

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

September 5, 2017

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Cramerton met in work session on Tuesday, September 5, 2017 at 6:00 p.m., in the G.M. Michael Room at the Cramerton Town Hall.

Board Members present: Mayor Will Cauthen; Mayor Pro Tem Demetrios Koutsoupas, Commissioners Dixie Abernathy, Houston Helms, Susan Neeley, and Donald Rice.

Staff Present: David Pugh, Town Manager; Anthony Fox, Interim Town Attorney; Greg Ratchford, Police Chief; Brad Adams, Deputy Police Chief; and Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk.

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum: Mayor Cauthen called the 6:00 p.m. meeting to order and determined there was a quorum.

A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to enter into closed session under N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3) Consult with the attorney to protect the attorney-client privilege. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice and approved by all.

Adjournment: Upon return to open session with no further action being taken, a motion was made by Commissioner Helms to adjourn the closed session. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas and approved by all.

7:00 p.m. Bi-Monthly Session:

Board Members present: Mayor Will Cauthen; Mayor Pro Tem Demetrios Koutsoupas; Commissioners Dixie Abernathy, Houston Helms, Susan Neeley, and Donald Rice.

Staff Present: David Pugh, Town Manager; Anthony Fox, Interim Town Attorney; Greg Ratchford, Police Chief; Dave Pettine, Planning Director; Joel Lineberger, Finance Director; and Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk.

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum: Mayor Cauthen called the 7:00 p.m. meeting to order and determined there was a quorum.

Invocation: Given by Attorney Fox.

Pledge of Allegiance: Given by all.

Adoption of Agenda for this meeting: A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas to adopt the proposed agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy and approved by all.

Public Comment: David Starrett, 384 Woodlawn Avenue, stated he would like to express his feelings regarding the proposed Veterans Memorial and to have everyone think about Cramerton of the past. He stated years ago every block in town had some type of connection with a veteran whether it was family or someone they knew who had been injured or who had died. Mr. Starrett stated that since there is no longer a draft requirement the military connection has been lost. He advised the Board that he wanted the Veterans Memorial to be a teaching memorial with incidental learning. He wants the younger generations to be aware of the sacrifices that were made by the veterans. Mr. Starrett stated the Veterans Memorial should inspire respect and give honor. He stated he does not agree with locating the Veterans Memorial on Goat Island as there will be limited exposure which will not encourage repeat visits and no incidental learning. Mr. Starrett stated the best location for the Veterans Memorial would be at Centennial Center Park. He stated he saw at least sixty people out walking in the downtown area tonight. He proposed to the Board that consideration be given to relocating the gazebo to the back side of Goat Island. He stated it would be a drastic mistake to put the Veterans Memorial on Goat Island and he does not think there will be a lot of visitation created by people using the Carolina Thread Trail. Mr. Starrett

stated he had served on the Branding and Marketing Committee and stated he was proud of the “So Blessed” logo that was agreed upon and that we are so blessed to stand here and to have the opportunity to build a memorial to honor and respect the veterans.

Ted Reece, 306 Lakewood Road, stated he agreed with Mr. Starrett’s comments and advised the Board that he thinks placing the Veterans Memorial at the proposed site is a tremendous mistake. He has spoken with others who agree that the site needs to be in a more visible site. Mr. Reece stated the downtown area already has sidewalks and is used daily. He stated he does not think the Carolina Thread Trail will be used in the same manner and most people will drive to the Goat Island area and not get out of their vehicles. He asked that the Board rethink this and find a different solution. Mr. Reece stated he spoke with several Lakewood residents and they do not want to see the traffic increase in their area.

Proclamation in Recognition of Remembrance Day: Mayor Cauthen read the proclamation in recognition of Remembrance Day, September 11th.

Presentation by Joel Long of Greater County Development Corporation: Mr. Long provided an update to the Board regarding projects as October is “Gaston Outside GO” month. The GCDC is a business led coalition formed to boost job growth and increase tax base. Mr. Long stated the GCDC is pro-growth and continues to work with Gaston College, Belmont Abbey, and local schools to provide qualified workers to assist in recruiting businesses. The Catawba Crossing Bridge is a top priority as it will provide connectivity to Charlotte, Charlotte/Douglas International Airport, I-485, and the River District. Mr. Long stated this project has been given a route number and can be rescored as a regional project and can now compete for state funding.

Mr. Long advised the Board that a group of consultants has been hired to conduct a review of the types of businesses that need to be recruited to Gaston County. Four videos have been prepared showcasing what’s great about Gaston County. He stated the month of October will have a different theme each week. The first week is business/economic, second week is education/workforce, third week is restaurant/retail, and the fourth week is culture/recreation. This year GO-toberfest will be held on October 30th in the City of Mount Holly. There will be a street festival serving GO brews from local Gaston County breweries. The Board thanked Mr. Long for his presentation. He thanked the Board for their continued support.

Recognition of Cramerton Police Officer Nevins: Deputy Chief Adams introduced Officer Nevins and advised the Board that he is in the second phase of training and is a recent graduate of BLET. Officer Nevins stated he is from Atlanta, Georgia and is an active member of the South Carolina National Guard. He stated he was thankful to be a part of the town and is in the process of learning about the history of Cramerton. He acknowledged the Police Department for the training that he is receiving and for the Board’s support of the Police Department. The Mayor and Board welcomed him.

Agenda Items Not Requiring A Public Hearing:

- **Board of Commissioners: Consider approval of the June 1, 2017 and June 22, 2017 proposed Board of Commissioners meeting minutes.** Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked that a correction be made to the proposed June 1, 2017 meeting minutes. He asked that the sentence under Topics for Discussion for Each Commissioner regarding the use of a Christmas card stamp be amended to read “and this stamp could be used as a Christmas card stamp and become an annual event” instead of ‘would could’. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked that a correction be made to the proposed June 22, 2017 meeting minutes to the adjournment time to “11:54 p.m.” not 11.54 p.m. A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to approve the amended minutes with corrections for June 1, 2017 and June 22, 2017. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helms and approved by all.
- **Planning and Zoning: Cramerton Projects Update.** Mr. Pettine stated the information presented is an overview of the status of the current projects along with housing growth projections. Discussion was held regarding the importance of when projects will start in order to update the police, fire, and public works departments so they can begin preparing for delivery of services. Mr. Pettine reminded everyone this is a fluid document and was prepared without specifics from the developers. Mayor Cauthen thanked Mr. Pettine for the project update information and stated he felt the two documents presented work well together. Mr. Pettine stated the proposed apartment projects are on hold as utilities are being coordinated

with True Homes to align with development of their proposed project. The Planning Director stated both of the apartment projects are on hold as the fill dirt is needed from one site for placement on the other site. Commissioner Abernathy asked where is the funding for the Lakewood Greenway is being received from. Mr. Pettine stated there is a \$720,000.00 federal grant through the Department of Transportation and \$60,000.00 from the Carolina Thread Trail. The Cramer Mountain Sidewalk is being funded with an NCDOT Grant. The Central Park Project is being financed through the town's current budget. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked about the "Buddy Harper Realty" signage at the Market Street and Eighth Avenue Extension parcel. Mr. Pettine stated he was not aware of the signage but will follow up to see if Mr. Harper is marketing these lots.

- **Cramerton Board of Commissioners: Cramerton Merchant's Association.** The Town Manager stated the Cramerton Merchant's Association has requested \$500.00 from the town to help support the CMA for 2017. The Town Manager advised the Board that a "special projects expenditure" line item was created in this year's budget for 2017-2018 for \$2,500.00. There is also \$2,000.00 available in the line entry "miscellaneous expenses" that can be used for these type of requests. Mayor Cauthen stated the CMA recently donated funds to the Parks and Recreation Department for a new volleyball net and is considering possibly donating some additional funds for outdoor furniture. Attorney Fox stated he researched this request and it is authorized under N.C.G.S.160A.456 giving authorization for a municipality to grant funds as part of community development and activities regarding economic development and is being granted for a public purpose.

Commissioner Abernathy asked if this was an annual request and for additional specifics regarding this request. Mayor Cauthen stated this is the second year for this request and the town assisted in promoting the creation of the CMA to encourage economic development. Commissioner Rice asked if the funding would be used for a specific project or for operating expenses. Mayor Cauthen said there are minimal operating costs for the CMA and this funding would be used to assist with a festival being planned that would benefit the local businesses and provide donations to be used for local projects by the Community Committee and the Parks and Recreation Department. A motion was made by Commissioner Rice to approve the \$500.00 request from the CMA. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Helms and approved by all. The Town Manager stated the funding will be taken out of the "special project expenditures" line entry of the Board's budget. Mr. Pugh stated he would notify the CMA of the approved request.

- **Cramerton Veterans Memorial: Update from Ad Hoc Committee.** Mayor Cauthen stated Gary Fankhauser with Viz attended the August 24th Cramerton Historical Society meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board along with the Community Committee members were in attendance. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated the meeting was well attended and Mr. Fankhauser received a lot of information and a good perspective on the town and its unique history. The Town Manager stated an e-mail will be sent out tomorrow regarding scheduling a meeting to follow up with the Veterans Memorial ad hoc committee. Commissioner Helms asked if Mr. Fankhauser was in receipt of all the information he needs. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated Mr. Fankhauser received a timeline and some other documents from the Cramerton Historical Society. Mr. Fankhauser stated at the meeting he would like to follow up further with the Cramerton Historical Society and veterans. Mayor Cauthen stated the ad hoc committee could determine the next step.

Commissioner Abernathy asked if an informal database has been created and is this information being collected and who is collecting the data. Mayor Cauthen stated information was gathered at each of the veterans meetings. Commissioner Helms stated that Mr. Fankhauser has been collecting the data at each meeting. Mayor Cauthen recommended that a date be set for the ad hoc committee to meet.

- **Village at Cramerton Mills: Consider "First Amendment to Purchase and Sale Contract" for firing range property.** Attorney Fox advised the Board of the request for amendment to contract regarding the sale of the town's firing range property from the buyer, VCM Bowman, LLC. This amendment to the contract will permit the buyer to extend the closing date by sixty-five days to November 20, 2017 by delivering \$25,000.00 to the Town Clerk by September 14, 2017. This payment would be non-refundable to the buyer except in

the event of a seller default, and would be applicable to the purchase price. Mayor Cauthen asked if the \$25,000.00 was outside of the purchase price and Attorney Fox stated no. Commissioner Helms asked about the number of amendments that can be made to the original contract. Attorney Fox stated the contract can be amended by mutual consent. A motion was made by Commissioner Helms to approve the request for “First Amendment to Purchase and Sale Contract” regarding the sale of the town’s firing range property. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy and approved by all.

Mayor Cauthen stated a meeting was recently held with Nate Bowman to discuss the phasing of the project. Brookline Homes and AV Homes/Bonterra will be building model homes. Signage information has been presented for review to the Planning Director. Mayor Cauthen stated the community pool is still part of the amenities that will be constructed. Commissioner Neeley asked if the firing range was discussed during that meeting. Mayor Cauthen stated the discussion was in regards to use of that land for light industrial. Chief Ratchford stated that the Police Department continues to use the firing range even as the number of homes in that area increases.

- **2017 Gaston County Municipal Elections: Consider cancelling the Thursday, November 2, 2017 meeting due to it being the week leading up to Election Day.** A motion was made by Commissioner Neeley to cancel the Board of Commissioners meeting scheduled for Thursday, November 2nd. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy and approved by all.

Manager’s Report:

- **Update of Road Paving Project:** Mr. Pugh stated B&N Grading began work on Mayflower Avenue and has recovered three to four inches of asphalt. The custom built drain for the Front Street alleyway has been delivered. NCDOT installed a handicap ramp at the Tenth Street/Front Street intersection Bridge. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated this should assist with the right hand turn at that intersection. Commissioner Abernathy asked why the Front Street roadway has not been completely finished as there are several homes near the businesses where paving is incomplete. The Town Manager explained there are some drainage issues near this area and the paving project will be completed once the custom built drain is installed in the alleyway. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated that the Center Street businesses need to be kept notified of the proposed timeline and how garbage service and other delivery services may be affected. The Town Manager stated that Rodney Baker has remained in communication with the businesses and that Doffer’s Canteen moved their dumpsters a couple of months ago in preparation for this project. The Town Manager advised the Board that he will ask Mr. Baker to follow up with the business owners and advise them that the custom built drain will soon be installed and of the current timeline for this project. Mr. Pugh stated that the paving work will continue with crack sealing on Center Street, Ninth Street, Washington Street, and Scoggins Street. Drainage work is being completed on Riverside Drive along with crack sealing.
- **“Big Board” – Update on Architect Study for Town Hall Building Project:** The Town Manager stated that one of the “big board” items to be discussed by the Board was the architect study for the Town Hall Building Project. The main goal was to have the roof repaired and this has been completed. The other part to this study was having repairs made to the windows and walls that are damaged. Talley & Smith Architecture was contracted and have completed an investigative study. Commissioner Helms asked if this was a budgeted expense and the Finance Director advised this is part of a capital project. Talley & Smith will perform an in depth study of whether the windows need to be replaced and what is the root cause of the water damage. The Finance Director stated that he has also met with James Holder who was part of the original MV Momentum group that renovated the Town Hall building and window replacements were recommended at the time of renovation. Chief Ratchford stated the side of the building that is considered the newest addition has always leaked. Mr. Lineberger stated water is coming in through the mortar joints and there are no weep holes to allow water to drain out.

The Board discussed other items that can be added to the “Big Board” list such as the repair to the pier at the South Fork Village Apartments. Commissioner Helms recommended that any Board member who has an item for the “Big Board” should e-mail this information to the Town Manager.

- **Attorney Update:** The Town Manager stated five responses to the request for proposal for an attorney has been received. The ad hoc committee is scheduled to meet at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, September 8th. Mayor Cauthen stated he will be not able to attend that meeting on Friday morning.

Update from Two Rivers Utilities:

Mike Bynum reported that TRU responded to forty-eight water meter related service requests, repaired two water leaks, and no sewer related calls. Twenty-five preventative maintenance requests were performed at the pump stations. Nine water samples were tested for water quality control and all were in compliance with the State Drinking Water Quality Standards.

Mr. Bynum advised that the surveying of the second phase of sewer easement clearing on Cramer Mountain is targeted to begin in one to two weeks. Letters with maps have been mailed to affected property owners to ensure they are aware in advance.

Town Attorney: Attorney Fox reported that a letter has been sent to Bob Wilson, owner of Rowboat Dock and Dredge, with a copy to Mr. Colter regarding the damaged pier at the South Fork Village Apartments. Mayor Cauthen asked if any responses have been received concerning an engineer or a pier expert to check the condition of the observation decks and piers. Mr. Pugh stated he contacted several of the coastal town managers and to date has not received a response. The Board encouraged this be done as soon as possible. Attorney Fox stated a draft waiver letter has been created regarding the VCM project.

Town Clerk: The Town Clerk stated that Carolyn Helms will need to be considered for reappointment prior to October 12, 2017 as that is when her ABC Board term ends. The application packet has been mailed to Mrs. Helms.

Police Department: Chief Ratchford stated the Police Department will be holding a reception on Thursday, October 5th, at 5:00 p.m. at Town Hall to celebrate their 50th anniversary. He advised the Board that the speed spy signs for Eighth Avenue have been ordered. Rodney Baker is working with AKW Electrical to install electrical power as the speed signs have the capability of being turned on and off automatically. Mr. Lineberger stated a budget amendment can be prepared at a later date if needed for this expenditure.

Fire Department: Chief Foulk was absent.

Planning: Mr. Pettine stated a bike plan steering committee meeting was held last week and information was received and draft maps were reviewed regarding identifying loops and routes. Mr. Smallwood has been working independently with another group and Mr. Pettine stated he is going to see how this will dovetail into the current plan. A draft plan should be available to present to the public in November and to the Board of Commissioners.

The Bike Exchange picked up their zoning permits this week and construction should begin in the next nine months. Mayor Cauthen asked if both sides would be graded. Mr. Pettine stated the flex space area would not be graded at this time.

The Planning Director stated a conference call with NCDOT is scheduled for next week to discuss any significant challenges to the Cramer Mountain Sidewalk engineering plans and any possible changes with the grading or elevation.

Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas asked if there had been any follow up with NCDOT regarding the possibility of allowing the trucks at ABF Freight to start turning right due to the school traffic and the McAdenville Bridge being out of service. Mr. Pettine stated he would follow up with Gary Spangler with NCDOT regarding these changes along with extension of the traffic light timing at that intersection.

Commissioner Neeley asked for an update regarding the speed study in the Timberlake neighborhood. Commissioner Helms stated those results were presented and discussed at the last Board meeting. Commissioner Neeley said the results were discussed but she did not remember a decision being made. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas commented that this information had been released to the Board via e-mail regarding Cimarron Boulevard. Mayor Cauthen stated that Commissioner Abernathy had asked about the traffic calming for Lakewood at the last meeting as

to how information was going to be communicated back to the neighborhood and when would this item be brought back to the Board for further discussion. Commissioner Abernathy stated in the minutes that were approved tonight it states “the Town Manager stated with the traffic calming device policy now in place the information can be analyzed and brought back to the Board”. Commissioner Helms stated he remembered discussing the Cimarron Boulevard speed study at the last Board meeting and having a follow up conversation with Chief Ratchford. Mayor Cauthen stated Cimarron Boulevard was classified as a Class A providing increased police enforcement. Chief Ratchford stated the status of these studies are currently all at the Board’s level to interpret and determine what the next steps will be.

The Town Manager advised Commissioner Abernathy that he forwarded an e-mail with the bullet points regarding communication with the Lakewood neighborhood to Mayor Cauthen as he is the liaison for the Lakewood neighborhood regarding increased police enforcement along with the issuance of citations. Commissioner Abernathy stated she thought discussion would come back to the Board to see what impact that option was making in the Lakewood area and to see if other options need to be considered. She said she brought this item up in order to see what the timeline was. The Town Manager said the increased police presence is already in place in the Lakewood area and Chief Ratchford said another speed study is scheduled to occur in October and November. Commissioner Neeley asked that the Planning Director or Town Manager call her to discuss the Cimarron Boulevard speed study.

Finance: Mr. Lineberger stated no monthly reports for August are being presented at tonight’s meeting. Property taxes are coming in. He stated that the bank credit cards for several departments were compromised and the accounts had to be closed and new bank cards issued.

Parks and Recreation: Mr. Smallwood was absent.

Topics of Discussion for Each Commissioner:

Commissioner Neeley thanked Mr. Pettine for the information about tracking of foot traffic he provided at the Cramerton Historical Society meeting. She asked if this information could be updated with another foot traffic count. Mr. Pettine stated the mobile units can be provided through the MPO and can be installed anywhere there is foot traffic including pathways. The last count was completed in March of 2015. Mr. Pettine stated he would contact Hank Graham with the MPO regarding scheduling a timeframe for a foot traffic count.

Commissioner Rice offered kudos to the Parks and Recreation Department for increasing awareness of the local trails by offering a program to walk and/or run the local trails on Tuesday mornings and evenings.

Commissioner Rice stated he would not be in attendance at the September 21st Board meeting. He asked that everyone keep the residents in the path of Hurricane Irma in their thoughts and prayers.

Mayor Cauthen stated he will not be at the September 21st Board meeting. He thanked Mr. Smallwood for providing the opportunity for individuals to visit the trails. Mayor Cauthen stated he attended one of the afternoon events and there were about fifteen people in attendance and most indicated they had never been on the Carolina Thread Trail area behind the high school.

Mayor Cauthen stated he has a local meeting scheduled on Friday to meet with a Director of Operations of a local business to discuss a mural project.

Commissioner Abernathy stated she had nothing to report.

Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas stated he hoped that everyone enjoyed their Labor Day holiday. He advised the Board that the next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting will be held on Monday, September 11th at Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. He stated upcoming events include the youth fishing tournament on September 23rd and the fall carnival in October. Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas announced that his son was born on Friday and everyone is doing well.

Commissioner Helms congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Koutsoupas regarding the birth of the baby. He stated that CCOG is struggling with low membership and encouraged the Board to help promote them when possible. Commissioner Helms stated he attended the recent Gaston County

Chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting and indicated that Bob Clay and Representative Patrick McHenry were the speakers. Mr. Clay spoke regarding the Catawba Crossing Bridge and the importance of staying in direct contact with the local state representatives regarding our support of this project. Representative McHenry spoke about federal level issues such as bridges, health care, and North Korea.

Commissioner Helms stated he attended the GCDC meeting and the topic was preparation for the land use plan and development. He stated Gastonia's City Manager Michael Peoples was there and they discussed how the county's southeast area is developing as a residential area and the Catawba Crossing Bridge project would encourage commercial development.

Commissioner Helms thanked Mr. Starrett, Mr. Reece, and Mr. Queen for attending tonight's meeting. He stated both the Senior's Luncheon and Cramerton Bunch Dinner are well led and organized. He said he sent out an e-mail regarding litter pickup he had done around Cramerton. He stated he has noticed that there have been people on the Baltimore pier even though it is roped off.

A motion was made to enter into closed session regarding NCGS 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 by Commissioner Abernathy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Neeley and approved by all.

Upon return to open session, a motion was made by Commissioner Abernathy to purchase three months of service credit for Chief Ratchford from the Local Government Employee's Retirement System as there was a three month delay at the time of his employment in 1990. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rice and approved by all.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Susan Neeley to adjourn at 10:08 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy and passed by unanimous vote.

Mayor Will Cauthen

ATTEST:

Wilene Cunningham, Town Clerk