



**TOWN OF ELM CITY
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
March 12, 2024 at 6:30 PM
Elm City Train Depot 101 Nash St.**

In attendance:

Mayor Tawanda Moore (hereinafter, Mayor Moore)
Mayor Pro Tem Tammie Atkinson (hereinafter, Commissioner Atkinson)
Commissioner Gil Wheeler (hereinafter, Commissioner Wheeler)
Commissioner Bridget Wimberley (hereinafter, Commissioner Wimberley)
Commissioner Zackery Mercer (hereinafter, Commissioner Mercer)

Also in Attendance:

Town Attorney Slade Rand (hereinafter, Slade Rand)
Zoning Officer Shawn Lucas (hereinafter, Zoning Officer Lucas)
Customer Service Administrator Melissa Younger (hereinafter, Melissa Younger)

Absent

Commissioner Tim Bridgers (hereinafter, Commissioner Bridgers)
Public Works Supervisor Wilbur Etheridge (hereinafter Wilbur Etheridge)

Call To Order: Mayor Moore called the regular council meeting to order on March 12, 2024 at 6:30pm.

Invocation: Mayor Pro Tem Atkinson

Pledge Of Allegiance: Mayor Pro Tem Atkinson

Approval of Agenda: Mayor Moore asked for a motion to approve the agenda for the March 12, 2024 regular council meeting and to add Carolina Pump and Sewer, cleaning/landscaping of the lagoons to the action items, having presentations take place before public comment section, and removing March 23, 2023 meeting minutes from action items to item 5 for approval. Commissioner Mercer made a motion to approve the agenda with changes. Commissioner Wimberley seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Approval of Minutes: Mayor Moore asked for a motion to approve the regular council meeting minutes from February 13, 2024 and February 21, 2024. Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to approve meeting minutes from February 13, 2024 and February 21, 2024. Commissioner Wimberley seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

March 23, 2023 meeting minutes were tabled for a later date.

Public Hearings/Comments:

- **Toni Merando** gave an update of the community held meeting. Issues that the citizen's would like the board to address. Those included wanting the Sherriff Dept back on direct patrol, water billing and air in lines causing the meter to spin, water charges being the highest in the state, and water leaks around town being fixed in a timely manner. She asked the board to make a motion that disconnections not to be done on the last business day of the week (Friday). She also stated that according to the NC Utility Commission Chapter 7 Rule R7-20F disconnection fee should not exceed \$15, and a reconnection fee cannot be charged if water has not been physically turned off.
- **Gabe Merando** stated that both him and his wife were turned down when asked to be out on the agenda. Mr. Merando is on the planning board and wanted to speak about ordinances pertaining to tobacco and vape shops in town. He asked the board to make a motion to put in front of the planning board that such shops would not be allowed in sensitive areas; near schools, churches, etc. He expressed concern at the overflow of traffic at the location of Biggun's Rides LLC, and parking vehicles in unauthorized areas. (Shawn Lucas will bring tobacco and vape shop ordinance concerns before the planning board at next meeting)
- **Eunice Lindsay** who is part of the Wilson County Comprehension Planning Steering Committee would like to see Elm City's zoning district updated and on the maps. Currently we are the only town that is not. (Shawn Lucas has reached out previously, and will do so again)
- **Robert Dunston** would like the trees are that hanging on the powerlines and on houses to be removed. There are a total of 4 trees that need to be removed.
- **Carla Stutts** first questioned if the funds for her neighbor's repaired driveway have been reimbursed. She felt as though the presentation from the current IT consultant was "staged" and the board should have been able to vote on bringing in a new IT company. She also feels that the books should be turned over to the CPA.
- **Teresa Summerlin** had a sit-down meeting with Sherriff Woodard and he stated that due to previous interactions with a particular commissioner that he would only be interested in discussing further contract possibilities with Commissioner Wheeler. Mrs. Summerlin suggested everyone work as a team to get the Sherrif Dept back. She is concerned with incidents that have taken place since direct patrol has ended in town. (Mayor Moore suggested that Commissioner Wimberley and Commissioner Wheeler join together and meet with Sherrif Woodard)
- **Vanessa Mercer** spoke and shared that there are no issues. She did add that the problem that no one wants to really address, is that "This is an all-Black Board". After comments and sneers from the waiting audience, Attorney Slade did cite that It is Mrs. Mercer's First Amendment right to speak.
- **Marsha Wells** feels that Commissioner Mercer should step-down and that Commissioner Wheeler should have been Mayor Pro Tem.

Presentations/Discussions:

- **Walt of Walteck Computer Services** Walt was called in on February 6, 2024 to Town Hall because none of the computers were working. He found out the root cause of what caused the system to be completely shut down, and fixed the issue. Walt also found that there were remote access capabilities found on various computers by unknown participants (other than Smartfusion), so he disabled them and immediately began working closely with Smartfusion (over the course of several visits to Town Hall) to make sure that the software worked seamlessly with the changes that he made.

- **Russell Michael** brought several ideas to present to the board. He would be interested in bringing a Film Commission to Elm City, he provided a plan for a mural to be painted on the Elm City Furniture building that he purchased. He also wanted to gauge interest in building container homes and stated there are investors interested in doing so.
- **Zoning Officer Shawn Lucas** – The owner of 500 E Church St is requesting to rezone the property from R-10 to R-7S to allow him to put mobile manufactured homes on the property were vacant. Currently, our zoning ordinances only allows these in a R7-S zoning district.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to go into public hearing. Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to go into public hearing. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

There was no public comment.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to come out of public hearing. Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to come out of public hearing. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Zoning Officer Lucas recommends rezoning the property from R-10 to R-7S so that the owner can better use the property for the intended use he wants to be able to do. Even though this is not content with our Comp Plan and Future Land Use Map, the following property has been an established trailer park for years without the use wanting to be changed. By allowing the rezone the property will be in harmony with the land uses currently in existence at the property.

Mayor Moore asked for the board's thoughts on Shawn Lucas' recommendation. Commissioner Mercer made a motion to go forward with rezoning 500 E Church St from R-10 to R-7S. Commissioner Wheeler seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Action Items:

- **Appointing a Finance Officer** – Mayor Moore recommended Tiondra Fields as Finance Officer. Commissioner Wimberley made a motion to appoint Tiondra Fields as Finance Officer. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion. Commissioner Wheeler opposed. **The motion passed.**
- **Securing Town Clerk/Finance Officer Position** – Tabled for a closed session at a later date.
- **Greg Isley's Firm** - Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to allow full access to Greg Isley's firm to get the Town audit ready. Commissioner Mercer seconded the motion. Commissioner Wimberley and Commissioner Atkinson opposed the motion. Mayor Moore opposed the motion as well. **The motion did not pass.**

Old Business: NONE

New Business: NONE

Town Staff Reports:

Mayor Moore read the Town Administrator's report in detail. Included in her report, was the need to vote on allowing Carolina Pump & Sewer to service the lagoon areas for \$1600 initially, with a maintenance charge of \$350/month to keep them compliant with the state. Commissioner Wimberley made a motion to have Carolina Pump & Sewer service the lagoons. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion. Commissioner Wheeler opposed. **The motion passed.** It also included Ms. Eunice Lindsey requesting the use of the Town Office conference room on the 3rd Saturday of the month to hold Fredrick Douglas Alumni meetings. Commissioner Mercer made a motion to allow Fredrick Douglas Alumni to use the Town Office conference room to hold their meetings. Commissioner Wheeler seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Zoning Officer Lucas made a recommendation to have Vonica Carr serve as an additional person on the Planning Board. Commissioner Mercer made a motion to have Vonica Carr serve on the Planning Board. Commissioner Wimberley seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

- 109 Toisnot St. has been notified on four different occasions that they are in violation of Town Ordinance - Chapter 95, Health and Sanitation & Chapter 96 Nuisances Sec. 96-02 (E). Zoning Officer Lucas recommends the Town Council vote on an ordinance to have the property cleaned by an outside vendor, after accepting bids from a minimum three vendors. A copy of the ordinance will be placed in the owners front yard, informing them of the Town Council decision. After the completion of the work, the owner on the property tax card will have a minimum of thirty (30) days to pay off the debt from the Town Clean up. If not paid the Town will place a lien on the property with the Wilson County Tax Department.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion regarding Zoning Officer Lucas' recommendation. Commissioner Mercer made a motion to go with Zoning Officer Lucas' recommendation pertaining to 109 Toisnot St. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Mayor & Commissioner's Reports:

Commissioner Wheeler presented 3 quotes for the carpet replacement at the Elm City Library. This project was voted on in the past to be done using ARP Funds. Commissioner Wheeler recommended going with Carpets by David due to their quote which also included them moving all shelving and placing it back when the job was completed. Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to go with Carpets by David to replace carpet at the Elm City Library. Commissioner Atkinson seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.** Commissioner Wheeler also expressed his concerns about the sinking ditch at the entrance way of Heritage Cemetery and the ability to have trees removed that are making it almost impassable for vehicles.

Mayor Moore asked for a motion to go speak with John Hackney and have Tiondra Fields bonded. Commissioner Wheeler made a motion for Mayor Moore to go speak with John Hackney and have Tiondra Fields bonded. Commissioner Mercer seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.**

Adjournment: Mayor Moore asked for a motion to adjourn the Regular Council Meeting. Commissioner Wheeler made a motion to adjourn the Regular Council Meeting. Commissioner Mercer seconded the motion. **The motion passed unanimously.** Meeting was adjourned at 9:05pm