



**BELVILLE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

May 20, 2024

Board of Commissioners Present:

Mike Allen, Mayor
Chuck Bost, Mayor Pro Tem
Ryan Merrill, Commissioner
Morgan Mehler, Commissioner
Hunter Smith, Commissioner

Board of Commissioners Absent:

None

Staff Present:

Athina Williams, Town Manager
Sharon Niemann, Town Clerk
Chad Staradumsky, Town Planner
Kerry Wooding, Deputy Finance Officer
Brenda Williams, Finance Clerk
Jace Sanchez, Admin Assistant
Brenda Hewlett, Admin. Support Specialist
Ian McLeod, Event Coordinator
Richard Trexler, Human Resources
Kemmy Goodson, Town Accountant
Norwood Blanchard, Town Attorney
Robin Spinks, Economic Development Advisor
Greg Feldman, Planning Consultant Withers Ravenel (via telecommunications)

Others Present to Address the Board:

Samantha Darlington, NC Commerce Community Economic Development Planner

ITEM # 1 – CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Mike Allen called the May 20, 2024, Regular Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., welcomed all. A quorum was present.

ITEM #2 – INVOCATION / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ACTION – Mayor Allen led the invocation asking for protection of our law enforcement, fire rescue and emergency responders, and asked for guidance for our Town, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.



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ITEM #3 – APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

ACTION - Commissioner Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to approve the Agenda. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ITEM #4 – APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Approval of the April 25, 2024, Regular Meeting Minutes.
- b. Tax Collector Report
- c. Finance Report
- d. Code Enforcement Report / Street Maintenance Report
- e. After Action Report – Senior Fishing Day
- f. After Action Report – Founders Day
- g. **R24-17 Resolution by the Belville Board of Commissioners Declaring May as ALS Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Awareness Month**
- h. **R24-22 Resolution Honoring Those that have made the Ultimate Sacrifice as We Observe Memorial Day**

ACTION – Commissioner Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to approve the Consent Agenda. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ITEM #5 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

No one was present who wished to speak.

ITEM #6 – PRESENTATIONS

a. Downtown Redevelopment Plan

1. Samantha Darlington, NC Commerce Community Economic Development Planner gave a presentation entitled NC Rural Planning Program which explained the mission and focus of the Main Street program, which is to help communities prepare for economic growth opportunities and improve prosperity. Samantha explained the two-day workshop which would enact smart specific measurable goals and tie them into our vision and provide actionable items (delineated tasks) to work on over the next five years as part of an implementation plan. Each task is defined to a group or person, and funds and dates are defined to the task.

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to approve **Resolution R24-19 A Resolution Requesting the Services of NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center for the Town of Belville, NC.** **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ACTION – Mayor Mike Allen **MADE THE MOTION** to approve the **Memorandum of Understanding Economic Development Strategic Plan Project for the Town of Belville, NC.** **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.** Mayor Allen directed staff to proceed with this memorandum.

2. *NC State University Coastal Dynamics Design Lab*



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Planning Consultant Adrienne Harrington presented a synopsis of the NC State University Coastal Dynamics Design Lab student presentations. The three presentations were interpretive, creative and proposed new conceptual viewpoints of what the space at the Belville Riverwalk and the Downtown Area could include. Keeping the area natural, with greenspace was the key focus, while building on history and culture. The students had some amazing ideas offering solutions to deal with sea level rise, and created imaginative features such as observation decks, an amphitheater, floating island docks, a Visitors center, raingardens, community gardens, and suggested themes which incorporated ways to prepare for resilience, while at the same time providing recreational opportunities. Most of the presentations focused on having the downtown formed around the park continuing seamlessly and be entirely walkable and bikeable. The final presentations will be put into a finalized book which will show their conclusions, and we look forward to that.

Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost relayed that he was awestruck by the designs and that the enthusiasm of the students and their diverse career paths helped make these presentations incredible. He was very impressed with the creativity of the plans and how well they listened to the Belville board and staff to keep our vision of continuity and greenspace on the forefront.

b. Keesha Starr, Parks and Recreation Board

ACTION – Commissioner Ryan Merrill MADE THE MOTION to approve R24-18 A Resolution by the Belville Board of Commissioners Expressing Gratitude and Appreciation for Keesha Starr for her Service on the Parks and Recreation Board. VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

c. Richard Trexler, One Year Anniversary

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost MADE THE MOTION to approve R24-20 A Resolution by the Belville Board of Commissioners Acknowledging Richard Trexler's First Work Anniversary with Appreciation and Thanks. VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

d. Kim Cranford, One Year Anniversary

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost MADE THE MOTION to approve R24-20 A Resolution by the Belville Board of Commissioners Acknowledging Kim Cranford's First Work Anniversary with Appreciation and Thanks. VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

ITEM #7 – PUBLIC HEARING

a. Public Hearing #1 – Articles 9 and 10 Landscape Buffers

The purpose of the Public Hearing is for consideration and action on text Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance in Articles 9 and 10 regarding Requirements for Landscape Buffers, and Modifications of Administrative Decisions on Landscape Buffers as shown in Exhibit A.

ACTION - Commissioner Morgan Mehler MADE THE MOTION to open the Public Hearing. VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

Planning Consultant Greg Feldman of WithersRavenel joined via telecommunications to present an overview of the text amendments to Articles 9 and 10 regarding the buffer requirements, noting the reasons for the new language. He pointed out that the previous text addressed only residences that were



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zoned R10 or R15. He also addressed the items the Planning Board had extensively discussed such as existing vegetation and tree preservation, the criteria on buffers where environmental constraints would prohibit adequate landscaping barriers, and modifications of administrative decisions thereon. The new text amendments would also ensure that the developer/owner would be responsible for ensuring the vegetation provides adequate coverage after two years. Town Manager Athina Williams mentioned that the Planning Board provided a recommendation via a consistency statement, and two residents from Magnolia Greens and the Waterford sat in on the Planning Board meetings about buffers and seem to be amenable to these changes.

There was no one else present who wished to speak.

ACTION – Commissioner Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to close the public hearing. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ACTION – Commissioner Morgan Mehler **MADE THE MOTION** to approve **Ordinance 2024-05 Ordinance Amending Articles 9 and 10 of the Town of Belville Zoning Ordinance to Allow for Greater Flexibility and Protection of Residential Uses in the Designs and Provision of Buffers.**

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to approve the Consistency Statement provided. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

b. Public Hearing #2 – Article 12 Sign Ordinance

Town Manager Athina Williams mentioned these amendments are staff initiated after questions arose from the Sign application for Westport Lofts. The purpose of the Public Hearing is for consideration and action on text Amendments to Article 12 of the Sign Ordinance regarding the allowance and size of wall signs in Multi-family Zoning Districts.

Planning Consultant Greg Feldman noted that the Town already had regulations for Wall Signs, but not for the Multi-family zoning districts. He shared that Westport Lofts wanted to get a sign approved, and there was nowhere in the Ordinance addressing that district. The Multi-family developments will be limited to two wall signs, the size of which is a percentage of the entire building. The size of the first sign will be 15% of the wall size, or 150 sq ft, whichever is less. The second wall sign may not exceed 10% of the wall size, or 75 sq ft, whichever is less. The text amendments included language regulating the illumination of the signs. Externally lit signs must be downward facing or backlit, to avoid shining in the direction of residences. Mr. Feldman provided some examples of signs both here and in downtown Wilmington. Discussion ensued. Town Manager Athina Williams mentioned that the Planning Board paid particular attention to the light shining into other residences and recommends the text amendments and they have provided a Consistency Statement. Town Manager Williams thanked Greg Feldman for all the work WithersRavenel did on these two ordinances.

ACTION - Commissioner Morgan Mehler **MADE THE MOTION** to open the Public Hearing. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

There was no one else present who wished to speak.



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ACTION – Commissioner Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to close the public hearing.
VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

ACTION – Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Bost **MADE THE MOTION** to approve **Ordinance 2024-06 -Ordinance Amending the Town of Belville Zoning Ordinance to Add Wall Signs as a Permissible Sign Type or Multi-family developments**, and the Consistency Statement provided herewith. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ITEM #8 – OLD BUSINESS

a. Update on the Belville Riverwalk Park

1. Event Coordinator, Ian McLeod gave an update on Founders Day held on May 4th. Fifty-five Vendors and six food trucks attended the event, and new this year was a dunk tank. Several town employees and one Commissioner got in the dunk tank, and the kids had a blast. We were very pleased with the event, which was well attended.

- On Monday, May 27th there will be a Memorial Day Ceremony at the Veterans Memorial in the Belville Riverwalk Park at 9:00 a.m. led by Mayor Allen. Mayor Allen asked everyone to let all the veterans know about the ceremony and invited everyone to come out.
- Our Food Truck Rodeo will be held on Saturday, June 1st. We have 15 food trucks lined up, entertainment, and are giving the beer garden a test run. This event is a fundraiser focusing on park equipment and programs. There will be a putt-putt course, face painting, fairy hair and inflatables, live music and three large tents for eating food and some yard games. Ian estimated that 1,100 people came last year, and we are hoping for more.
- Saturday, June 15th will be Youth Fishing Day, and we already have 29 of the 36 permissible youth registered. Brenda Hewlett and Joe Cranford will be purchasing more fishing rods for the event. Town Manager Athina Williams thanked the Parks and Recreation Board and Town Staff for their help with the events.

b. Project Updates

Stormwater Feasibility Study

Adrienne Harrington joined to give an update on the Stormwater Feasibility Study. She indicated that now it is time for the public input part of the study. We will have the Town Hall open for two weeks to provide in person sessions, and online services available as well. We encourage everyone to come in and report on the drainage and flooding issues in your neighborhood, so we can pinpoint the areas of main concern. We are also asking the public if they support stormwater project improvements. We hope to get a lot of feedback from the public, so we can hear all the concerns.

Residents will be asked to either come into town or fill out the survey online. We want to hear which areas of concern are the priority and are of major concern for the citizens. The chamber will be set up for two weeks for the public to participate. This research will be added to the Feasibility Study.

Greenfield Energy – Robin Spinks



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Town Manager Athina Williams informed the board that Robin Spinks and her husband have recently won a Coastal Entrepreneur award for their generator company, Greenfield Energy. The innovative design was for a generator specifically designed for people near the water, which can sit a little closer to your house. Mayor Allen asked Robin to come forward and explain a little about the project, which she did.

c. FY 2024/2025 Draft Budget

1. Update on Fringe Benefits

Town Manager Athina Williams explained that she and Kerry Wooding, our Deputy Finance Officer, have reviewed all the insurance plans available and have recommended that we utilize Wells Insurance as our facilitator. Mr. Wooding presented a cost comparison of the insurance options. Kerry Wooding came forward to explain the comparative analysis and recommended that we select Blue Cross and Blue Shield which will allow a \$32,000 decrease in insurance costs, if we change from the NCLM alternative. If the Board desires, we will still use NCLM for vision, life, dental and workers compensation, which are more cost effective. The savings from the insurance costs which have already been allocated in the budget, will be redesignated in an account for the potential relocation of the Town Hall.

ITEM #9 – REGULAR AGENDA

b. Transportation Update

Mayor Allen gave a report on the Cape Fear Bridge repairs, which are now complete. Mayor Allen anticipates that the funds for a new Cape Fear Bridge sound promising. He informed the public that they can come by Town Hall if you are interested in looking at planned transportation projects.

ITEM #10 – CLOSED SESSION

- a. N.C.G.S. § 143-391.11(a)(3) – To consult with the attorney including litigation and
N.C.G.S. § 153A-158.1(a) To discuss matters relating to acquisition of property.

ACTION – Commissioner Morgan Mehler **MADE THE MOTION** to go into Closed Session. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ACTION – Commissioner Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to come back into Open Session. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

ITEM #9 – OTHER ITEMS AND REPORTS

- a. Town Attorney Norwood Blanchard – informed all that in the Closed Session we discussed litigation, with USG, and negotiating strategies for acquisition of property, but no action was taken in the Closed Session.
b. Board of Commissioners – None
c. Mayor Pro Tem - None
d. Mayor – Mayor Allen thanked everyone for attending.
e. Town Manager – None

ITEM #10 – ADJOURNMENT



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ACTION – Commissioner Ryan Merrill **MADE THE MOTION** to Adjourn the Meeting. **VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.**

Minutes Compiled by Sharon A. Niemann

SIGNED:

Mike Allen, Mayor

ATTEST:

Sharon A. Niemann, Town Clerk

