

**Town of Hertford**  
Work Session Meeting (In Person/Facebook)  
Monday, January 22, 2024 – 6:00PM  
Horace Reid Community Center, 305 W Grubb Street

The Council of the Town of Hertford held a Work Session Meeting at the Horace Reid Community Center (also by Facebook) on Monday, January 22, 2024, at 6:00 PM.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ashley Hodges, Mayor  
Rhonda Waters

Sandra Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem  
Keith Rouse

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT**

Connie Brothers

**STAFF PRESENT**

Janice McKenzie Cole, Town Manager  
Doris Walton, Assistant to the Town Manager  
David Forsythe, Public Works Director  
Gina Durante, Town Clerk

A quorum was present.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Hodges called the meeting to order.

**INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The invocation was given by Councilman Rouse, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by Councilwoman Waters to approve the agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded the motion and it passed unanimously, 4-0.

**SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT**

Eric Thomas, Assistant Director for Design & Revitalization Development Finance Initiative, and Rebecca Nixon, Data Analyst, both from the UNC School of Government.

Manager Cole noted that Council had previously authorized and approved the Town to work with the UCSOG Development Finance Initiative to do a financial feasibility study for development at the West Grubb Street spray field. Manager Cole, Public Works Director David Forsythe, and Assistant Doris Walton have met regularly with Eric, Rebecca, and Maggie of the SOG regarding this study for 5-6 months.

Mr. Thomas explained that the assessment he is presenting is based on market analysis, financial project feasibility from a private developer perspective, public interest, capital market lending conditions, conversations with Council and stakeholders, reviewing Hertford's Strategic Plan, and Town's considerations of development of this property.

Some of the presentation highlights include:

- There is limited space in Town boundaries for development of single family housing.
- Median housing prices have increased 41% from 2016-2021.
- In the last five years, home ownership has increased.
- Projected demand for more single family housing in Hertford over the next five years.
- The spray field is owned by the Town even though parts of it are outside Town boundaries.
- Based on the DFI assessment, single family housing and open space is best opportunity for the use of the spray field.
- There are no contamination concerns for the redevelopment of the spray field.
- A connection to the Town infrastructure is necessary to attract developers.
- Various formulas for development costs, profit margins, and price points were presented.
- Affordable Housing for this site will require significant gap funding.

Council and Manager Cole discussed the need and their support for new housing in Town to grow the tax base. The spray field may not be the right location to build Affordable Housing, but development of the West Grubb Street location is still desirable for the Town. The 300 block of Market Street may be a better option for Affordable Housing and the infrastructure is already in place. There is a need to manage growth and recruit developers. Current Town grants do not include expanding our infrastructure, but we can look for grants for that purpose.

Mr. Thomas closed by informing Council that the SOG will answer any further questions that might arise, including legal questions, free of charge. Mayor Hodges thanked Mr. Thomas and Ms. Nixon for the informative presentation and all the number crunching that went into it.

## **CONTINUED BUSINESS**

None

### **MANAGER'S UPDATE**

- Manager Cole stated that there was a meeting with Habitat for Humanity, but nothing notable to report.
- Manager Cole discussed murals around town promoting our brand “Cultivating the Arts.” Electric Cities has awarded Hertford a grant to be used for a mural on the Gunther building and a sculpture at the Chamber of Commerce. The Perquimans Art League has also received grants. PAL approached Seeds of Success to contribute to a mural at the Community Center. The PAL grants require a match and minority input. A retired teacher from Elizabeth City will assist them with the drawing for that mural. With Council’s approval, Manager Cole will oversee what is put on the Community Center as it is owned by the Town. Council came to a consensus to approve Seeds of Success to proceed with their grant application.
- The Board of Elections is open at their new location. Early voting for the statewide primary election begins February 15, 2024, at 333 Winfall Blvd. IDs are required. Manager Cole will be providing more information in the next utility newsletter.

### **COUNCIL'S REPORTS/CONCERNS**

Councilwoman Waters had no report.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson announced that on February 10, 2024, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority will be celebrating their Founder’s Day in Hertford. Lillie and Beulah Burke, sisters born in Hertford, were two of the nine founding members of the original Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority in 1908. The event will take place from 12 PM – 2 PM. A heated tent will be set up at King Street and Edenton Road Street at the historical markers commemorating the Burke sisters where the sorority will convene, and lunch will be served. Mayor Hodges will welcome AKA to Hertford. Business owners will be encouraged to stay open following the event.

Councilman Rouse had no report.

Mayor Hodges reported that on January 19<sup>th</sup>, Withers Ravenel, our infrastructure engineering contractor, prepared a BBQ lunch for the Town of Hertford staff because we are one of their top three clients in North Carolina. Also on January 19<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Hodges and Manager Cole met with Chris Hardy, our Regional Representative from Congressman Don Davis’s office. Mr. Hardy was available to speak with Hertford residents and did meet with some. He and Manager Cole spoke with Mr. Hardy about Representative Davis’s legislative priorities and the process for requesting funding

through Congressionally directed funding requests. It was a positive conversation with Mr. Hardy and Mayor Hodges looks forward to a future visit with Representative Davis. Also, Mayor Hodges and Manager Cole visited the Marine Park construction site, and he noted that there has been a great deal of progress. Mayor Hodges and Manager Cole were present when County Manager Heath discussed the number of commercial business sites to be developed there with representatives from Senator Tillis's and Senator Budd's offices. Lastly, Mayor Hodges thanked Perquimans NAACP and First Baptist Church and Congregation for welcoming Council to their services honoring Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on Monday, January 15<sup>th</sup>. It was a wonderful celebration.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Councilman Rouse made a motion to adjourn, and Mayor Pro Tem Anderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.