

Town of Cramerton Board of Commissioners Meeting
February 20, 2024 – 6:00 p.m.
G. M. Michael Commission Chamber – Town Hall, Cramerton, NC

Mayor Nelson Wills called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. on February 20, 2024, in the G. M. Michael Commission Chamber, Town Hall, Cramerton, North Carolina and determined there was a quorum. Commissioner Abernathy presented the Invocation and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: Mayor Nelson Wills

Commissioners: Richard Atkinson
Scott Kincaid
Kathy Ramsey
Dixie Abernathy
Jennifer Ramsey

Town Manager Zach Ollis
Assistant Town Manager Josh Watkins
Town Attorney Karen Wolter

ITEM 3: ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Town Manager Ollis requested to add item 5a Community Committee Report and Updates from presenter Pastor Michael Goins under Proclamations and Presentation.

A motion was made to approve the agenda as amended by Commissioner Abernathy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner K. Ramsey. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

ITEM 4: PUBLIC COMMENT

Jason McAuliffe 225 Market Street Cramerton – He purchased the property at 225 Market Street, former Baker Furniture Store. He’s working on redeveloping the property into 32000 sq ft of retail and office space. The new spaces will be inline retail where customers can walk from store to store. The existing stores will remain as we add more tenants in 2024 and into the future. He is looking forward to being a part of the community.

ITEM 5: Proclamations and Presentation

5a. Community Committee Report and Updates

Paston Michael Goins gave an update on some of the activities that the Community Committee has put together for the town. The committee has partnered with Stuart Cramer for a story walk during the month of March. There will be stories throughout Cramerton. You can walk to different locations within the Town, read a portion of the story and move onto the next area to read more.

The neighbors’ helping neighbors’ program will continue. This program is in place to help those that might need assistance. Such as yardwork, or repairs to a home. To make this program successful volunteers are needed.

Something new that will be taking place is “Yard of the Month”. The committee will be going around the town/community and neighborhoods looking for those to receive this award.

This year’s River Sweep is set for April 20th. More information to come on this and volunteers are needed as well for this event. You can receive updates on our Facebook page Cramerton Community Committee.

There are plans for a festival “The Goat Festival” on September 14th. More information coming on this as well.

ITEM 6: Consent Agenda

6a: Stormwater Ordinance

The new Town of Cramerton Stormwater Ordinance has been in the works since the beginning of September. Staff have conducted extensive research to ensure the Town is addressing current and future stormwater challenges. This ordinance updates development standards to ensure new projects and developments incorporate effective stormwater management measures while also minimizing the impact of development on our local hydrological system.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kincaid to approve the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

ITEM 7: Agenda Items Requiring a Public Hearing

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tempore to open the Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

7a. Public Hearing for Rezoning Case #RZ23-03 74 Auto Group Conditional Zoning Amendment

Assistant Town Manager Watkins gave a brief history of this property and the rezoning petitions that have taken place over the years. A full presentation with aerial view photos is available in the agenda packet.

The aerial view photos (5030 and 5034) that were provided dates back to 2000. At that time the two lots were being used as an automobile sales lot. This was prior to the current LDC Ordinance that was adopted in 2002.

An aerial photo was provided for the year 2012. In 2012 the use of the two lots for auto sales stopped on the property.

Mr. Watkins explained the term Legal Nonconforming uses, some may call it being “Grandfathered” in. For that use to be maintained it must not cease use of the property for more than 180 days.

In 2018 the appiccate approached the town about establishing the historical use of the property in this location.

Mr. Watkins referred to the minutes from the 2018 Planning Board meeting regarding the applicant’s request. Minutes state that the applicant is seeking the use for Auto Sales. At the time of the request the Town’s Land Use Plan recommended commercial/mixed use in this area and this would be consistent with the request. Auto Sales was consistent with Commercial/Mixed Use component of existing land use plan.

There were 8 conditions for approval. Three of those had to do with eliminating cars that needed repair and repair of vehicles; No junked/inoperable vehicles, Storage buildings on site not to be used for storage or service, no automobile work to be conducted on site. Based on the minutes the Harrisons(appiccate) were in agreement with those proposed conditions.

June 8, 2022 the Land Use Plan was updated making the 2011-2031 Land Use Plan no longer valid. With this update the area along Wilkinson between Market Street and Vale Street is no longer Commercial/Mixed Use. It’s now designated as Neighborhood Retail.

The request was brought before the Planning Board earlier this month and the board recommended approval but it was based on the prior use of the property; not consistent with the current Land Use Plan.

Also, amended the recommended conditions of approval that staff had requested.

The staff’s recommendation is the denial of the rezoning request, being that it is not consistent with Land Use Plan. If another request came in along this section of Wilkinson Boulevard, staff would still recommend denial based on the Land Use Plan Recommendations.

No questions from the board at this time.

Mayor Wills opened the floor to public comments, starting off by reading the rules.

Danny Caldwell – He and his wife live directly across from the car lot. He voiced his concerns about the noise that occurs while working on cars. Also, there’s a flood light on the property that shines into their bedroom. At nighttime it’s excessively bright. He requested the board not to approve any rezoning.

Lynn Ferguson – She would like to oppose the proposed rezoning change at 5030 and 5034 Wilkinson Blvd. She and her husband live directly behind 5030. She voiced her concerns of the environmental impact of her property and the surrounding properties. She’s also concerned about the noise and the possibility of excessive inoperable vehicles on the property.

Paula Overcash Harrison – Mrs. Harrison is the co-applicant for this rezoning request. She stated their request in regard to auto repairs. All repairs would take place inside the enclosed garages. So, the noise to be limited. Also, we picked an area with the Planning Board where vehicles would be parked until they’re ready for sale. This area would provide a limited view from the public. We also are proposing to install an 8 foot fence along the property line to help with the site and noise issues.

The Salesman from 74 Auto Group spoke on behalf of the business. Currently I do check tire pressure, batteries, jump off vehicles and change tires not sure if that’s considered fixing cars or if that’s an issue.

The motion was made by Commissioner Kincaid to close the Public Hearing. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

Commissioner Kincaid stated that he listened to the Planning & Zoning Board meeting, and they did a fantastic job. However, with the inconsistency with the Land Use Plan I make a motion to deny R23-03 74 Auto Group Conditional Rezoning request. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Atkinson. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor. Request was denied.

ITEM 8: Agenda Items NOT Requiring a Public Hearing

8a. Statement of Consistency for #RZ23-03 74 Auto Group Conditional Zoning

Commissioner Kincaid made a motion to approve the first Statement of Consistency for Rezoning Case Number RZ23-01 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner J. Ramsey. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

8b. Department Introductions and Overview;

Police Chief Adams, Fire Chief Foulk, and Assistant Town Manager Josh Watkins, all introduced themselves to the board and gave an overview of their roles and responsibilities with the town and the department they represent.

8c. S23-02 Millstone Townhomes Preliminary Plat

Josh Watkins presented a preliminary plat request for S23-02 Millstone Townhomes. Staff requests that the board approve S23-02 Millstone Townhomes Preliminary Plat request.

The motion was made by Commissioner K. Ramsey to approve S23-02 Millstone Townhomes Preliminary Plat. The motion was seconded by Commissioner J. Ramsey. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

Commissioner Abernathy asked about the potential secondary egress out of the development. Is that showing on the plat that was presented?

Josh Watkins advised yes, showed on the map, listed as Grafton Trail. There’s a stub that would later be able to connect to the property beside Food Lion. When that vacant property is developed our ordinance will require them to make that connection, providing the secondary entrance.

8d. Corporate Resolution Authorizing Signers to Conduct Business on Behalf of the Town of Cramerton

Town Manager Ollis presented the resolution giving Mayor Wills, Zach Ollis, Josh Watkins, Carolyn (Michelle) Emory, Melissa Melton, and Brad Adams the authority to conduct business on behalf of the Town of Cramerton, sign checks.

Mayor Pro Tempore made the motion to approve the Corporation Resolution Authorizing Signers to Conduct Business on Behalf of the Town of Cramerton. The motion was seconded by Commissioner K. Ramsey. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

8e. Baltimore School Restoration Architect Proposal

Town Manager Ollis presented the Baltimore School Restoration Architect Proposal. This project was advertised along with Steve Austin and Mr. Ollis reached out to multiple people for a proposal. What's being presented is the bid we received.

Steve Austin, who currently manages the CDBG project on behalf of the town was present to answer questions.

Commissioner Kincaid made a motion to approve Innovative Design Group as the architect and staff will engage in contract negotiations. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abernathy. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

8f. Discussion of Trash RFQ Process

Town Manager Ollis gave an update on the most recent Trash RFQ. The RFQ was advertised, and a few vendors were notified. Proposals were received and a bid opening was held earlier this month. Staff plans to present a recommendation at the next formal BOC meeting in March.

8g. Discussion of Police Vehicle Purchase

Town Manager Ollis discussed with the board placing an order for 3 additional police vehicles. Typically, three vehicles are purchased each year for this department. The 3 for this fiscal year have been ordered. Unfortunately, they are taking longer to receive those vehicles than in the past. With the timing and delays staff feels it would be beneficial to go forward with placing an order for 6 verses just 3.

Funds to purchase these extra vehicles would be pulled from the fund balance. The upcoming 2024/2025 budget would not have funds allocated for those vehicles since they've already been purchased.

After discussions with the board. Mr. Ollis will work with the finance department on the numbers to review at the next meeting.

The motion was made by Commissioner Abernathy to approve the January 2, 2024, minutes as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kincaid. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor.

ITEM 9: Manager's Report

Mr. Ollis thanked staff for everything that's been going on. We've all been very busy. All the departments are working very hard and all is great.

ITEM 10: General Staff Reports

Department Staff reports are included in the agenda packets.

Director of Parks and Recreation Brandon Free advised that mulch will be going in this week at Goat Island Park.

No additional updates.

ITEM 11: Commissioners Comments

Commissioner Kincaid – Praised the Planning and Zoning Board for the dedication of and consideration that they put into each case is to be commended.

He commended staff for all their hard work on Goat Island.

He thanked Michael for coming and giving an update on the Community Committee. This committee is doing some outstanding things.

Commissioner K. Ramsey – She thanked staff for all they do to make sure things run seamlessly.

Giving follow up on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. At the next meeting there will be a candidate we will recommend for approval to service on the board. This will leave two additional seats available. Hopefully, those seats will be filled soon.

Mayor Pro Tempore Atkinson – The Historical Society is filling out an application to publish a book on Cramerton. Most Towns and Cities have these books. The books can be put in stores to sell, and we would receive royalties. As a fundraiser we can purchase them at half price and sell them at retail price.

We will need good vintage photographs. The more people we can get to go into the book, the greater the sells will be. Mr. Atkinson will be a point of contact if you have any photos you would like to have featured in the book.

Commissioner Abernathy – She thanked the attendees in person and on zoom that stayed for the meeting this evening. She thanked Brandon for getting the trail opened back up. Stated she knows how hard everyone has been working.

She requested the board if we can consider having our ordinances, specifically the appeal process, come before us for discussion and consideration at one of our meetings in March. She stated she has some specific questions about that. Has nothing to do with the great job Mr. Parks does enforcing our ordinances. She has some questions specifically about the appeal process for citizens.

She thanked the Citizens of Cramerton for allowing her to attend the NC Legue of Municipalities training conference last Thursday and Friday. She advised that she learned so much that she believes will strengthen her capacity to serve the citizens of Cramerton.

The Historical Society will host their annual Black History Month Celebration and Lector on Tuesday, February 27th at 6:30. She'd like to invite everyone to come to the Museum for this event.

Commissioner J. Ramsey – She thanked all the staff for all you do. Anytime I have a question you respond immediately.

Mayor Wills – He talked about attending the Mayor's Conference a couple of weeks ago. He touched on us working on getting grants. Staff are in a place to get creative, figure out all the opportunities that are available for the town.

Organizing a group of Mayors from the county, have had three meetings. These meetings are going well, taking a leadership role for us all to work together. Another meeting is scheduled for this Saturday with Belmont, Mt. Holly, Cramerton, Gastonia, Dallas, and Charlotte.

ITEM 12: Closed Session Pursuant to 143-318.11(5) – To establish, or to instruct the public body's staff of negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body.

A motion was made by Commissioner Abernathy to move into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(5). Commissioner Kincaid seconded the motion. All in favor.

A motion was made by Commissioner Kincaid to come out of closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318-11(5). Commissioner K. Ramsey seconded the motion. All in favor.

ITEM 13: Adjournment

A motion was made by Commissioner Abernathy to adjourn, and Commissioner K. Ramsey seconded. The vote was 5 to 0 in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 8:36pm.

ATTEST:

Missy Melton, Town Clerk

Nelson Wills, Mayor