

**MINUTES OF MIDWAY TOWN COUNCIL VISION SESSION HELD ON AUGUST 15, 2017 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM AT MIDWAY TOWN HALL, 426 GUMTREE ROAD, MIDWAY, NORTH CAROLINA**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor John Byrum called the meeting to order.

Councilors present were: John Byrum, Jackie Edwards, Keith Leonard, Mike McAlpine, Robin Moon, and Todd Nifong (left at 6:45 p.m.). Absent: None. Town Manager Gary Looper, Town Clerk Linda Hunt and Deputy Clerk Tammy Robertson were present (arrived at 6:25 p.m.). Absent: Town Attorney Jim Lanik.

Each Councilor had been furnished an agenda prior to the meeting.

No members of press were in attendance.

**ADOPT AGENDA**

On motion by Councilor Mike McAlpine, seconded by Councilor Jackie Edwards, Council voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

**VISION SESSION**

**STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT**

The Town of Midway will receive a \$75,000.00 State Economic Grant from the State of North Carolina that was presented in the State Budget. The application to receive these funds will need to be submitted to the Rural Economic Division of the North Carolina Department of Commerce by September 15, 2017 with the Town's specific plans on utilizing the funds to further economic development in the Town. The grant money will be received by the Town in October 2017.

Mayor Byrum and the Town Council had hoped to utilize the grant money to help secure a grocery store for the Town but since has learned of a confirmed five year lease of Dollar Tree opening in September 2017 in the space vacated by Walmart Express. The option now for a grocery store to locate in the Town would be in a free-standing building, however, as to date, there are no leads to indicate interest in any grocery store retailers securing a store in the Town.

Councilor Todd Nifong asked Town Manager Gary Looper if the process for submitting the grant is a long one or more "fill in the blank" answers. Mr. Looper responded it is a short process but Council would need to be specific on the economic development project for which they want to use the money. Mr. Looper stated that the grant information would need to be updated with the Department of Commerce by July 2018 to include what economic development enhancements Council expects to see in the Town created by the grant. The project will need to be completed by October 2018.

Councilor Nifong has been asked by residents if the Dollar Tree will be selling grocery items. Mayor Byrum responded by saying he believes it will. Some Dollar Tree stores do have small food sections. Mayor Byrum also stated the Dollar Tree has obtained an ABC retail permit in order to sell alcohol. Councilor Nifong stated that he wants to exhaust all efforts on securing a grocery store before using the grant money for another project for the Town.

Councilor Jackie Edwards said a grocery store is her first option and walking trails in the Town Park would be her second option. Councilor Edwards submitted email contacts to Mayor Byrum for a

Neighborhood Walmart and an Aldi grocery store. Mayor Byrum said he would reach out to the contacts and see if either store would be a potential tenant for the Town.

Mayor Pro Tem Mike McAlpine asked about exhausting all efforts to obtain a grocery store for the Town and if \$75,000.00 would be a big enough draw. Councilor Nifong stated that in a previous Town Council meeting that most Councilors stated that they would be willing to give the full \$75,000.00 plus more in order to attract a grocery store to the Town. Councilor Nifong stated he wants to honor the community's wishes and expressed his desire to try and locate a grocery store to the Town before granting the money to another project. The concern by Council is being able to secure any leads for a grocery store before the September 15, 2017 grant submission deadline. Mr. McAlpine stated that there would have to be a big incentive to draw prospective grocery store tenants to the Town and that \$75,000.00 would not be enough. Mayor Byrum commented that the incentive would need to be at least six figures to even have a conversation with a prospective tenant.

Councilor Robin Moon said that all of Council wants a grocery store but realize at this point it would have to be a free standing store. Mr. Moon stated that Council needs to hear from citizens in regards to what they would like to see for the Town.

Mayor Byrum stated that he did not think this grant money could be applied to a grocery store because there are not any leads on a grocery store locating to the Town. He did say however, that he has spoken with Lexington City Mayor Newell Clark about a contact that Lexington has partnered with that may be able to help the Town in securing tenants for the Town. Mayor Byrum stated that the grant money could possibly be applied towards a study in locating potential tenants for the Town through this contact. Mayor Byrum also suggested a study that could help lay out a larger development for future expansion for the Town. Mayor Byrum said the Town has until October 2018 to use the grant money.

Mr. McAlpine said that whether the Town uses the grant money for a study or not, the Town has the funds available that can easily be diverted and used for another project for the Town such as a grocery store, greenways, or Town Park. Mr. McAlpine said since the grocery store is the number one priority of Council, why not talk with Mayor Clark's contact to see what they have to offer.

Mr. McAlpine also suggested putting up a banner with an opening target date for the Town Park.

Mayor Byrum stated that even though Council has three viable options for use of the grant money, Council will need to be more specific and pick one option to apply toward the grant. Mr. Looper said the State will be writing the contracts between September 15, 2017 and October 15, 2017 and will be sending them out to be signed after that time.

Mayor Byrum suggested trying to reach out to Mayor Clark's contact before the next Town Council meeting on September 5, 2017. If he is able to have a conversation with the contact and can report back to Council before September 5, then Council can decide at the Town Council meeting on September 5, whether to use the grant towards the study of securing tenants for the Town or to use it toward the Town Park.

On a conference call with Lexington Mayor Newell Clark during the meeting, Mayor Clark advised Council about a partnership the City of Lexington had with Retail Strategies out of Birmingham, Alabama. Mayor Clark told Council that Retail Strategies educated the City on what the City should be doing in order to attract businesses to the community. Retail Strategies conducted a study of the community, incomes of the community, proximity to the interstate among other variables within a seven mile radius of the City. Retail Strategies put together a list of businesses that were expanding and what market they are looking for in order to determine what businesses might locate to Lexington. This enabled

the City to find site selectors and what would fit in the community. Mayor Clark stated that this study helped secure a Chick Fil A for the City. Mayor Byrum asked Mayor Clark if there were any regrets from the City's Councilors in having a relationship with Retail Strategies. Mayor Clark said no but the City may not continue the partnership with Retail Strategies because the City has gotten what they needed from the partnership with the firm.

Council was in agreement to have Mayor Byrum contact Lacy Beasley with Retail Strategies to further investigate the type of services they offer that could be beneficial to the Town of Midway and the estimated cost for those services.

### **WEBSITE DISCUSSION**

The Town currently contracts with Rick Zebra Designs for website hosting. Mayor Byrum asked for clarification in the terms of the contract with regards to how many hours per month are allowed for maintenance of the website. Town Manager Gary Looper stated that the contract is for thirty six hours of website content management per year. Mr. Looper said that the Town has been billed for three hours so far by Rick Zebra Designs for maintenance performed on the website.

Rick Zebra Designs offers the Town of Midway a content management service based on three hours per month with a two business day turnaround time. Any service that exceeds the three hour monthly package will be billed for the extra hours. Common maintenance requests include:

- Add new content including text, products, images and video to existing pages
- Add new pages including new content, images, videos, forms and add to navigation
- Update existing content including text, products, images and video
- Update CSS styling (colors, text size, fonts etc.)
- Update version software including modules for Drupal

Mayor Byrum asked Council what they wanted to discuss in regards to the website. It was suggested to have a workshop with Rick Cisneros of Rick Zebra designs along with Councilor Robin Moon and Councilor Edwards regarding issues Council is having with content on the website.

Councilor Moon suggested having two Councilors along with staff present at the workshop and each bring a list of items they would like to see added or changed on the website. Councilors Moon and Edwards said they would be willing to meet with Mr. Cisneros to discuss issues and changes needed to the website.

Mr. Looper said that Mr. Cisneros will need Council's input on what pages to add to the website. After that has been completed, updates to those pages can be monitored internally by staff.

Councilor Edwards raised concerns of mistakes on the website and felt like the mistakes needed to be taken care of immediately before focusing efforts on the structure of the website. Mayor Byrum said the mistakes along with content issues can be handled simultaneously by communicating with Mr. Cisneros. Ms. Edwards will compile a list of concerns that need immediate attention.

Mayor Byrum wants action dates on resolving issues. Councilor Moon volunteered to contact Mr. Cisneros on a possible meeting date and to let him know that Councilor Edwards will have a list of edits ready to be corrected immediately before the meeting.

Councilor Edwards stated that she and Councilor Moon may need Council's input in regards to changes to the website. Mayor Byrum said to compile a list of those concerns and they can be addressed at the Town Council meeting on September 5, 2017.

**APPOINTMENT TERMS OF PLANNING BOARD/BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

North Carolina General Statute 160A-388 states that members of a Board of Adjustment will serve a term of three years, provided that upon initial appointment the terms of office are staggered. Currently, the Town's Planning Board also serves as the Town's Board of Adjustment with both Boards serving four year terms.

Town Manager Gary Looper stated that he would like Town Attorney Jim Lanik to look over legislation regarding terms of the Planning Board before making any changes to the Town's current Planning Board/Board of Adjustment.

Mayor Pro Tem Mike McAlpine asked if two year terms on the Board of Adjustment would work since they are currently serving four year terms. Mr. Looper stated that the General Statute is clear on a three-year term, not more or less. Mr. Looper said that Council may need to adjust the termination point of the terms of current Board of Adjustment members so they don't all rotate off the Board at the same time.

Mayor Pro Tem suggested appointing a separate group of people to serve on the Board of Adjustment rather than have the Planning Board serve both roles.

Mayor Byrum asked Council what they would like to see happen to get the current Board of Adjustment into compliance with the General Statute three year term. Mr. McAlpine stated that he would like to keep the current Planning Board at a four-year term and create a new Board of Adjustment with a three-year term.

After discussion, it was the consensus of Council to amend the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment terms to three years that is in compliance with General Statute 160A-388 pending recommendation by Town Attorney Jim Lanik.

The Planning Board is to be advised of pending Council action regarding length of terms from four years to three years.

**TOWN PARK DISCUSSION**

Mayor Pro Tem Mike McAlpine updated Council on the progress of the Town Park to be located on the land behind Town Hall. Currently, Chris Sink is filling all of the holes where trees were removed and placed in holding beds. By the first of September, the land should be ready for hydro seeding in order to establish a good sod base by spring 2018.

Initially, Mr. McAlpine thought ten acres would be sufficient for seeding but would like to have sixteen acres considered. The grass should have a good foundation for the walking trails to be developed by spring of 2018. Mr. McAlpine outlined characteristics of the walking trails including:

- 12-20 foot width
- 2,400 linear feet (1/2 mile)
- Two segmented walking areas

Mr. McAlpine gave an estimated cost of the walking trails to include:

- \$20,000 for 400 yards of granite dust
- \$20,000-\$25,000 for grading

Mayor Byrum told Council that he had spoken with a Davidson County Commissioner who had advised him that the Davidson County Commissioners had offered to partially fund the installation of a splash pad if that is something Council would like to add to the Town's park.

Mr. McAlpine noted that tree spacing at the Union Cross Park in Forsyth County is fifty feet. Mr. McAlpine said this is a good distance because it allows for site visibility.

Mr. McAlpine stated that there have been two meetings with the Town Park Committee with all members in attendance. Mr. McAlpine said the next order of business for the Committee would be to establish policies and procedures for the park. He stated that the Committee would be ready for contract proposals for the walking trails after the seeding of the land is completed in September. The Park Committee was also interested in playgrounds for the park. Mr. McAlpine said he is aware that Councilor Todd Nifong has expressed concerns in the past about security in the park because of the inability to control traffic.

Mr. McAlpine said that the park should be built in phases starting with the grading of the land then adding walking trails and designated areas for picnic shelters. The flattest land should be used for special projects.

Mr. McAlpine stated the Park Committee's next step is to redraw park plans with Brad Coe of Coe Forestry. Another septic tank may need to be added if the Northern Davidson County YMCA does not come to fruition. Mr. McAlpine said the fence can be installed after the seeding is completed. Mr. McAlpine gave cost estimates for grading, seeding and fencing as follows:

- Fencing \$14,000 - \$15,000
  1. \$10.25 per foot for fencing \$11,525.00.
  2. \$625.00 per 6 foot walk gate. Two will be needed.
  3. \$920.00 for 12 foot double gate.
- Seeding \$24,000
- Grading \$15,000

Discussion only.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION STREET CONDITIONS AND PAVING SCHEDULE**

At the October 3, 2016 regular Town Council meeting Town Manager Gary Looper presented a needs assessment of roads in Midway that are in need of repair. Mr. Looper has compiled the following list of roads that are still in need of repair:

**HICKORY TREE ROAD AREA**

Cale Bradley Court  
Havenwood Drive  
Fred Sink Road (first 300 feet)

**HARTMAN ROAD AREA**

Frances Lane  
Sinkland Drive  
Midpines Drive

**COUNTRY LANE AREA**

Jones Road  
Grace Lane  
Noralin Drive

**OLD HWY 52 AREA; SOUTH OF HICKORY TREE ROAD**

West Drive  
Woods Lane  
Woods Court  
Tower Circle

**GUMTREE ROAD AREA**

Hebron Church Road  
Bobby Willard Road

Mayor Byrum specifically mentioned the poor road condition for Noralin Drive in the Country Lane area.

Mr. McAlpine added the following roads in the Livengood Estates area to the list of roads in the Town needing repair

LIVENGOOD ESTATES AREA

Pam Drive  
Brookdale Drive  
Baxter Road

Mayor Byrum asked how much the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) considers the Town's requests on repairing the roads. Mr. Looper said generally it depends on how much money the NCDOT has allocated towards the project and the severity of the roads in question.

Mayor Byrum asked Council to submit a list of any additional roads that they want added to the list for repair and submit that list to Town Manager Gary Looper.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion by Councilor Jackie Edwards, seconded by Councilor Mike McAlpine, Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

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John E. Byrum, Mayor

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Tammy H. Robertson, Deputy Clerk

