



Town of Franklinton

Board of Commissioners
Town Hall 101 N. Main St.
March 19, 2024, 7:00 PM

MINUTES

Those in Attendance: Mayor Art Wright, Commissioners John Allers, Tasha Hatten, Alvin Holden, Judy McArn, and LaTasha Wilder, Town Manager Zach Steffey, Town Attorney Brian Pridgen, and Town Clerk Lauren Chandler

Others in Attendance: Chief of Police James Davis Jr., Public Works Director Brad Kearney, Town Planner Chris George, Carey Johnson with the Franklin Times, and citizens

Mayor Wright called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. Commissioner McArn led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Wilder made a motion to approve the agenda. Commissioner McArn seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Allers made a motion to approve the following minutes: February 20, 2024 Regular Meeting, February 29, 2024 Special Meeting, and February 29, 2024 Closed Session. Commissioner McArn seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

Public Comments (Three-minute time limit)

Ms. Susan Dobie, 201 Winston St., stated that there are 552 municipalities in NC. Out of the 552, there are only 11 municipalities that have a higher property tax than Franklinton. These other 11 are not located near Franklinton. There are 4 municipalities that match Franklinton in tax rates. That leaves 536 municipalities that have lower tax rates than Franklinton. For example, Franklinton's tax rate is over 50% higher than Louisburg. Franklin County is the fastest growing county around us and the 3rd fastest growing county in the State. Growth means stretching resources thin and busier roads, but it has brought in more people paying property taxes. We need growth to get a bank, another grocery store, a better pharmacy, and maybe a dog park. Ms. Dobie's tax evaluation more than tripled. This reminded Ms. Dobie of the 1980's when high taxes caused older individuals to have to sell their homes because they couldn't afford their taxes. Ms. Dobie recognized that the Board does not have any control over the tax evaluations, but that the Board could reduce the property tax rate. The Board could also tax only the first 40 years of a home. Ms. Dobie could not image that the Town needs tax revenue that amounts to more than triple what it needed in 2023. Ms. Dobie felt this tax rate was unsustainable and asked the Board to take drastic measures.

Vincent Yarborough, 415 S. Chavis St., stated that he has walked his road every day for 18 years and that recently he has witnessed vehicles racing and driving erratically on his road. He has had to move quickly out of the way of these vehicles to avoid injury. He would like there to be something done about the driving on this road to make it safer.

Annette Young, 406 S. Chavis St., spoke on behalf of her mother. Ms. Young agrees and stands with Ms. Dobie on the tax issue. She thanked Mr. Yarborough for speaking on the walking conditions on S. Chavis St. Mr. Yarborough must maintain daily walking for his health. Ms. Young also mentioned her brother no longer walks on Chavis St. because of the risk of getting hit by a car. Ms. Young was encouraged and thankful to see that Chavis St. was on the agenda of tonight's meeting and encouraged the Board to move forward in making it a safe place to walk.

Agenda Items

a. Voluntary Annexation Petition for 425 Gordon Moore Rd (Parcel ID 010296)

i. Staff Presentation

Zachary Steffey

This is the second meeting required for annexation. The Board of Commissioners have received a voluntary annexation petition for 425 Gordon Moore Road (Parcel ID 010296). The subject property is non-contiguous to the contiguous corporate limits of the Town of Franklinton. The subject property will be zoned PD Planned Development. The subject property will be 3 acres on the northwestern corner of the existing parcel. The Town Clerk has reviewed the Annexation Petition and certified that the petition is complete. At the February 2024 Board of Commissioners meeting the Board set a Public Hearing for March 19, 2024 at 7 PM or as soon thereafter.

The Board of Commissioners are asked to hold a Public Hearing on the proposed Voluntary Annexation and are asked to vote on the proposed Voluntary Annexation of 425 Gordon Moore Road.

ii. Vote to Open Public Hearing

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Allers made a motion to open the public hearing. Commissioner Holden seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

iii. Vote to Close Public Hearing

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Allers made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Hatten seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

iv. Vote on Annexation

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Allers made a motion to approve the Voluntary Annexation Petition for 425 Gordon Moore Rd (Parcel ID 010296). Commissioner McArn seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

b. Voluntary Annexation Petition for 818, 820, and 838 South Main Street (Parcel IDs 007531 and 007532)

i. Staff Presentation

Zachary Steffey

This is the second meeting required for annexation. The Board of Commissioners have received a voluntary annexation petition for 818, 820, and 838 South Main Street (Parcel IDs 007531 and 007532). The subject properties are contiguous to the corporate limits of the Town of Franklinton. The subject properties are being combined and rezoned to PD Planned Development and will be an addition to the previously approved Essex Master Development Plan. The combined subject properties are 1.55 acres according to the Franklin County GIS records. The Town Clerk has reviewed the Annexation Petition and certified that the petition is complete. The petitioner seeks to enter into an annexation agreement with the Town of Franklinton. The annexation agreement will allow the annexation to be completed once water has been allocated to the townhome units that will be located on this lot. Completion of this annexation may be initiated sooner if requested by the property owner. The Board of Commissioners set a Public Hearing on the proposed annexation for the March 19, 2024 Board of Commissioners meeting.

The Board of Commissioners are asked to hold a Public Hearing for the proposed voluntary annexation and are asked to vote on the proposed voluntary annexation of 818,820, and 838 South Main Street.

ii. Vote to Open Public Hearing

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner McArn made a motion to open the public hearing. Commissioner Wilder seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

Ms. Dobie asked where this was in relation to the old dump. Mr. Steffey answered that it was across the street.

iii. Vote to Close Public Hearing

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Holden made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner McArn seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

iv. Vote on Annexation

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner McArn made a motion to approve Voluntary Annexation Petition for 818, 820, and 838 South Main Street (Parcel IDs 007531 and 007532). Commissioner Wilder seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

c. A Rezoning Petition to rezone the property located at 425 Gordon Moore Rd (Parcel ID 010296) to the Planned Development Zoning District (PD) from the Franklin County Ordinance Residential 80 (FCO R-80)

i. Staff Presentation

Zachary Steffey

The Town of Franklinton has received a rezoning request for a portion of 425 Gordon Moore Road (Parcel ID 010296). The rezoning request is to change the zoning of the property from R80 Residential (Franklin County Zoning) to PD Planned Development (Town of Franklinton Zoning). The property is bordered to the north, east, and south by property zoned R80 Residential and to the west by property zoned R30 Residential. The rezoning applies to a portion of the property that will be carved out of the existing larger tract and will be a total of 3 acres. Based on the proposed subdivision the subject property will be compliant with the minimum lot size and dimensional requirements for the PD Planned Development Zoning District.

The Planning Board of the Town of Franklinton met at 6:00 PM on Monday, March 11, 2024 and voted 4-0 to forward a favorable recommendation of the proposed rezoning to the Board of Commissioners. The Planning Board also found the proposed rezoning to be reasonable and consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Plan of the Town of Franklinton.

The Board of Commissioners are asked to consider whether to approve or deny the rezoning request for 425 Gordon Moore Road along with the proposed Statement of Reasonableness and Consistency.

ii. Vote to Open Public Hearing

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Wilder made a motion to open the public hearing. Commissioner McArn seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

iii. Vote to Close Public Hearing

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Holden made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner McArn seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

iv. Vote on Rezoning

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner McArn made a motion to approve the Rezoning Petition to rezone the property located at 425 Gordon Moore Rd (Parcel ID 010296) to the Planned Development Zoning District (PD) from the Franklin County Ordinance Residential 80 (FCO R-80) and find that the proposed rezoning is consistent with the adopted Comprehensive Land Use Plan of the Town of Franklinton, that the proposed rezoning is reasonable, and that the proposed rezoning is in the best interest of the public. Commissioner Wilder seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

d. South Chavis Street Speed Limit Adjustment

i. Staff Presentation

Zachary Steffey

The Town of Franklinton has received concerns about the rate of speed of vehicles along South Chavis Street. The current posted speed limit on South Chavis Street is 35 mph. South Chavis Street is a NCDOT State Maintained Road. NCDOT has provided the required documentation to repeal the existing speed limit and to set a new speed limit of 25 mph for the roadway. Once these documents have been approved by the Board of Commissioners they will be submitted to the State Traffic Engineer for final approval.

The Board of Commissioners are asked to consider approving the Certification of Municipal Declaration documentation to reduce the speed limit on South Chavis Street and on the surrounding roadways from 35 mph to 25 mph.

ii. Vote on Speed Limit Adjustment

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Holden made a motion to approve the South Chavis Street Speed Limit Adjustments. Commissioner McArn seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

e. Consideration of the adoption of the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Ordinance

i. Staff Presentation

Zachary Steffey

The Budget Officer for the Town of Franklinton presented a recommended budget for Fiscal Year 2024-2025 at the Board of Commissioners February 29th Retreat. Proper public notice has been filed in the newspaper and the FY 24-25 Recommended Budget has been made available for public inspection at Town Hall for at least 10 days.

The Board of Commissioners are asked to consider approving the Town of Franklinton Budget Ordinance for Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Mr. Steffey presented a brief overview of the budget:

- The tax rate decreased by 2 cents.
- The Town will be eliminating the garbage and recycling billing fees and absorbing the cost in the tax rate. This is a good step forward with the inconsistencies of collections for the Town and for our residents as well in eliminating that monthly trash service fee.
- The budget includes 4 new positions: 2 new Police Officers, 1 new Public Works Technician, and a Parks & Recreation Director.
- The budget includes several vehicles for several departments to modernize the fleet and reduce maintenance costs.
- Additional funding has been set aside for paving and sidewalk repairs throughout the town.
- The budget includes funding allocated for a market analysis study to examine the feasibility and to examine the market for a YMCA in Franklinton.
- The budget includes the match components for the Downtown revitalization projects that include Mains St., Water St., and Front St.
- The budget includes funding allocated for the Franklinton to Novozymes Rail Trail Project
- The budget includes increases to remain competitive to maintain and effectively recruit for our various positions across all departments.
- Funds will be set aside for Capital Improvement Plans.

The budget is balanced at \$3,608,507 with a tax rate of \$.73 per \$100 evaluation.

Mr. Steffey shared the breakdown of revenue sources:

- Ad Valorem Taxes \$2,293,202
- Sales and Use Tax \$668,393
- ABC Revenue \$100,000
- The other revenues make up the smaller components of the Town's revenues.

Mr. Steffey shared the breakdown of expenditures:

- Public Safety with our Police Department is the Town's biggest expenditure at \$1,389,761.
- Public Works and General Administration are almost even with Public Works at \$562,085 and General Administration at \$587,269.
- Solid Waste services come next at \$275,000.
- Public Grounds comes at \$226,200

Mr. Steffey shared a pie chart with the Board of Commissioners to further show the breakdown of expenditures:

- 39% Police Department
- 16% Public Works

- 16% General Administration
- 8% Solid Waste Services
- 6% Public Grounds
- 6% Governing Board
- 4% Parks & Recreation
- 3% Street Maintenance
- 2% Planning & Inspection

Mr. Steffey shared an example:

Average Property Tax Bill Example

- Based on an average home value of \$300,000 and the property tax rate of 73 cents per \$100 of valuation:
 - $\$300,000 \times .0073 = \$2,190$ annual property taxes
 - $\$2,190 / 12 \text{ months} = \182.50 per month
 - $\$2,190 / 365 \text{ days} = \6 per day
- With the reduction in the tax rate from 75 cents per \$100 of valuation to 73 cents per \$100 of valuation a home valued at \$300,000 will see a \$60 savings.

Trash and Recycling Services

- Residents paid a \$25 per month trash fee for trash service and recycling service during FY 23-24
- In FY 24-25 the monthly trash fee has been eliminated and trash services have been absorbed into the tax rate. This results in a annual savings to residents of \$300 per year.

In Summary

Based on the example above, a property valued at \$300,000 will see \$360 in savings during Fiscal Year 24-25 compared to what they would have paid if the tax rate was not decreased and if trash billing was not absorbed into the tax rate.

Mr. Steffey shared the Town's plan in lowering the tax rate. The goal would be to drop the tax rate each year by 2 cents. This is based on the Town's average annual growth rate of the Town's tax base which is 8.44%. In the next 5 years the Town would be able to reduce the tax rate to .65 cents per \$100 evaluation. The Town may be able to reduce the tax rate even further and quicker than this if water is awarded to the approved projects in town. Water allocations is the biggest challenge to building the Town's tax base. Currently the Town has 1,473 residential units approved by the Town of Franklinton. The projects would generate \$3,387,200 in property tax revenue if the projects had full water allocations. Currently the number of units that have been allotted water stands at 229 units which will only generate \$497,678 in revenue when these units are constructed. If all the units approved by the Town were allotted water, the Town could reduce the tax rate by 41.9% per \$100 evaluation (not including additional services). This would make the new tax rate, under this hypothetical scenario, 31.1 cents per \$100 evaluation. This puts it in perspective the challenging situation the Town of Franklinton is currently in. The Town has the growth and the units approved by the Town, but the water is not there, and this puts the Town in a very difficult position.

In addition, we have developments adjacent to the Town's corporate limits that are not annexed into Town but creates a strain on the Town's resources. Mr. Steffey shared a map of the Town of Franklinton's corporate limits and the surrounding neighborhoods that are outside those limits. These new developments add calls to the Town's Police Department, setting up trash services, bulk item pick up, and strain on our roads (which is great, except that the Town does not benefit from the tax revenue of these developments). A lot of the growth is happening right outside our corporate limits. The Town is actively seeking developments to annex into Town limits.

Commissioner Allers made a motion to open the public hearing. Commissioner McArn seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

Commissioner Wilder thanked Mr. Steffey for the efforts in annexing developments into the Town's corporate limits.

Ms. Dobie stated that the Town was offering a lot of hypotheticals and they all sounded wonderful. Ms. Dobie was wondering when that \$.31 cents would take place. She also did the math with the tax changes, and it would still bring Franklinton to only having 12 municipalities with greater tax rates out of the 552 in the state and 4 that would match the Town of Franklinton. This would leave 532 municipalities that would be lower than the Town of Franklinton. Ms. Dobie stated she was confused as to how the budget was applied to this area before the evaluations.

Mr. Steffey answered that the budget is worked on simultaneously with evaluations.

Commissioner Allers stated that the good thing about talking about the budget is it shows that the revenue is there to do the things residents desire of the Town.

Tim Sitzer, Blue Jay Ln., asked what is the single biggest factor that prohibits annexation? What determines if something gets annexed? Mayor Wright answered that the Town has to reach out to the development about annexation before completion of the project or it is near impossible to annex the whole development because the neighborhood would have to agree as a whole. Mr. Steffey answered that there usually is an incentive to annexation and that is usually water and wastewater. The Town does not have this option but is a service of the County. The Town can provide the incentives of Police Service, trash service, bulk item pickups, yard waste pick up, and all other Town services to help bring in annexations. Mr. Sitzer asked if subsidies are given to annex? Mr. Pridgen answered that subsidies cannot be given for residential annexation but maybe under certain circumstances with commercial. Mr. Sitzer asked if the Town and Franklin County were in competition for annexations. Mr. Steffey answered that Franklin County benefits from development whether a property is in the corporate limits of Franklinton or not.

iii. Vote to Close Public Hearing

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Allers made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Holden seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

iv. Vote to Adopt Budget Ordinance

Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Holden made a motion to adopt the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Ordinance. Commissioner Allers seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

Reports

a. Town Manager Report, Staff Reports (included in packet)

- a. Police Department Stats for February: 105 traffic stops, 12 arrests, and 63 citations. Many of the officers have achieved their radar and lidar certifications and the Town anticipates more traffic stops. The Franklinton Police Department participated in a speed enforcement campaign on US1 with the Youngsville Police Department.
- b. Public Works completed 5 pothole patches in January and 40 potholes patches in February.
- c. The Town had the Franklinton to Novozymes Rail Trail Meeting and a follow up meeting with the consultants with feedback for this project. Things are progressing with this project, and we hope there will be some definitive plans in the coming months.
- d. The Franklinton Chamber of Commerce had a good turnout with their last meeting and the next meeting is scheduled for April 8, 2024 at 11:00 AM.
- e. The Town has put out a wayfinding sign to help direct foot traffic to our side businesses along Mason Street. The Town plans to put at least one more wayfinding sign out. The Town is looking to put out more permanent signage in the future.
- f. The Town was able to get the Town Hall parking lights fixed.

- g. Congratulations to Captain Hastings in receiving the Officer of the Year award from the American Legion Post 52. Congratulations to Captain Hastings on this honor. Thank you also to Commissioner Allers and Commissioner McArn for attending the event.
 - h. The Town recognizes the women that serve the Town of Franklinton on National Women's Day.
 - i. The Town thanks Bill Hylander for participating in the Town's promotional video. We appreciate him being a good sport and doing a great job with these videos. The Town also recognizes Officer Carter as a part of this publicity as well. These videos are very effective, with this video reaching over 100,080 people. These promotions are bringing a positive impact to Franklinton and people into our Downtown area.
 - j. The Town had it's St. Patrick's Day Palooza March 15th and there was a great turnout despite the rainy weather. Bill Hylander came out as the Leprechaun and handed out gold coins. The Town thanks Destiny Russell, the Town's Events Coordinator, for putting the event together.
 - k. The Town staff has started to decorate for Spring. The light tunnel was switched over to an Easter egg theme. This will be the last month for the tunnel before being taken down. The hay Leprechaun was converted into an Easter Bunny and the Texaco Station Park has been decorated with fun Easter items.
 - l. The Easter Egg Hunt is coming up. The Town is partnering with Franklin County for the egg hunt scheduled for Saturday, March 23rd. A specialized hunt will be at 10:00 AM and a traditional hunt at 1:00 PM. Thank you Franklinton Nutrition for contributing some coupons, candy, and eggs to this event.
 - m. The Town's next Fridays in Franklinton will be held April 5th from 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM.
 - n. The Town is adding one more event for the year, Funky Town Festival. This event will take place June 15th from 5:00 PM – 10:00 PM and will be a 70s and 80s themed event (including disco ball and 70s and 80s music performed by the Groove Slingers). The Town is hoping to make this event our signature event for the Spring just as Frankenfest is in the Fall.
- b. Advisory Board Reports (included in packet)

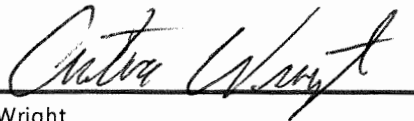
Upcoming Meetings

- a. April 8, 2024 – Franklinton Chamber of Commerce at 11:00 AM at Town Hall
- b. April 8, 2024 – Planning Board Meeting at 6:00 PM at Town Hall
- c. April 16, 2024 – Board of Commissioners Meeting at 7:00 PM at Town Hall

Adjournment

Commissioner Allers made a motion to adjourn the Board of Commissioners meeting. Commissioner McArn seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a vote of 5-0.

X



Arthur Wright
Mayor

X



Lauren Chandler
Town Clerk