

**TOWN OF NORTH WILKESBORO
COMMISSIONERS MEETING**

Date: September 5th, 2023

5:30 p.m.

HELD AT THE NORTH WILKESBORO BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS BOARD ROOM

THERE WERE PRESENT: Marc R. Hauser, Mayor
 Angela Day, Commissioner
 Andrew Palmer, Commissioner
 Michael Parsons, Commissioner
 Bert Hall, Commissioner
 Otis W. Church, Mayor Pro-tem
 Holly R. Minton, Town Manager

ALSO PRESENT: Daniel Johnson, Town Attorney
 Rob Thornburg, Police Chief
 Sarah Davis, Planner I
 Meredith H. Detsch, Planning Director
 J. Dylan Blankley, Town Clerk
 Robert Gentle, Fire Chief
 David Webb, Public Works Director
 Curt Hayes, Building Inspector

CALL TO ORDER

I. II. III. Call to Order, Invocation, and Pledge of Allegiance –

Mayor Hauser called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and delivered the invocation.

Mayor Hauser then asked Police Chief Rob Thornburg to lead in the Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda -

No additions or deletions to the agenda tonight.

V. Approval of Agenda -

Mayor Hauser called for a motion to approve the agenda as written. **The motion to approve the agenda as written was made by Commissioner Church and seconded by Commissioner Day. Motion unanimously carries, (5-0).**

VI. Awards and Recognitions –

No awards or recognitions tonight.

VII. General Public Comment Period -

Mayor will acknowledge no more than five speakers. Speakers have five-minute limits.

There were no public speakers at this meeting.

VIII. Routine Business/Consent - (action)

All consent items may be approved in one motion. Items requiring further discussion may be pulled and voted upon separately.

- A.) Approval of Regular Board meeting minutes- July 27th, August 8th, and August 24th- J. Dylan Blankley, Town Clerk
- B.) Resolution removing Parcel ID 1402501 off of Kensington Dr. from the Town of North Wilkesboro Surplus property list. -Holly Minton, Town Manager
- C.) Budget Amendments- Connie Bauguess, Finance Director

The motion to approve the Routine Business/Consent items was made by Commissioner Church and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Hall. Motion unanimously carries, (5-0).

IX. Manager's/Town Attorney's Report/Emerging Issues -

Town Manager Holly R. Minton & Town Attorney Daniel Johnson

Manager Minton's report included the following:

- The consulting contract with Sanford Holshouser has been signed. The leadership team for

the group discussions has been selected, with a first meeting set for the beginning of October.

- Manager Minton stated that the raw water intake project is still in the planning phase and is progressing slowly. Representatives from McGill Associates will be surveying properties along the Yadkin River in the following two weeks. This should allow us to begin moving with those plans.
- The auditors will be on-site next week. Last year, there was an issue with the audit being completed on time. A stipulation with the new auditor was that the audit be completed on time or early, and the new auditor would be on-site for the second time to meet this stipulation.
- The contract with WithersRavenel was signed today for the Capital Improvement Plan. Manager Minton expressed excitement over this project getting started, and part of this plan is a vision with the community and board members.
- The park's master plan is proceeding. The Council of Government has sent a survey they plan to circulate to move forward with the park's master plan. We need to get input from the community on the master plan.
- Tomorrow morning, the Leadership Wilkes team will be visiting. Leadership Wilkes is a group from the Wilkes Chamber of Commerce, and Mayor Hauser is a part of the group. Manager Minton and staff will be informing the group about North Wilkesboro, how the town operates, and new things on the horizon.

Emerging Issues

Commissioner Palmer requested an update on the 10th Street drain work. Manager Minton replied that the 10th Street Stormwater Project is nearing completion. There was a four to five-day delay due to asphalt availability. As of today, the asphalt has been poured. When staff dug down, there needed to be an adjustment because what was supposed to be underground was not the case. There were abandoned DOT water lines underground, but Public Utilities Director David Poore addressed this with the contractor, Iron Mountain, and the project is nearing completion ahead of the Apple Festival.

Commissioner Palmer inquired what it would take to make the parcel off of Kensington Dr., Parcel ID 1402501, part of B-Street Park. Manager Minton suggested we could, but did not know it would be necessary now. The board voted to remove it from the surplus property list. Manager Minton commented that if the town makes plans for B-Street Park, it could be integrated at that time. Commissioner Palmer requested a note placed on the property so a future board does not surplus the property again. Manager Minton replied that the park's footprint could be changed to include the parcel. Commissioner Palmer requested that Manager Minton look into options for the parcel.

Town Attorney Daniel Johnson has nothing to report.

X. Consideration of Old Business-

D.) Public Hearing for alleyway closure on J-Street. - *Meredith Detsch, Planning Director*

Commissioner Palmer requested to recuse himself from the alleyway closure based on the counsel of Town Attorney Daniel Johnson due to a potential conflict of interest.

The motion to allow Commissioner Palmer to recuse himself from the public hearing and the vote thereafter was made by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Church. Motion unanimously carries, (4-0).

Mayor Marc Hauser opened the public meeting.

Planning Director Detsch's presentation included the following:

- Applicant Lisa Pardee in attendance
- The alleyway is a small piece of land between Ms. Pardee's property. She would like to put up a fence; to do so, you cannot cross over the town's right-of-way. All required notifications were sent out by staff, and Ms. Pardee is the only citizen affected. Staff also placed the signage necessary on the property and created the required flat with a resolution.
- There were no further questions or comments by the Board of Commissioners, Town Staff, or citizens.

With no further comments, Mayor Hauser closed the public hearing.

The motion to approve Lisa Welborn Pardee's request of the alleyway closure between lots

9, 11, and 12 of J Street was made by Commissioner Parsons and seconded by Commissioner Church. Motion unanimously carries, (4-0), Commissioner Palmer recused.

Commissioner Palmer rejoined the meeting.

E.) Personnel Policy for shared leave for staff- *Holly Minton, Town Manager & Crystal Kenner, Payroll/Personnel.*

Manager Minton presented the report on the shared leave policy. Over the last 30 days, all staff were provided with the introduced changes to the shared leave policy. Most of the changes were procedural in how they were approved. All feedback received from staff during the 30-day receive period was positive. The changes will allow the process to become more streamlined. Manager Minton then requested that the board proceed with a motion.

The motion to approve the personnel policy revision changing language and procedure for shared leave was made by Commissioner Church and seconded by Commissioner Hall. Motion unanimously carries, (5-0).

XI. Consideration of New Business –

F.) Introductory discussion: Contracting the creation of a Unified Development Ordinance- *Meredith Detsch, Planning Director & Sarah Davis, Planner 1*

Planning Director Detsch presented the Uniform Development Ordinance (UDO) discussion. She stated that one of the board's goals has been to make the ordinances more development-friendly. The current ordinance is difficult to navigate. The staff started with the sign ordinance. The time it took to complete three articles would not be helpful in the time set by the board. Ms. Detsch stated that she began to investigate the cost of getting a Unified Development Ordinance and to see what it would take to have a consultant come in and help. This is just a conversation without commitment. A Unified Development Ordinance would put the town's ordinances into one book. Upon her hiring, Ms. Detsch made her book containing the ordinances, including zoning, subdivision, sidewalks, and cell phone towers. Without this, staff must pull multiple documents to answer a simple question. The UDO intends to level the playing field for development in a single document in one location. Currently, there are two to three town codes and two stand-alone ordinances; this would put them all into one book. Many of these documents are housed in Municode. Ms. Detsch still wants to use Municode, but development is rapidly changing. A UDO would streamline the lengthy text amendment process. An estimated staff timeline would be five years as a conservative estimate.

Commissioner Church requested how long it would take for a consultant to complete and if the town had received bids for this project. Ms. Detsch replied that their timeframe would be two years due to the cost, and there was only one estimate as a start to the process, but she could get more. Manager Minton commented that there will be multiple bids if we proceed with the UDO. This discussion gives a baseline cost compared to the in-house cost. \$46,000 is a steep price tag, but considering staff time over five years with lower expertise on other community's ordinance practices. Ms. Detsch and Ms. Davis cannot know everything about everything. Professional services would push us to a better document. Manager Minton also stated that we need to consider if we want to pursue outside of a budget cycle or if we want to wait until the next budget. Manager Minton expressed some hesitancy about doing this outside of the budget cycle. Another option is waiting until January with six payments in this budget year and the rest in the next budget year. There are several options, but staff see this as the best recommendation based on recent feedback. Three planning directors have built the current ordinances with significant adjustments, making the document less coherent.

Commissioner Parsons commented that the ordinance document can be ambiguous. Manager Minton agreed. Commissioner Day communicated that it is essential and suggested that staff move forward because it is hard to get good work done. Commissioner Church concluded that the cost is cheap compared to staff time. Ms. Detsch commented that the board expects quicker results, and staff cannot provide those fast results. Commissioner Day stated that we would find other issues as we progress, and the board can support those issues. Manager Minton clarified that the work would be completed over one year but could be contracted to pay over two years. Mayor Hauser communicated that in getting to know the staff, they have enough to do without this project, especially to be completed in one year. The plan would allow staff to catch up. It would place everything together in the same document for citizens and staff. It would also be more efficient and streamlined as an asset to everyone if the contractor could complete the project in a year and pay for it over two fiscal years. Manager Minton replied that with a third

party involved, they have the knowledge to justify any changes to the board. The board then discussed the UDO further.

Ms. Detsch stated that quality growth requires a quality ordinance to back it up. We need to decide what is important to enforce and what is not. Commissioner Palmer asked if this would address the whole document. Ms. Detsch replied that is what we want. Commissioner Palmer asked if the 3rd party understands who we are as a town. Ms. Detsch answered that third parties go toward strictness and form-based code, but if you enter into a contract saying what we want with a clear outline and continuously meet with them, we can craft the right document. Manager Minton commented that part of the contract would be meeting with the planning board, Board of Commissioners, and listening to local voices to craft the document. They do this for a living and understand the differences between a North Wilkesboro and a Winston-Salem.

Commissioner Palmer questioned about economic development. If we were to join Wilkesboro for a code, would it be a good idea to do that before doing our own UDO? Commissioner Parsons responded no that the ideologies in the two towns are different from each other. Commissioner Parsons sat on the steering committee between the two towns and their perception of their ordinances and what we perceive of our ordinances are very different. He clarified that Wilkesboro's focus on their plan is very different from ours. This plan benefits us entirely. Commissioner Palmer commented that he would like to see what economic development professionals would say about this plan to think big for the community. Andrew Palmer is always for anything that may benefit us as a community. Ms. Detsch commented that the two towns and the county work well together on the flood plain maps and the outdoor economy plan but do not work together daily. There will be public meetings regarding the flood plain in November. Commissioner Palmer questioned if the ordinances could hurt economic development. Commissioner Parsons replied that is why we are pushing to clean up our ordinances. The board recently changed the zoning for multifamily and general business because we were very restrictive to become more developer-friendly. A UDO does not preclude us from joining with Wilkesboro or the county instead, it gives a streamlined direction.

Manager Minton stated that we intentionally did not request a decision tonight. We need careful thought and consideration. We can meet with the county, Wilkesboro, and the EDC. Ms. Nichoals requested that a potential UDO be presented to the planning board in increments for public review. Commissioner Parsons requested who could help us with the UDO besides In-Focus who performs our code enforcement. He would also like to see a two-budget split but had questions about where the half would come from out of the budget cycle. We must be able to pay without imposing a burden on the town. Commissioner Parsons requested a timeline for the contract. Mayor Hauser stated that the town would take the next step carefully and proceed. Manager Minton replied that the staff would provide financial information and that the cost may come out of contingency. Ms. Detsch commented that Concord and Kannapolis performed a unified UDO, which did not work.

XII. Closed Session- *No closed session tonight.*

XIII. Adjourn-

With no other comments or concerns, Mayor Hauser called for a motion to adjourn. The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Church and seconded by Commissioner Hall. The meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

Marc R. Hauser, MAYOR

J. Dylan Blankley, Town Clerk

Approved: _____