

October 29, 2024 Special Meeting

Meeting minutes

Call to Order

Mayor Marla Thompson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Roll Call

Mayor Thompson conducted a roll call of board members. The following members were noted present: Alderman Tim Hertzelt, Alderman Allen Bumgarner, Alderman Genita Hill, Mayor Pro Tempore/Alderman Gary Lingerfelt, and Mayor Marla Thompson.

Alderman Phyllis Pennington was noted as absent with a signed Waiver of Notice requirement as per NC GS 160A-71.

Items for Discussion

Establishing a Designated Downtown Area

Town Manager James Cozart began the discussion by recapping a past grant application concerning a sidewalk project on First Avenue, which was denied due to the town lacking a designated downtown area. The purpose of this special meeting was to gather board members' thoughts on designating a downtown area, which would potentially make the town eligible for Department of Commerce downtown development grants.

Town Manager Cozart and Town Clerk Heather Minor had consulted with Western Piedmont Council of Government's (WPCOG) Ben Willis and Kyle Case regarding the grant, Tyler Mulligan from the UNC School of Government (UNC SOG), as well as, Adam Lovelady, and Jim Joyce, to understand the requirements and processes for designating a downtown area. The designated area proposed for discussion was from 22nd Street Southwest to 27th Street on First Avenue.

Town Clerk Minor explained procedural details, noting the anomaly of creating a downtown area from scratch, emphasized the importance of creating a central business district or zoning area to legally define and bind the new downtown area, and set a target to have definitive answer as to how to proceed by December.

Both Town Manager Cozart and Clerk Minor emphasized that creating a downtown area could shape the town's future, offering potential for transformation. The proposed area included landmarks like Circus Hall of Cream and Long View Drug, within which activities like business facade improvement, landscaping, and downtown revitalization could be facilitated.

Concerns raised by Mayor Marla Thompson related to potential requirements of designating the area and how such requirements would impact businesses. Town Manager Cozart explained that zoning changes might lead to different construction regulations but would not significantly affect the current status.

Alderman Hertzelt raised a concern about a car lot within the proposed area, to which Town Manager Cozart explained possible code enforcement actions to ensure better appearance standards.

Police Chief TJ Bates shared insights on the strategic aspects of developing a downtown area, outlining opportunities it presents from economic and community engagement perspectives. The speaker recounted historical instances of significant projects that positively impacted towns, suggesting similar visionary thinking for Long View.

Deputy Fire Chief Tyler Keener also expressed support, pointing out inadequate fire protection systems in existing dilapidated buildings and how the envisioned project could improve safety.

Lengthy discussions proceeded with input from all respective attendees, exploring urban design potential and discussions around the potential offer to purchase of nearby properties to stimulate development.

The pursuit designating a downtown area was enthusiastically supported by all members present, including verbal affirmations from Alderman Hill, Mayor Pro Tempore/Alderman Lingerfelt, Alderman Bumgarner, Alderman Hertzell, and Mayor Thompson.

Adjournment

Mayor Pro Tempore/Alderman Gary Lingerfelt made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Alderman Allen Bumgarner. The motion to adjourn the meeting was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 10:44a.m.

Staff present:

Town Manager James Cozart, Police Chief TJ Bates, Police Administrative Specialist Sidney Shirley, Deputy Fire Chief Tyler Keener, Finance Director Melissa Lalonde, Deputy Finance Director Denise Collins, IT Alan Bumgarner, Town Clerk Heather Minor