

Minutes  
Spring Hope Board of Commissioners Meeting  
March 4, 2024

A regular meeting of the Town of Spring Hope Board of Commissioners was held at 7 p.m. at the Spring Hope Town Hall in the Commissioners Room.

Members present: Mayor William Pritchard, Commissioners Brenda Lucas, Eric Gainey, Brent Cone, Tommy Toney and Drew Griffin.

Also, present was Town Manager Andrew DeIonno, Town Clerk Michele Collins, Town Attorney Mark Edwards, Code Enforcement Officer Shawn Lucas and Chief Nathan Gant.

Mayor Pritchard called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance.

Commissioner Cone made a motion to approve the minutes from the February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting; Commissioner Griffin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor Pritchard asked Town Manager Andrew DeIonno to introduce the architects for the Depot Project. Mr. DeIonno introduced Andy Lopina, the lead architect who was on a video chat from his office in Winston Salem. Mr. Lopina said that David Gall the historical architect was also present, Mr. Lopina asked the board to look at the preliminary sketch for the inside of the depot building. He pointed out the different spots in the plan including the caterer's kitchen, the reconstructed ADA ramp, the new bathrooms and the network room which would be housed in the existing small office. Mr. Lopina said there were indications that the original office may have been used by the conductor.

Mr. Lopina told the board that they had arranged the inside to house the largest occupancy count they could that would include all the necessary things the town would need. Mr. DeIonno asked Mr. Lopina to talk a little more about the numbers to be expected. Mr. Gall said that including the space on the front deck that there should be room for approximately 400 people. He said that they figured that number was done with the requirements from the state. Mr. Lopina also said that there were enough exists and that some of the existing walls were kept but that number should be accurate. Mr. Lopina also said that they were trying to see if a train car would be possible to acquire and use for storage.

Mayor Pritchard asked if there was anything in the existing flooring that would assist the portable stage or was it just a suggestion. Mr. Gall said it was portable to be able to move it around and that it would just need to be able to be wired. He also asked if it was necessary to keep the network room as it was so that the vaulted ceilings could be visible. Mr. Gall said that that the original ceiling would be exposed as much as possible to be able to insulate the ceiling. He said that the historical office of the state may not allow the office to be removed.

Commissioner Griffin asked if the network room would be a walled room without a ceiling. Mr. Gall said yes. Commissioner Griffin asked what kind of flooring would be in the building, Mr. Gall said that he was going to have the ply board removed and have the original flooring milled and sent back to the depot to be stained. Mr. Gall also said that there would be a skirting wall around the building after it is insulated and the piers are reconstructed. Mr. Gall explained that many of the older piers would need to be completely rebuilt.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to accept the preliminary floor plan; Ms. Lucas seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. DeIonno said that he asked the owner of the Icehouse if she would be willing to either donate or sell the property to the Town of Spring Hope. He said that the town had maintained the area for many years so therefore it would not add to the work of the town. He said that Mrs. Williams decided to donate the building and property. He also said that the plan was to restore the building and use the property for a small park.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to accept Resolution 2024-05 accepting the donate property and an extended a thank you to Mrs. Williams; Commissioner Cone seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to accept the CPA firm of Ryan Marler to assist in the upcoming year's bookkeeping as long as there were no concerns by the town attorney; Commissioner Gainey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. DeIonno said that he felt as though it was important to do some reorganization of the town offices. He said that Spring Hope was unique in the fact that the town was collecting taxes. He also said that he thought that it was smart to have the county begin to collect for the town. He said that there would be a small fee and that the resolution would need to be approved.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to approve the resolution allowing the county to collect the taxes; Commissioner Cone seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Mr. DeIonno said that the DDB recommended allowing store owners to display items on the sidewalks within four feet of the front with a permit. He said that they also decided that the merchant would have to file a plan and that the permit could be revoked. Mr. DeIonno said that a small number of towns allow merchandise on the sidewalks. He said that any new language would have to added to the ordinance and brought back next month,

Leanne Hahnel the chairperson of the DDB said that they talked to some of the merchants as well as measuring the areas in front of the stores. She mentioned that some sidewalks had more room than others.

Commissioner Gainey made a motion to leave the ordinance as it was because the current ordinance had not be adhered to even after violations and the burden it would put on code enforcement; Commissioner Lucas seconded.

Commissioner Cone said that he was thankful for the research that the manager did as well as the work the DDB did to complete the work. He said that he disagreed with leaving the motion as it is currently written.

The motion was defeated 3-2 with Commissioner Gainey and Lucas voting to keep the ordinance the same and Commissioners Griffin, Cone and Toney voting against keeping it the same.

Commissioner Cone asked what the developed standards were currently. Mr. DeIonno said that the DDB suggested the standards and that the Town of Spring Hope did not have any. He said that most towns would only allow merchandise during events. Commissioner Griffin asked if it

was possible to have the DDB come up with some events for the permits to be issued. Commissioner Lucas said that the main thing was that it was a hazard. Mr. DeIonno said that neither he nor the staff would be in charge of what would be put out. He also showed a picture of a store that never became compliant with the current ordinance that states no merchandise. He also said that there is no way for people to self-police. He said it was clear with the pictures that despite the current ordinance merchants don't comply. Commissioner Lucas said she thought all the work was to try to make the town look better.

Commissioner Gainey made a motion to keep the ordinance the same; Commissioner Lucas seconded and the motion passed 3-2 with Commissioner Cone and Toney voting nay.

Ms. Hahnel from the Spring Hope Chamber asked to have the event permit for the Car Show approved. She said that this year all the vendors would be from Nash County. She also said that they had many events coming in the year.

Commissioner Cone made a motion to accept the Car Show event permit; Commissioner Griffin seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Shawn Lucas gave the Code Enforcement report.

Chief Gant told the board that the past month was busy. He said that there were 154 calls for service, 30 traffic stops and three accidents. He mentioned that the person who had been chased into Spring Hope limits by another agency had been arrested.

Mr. DeIonno mentioned that the NC Department of Commerce had another grant round for downtown projects. He said that there were two potential projects, he said that either the board could pick to pay for additional items for the depot project or renovate the Chamber building. He said that the Chamber would have to relinquish its part ownership of the building to the town to be eligible for funds. He said that there were structural issues with the building. Commissioner Lucas asked how much the town would have to pay; Mr. DeIonno said that there would be a 5% match and that he would go for the max of \$850,000.00. Mr. DeIonno said that this grant would only be able to be used for structures. The board decided that finishing the depot project was a better fit for the upcoming grant.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to give the manager the go ahead on the grant for the depot; Commissioner Gainey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. DeIonno told the board that Nash County wanted the board to agree to do an interconnect as it pertained to water service. He said that the county wanted to apply for a grant and that they need to be connected to the town. He explained that this kind of arrangement would not help the town grow as far as expanding the water system in the future. Mayor Pritchard said that he had gotten a phone call from the chair of Nash County board, He said that he agreed with the manager that it would stop the growth for the town. The board agreed.

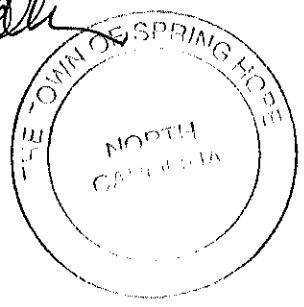
Brett Bowers a representative for Tom White's company, said that the buildings on Ash Street were being worked on. He said that the permits had been submitted and that the roof and masonry work was completed, on one of the buildings. Commissioner Cone asked when the completion date would be, Mr. Bowers said that it looked like it would be ready around June.

Commissioner Griffin said that he thought coming to the next meeting would be a good idea, Mr. Bowers said that he would come back to the next meeting.

Commissioner Griffin made a motion to adjourn; Commissioner Gainey seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Submitted

*Michael Collins*



Attest

*Kyle Bowers*