

Minutes of the Work Session of
The Liberty Town Council
Held on October 21, 2024 5:30 PM

Present

Mayor: The Honorable Filmore York

Council: Terry Caviness, Larry Coble, Don Herndon, Tyson Nixon
and Greg Carpenter

Town Manager: Scott Kidd

Town Clerk: Jessica Brown

Staff: Public Works Director; Joseph Walsh, Finance Director;
Kathy Bond, Police Chief; David Semrad,
Library Director; Brenda Heindl, Assistant
Town Manager; Janie Phelps, Parks & Recreation
Director; Kolby McPherson

Town Attorney; Robert Giles II

To Order

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm and welcomed everyone and those watching on Facebook. He gave condolences to Council Member Larry Coble for the passing of his father and welcomed speaker Lizzie Morrison and Randolph County Commissioner David Allen.

Adoption of Agenda

Council Member Tyson Nixon made a motion to adopt the agenda. Council Member Greg Carpenter seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Council Members Larry Coble, Terry Caviness, Don Herndon, Tyson Nixon and Greg Carpenter voted yes and adopted the agenda.

Downtown Economic Development Strategic Plan Presentation - Lizzie Morrison

Lizzie Morrison, Community Economic Development Planner for the Piedmont Triad Region North Carolina Department of Commerce came forward to present the Town's Downtown Economic Development Strategic Plan (2025-2030), She has previously worked with Mt. Airy on their strategic plan. Liberty's plan was shared with a Local Work Group for review and about 30-40 people attended the workshop. Our Liberty Local work group is made up of local officials and town staff as well as business leaders. The plan is a baseline of where we are and how we can strengthen the downtown over time. The planning process involved meeting for about a year and discussing the Town's assets and opportunities. The Main Street approach is to intentionally grow the community. Liberty's Economic Positioning Statement is, "Historic Downtown Liberty,

positioned at the crossroads of Randolph County's thriving industrial corridor, preserves a walkable and close-knit neighborhood to call home. Filled with a rich history of family-owned businesses, downtown provides a place for the arts, music, innovation, and celebration of community." This plan makes a total of 28 recommendations for objectives and actions under three priority strategies: 1) Downtown Liberty is a livable, walkable neighborhood. 2) Downtown Liberty offers family-owned businesses supported by historically preserved buildings. 3) Downtown Liberty provides a place for the arts, music, innovation, and celebration of community. What could be downtown? Trees, banners, and planters; simple improvements could give the private sector confidence to invest.

Council Member Tyson Nixon asked what the next step would be. Ms. Morrison said once adopted there is a timeline to organize the structure of what this would look like. It could be a committee or an employee. We want to find the lowest hanging fruit on the list so the community can see the investment. Bret Pedigo said this process started pre covid and some things have already been done. We can vote on this tonight or next week. The Town Council unanimously approved the Downtown Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Information

Monthly Reports

Each Department's Monthly Reports are included for review. Parks And Recreation Director Kolby McPherson said the Fall Festival September 28th started a little slow but foot traffic really picked up in the afternoon. Cheerleading has really taken off. Mayor York remarked he can see they have been working on the trail at Freedom Park. The Town Manager said there has been a shift in sports with more kids playing travel ball. The Turkey Trot is a new event that will be in November. Mayor York said he stopped by the Cycle NC event. The Mayor's Walk and Trunk or Treat at Freedom Park is scheduled for October 26th.

Public Works director Joseph Walsh said they are backing off of limbs and starting to focus on leaf pick up more. They did receive a grant for lead pipe replacements. The fields at the WWTP are fifty percent infested with army worms. This had been a problem for the whole county. He hired a company that sprayed for the worms at fourteen dollars an acre. They will then do some reseeded. They received a grant for Downtown which Bret Pedigo submitted for up to \$154,000. They are helping to work on the trail at the park. They hope to help some in the mountains with hurricane damage. FEMA does reimburse for this. Council Member Don Herndon asked if they mow the railroad property every week. Mr. Walsh said they mow every other week and do not receive any reimbursement.

Matt Talbott said they sent two firefighters to Black Mountain to help run calls and they made it back OK.

Code Enforcement Update

Paul Fuller with State Code Enforcement came forward to give the update. They have had thirty seven cases since September. There are several properties that need to be cleaned up and mowed. 303 New Street is in foreclosure. He hopes to get a court date for 122 W Swannanoa.

Legislative Update

Assistant Town Manager Janie Phelps gave an update. There is some new legislation that applicants can get a permit fee back if the review is not completed within twenty days.

There are some new materials that are no longer considered impervious. She will get a report out. Affordable housing is still a concern.

New Business

Chamber Christmas Parade Road Closure Request - Saturday December 7, 2024

The Liberty Chamber of Commerce is requesting road closures for the annual tree lighting and Christmas Parade Saturday December 7, 2024.

Public Hearing- Request by applicant Stanhope Johnson, on behalf of property owner Mary Franklin Whitt Johnson, for a SNIA (Special Nonresidential Intensity Allocation) for properties at 6988 Kinro Rd. Monday October 28, 2024

This is an advertised public hearing for a quasi-judicial review request by applicant Stanhope Johnson, on behalf of property owner Mary Franklin Whitt Johnson, for a SNIA (Special Nonresidential Intensity Allocation) to the properties of parcel numbers 8735291096 and 8735293325, located at 6988 Kinro Road. The proposed plan is requesting to exceed the maximum built-upon area of twenty four percent for the WS-III watershed classification in a low-density community. Janie Phelps came forward and said she can clarify any questions but otherwise will discuss next Monday when all parties are sworn in.

Randolph County Animal Control Contract

This is an updated contract for Randolph County to take over the Town's Animal Control currently handled by our Police Department. The Town Manager said it would be a little less than \$1,000.00 per month. It would be from November 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. It would be yearly going forward and there is enough in this year's budget to cover it. It would give our PD time to focus on other things. Liberty would have a designated person and then an after hours person. Council Member Herndon asked if citizens can still call 911 which they can and Council Member Carpenter asked if the PD would still come if there was an immediate threat and they would. Council Member Nixon asked if this would be a charge per call or a flat amount. Mr. Kidd said it would be a flat amount. Council Member Nixon said he had a terrible experience with Randolph County Animal Control recently and would not recommend it.

Manager's Report

Town Manager Scott Kidd gave the report. He attended the NC Works Partnership Conference in Greensboro October 9th and 10th. They try to keep a strong workforce in Randolph County. He attended the PTRWD Board quarterly meeting. Janie Phelps, Mayor York and himself attend the PTRC Annual Awards celebration. They are finalizing bid documents for the LWCF. We just received a \$154,000 grant for sidewalks and streetscapes. ASADRA is going out to bid for two pump stations. Chief David Semrad and Lieutenant Luke Scala with the PD went to western NC as well as two firefighters to help damaged areas.

Council Comments

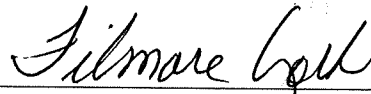
Council Member Herndon said there had been a great response from the community for the donation boxes set up around town for Western NC. Council Member Caviness distributed a handout regarding the Veterans' Memorial.

Mayor Comments

Mayor York reminded everyone that early voting has begun and to please vote.

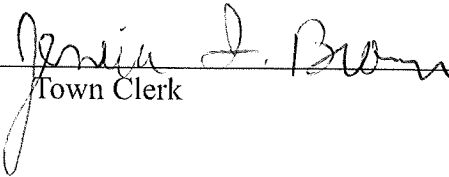
Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, Council Member Tyson Nixon made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Council Member Don Herndon seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Council Member Larry Coble voted yes, Council Member Terry Caviness voted yes, Council Member Don Herndon voted yes, Council Member Tyson Nixon and Council Member Greg Carpenter voted yes. The meeting was adjourned.



Mayor Filmore York

ATTEST:



Town Clerk