



## **MINUTES**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Edwards called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. Council Member Joe Maxim moved to open the meeting at 6:05 p.m., seconded by Council Member Les Gladden. There were ayes by all and the meeting commenced.

Mayor Edwards asked to skip to item #2 on the agenda as Mr. Julian Wilson had not joined the meeting yet to go over his presentation for Palmetto Armory.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**2. Discussion on Cone Mill property (Ryan Spitzer)** - Discussion on next steps for this property. **(INFORMATIONAL)**. Town Manager, Ryan Spitzer, stated that he and the Mayor had a conversation with DFI who had originally assisted with the sale of the old mill property. They agreed to do another RFP for the site if Council wanted them to. Council was not keen on the idea of residential units on that property but DFI pointed out that a lot of the projects they see coming through now tend to have a residential component to them. It's just easier to start building homes first because while they are moving people in them, it gives them more time to find a tenant for the commercial side of the project. Unless a developer already has a tenant lined up to go into the space, they don't want to build just commercial buildings. DFI would also do a market study, which they had done originally. That process would take about 2-3 months.

Mayor Pro Tem, Melissa Davis, stated that most people she had talked to did not want to see townhomes there. They were not opposed to commercial development but they did not want to see townhomes. Council Member Joe Maxim was not in favor of residential either and wanted a place that provided employment opportunities. Mayor Pro Tem Davis wanted to know if it could be used as greenspace or a park. Mr. Spitzer stated that because it was a Brownfield site with contaminated soil, it could not be used as a park, nor could single family residences be built on it since children may play on the ground with the contaminated soil. He added, however, that from the old two white houses down to the town hall, anything could be built there.

Council Member Les Gladden, noted that they were against the wall in this instance because townhomes could be the difference between getting a deal and getting a really good deal. It was either Council accepts a lower offer for just an office on the property or gets a higher price by allow some residential, along with office or commercial space, especially if that was what the market was dictating. Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley agreed; she, too, has heard from residents that they were done with townhomes but also understood that the market is calling for them. She asked if Council could specify in their RFP a specific number or per centage of homes they would like there? Mr. Spitzer responded that it could be done either way but they would need to figure out what that number was. Council Member Stinson-Wesley was in favor of capping the number of units.

Council Member Joe Maxim was concerned about what the town had done in the past by pushing back hard on density issues with other properties and just did not want to allow greater density for one developer but not the other. He wanted to be sure the town was applying its regulations fairly across the board. Additionally, he was not in favor of mixed use as he was skeptical that one investor could potentially buy up all the units and rent them out as one such investor did in his neighborhood. He would rather see more of what US Development is doing with smaller rental units above commercial/retail buildings with increased opportunities for employment in Pineville.

Council Member Gladden requested that Mr. Spitzer get an opinion from Electricities if they think the warehouses in the back of the property should stay or go. If Electricities thinks they should go, it might be wise to have them demolished while we still have the demolition crew here.

Mayor Edwards was more in favor of commercial but if the market at this time was calling for townhomes, Council may need to consider it but he reminded the board that they had all agreed there would be no more apartments. Planning and Zoning Director, Travis Morgan, stated that it was easier to regulate things like parking, landscaping or elevations, but

much more difficult to regulate ownership of multiple units. There's not a whole lot that can be done if an investor buys multiple units and rents them all out. Mayor Edwards added that the bill that was currently trying to be passed into law would make it that much easier for developers to put multi-family housing anywhere and even though it may not pass this year, they will continue to try to pass it like they have each year.

**1. Palmetto Armory (Travis Morgan) - Text amendment proposal for an indoor shooting range. (INFORMATIONAL).**

Council was ready to move on and go back to item #1 but the applicant still had not joined the meeting. It was decided that instead of tabling the item, Mr. Morgan would do his portion of the presentation first.

Planning and Zoning Director, Travis Morgan, stated that it had been a while since the town had gotten an external request for a text amendment. Text amendments must to go to the Planning Board first and then required to have a Public Hearing afterward. The request before them was to have an indoor gun range located where the Office Depot currently is located across the street from Carolina Place Mall and in front of the old Dicks store where a bowling alley/entertainment center will soon be located. He asked Council to consider where they would want this type of business to be located. Some towns allow it in their commercial districts, others in their industrial areas. He was thinking ahead in case any other requests come in for similar uses or for an outdoor shooting range and he would like to have something in place before it actually happens. He leaned on Charlotte's and Waxhaw's regulations for guidance in formulating regulations for Pineville. Some of his concerns were:

- Noise
- Air Quality
- Being located near incompatible uses
- Bullet stop wall standards

As it stands now, the proposed location for the gun range is in the B-4 Zoning District (*zoned for business*) and while it is zoned for gun sales and repairs, it was not zoned for a gun range. While things such as setbacks, decibel levels, and other qualitative measures can be put in place, he was still concerned about air quality and will research this further. He added that Mecklenburg County showed all firing ranges as stand-alone buildings.

Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley asked what would happen if a neighboring store, such as the Vitamin Shop closed up and a Charter School came in to that spot? Mr. Morgan said it was a good question – most towns had indicated that since the gun range was there first, they were permitted to remain there but could not expand and others stated that they could expand so it would be something they would have to take into consideration. He added that this was the first flush of information he was able to put together but a lot more flushing out of information still needed to be done.

Council Member Joe Maxim asked Council if the B-4 Zoning District was the right district to put this business in. Mr. Morgan stated that a Conditional Use was the safer way to go with this. He added that the more detailed and clearer the conditions and parameters were, the better. There's some question as to the standards of the back wall plates and who actually oversees that or if there's an industry standard. Mayor Edwards stated that it was federally regulated by the ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco & Fire Arms) who has to license any dealer. Additionally, they come twice a year to check out the gun ranges. He thought the back wall plates were changed out every five years or so.

At this time, Mr. Julian Wilson, had joined the meeting and stated that OSHA was heavily involved in site visits to gun ranges. They test for lead contamination, that the range is operating safely and checking for any unsafe activity being conducted. Council Member Gladden asked about building standards to which Mr. Wilson replied that there were industry standards in place. A business called Action Target is one of the largest entities that supplies the back wall plates to many ranges. Mr. Wilson purchases his plates through this company. Mayor Pro Tem Davis asked Mr. Morgan to check on any complaints or incidents that may have occurred in some of the other towns while Council Member Gladden suggested he call one of the district reps at Action Target to get more information. Mr. Morgan replied that if the applicant could get that information for him, it would save some time. Council Member Stinson-Wesley recommended getting feedback from other towns that have ranges. Mr. Wilson offered to share municipality information and contacts with anyone that wanted them.

At this time, the floor was turned over to Mr. Wilson who provided some background on how he came to be in the business. He explained that Palmetto wasn't just a gun store but one that offered other sporting goods and apparel. The major function of the business, however, was to train people on proper handling of firearms. He has several stores, mostly in SC, one in GA and one about to open in Denver, NC. He has a good working relationship with the ATF and added that gun ranges were closely regulated due to the smell of gun powder.

He explained that there were certain criteria he looks for when opening up a new store such as being close to an interstate, stand-alone building, the right size, and not in a residential area – it was the perfect location that checked all the boxes for him. Currently, Office Depot is renting the space from him as Staples will be buying out Office Depot and close operations at that location. As noted above, he purchases his back wall bullet plates from Action Target and stated that they make such good quality, high standard plates, that he doesn't have to change his at all.

**3. FY2021-2022 Budget (Ryan Spitzer) - Discussion or questions on any outstanding items. (INFORMATIONAL).** Mr. Spitzer stated that if Council was good with the FY21-22 budget, there would be a Public Hearing at the May Council Meeting which all determined should be hybrid of a limited number of attendees as well as a ZOOM meeting for those that don't want to attend in person.

The Fire Department was requesting a raise in the stipend paid to the Chief's position from \$25,000 to \$35,000 so they were looking at the job description for that position. Council Member Maxim asked where we stood with the Police and Telecommunicator salaries. Mr. Spitzer responded that the Telecommunicators' salaries were increased by 10% which would be a \$36,000 hit to the budget, while the police department salaries would also increase by 10%, along with a 2% COLA adjustment across the board. This will result in a \$179,000 hit to the budget. Mayor Edwards asked if Mr. Spitzer had heard of any police departments cutting their budgets due to recent trends in defunding police departments. Mr. Spitzer had not heard of any cuts.

Mr. Spitzer stated that Finance Director, Richard Dixon, would give an analysis of where the town stood currently with its budget at the May Council Meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Davis wanted to be sure they were clear on the sponsorships for the year. Mr. Spitzer stated that \$15,000 would be put aside for the ASC but only \$10,000 would be given to them up front. They would talk with the ASC at a later date to determine if the remaining \$5,000 would be given to them. Mr. Spitzer added that there would be no increase in any fees or taxes to residents but once the Public Hearing was held in May, the budget could not be increased at all; it could decrease but it could not increase.

**4. Discuss Possible Fire Station Locations (Ryan Spitzer) - Council to narrow down location choices for a new Fire Station (INFORMATIONAL).** Mr. Spitzer was still waiting to hear back from the Fire Department on their preferences for where they want to see a new fire station built. Council Member Gladden stated that from the talks he had with some of the firemen, the two choices they seem to be favoring right now were Lowry St. and where they are now on College St.

All agreed that a two-story facility would take up less of a foot print and therefore, less land needed which would help to keep the cost down. Mr. Spitzer still would like to discuss it with Jason Klemowicz and then put some building footprint layouts down on paper to determine exactly how much building space would be needed. The department will need to pick up the pace for deciding on a location because they will need to work up a contract with whoever owns the property they decide on. They will need to decide the footprint of the building before they can make a final decision as to where it will go.

Additional items that were briefly discussed included:

- Citizen complaint process – Ryan to send Council a flow chart he worked up.
- Update provided on the Miller/Smith property – possibly go with either 51 homes with current zoning or allowing 70 homes on smaller lots.
- Mr. Morgan to do calculation on average lot sizes in the area and send it out to council
- Rock hit water line for the Splash Pad and broke it – repairs were being done

**ADJOURN:** Hearing no further comments or discussion, Council Member Les Gladden moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m. seconded by Council Member Amelia Stinson-Wesley. There were ayes by all and the meeting concluded.

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Mayor Jack Edwards

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_

Barbara Monticello

