



C O U N C I L M I N U T E S JANUARY 26 & 27, 2024, SFD TOWN HALL

The meeting was called to order 1/26/24 at 5:03pm by Mayor Sessoms and introductions were made.

The following were present:

Council

- Tim Sessoms, Mayor
- Lynne Williams DeVaney, Mayor Pro-tem
- John Doggett
- Jonathan Hamilton
- Janelle Robinson
- Heath Clay

Staff

- Scott Whitaker, Town Manager
- Cheryl Gore, Manager Asst./Events Coordinator
- Jeff Goard, Parks & Recreation Director
- Dee Hall, Finance Director
- Sarah Tibbetts, Town Clerk
- Brad Rentz, Planning Manager
- Adam Schull, Facilitator, PTRC

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

DeVaney motioned to remove item 12A (“OSM-V text amendment & de-annexation threat”) from the agenda and to then approve the agenda as amended. The motion was seconded by Hamilton and carried unanimously. The meeting agenda was for Friday and Saturday.

RETREAT ROLES, GROUND RULES, & DECORUM

Adam Schull introduced himself and reviewed roles and ground rules.

REVIEW OF PARTICIPANTS’ STATED RETREAT GOALS

Schull asked Council to think through and discuss goals they have set for the retreat and what they hope to take away from the time spent together.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- A. Town Vision Statement:** Whitaker read the town vision statement and asked Council to keep it in mind as they worked through each Objective Area of the Comprehensive Plan (CP).
- B. Common Objective Areas (how we are doing in each area & barriers):** Schull and Whitaker presented the Comprehensive Plan’s common Objective Areas: 1) appropriate, limited commercial development; 2) sidewalk, bikeway, and trail system; 3) community character preservation; 4) transportation improvements; 5) water and sewer options; 6) appropriate housing and residential development; 7) park and recreation improvements; 8) attractive community appearance; 9) quality schools; 10) Summerfield Road focus area; 11) historic preservation; and 12) limited services local government. A summarized paragraph about each area was reviewed and Council was asked how they felt the town was generally doing regarding the area. When there were questions in areas of concern, there was additional review of the section and individual policies supporting that area. Some take-a-ways were: some members of Council wanted Council and boards to have the same training to be better aligned with the CP and the UDO for decision-making; Council wanted more input with NCDOT



regarding new roads or repaving of existing roads to better accommodate runner and biker safety; the town doesn't feel that public sewer is in the plan for the future; questioning if the Planning Department could require developers to utilize technology to better protect septic systems within new developments; Council thought new developments should include neighborhood parks within them; Council would like to be made aware of large code enforcement situations that way they could step in and help where needed; external forces were pushing the town to be less of a "limited services government"; and that interconnectivity plans within the UDO needs to be revisited because times have changed and children aren't walking or riding bikes to schools due to safety concerns and residents don't want strangers in their yards or on their land.

- C. Update/overhaul process:** There was discussion about how to proceed with updating the CP and the timing as adoption of the Land Use Plan (LUP) was intended prior to updating the CP. Whitaker stressed that an approach should be determined during budget development and asked that Council provide more direction within the following month.

DeVaney motioned to recess the meeting until 8:30am the following morning on 1/27/24, the motion was seconded by Clay and carried unanimously at 7:59pm.

Saturday, 1/27: DeVaney motioned to call the meeting back to order at 8:34am. The motion was seconded by Doggett and carried unanimously. Introductions were made.

ROLES WITHIN A COUNCIL-MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Deputy General Counsel Tom Carruthers with the North Carolina League of Municipalities introduced himself to Council and gave a brief history of his background in municipal law and local governmental service. Carruthers shared a PowerPoint about the Manager-Council form of government compiled by the NCLM and the UNC School of Government. He explained the statutory legal duties and requirements of the Manager and discussed roles of the Council and staff. Carruthers led Council through some Q&A. He stated that his one-hour presentation resulted in a two-hour discussion, so he would present the Clerk with certificates stating that Council members had met their legal ethic requirements via the NCLM. (He still encouraged those already signed up for the ethics training to complete the course or further training via NCLM or the UNC SOG.)

A recess was declared by Doggett and seconded by Clay at 10:42am. The meeting was resumed at 10:55am by a motion made by DeVaney and seconded by Doggett.

COUNCIL

- A. Republic Services trash / recycling:** DeVaney requested the topic to discuss to discuss complaints and bidding for future franchise agreements. Staff reported that they monitor all Republic complaints from residents and will inform Council of problems. If the number of complaints is deemed a breach of contract, Council will revisit the topic. DeVaney would like to revisit this topic again in 6 months that way Council has enough time to change services and avoid being in the position they were in this year where other companies didn't have enough time to get equipment to take on Summerfields trash and recycling.



- B. Consolidated Committee Ord.; communication with Finance Committee:** DeVaney wanted the language to be consistent for conflict of interest amongst Council, boards, and committees. She also wanted all boards, committees, and Council to sign yearly code of ethics agreements. DeVaney also wanted the Finance Committee to review contracts and advise on money spent or budgeted for projects. She planned to attend the 1/29 Finance Committee meeting. A discussion was had about the Planning Board's Code of Ethics and as a result, Hamilton asked to add to the 2/13 Council meeting agenda for Hornik to formulate wording on a policy for the Planning Board's Code of Ethics to address close family conflict, and asked Rentz to add it to the Planning Board's March meeting agenda. Hamilton motioned for the Planning Board to review its policy, stating that Council is asking that no person shall serve on the Planning Board who has close familial relation to someone on Council, and then provide a recommendation. The motion was seconded by DeVaney and carried unanimously.
- C. King & Co. lobbyist contract:** Hamilton stated he reached out to Sebastian King with a counter to his contract where King asked for no ending term and \$8K per month. Hamilton countered with \$6,500 and a 10-day termination notice. King declined the counter-offer price and offered a 60-day termination notice. Council discussed options and how to proceed. DeVaney motioned to renegotiate with King and Co. with another counteroffer to decrease the monthly cost from \$8K and offer a 30-day termination notice. She also asked that King list all additional fees that would be charged outside of the monthly payment, the motion was seconded by Clay and carried unanimously. Hamilton agreed to contact King with this offer on Council's behalf.

ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT

- A. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects & updates:** Whitaker presented the CIP to Council. Whitaker and Hall answered questions.
- B. Projects & Initiatives spreadsheet:** Hall presented her ongoing project spreadsheet as well as a revised version created by Clay. Clay stated his new version better reflects what Council would like to see for projects and it includes a lifespan dashboard. Hall also showed her current grant spreadsheet.

Mayor Sessoms called for a lunch break recess stating they would resume at 12:45pm.

Mayor Sessoms reconvened the meeting at 12:48pm.

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

- A. Events:** Gore presented a PowerPoint about all town events, which are free for the community to attend. Gore thanked yearly sponsors who help fund these events and add to their great success.
- B. Department/facility needs & recommendations (SCP, SPP, SAP):** Goard presented a PowerPoint showing the town-owned parks, shelters, and facilities. He explained the community uses and rentals of each and the current budgeted projects, such as restriping the parking lot at SAP and purchasing a new Gator utility vehicle and highlighted other future projects. DeVaney stated the Founders' Day Committee is looking for sponsors and mentioned the local church bake-off. Council thanked Goard and Gore for the hard work invested into making these events a continued success and for keeping the park grounds so well maintained.



PLANNING DEPARTMENT

- A. UDO text amendment needs:** DeVaney requested this topic to get the list of minor changes that was started last year back in front of Council. Rentz presented items and/or areas that needed improvement within the UDO. DeVaney wanted progress so that the UDO would not become outdated like the CP.
- B. Department needs & recommendations:** Rentz stated the town needs to review or restart the Land Use Plan and Comprehensive Plan discussions. He also reported that there is potential PTRC training for the Planning Board and hopefully Council as well. There was more discussion about the LUP and CP and Whitaker recommended that the LUP be finished with the CP update to start immediately afterward. He reminded that the LUP was a recommendation of the ad-hoc UDO Review Committee, considerable money had been spent, and a recommendation from the LUP Steering Committee was complete and waiting on Council authorization to forward it to the Planning Board. The majority of Council thought the CP should be updated first and that the LUP should be re-worked. Rentz also noted that he would be asking for more money in the budget this year for code enforcement needs.

BRAINSTORMING & CONSENSUS BUILDING

Schull asked Council to consider all that had been discussed and try and connect it for a larger goal. DeVaney felt some policies needed to be written or re-written; she wanted all boards and committee to sign yearly ethics forms; and she wanted a yearly evaluation of the town attorney. She asked that the Planning Department consider ways to help preserve farmlands and to revisit stub-road regulations and the scenic corridor text amendments. It was suggested that the town should find ways to encourage new developments to use grey water instead of potable water for watering lawns. DeVaney and Robinson agreed to revisit the LUP and bring their issues with it to Council.

PRIORITIZING GOALS, ASSOCIATED NEEDED ACTIONS, & LEAD PERSON(S)

Council wanted Hamilton and Clay to better understand the LUP within the next 6 months so Council can decide how to move forward with the possibility of incorporating it into the updated CP. Council wants to continue UDO improvements via text amendments, which Rentz will spearhead. Robinson will draft a new social media policy and review the Public Records Policy to see if it needs to be revised.

With no further discussion, Sessoms thanked: Schull for his facilitating efforts; Rentz for his hard work within the Planning Department; Tibbetts for all her hard work in her Clerk duties; Goard and Gore for their time spent to make events and parks great; Hall for her great efforts with town finances; and Whitaker for his hard work and the time invested into planning the retreat.

DeVaney motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:23pm, the motion was seconded by Clay and carried unanimously.

Tim Sessoms, Mayor

Sarah Tibbetts, Town Clerk