws being passed by the State which allows the receipt of written comments which can be taken up to twenty-four (24) hours after we the virtual public hearing is held. Written comments can be accepted from the date the public hearing is posted and will be accepted through August 17th. The public hearing can be closed at the August 6th meeting and the Board can vote on August 20th. Any comments received after the August 6th meeting will be read into the record at the August 20th meeting. Discussion was held regarding the August 6th meeting being held as a virtual meeting. Commissioner Abernathy stated this is a very important meeting and the decision at that hearing will make a significant impact on the town. She stated her personal preference was to have an in-person meeting. Commissioner Rice stated this is a large project and it is important for people to be heard in person. Attorney Wolter stated a hybrid public meeting could be held allowing one person at a time in Town Hall while practicing social distancing. Mayor Cauthen advised that social distancing is not feasible for the size of the Board Room at Town Hall. The Town Manager stated he has spoken with Eric Smallwood about the usage and logistics for setup of the public hearing at the gym.
- 2. Action Item: Consider setting a public hearing for the Thursday, August 6, 2020 meeting to consider the application for a rezoning of Gaston County Parcel #s 222767, 216850, and 222768. The request is to rezone the property from R-1, Gaston County Residential District, to CZ, Cramerton Conditional Zoning District. The purpose of this request is to allow for a 479-acre mixed-use development consisting of 1070 single family homes, 80,000 square feet of retail/commercial space, 100,000 square feet of office space, and 70 acres of future business/light industrial use.** A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas to schedule the public hearing to be held at the C.B. Huss Recreation Center to consider the annexation and the application for a rezoning of Gaston County Parcel #s 222767, 216850, and 222768. The request is to rezone the property from R-1, Gaston County Residential District, to CZ, Cramerton Conditional Zoning District. The purpose of this request is to allow for a 479-acre mixed-use development consisting of 1070 single family homes, 80,000 square feet of retail/commercial space, 100,000 square feet of office space, and 70 acres of future business/light industrial use. Commissioner Rice seconded the motion. Commissioner Abernathy voted yes; Commissioner Atkinson voted yes; Commissioner Neeley voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor. The vote for this public hearing will be at the August 20th Board meeting.

i. Urban Farming Ordinance in Cramerton

- 1. Action Item: Consider approval of amending Chapter 90 of the Cramerton Code of Ordinances to allow Chickens in Residential Zoning Districts.** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to approve the amending of Chapter 90 of the Cramerton Code of Ordinances to allow chickens in the Residential Zoning Districts. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice. Commissioner Abernathy voted yes. Commissioner Atkinson voted yes. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

BIG BOARD

- a. **NCDOT / Road Projects in Cramerton.** The Town Manager stated he and Commissioner Neeley spoke with Dr. Houchard about the Helix R artwork. Dr. Houchard advised them that the school operations committee has not met since March. Field work including surveying has been completed for the Masonic Lodge parking lot. An appraisal was completed a year ago. No meetings are being held at the Masonic Lodge currently due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas stated the town is getting ready to put up wayfinding signs that will direct people to park at this parking lot. Mayor Cauthen stated an informal conversation with some of the stakeholders may be needed to expedite the process. Commissioner Abernathy recommended consideration of the town going ahead and paving our portion of the parking lot. Commissioner Neeley asked about the grading at Central Park. Mr. Smallwood stated the restrooms are about ninety (90) percent completed and should be finished by the end of this week. A meeting is scheduled with the trail contractor to begin laying out the trails. The Town of McAdenville Council and staff is in agreement to move forward with the Wilkinson Boulevard and Market Street improvements and to contact Senator Harrington. Sign Connections expects to have the wayfinding signs up by the first week of August. Additional information may be available regarding the brownfields grant at the August 6th Board meeting. An information meeting was held with both Cramerton and McAdenville representatives to discuss private funding donations for the Cramerton and McAdenville North Connector Greenway. Commissioner Neeley will be the captain of the campaign for raising funds here in Gaston County. Bill Carstarphen will be leading the capital campaign for the Thread Trail.

Manager's Report: The Town Manager read an email that was received from a citizen about the great job that public works did. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas asked about the future of the Parks and Recreation athletic programming. Mr. Smallwood stated the Parks and Recreation Department is reaching out to gather information about what other municipalities are planning regarding their fall sports programs. Commissioner Neeley asked about the procedures that are in place for people using the pool. Mr. Smallwood stated temperatures are being taken including the staff and a log is being kept that individuals are being asked the recommended questions from the CDC.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus): The Town Manager stated Phase II of the Governor's order will continue until the first week of August. Town Hall remains closed to the public. The Parks and Recreation Department is open for administrative purposes only. Playgrounds remain closed. A new slide was ordered for the Goat Island playground and needs to be adjusted. Commissioner Abernathy asked about the unevenness of the bridge on the Lakewood side of Goat Island. Mr. Smallwood stated the bridge is comprised of rough-cut lumber and should even out as usage increases.

The Town Manager stated businesses on Center Street have asked what other towns were doing in their downtown areas regarding takeout food orders. Signage for ten (10) minute parking will be placed next week in front of Doffer's and Mayworth's restaurants for a total of four (4) parking spaces. Once the COVID 19 pandemic is over then the ten (10) minute parking areas will be restored to regular parking spaces.

General Staff Reports (as needed)

- **Update from Two Rivers Utilities, Mr. Mike Bynum.** A copy of report will be placed in the minutes book.
- **Police Department.** Chief Adams stated the police assisted a group of individuals for a peaceful protest in the Town of McAdenville last week.
- **Finance Department.** Mr. Lineberger was absent.
- **Fire Department.** Chief Foulk had nothing to report.
- **Parks and Recreation Department.** Nothing to report.
- **Planning and Zoning Department.** Nothing to report.
- **Town Clerk.** Nothing to report.
- **Town Attorney.** Nothing to report.

Topics of Discussion for Each Commissioners

Commissioner Abernathy stated she missed the annual 4th of July fireworks. She commended Mr. Smallwood about the use of the red balloon idea as it worked great

Commissioner Atkinson asked if anyone had any comments about the lights on the C.C. Dawson Bridge. Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas stated he liked the concept of the lights on the trestle but he felt they looked washed out. There are some concerns about lighting on the bridge could be a distraction to drivers and Norfolk Southern railroad. Commissioner Atkinson asked if Randi Gates would be the correct person to speak with about installation of traffic control measures at the Eighth Avenue underpass. The trestle belongs to Norfolk Southern and this portion of the Eighth Avenue belongs to the state. The Town Manager stated he would schedule a meeting with Chief Adams, Rodney Baker, Josh Watkins, himself, along with Commissioner Atkinson to meet onsite to discuss traffic control measure possibilities. Commissioner Atkinson asked who does he talk with about flood remediation for removal of the dam on Lower Armstrong Road. Mayor Cauthen stated this could be very complicated as no one claims ownership of the dam. The Town Manager was asked to contact the Catawba Riverkeepers and the Army Corps of Engineers.

Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas had nothing to report.

Commissioner Neeley reminded everyone to continue following the guidelines to wash your hands, maintain social distancing, and wear a mask.

Commissioner Rice stated he was looking forward to a meeting where everyone will be there in person.

Mayor Cauthen had nothing to report at this time.

Public Comment: Two emails were received and were read into the public record by Attorney Wolter.

Email received from:
Steve Ashby
110 Moonlight Way
Belmont NC

*"THIS IS A JOKE. (Belmont voted NO and Cramerton scooped up a few hundred acres of county land to be rezoned after the voters made their stance **very clear**)*

Cramerton, Belmont and the rest of gaston county CANNOT sustain this type of development. There is no infrastructure in place to support this reckless proposal. Roads, schools, etc are full and stressed as is. Make these changes first or cancel this project. Or be prepared to be voted out of office. I vote NO WAY to this project.

There are also numerous hawk and eagle nests behind my house (not mention much more wildlife reliant on lake Wylie that will be destroyed.) This should be reviewed by the state and federal regulators. Also where is the environmental impact study and why is it not distributed appropriately? Also a traffic study for the entire county, not just new hope road. Where is the feedback from all the schools and daycare currently? or have they NOT been notified?

I am an adjacent land owner with 2 properties."

Email received from:
Pamela Bellair
539 Lake Wylie Rd, Belmont, NC 28012

"To leaders:

I write to you today to express my concern over the proposed developments on South New Hope Road called Overlook at Riverside. I am a resident on Lake Wylie Road and understand that economic development happens. I'm hoping that with this letter and others that this town makes a smart decision for all and not just think about the money to be gained.

Just last week my daughter pointed out to me the pair of bald eagles that live in those woods that are being proposed for development. They fly down to the river and is such a beautiful sight.

I'm also concerned about the construction run off that is ruining our River. Since moving here over three years ago, I have seen the river getting narrower and narrower due to the sludge build-up that is causing islands and

swallowing up the river. I fear that many people that enjoy the river will no longer have that luxury if construction continues at this rapid pace.

Please be mindful of all residents when you make the decision of Overlook at Riverside. Remind yourself that as Leaders voted into office that you should stand with the people.

My faith is in you to do the right by all.”

Adjournment: A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy. Commissioner Atkinson voted yes; Mayor Pro Tempore Koutsoupas voted yes. Commissioner Rice voted yes. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

Mayor William Cauthen

ATTEST:

Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk