

Greensboro Selectboard

February 14, 2024 – Minutes

[This was a hybrid meeting held at the Greensboro Free Library, with some participants joining remotely]

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Ellen Celnik, Gary Circosta, David Kelley, Peter Romans, Eric Hanson

SELECTBOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Patrick Shattuck, Kim Greaves, Josh Karp, Chief Dave Brochu, Jr., Naomi Ranz-Schleifer, Meaghan Meachem, Tom Camarra, Andy Rosedale, Liz Steel, Deb Favreau, MacNeil, Lise Armstrong, Christine Armstrong, Paul Fixx

CALLED TO ORDER: 4:00 PM

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

David Kelley: Funky Fourth committee

MINUTES

1. January 10 regular meeting: approved as amended
2. January 17 budget meeting: approved as written

PUBLIC CONCERNS

None this evening.

HOUSING AT TOWN HALL – RuralEdge – Patrick Shattuck

Patrick Shattuck, Executive Director of RuralEdge (RE) presented preliminary plans for turning the town hall into housing units. He emphasized that the plans are marked “not for distribution” since they are subject to change. The project was discussed by Patrick and those present.

1. **Feasibility studies.** Patrick said \$35k has been spent to date on feasibility studies and design. Studies completed or underway include wetlands, historical, archeological, wastewater and environmental (toxics).
2. **Historic preservation and aesthetics.** Patrick said RE is aiming to preserve the character of the village and this historic structure, yet create an energy efficient building with a workable layout of apartments. Historic Preservation requires the interior tin finishes be preserved. The building will be reinsulated from the exterior, with windows brought out to the new plane to preserve perspectives. The rear addition is shorter and narrower than the main building to preserve current sightlines as much as possible. Historic Preservation would also like the third floor’s open feel and stage to be preserved as much as practicable, so this level is designed with a wide main hallway and will include split-level apartments.
3. **Wastewater System.** To the surprise of many, it has been determined that there is adequate septic capacity for the project on the Village Green triangle. Liz asked about the current uses of the Green, such as Farmers Market, community garden, and community events such as the Funky Fourth. Patrick said that while the Green would indeed become a huge leach field, it would remain available for use by the community.
4. **Number and types of units.** The preliminary plan includes 20 units.
 - 8 are one-bedroom, 10 are two-bedroom, and 2 are three-bedroom.
 - Four will be town house style, two story apartments.

- Some units will be priced at 50% of area median income, others will be priced at 80%. Rents will be all-inclusive and will range from \$833-\$1387 per month, significantly below market rates. Patrick said RE tried to make rents aligned with starting salaries of area businesses.
- Ellen asked whether local applicants will be given priority for the new units. Patrick said RE will be able to market the new units locally for six months, prior to adding them to existing waiting lists.
- Liz Steel said that while local businesses and the school are hoping for more families, it appears this project is focused on senior housing, and she asked why there aren't more three-bedroom units. Patrick said a market study showed that seniors in the area are in need of small, affordable units, adding that these one-bedroom units could also be rented by a single younger person. In terms of family occupancy, Patrick said over half the units are two and three bedroom, which Dave agreed would be fine for small families. Patrick added that due to limited septic capacity, only so many two- and three-bedroom units are workable.
- RE is thinking of the ground level units as primarily for elder housing, as units will have complete ADA accessibility. The project will not include an elevator.
- The property will have laundry, storage, garden spaces including accessible raised beds, and the SASH program will be available as support for Medicare recipients.

5. Moving town offices to the Grange.

- Patrick said the town has made it clear that the town offices should be moved to the Grange. He said this would be challenging and expensive option, adding that there may not be adequate space for all the town's office needs. Grange wastewater would have to be pumped across the road to the Town Hall's new system. Patrick said once floor plan ideas are received from the town, preliminary layouts can be drawn up.
- Patrick said the town offices could remain in the town hall basement. Renovating this space would be considerably less expensive than redeveloping the Grange, and he noted the existing basement windows could be replaced with larger ones since they are not original. Patrick added that operational costs would be lower if the town offices remain in their current location.
- Eric wondered what would happen to the Grange if it's not used for the Town Offices. Patrick said meeting codes for a public building on that site would be very expensive, and one option is for the town to sell the building for use as a studio or workshop.
- Ellen noted the importance of the Giving Closet to the community, and asked whether this could be put in the Grange. Patrick suggested the GC could be moved to a room in the Town Hall Basement, perhaps with a separate entrance.

6. Other factors.

- Town zoning requires 1.5 parking spaces per unit, and the project will meet that requirement.
- Toxins were found in the town hall building and some environmental remediation will be necessary.
- It is estimated that the redeveloped Town Hall would provide \$23k in tax revenue to the town.

7. Timeline and funding. Patrick said RE's timeline was a year each for feasibility studies, assembling funding, and construction. With feasibility studies about complete, work on funding can begin. Patrick said RE has estimated the project will cost \$10 million, adding that funders will likely love this project because it 'checks all the boxes' for nearby resources, being close to the village center, public beach, Willey's Store, Post Office, library, school, etc.

8. Concerns, alternatives, public support and outreach.

- Naomi asked about building a brand-new building instead. Patrick said this was analyzed and the Town Hall project will cost less, in part because the spaces lay out very well and the main stairway meets current requirements. Ellen added a new building on a new site could mean more local resistance.

- Peter said he's heard from a few residents that the project seems larger than originally discussed four years ago. Patrick disagreed, saying the scale of the project as presented is similar to initial discussions. Ellen added that the break-even point for these projects depends on a certain number of units. Patrick said there is a huge need for housing, and he'd be happy to host a field trip to similar-sized units in the area so folks can see how these buildings fit in with their surroundings.
- Naomi thought that the option agreement signed between RE and the town implied there would be considerable opportunities for public input. While Patrick will be making a presentation at the 2024 town meeting, Meaghan noted that the target demographic for these new housing units may not be in attendance. Eric said there would be a series of public meetings followed by a public vote on the project. Patrick said RE wouldn't have invested this much time and money into the project if the organization hadn't felt there was serious interest from the town in actually pursuing the project.
- In terms of building public support, Chief Brochu said when the new firehouse was built, Jr. Salls held a series of six meetings around town, to inform as many residents as possible about the project, clarify why it was needed, and to answer any questions.
- Naomi said a discussion about alternative uses of the Town Hall would be appropriate.

FIBER INTERNET FOR TOWN OFFICES

Discussion of a proposal for the town to connect to the fiber internet connection at the Town Hall, currently used by the Hardwick Gazette. This will be faster and cheaper than Consolidated DSL in the long run, and will allow the town to move to better performing cloud-based computing for its server and municipal accounting. This will also allow the town to hold hybrid meetings at the town hall, and allow town employees to do some remote work.

I.T. consultant Andy Rosedale estimated it will cost the town \$2250 to establish the new fiber connection. Costs for ongoing I.T. support would be shared by the Gazette and town. Eric made the following motion:

*The Board approves spending \$2250 to establish the high-speed internet connection for the town offices.
The Board will sign the I.T. maintenance-sharing agreement with the Gazette, with both parties agreeing on 'Option C' as presented by Andy Mosedale.*

Ellen seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

ORLEANS COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT.

The January OCSD report was not available for review this evening.

GREENSBORO FIRE DEPT. – Chief Dave Brochu, Jr.

1. GFD report. Chief Brochu updated the Board on GFD activities and issues since November 2023.

- Members of the GFD have re-elected Chief Brochu. The Selectboard will reappoint Chief Brochu at its March meeting.
- **Alarm calls.** Chief Brochu estimated that a third of alarm calls are false alarms. He noted that if you're home and there's a false alarm, resetting the alarm is not enough: you need to call the alarm company and cancel the GFD response, otherwise they'll show up. Chief Brochu said there are not many repeat offenders but they do keep track. In the past, the Board has discussed charging for repeat false alarms.

2. Stannard fire contract. Stannard has received the updated contract but hasn't commented yet.

ROADS & DRIVEWAYS

1. **Road Foreman's report – Tom Camarra.** Tom updated the Board on road crew activity over the past month. During winter downtime they've been repairing trucks and cutting limbs around town to make routes more passable. Peter suggested junk culverts be brought to All Metals, noting this is a FEMA expense and that road crew time and equipment and any other costs should be tracked.
2. **July flood/road repairs update.** The FEMA reimbursement process for road repairs is continuing. Josh, Peter and Gary met with the town's new FEMA contact and believe he'll be good to work with.
3. **Sidewalks.** Naomi wondered if there are any sidewalk funds for improving pedestrian safety in downtown Greensboro as discussed in 2021. Peter said while there are no sidewalk funds in FY25, the \$15k budgeted for sidewalks in FY24 wasn't used and may be available.
4. **McCann curb cut.** After discussion, Eric made the following motion:

The Board approves the McCann curb cut as approved by Road Foreman Tom Camarra, specifying a 24" culvert.

Peter seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

TOWN CLERK – Kim Greaves

NEMRC cloud access. Kim said current NEMRC access is slow and this accounting software can only be accessed at the town offices. She is planning to switch to a cloud server for NEMRC, which will allow faster access to this system and allow for some remote work. There are funds in the FY24 budget to make this switch. The town office's new fiber internet connection (discussed earlier) will make NEMRC cloud access possible. Gary asked whether there would still be a considerable staff presence at the town offices, with this new option for remote work. Kim said there certainly would be, but that it would be very useful to have the flexibility to work remotely at times.

TREASURER – Brett Stanciu

Treasurer Brett Stanciu was not present this evening.

1. The Board reviewed the treasurer's monthly report, the FY24 budget report, and the January check warrant reports.
2. **Transferring remaining ARPA funds to General Fund.** Gary said the town is following VLCT recommendations on this funds transfer. The approx. \$77k remaining ARPA funds will be transferred to the General Fund and when a use or uses are proposed, other approval will be sought. Eric made the following motion:

The Board approves moving the remaining ARPA funds into the General Fund, as described in the resolution included in the February Board packet.

Ellen seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

ONGOING BUSINESS

1. **Wilson St. Drainage issues.** No update.
2. **Community Wastewater Project.** There was meeting on Feb. 13 with Eric, Peter and members of St. Michael's church to discuss the sale of a portion of their land for the disposal field. The Church has more questions about the sale and expressed some concerns.
The sale of the Fontaine parcel is also required for the project, and Board members plan to meet with Gerard again to further discuss. Grant-imposed deadlines have passed for purchase and sale agreements to be signed, but the town has, so far, been given extra time to try to work things out with the landowners.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. **Pre-town meeting.** Kim said the town report will be delivered to residents early next week, and she'll put a digital version up on the town website as soon as possible. Discussion of holding a fully remote pre-town meeting on Wed. 2/28 at 6:30 PM.
Naomi requested that next year, the Board hold a public budget meeting in early January, once a draft budget is completed, to gather public input before the town meeting warning is signed.
2. **Funky Fourth 2024 planning.** The Board approved David and John Schweizer beginning to plan the 2024 Funky Fourth.
3. **Wake Boats & Hardwick Electric Dept.** David said the HED has been supportive of the Town's efforts to keep wake boats off Caspian Lake. He proposed sending a letter of thanks to the Town of Hardwick/HED. The Board approved.
4. The Board agreed that an Executive Session to discuss pending litigation was not necessary this evening.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:10 PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Josh Karp, Selectboard Clerk