

Minutes  
Special Called Meeting  
Aberdeen Town Board

January 17, 2012  
Tuesday, 5:30 p.m.

Robert N. Page Municipal Building  
Aberdeen, North Carolina

The Aberdeen Town Board met Tuesday, January 17, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. for a Special Called Meeting to discuss the Main Street Program. Members present were Mayor Pro-tem Robbie Farrell, and Commissioners Pat Ann McMurray, Alan Parker, and Walter Wright. Mayor Elizabeth B. Mofield and Commissioner Jim Thomas were not in attendance for the meeting. Staff members in attendance were Planning Director Kathy Liles, Town Manager Bill Zell, and Town Clerk Regina Rosy. Elease Goodwin, Steve Saye, Tim Marcham, Shirley Starkey, Sarah Ahmad, Joel Stancil, and Reporter for the Pilot Tom Embrey were also in attendance for the meeting.

Mayor Pro-tem Farrell called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Planning Director Liles began by discussing the Planning Department's current budget. Planning Director Liles stated the current budget includes \$232,000 for salaries, and the operating budget is \$144,574 which includes \$16,000 for appearance and beautification, \$17,000 for downtown development, \$15,000 for pedestrian grant, \$20,000 for Main Street and master sign plan, and \$15,000 for minimum housing.

Planning Director Liles stated supportive grants this past year included NCDOT Pedestrian Plan, Clean Water Management Trust Fund green way acquisition, CDBG Talent Enhancement Grant, CDBG Midway Gardens Grant, CDBG Bethune Street Grant, and Rural Development Grant with Royal Threads.

Planning Director Liles stated the 2012/2013 future needs include the Main Street Program, update Land Development Plan (insufficient goals and growth areas), bike improvements, pedestrian improvements, implement hazard mitigation plan, and signage.

Planning Director Liles stated proposed grant applications for 2012/2013 that could offset some of these impacts to the budget include: NCDOT SRTS – tunnel improvements, CDBG NC Catalyst Grant, SBEA CDBG Grant, Infrastructure CDBG Grant, investigating other grants for pedestrians and bikes, building reuse, and Certified Local Government status which could enable the Town to go after historic preservation grants.

Planning Director Liles stated the downtown manager is required by the Department of Commerce and is a required full-time position for the Main Street Program. This person would be responsible for organization, promotion, design and economic restructuring. Other duties might include serving as grant coordinator and providing opportunities to defer planning and

administrative functions to this position. Planning Director Liles stated the Main Street Program salary and benefits would be an estimated \$62,000. The budget for programs would be \$1,000 for organization, \$5,000 for promotion, \$10,000 for design, and \$1,000 for economic development for a total budget for programs of \$17,000. The Main Street Program would require a \$5,000 team assessment and would also have to include an additional \$3,000 for travel.

Planning Director Liles stated another decision point is how you go about selecting an executive steering committee for the Main Street Program. Planning Director Liles suggested a nomination process, or another option may be to have 1 Board of Commissioners representative, 1 staff representative, 1 Historic Preservation Commission representative, 1 Appearance and Beautification Commission representative, 1 Aberdeen Business Guild representative, 1 railroad representative, 1 Convention & Visitors Bureau representative, and 3 different downtown business or property owners. Another option is to structure the above recommendation into subcommittees, and could let Board members each recommend 2 names, direct staff to interact with nominations not on the recommended list, and in the next meeting the Board culls the list to 7 plus the additional representatives. Planning Director Liles stated those from the original list suggested by Ray Ogden include: Ariel Kowalick, Mike Ratkowski, Richard Gergle, Chuck Boyer, Janet Kenworthy, Shirley Starkey, Bonnie McPeake, and Andy Honeycutt. Additions could be Buck Mims, Elease Goodwin, and Sarah Ahmad.

Commissioner Wright stated he wants to know what items are critical to the Planning budget, and how much more will the budget increase to include the Main Street Program. Planning Director Liles stated there would be a \$27,000 increase on the current budget to include the Main Street Program, by shifting money. Commissioner Wright asked how much it would cost to pay for the salary figure for the Main Street Manager. Planning Director Liles stated this current budget year \$15,000 went towards Ray Ogden, and \$5,000 went towards the intern position. Commissioner Wright stated the Board needs to consider the tax rate increasing from \$0.43 to \$0.45 just to pay for the Fire Station expansion project. Commissioner Wright also stated the Board needs to consider what Aberdeen has already done for Main Street. Planning Director Liles stated one of the issues seems to be the full-time salaried position. Planning Director Liles stated the Town could structure a downtown revitalization program with existing staff and could do a lot for the downtown area. Planning Director Liles stated the one advantage to the Main Street Program, is that it gives the Town a structure to work with. Planning Director Liles stated it would be a struggle to use existing staff. Mayor Pro-tem Farrell asked how long this position will have to last. Planning Director Liles stated Main Street requires 3 years for a full-time position.

Commissioner Parker asked what the difference was between the ADDC and the Main Street Program. Commissioner Parker stated he is wondering why the Town couldn't go in the other direction with the ADDC, and not have to pay a full time additional staff person.

Commissioner Wright stated the ADDC started first, and money was raised for facades, improvements, etc. Commissioner Wright stated the Main Street Program came out of the ADDC.

Commissioner McMurray stated the problem she has found is that sometimes the business owners want the Town to take the responsibility for the program, and she really thinks the program would need a good manager. Commissioner McMurray stated it has to be someone with education and experience with planning, economics, and the benefits for the community.

Joel Stencil stated he appreciates what the Town is doing, and he is not sure what the right direction is.

Mayor Pro-tem Farrell stated he does not think anyone is opposed to Main Street, but he thinks it really comes down to the finances. Commissioner Parker stated the opportunity is always there to apply for the program, and the Town could always apply at a later time. Commissioner Wright informed the Board that for the past two years in a row, the Town has used money from the fund balance to balance the budget.

Sarah Ahmad stated if the program is not structured, with the correct staff person, then the program will not be as successful. Shirley Starkey stated the toughest part of the job is going to be finding someone who understands the downtown area.

Elease Goodwin stated she was here during the other revolution, and she really believes in the Main Street Program, and she saw things happen in Aberdeen that she's never seen happen before. Ms. Goodwin stated she believes Aberdeen should jump on this opportunity now that all this work has already been done.

Steve Saye stated he owns the old hardware store. Mr. Saye stated Aberdeen needs to decide what it wants to be. Mr. Saye stated do you want empty stores or not? Mr. Saye stated the focus should be filling up the empty spaces.

Mayor Pro-tem Farrell stated whatever money Aberdeen invests in this program, taxpayers should be able to see outcomes. Mayor Pro-tem Farrell stated Main Street is a great program, it just comes down to how do you pay for it.

Manager Zell stated the town can only do so much, like zoning, façade grants, etc. But the Town can not buy properties or fill the empty buildings in the downtown area.

Commissioner Wright suggested putting this off until a budget is presented, since the fire station could possibly raise the current tax rate from \$0.43 to \$0.45. Planning Director Liles stated she will just put a main street line item in her budget and if it gets pared out, then it gets pared out.

Manager Zell stated once the budget is reviewed, it will be reviewed again to determine if the Main Street Program can fit in the budget. Mayor Pro-tem Farrell stated the Town Board is very excited about the Main Street Program, enjoyed it the first time we had it, would like to have it again, but first the budget has to be reviewed.

Manager Zell stated the budget ordinance for the Midway Gardens project needs to be approved tonight, if the Board is willing. A motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner McMurray, to approve the Midway Gardens Project Budget Ordinance. Motion unanimously carried.

With no further discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Wright, seconded by Commissioner McMurray, to adjourn the Special Called Meeting. Motion unanimously carried.

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Regina M. Rosy, Town Clerk

Minutes were completed in  
Draft form on January 17, 2012

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Robert A. Farrell, Mayor Pro-tem

Minutes were approved  
on February 13, 2012