

**MINUTE BOOK XXXI, PAGES 26-31  
PLANNING RETREAT MINUTES  
March 07, 2022**

The Planning Retreat of the Town of Troutman Town Council was held on Monday, March 07, 2022, 11:30 am the Troutman Town Hall, 400 North Eastway Drive, North Carolina with Mayor Pro Tem W. Paul Henkel presiding until the arrival of Mayor Teross W. Young, Jr. at 12:50 p.m.

Council Members Present: W. Paul Henkel, George W. Harris, Edward R. Nau, Felina L. Harris, Jerry R. Oxsher

Council Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Ronald Wyatt, Town Manager; Kimberly Davis, Town Clerk; Justin Mundy, Finance Director; Chip Smith, Parks and Rec. Director; Lynne Hair, Planning Director

Press Present: Debbie Page, Iredell Free News

Others Present: See Sign-in Sheet

**MAYOR PRO TEM HENKEL CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER**

Town Manager Ronald Wyatt commented that this afternoon will be enlightening and staffs intent is to identify systems in place that is working and what is not effective. He expressed appreciation to each department director taking the time to evaluate those systems.

**FINANCE DEPARTMENT, (*Justin Mundy, Finance Director*)**

**General Fund and Utility Fund Revenues and Expenditures**

Finance Director Justin Mundy began his presentation by sharing a comparison between the General Fund and Utility Fund Revenues and Expenditures from February 28, 2021 to February 28, 2022 stating that revenues are up overall 10.37% over prior year with property taxes collected currently at 106%. Town Manager Ron Wyatt interjected that the reason the Town is at 106% in property taxes is because the Town's anticipated property tax evaluation has been exceeded due to new construction has been completed. Councilmember Oxsher asked about the tax distribution process from the county. Mr. Mundy responded that the Town receives a monthly statement from the county showing the Town's levy (remaining balance to be collected) and last month's collections (the report from the county is one month behind). The Town has a remaining \$125,000 to \$135,000 to be collected. Utility taxes (collected quarterly) is on pace with last year's totals as well as local sales tax. Mr. Mundy addressed Town expenditures highlighting that Expenditures are up \$1 million stating that the increase is mainly due to Capital Expenditures for properties the Town has purchased; other reason for the increase is outfitting a number of employees with new computer equipment. Town Manager Wyatt explained that once new computers are purchased for the Police Department; the intention is to put all computers on a four year replacement rotation.

*Councilmember George Harris was excused at 12:15pm from the meeting temporarily for an appointment.*

Mr. Mundy continued by stating that expenditures in Admin are up due to the creation of Emily's new position (which is not budgeted), new payroll and computer software, billing and collections software training for new employee. He also highlighted that Planning and Zoning Expenditures are up due to new positions. In the Utility Fund, Mr. Mundy advised that current revenues are up (\$777,000) however, \$233,000 is a transfer to purchase sewer capacity allotments from the Town of Mooresville. Utility Fund Revenues are up largely due to water and sewer installations that has increased \$98,000 year-to-date and water and sewer sales are up \$393,000 year-to-date. In speaking to Utility Fund Expenditures, Mr. Mundy commented that anytime revenues are up expenditures are going to increase as well.

#### **Items of Interest**

- **Document Scanning**

Working to start the process of scanning all documents onto our servers. Having electronic documentation makes it easier and quicker to find needed items.

- **Installation of a New Payroll System with Payroll Pro Solutions**

Staff is working out all the kinks. The system provides accountability, and audit trail and less room for errors internally and protection for the Town and employee.

- **Learning Old Ways in Order to Improve and Build New Ones**

Mr. Mundy stated he is learning the old ways in doing things, however as the Town continues to grow there are more and more customers; what worked 10-20 years ago is not going to work now. Staff is trying to identify the areas that need improvement and once identified, we are trying to figure out the best process to be more efficient.

- **Phone Payments**

Mr. Mundy commented that there are a variety of payment options including: auto draft, check or cash in-person, mail, online, and by card over the phone. He advised of safety and security issues, potential for errors, and the amount of time spent in taking payments manually by phone. Mr. Mundy stated that the Town has received as much as 40 phone payments in one day (approximately 500-600 phone payments in a month) at no charge. He stated that most municipalities do not offer payments by phone and if they do it is an automated payment system. In recommending that the Town invest in an automated system (IVR - Interactive Voice Response) Mr. Mundy stated that it would improve customer service and provide protection to the Town and our customers. Iredell County is a current user of IVR (Interactive Voice Response). IVR has a onetime implementation fee of \$500 and after implementation the cost is \$115 a month. Town Manager Wyatt stated that at Council's upcoming meeting a \$5 fee will be proposed for manual phone payments until such time that an automated payment system can be available. Several Councilmembers voiced that the proposed implementation of a fee and future inactive voice response system could be a positive for the Town.

*12:50p.m. - Mayor Teross Young arrived.*

- **Trash/Recycle Pickup:**

Mr. Mundy stated that the Town has budgeted \$230,000 a year for trash and recycle pickup but only collect \$36,000. Therefore the Town is losing approximately \$200,000 a year with the current setup of charging customers only \$1.80 a month for the contracted services. In researching other municipalities, he found that most are charging \$20-\$25 a month for trash and recycling services. Town Manager Wyatt stated that in effort to fix broken systems this discussion is to plant food for thought for the upcoming budget discussion that as residential occupancy increase so does the Town's cost to provide services such as trash and recycling, leaf and limb, administrative personnel, and police services. He stated that when something is \$200,000 out of kilter, it warrants Council's advice on how to proceed in going forward whether to look at the Town handling its own services or look at the budget to make it a self-paid system. Manager Wyatt suggested, if Council so desires during the budget process to increase the recycling fee, in increments or half of what they would like the fee increased to. A brief background was presented regarding how the \$1.80 recycling fee came to

fruition. Town Manager Wyatt stated that if the Town does not charge fees more accordingly, the Town's ad valorem taxes will eventually get used up. Mayor Young led a discussion regarding determination of the true cost for Town services. Town Citizen Sally Williams commented that she actually has more recyclables than garbage and that she does not mind paying for the services because she would rather pay than have to take her trash and recycling to the land field herself. Councilmember Paul Henkel stressed that most citizens are of the "green mind" and will not like recycling taken away. Mayor Young stated that he liked the idea of increasing the fee in increments and asked staff to present options to Council at the Budget Retreat. He also stated that if Council agrees to increase the fee, the Town needs to have a talk with Benfield's regarding expectations. Councilmember Eddie Nau voiced concern that the Town has been losing money and Council was not alerted before now. Town Manager Wyatt stated that he feels that now is the appropriate time to review all contracted services prior to the Budget Retreat including leaf and limb.

**Other:** Town Manager Wyatt shared a letter of confirmation from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) confirming that the Town's request for grant funding has been approved and is eligible to receive American Rescue Plan (ARP) from the State Fiscal Recovery Fund. The project grant is 100% of the Wastewater Capacity Improvements project cost up to a maximum of \$2,445,000. These funds will be included in the upcoming budget, but the funds are to be used specifically for the Westmoreland Road Wastewater project and for the ability to continue pumping wastewater to Mooresville at a higher capacity. He expressed appreciation to Representative McNeely and Mills, and Senator Sawyer for their assistance in receiving the funds. Mayor Young thanked Manager Wyatt for being proactive in getting the funds commenting that it is a great source in helping support future growth needs. Manager Wyatt reminded Council that the Town has received Art Funds that is available for infrastructure only and will also be included in the upcoming budget with possible additional Art Funds from the County. He advised that the Town has applied for other state grant under the DEQ guidelines for freshwater and wastewater grants but due to Iredell County being a tier 3 county it is unlikely that the Town receives any funding.

- **Areas for Improvement**

- Pushing autopay to customers.
- Maintaining good employees. Many municipalities are struggling to retain employees and finding it harder to attract new employees.

(Copied in full, financial summary and grant confirmation letter is filed on CD titled: "Town Council Supporting Documents" dated March 07, 2022 in CD Book #1 titled: "Town Council Supporting Documents")

*Break*

*2:00pm George Harris returned to the meeting*

**PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT, (Chip Smith, Parks and Recreation Director)**

In speaking to the parks Master Plan, Chip Smith Parks and Recreation Director stated that Phase 1 is complete; Phase 2 is completed with the exceptions of the amphitheater which was held off until further information regarding the up-fit of the fairgrounds and possibly an amphitheater located there. Town Manager Wyatt added that if an amphitheater is going to be located in the Fairgrounds, why would the Town waste tax payer's money to install one in the park. Mr. Smith stated that there was also a delay in additional parking and for the walking trail around the soccer field. In Phase 3, the two ballfields are complete as is the walking trail and additional parking. He stated he would like to amend the Master Plan by removing the basketball courts and horseshoe pits. To amend the plan a community input meeting would be required. Town Manager Wyatt stated that the concession stand at the ballfields is delayed in

this year's budget due to the increase in construction cost. Staff will asked for those budgeted funds to be rolled over into next budget year plus additional funds are to be requested. He advised that irrigation and lights for the ballfields are not feasible until power is installed. Councilmember Eddie Nau asked if it is the Town's plan to upgrade the plumbing in the pavilion to industrial grade due to backups at the facility. Town Manager Wyatt stated that since the fixtures in the pavilion have been upgraded to commercial grade, there have been less issues. The Town has not went as far as trying to re-engineer the infrastructure in ground. The intent was to change out the fixtures to see if that would alleviate the problem and once the concession stand with restrooms is built at the ballfields, it will provide some relief for the pavilion restrooms. Councilmember Felina Harris asked the reason behind the possible removal of the basketball courts. Parks and Rec. Director Smith stated that he would like to create pocket parks closer to communities/neighborhoods and place basketball courts there. Upon an inquiry by Councilmember Felina Harris as to why TYAA does not use the fields at the park, Town Manager Wyatt presented a brief summary/explanation stating that the county refused to mark and line the fields therefore TYAA are not allowed to use the fields. He continued on to inform Council that Martin Page will be a new Parks and Rec. committee member, bringing him on board with the intention to form a Troutman league to include: football, baseball, softball, basketball, soccer, cheer leading, etc. that will be offered to both in town and out of town residents. Manager Wyatt stated that the Town will have to partner with the school system in order to have a gym for basketball and access to school ballfields. He commented that he looks forward in working with Martin and the committee in the endeavor. Councilmember Paul Henkel stated that when the concession stand is constructed, the lights for the fields should be done at the same time stating that the lights are important to overall success and that it will not be a first class field until the lights go up and tournaments can be held. Manager Wyatt stated that we have to have the concession stand before we can get the lights per Duke Power. Councilmember Nau requested that staff come back with a quote for lights at the ballfields. Manager Wyatt stated if we could combine the projects, the rate to borrow money now for the Town is less than 3%. Councilmember George Harris commented that during last year's retreat, the possibility of donations was discussed asking if there are any out there now. Town Manager Wyatt responded yes, there is Keystone, Lowes, and Randy Marion. The Troutman Rotary Club has committed to pay for both scoreboards. Mayor Young asked where the Town's relationship with the County stands with maintenance. Town Manager Wyatt stated that the Town did away with the Interlocal Agreement with the county, therefore they do no maintenance nor do they use the Park facilities at all. He informed Council that the county is no longer involved with youth sports. A brief discussion was held regarding maintenance/mowing of the park grounds.

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**PLANNING DEPARTMENT, (*Lynne Hair, Planning Director*)**

Planning Director Lynne Hair stated that there is one word to describe the Town is "Growth". The population in Troutman in 2010 was approximately 2400 people. The census in 2020 has the town at approximately 3700 people and the Town has grown even more in the last year estimating a population increase of 55% over that time span.

**Department Trends**

Ms. Hair stated that there are several different function that the Planning department is responsible for, one of which is Issuing Zoning Permits. Issuance of such permits have doubled in the last five years from 150 in 2017 to 346 in 2021. Ms. Hair explained that permits are issued for construction of anything in the Town of Troutman from new construction to accessory structures. The department also reviews subdivision plans for planning compliance as well as engineering compliance. In 2021, 14 subdivision plans were reviewed. The department also reviews site plans, explaining that the difference between a site plan and subdivision plan is any land that is being subdivided and a site plan is for anything not being subdivided such as a commercial development. Last year the department reviewed site plans for 12 non-residential developments in Town that includes apartments and sometimes Townhomes if they are not

being subdivided and any other type of use that is not single family subdivision. In 2017 the department received and processed 11 rezoning applications. There was a slight lull over the next three years and back up to 13 rezoning cases last year. In regards to residential lots, Ms. Hair reported that there are 1622 lots under construction (plans approved and/or permits issued); 1784 approved residential projects but no plans submitted as of yet; and 923 proposed projects (rezoning request/no approvals) totaling 4329 single family lots which will double the population in Troutman once all are on-line. Town Manager Wyatt stated that the totals do not include by-right development (including apartments).

Councilmember Paul Henkel asked what is making Troutman so attractive. Ms. Hair responded that the growth is expanding out of Charlotte, housing in Charlotte has got too expensive, and there are jobs here. Troutman is a nice area to be and there is the Lake. Town Manager Wyatt added that the safety of our community, lower taxes, accessibility to Charlotte, and less cost for construction are also things that attract people to Troutman. Mayor Young also addressed the question stating that Troutman is a crossroads community with easy accessibility to I-40, and I-77 with I-85 not being too far. There is industry that want to move here for tax reasons and there are people looking for the quality of life Troutman offers.

Ms. Hair addressed zoning permits stating that they are a good indicator of what is going on. Last year there were 350 zoning permits issued. This year to date the Town has issued 75 permits. In February there were 61 permits issued and in the first three days of this month (March), the Town issued 25 zoning permits. If the numbers stay true, the Town is on track to issue approximately 450 zoning permits this year. A brief discussion was held regarding the probability of a private land sale within the Town's ETJ that could bring an additional 1600-2700 new homes.

#### **Land Use Map**

Ms. Hair stated that the Town's Land Use Map is a document that is used a lot in the Planning Department as a guide for Council's vision, but the map was created in 2018 and the Town has changed considerably. She stated that she feels that due to the growth it really needs to be revisited in order to provide a clear direction for land use decisions. She suggested sitting down with Council within the next year to see if amendments can be made. Barium Spring's is shown on the map as industrial, when in the last few years industry is gravitating to Exit 42. Ms. Hair stated that the Town has a lot of medium density residential land use in the Town which is 3 to 4 units per acre asking if Council wants to continue to encourage that trend or consider making changes to the map providing a different vision for the Town. Councilmember Paul Henkel agreed that it is time to update the Land Use Map commenting that Land Use Plans need to be revisited at least every 5 to 8 years. Town Manager Wyatt commented that industrial and large commercial should be located close to interstate exits.

#### **UDO Update**

In reference to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) adopted 2019, Ms. Hair stated that there are numerous text amendments needed due to numerous conflicts. Staff has identified the following areas in need of attention: Landscaping and Tree Save section of the ordinance to make sure the Town is requiring enough; Sign section; and Subdivision section. She stated that she would like to put together for Council's consideration language for Cluster Subdivisions that is not currently in the UDO explaining that developers who want smaller lots are asking for conditional zoning of the Mixed Residential (RM) zoning district because it is the only zoning district in the UDO that allows lots smaller than ¼ acre. Ms. Hair stated that with Cluster Subdivisions the Town can allow the smaller lot but put in requirements for things like more open space, larger perimeter buffers, etc. It would also be a way to build in requirements for pocket parks within the open space and tie it in with the Parks and Recreation goals.

### Transportation Plan

Ms. Hair stated that the Town is very fortunate to have Andrew Ventresca (Associate Planner) who has a lot of experience in the transportation field. He is working with a consultant on a new Pedestrian Plan. The Town just received the Transportation Planning Grant that will allow a new Town-wide Transportation Plan. Transportation is an issue in the Town and as the Town continues to grow, a new plan is really needed. She advised that the Talley Street Sidewalk Project is moving along. Staff is working with consultants on the project.

### Challenges

- **Development Pressure**  
There were 13 rezoning cases from 2021. Current staff processed all in a four month period. Ms. Hair commented as the current work load continues, she can see the department growing.
- **Space and Storage Issues**  
Ms. Hair stated that she and Andrew share an office and it just is not optimal when one of them are on the phone or a zoom call and the other phone rings. Meeting space is also an issue for the Planning Department in Town Hall. She also mentioned that a kiosk or computer area would be nice to be able to sit down with developers or citizens to answer questions, walk them through the permit application process, etc. Permit's is something that the Town does not have to keep forever, but plan documents do have to be kept and storage is an issue in this building making record tracking difficult commenting that online is a great way to store documents. The County has purchased a permitting software system called Inner-Gov that they will share with all municipalities that will do away with paper permits and scanning documents, and emails. The system is not expensive and will streamline the process where everything is done on-line.
- **Processes**  
Working to figure out how to coordinate things with other departments such as utility permitting with zoning permitting.

Town Manager Wyatt stated that the Town certainly has the staff competent to make changes to the Town ordinance and plans without bringing in an outside company. He suggested that two Council members participate in working with staff to bring back updates for Council's approval.

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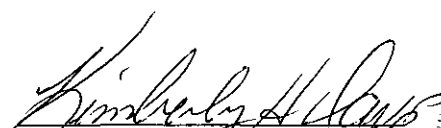
### WRAP UP – COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL

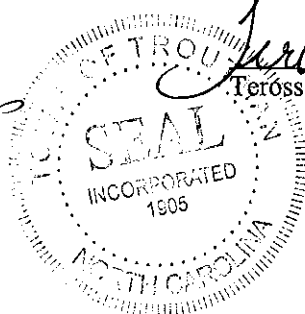
Councilmember George Harris commented that the retreat was very informative. All Council members were in agreement. Mayor Young suggested that the name be changed next time to from Planning Retreat to Town Council's Strategic Planning.

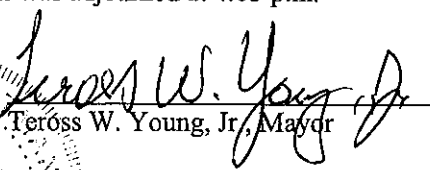
Town Manager Wyatt expressed thanks and appreciation to Mayor Young and Council and to the Department Heads for their diligence and efforts.

### ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Councilmember George Harris, seconded by Councilmember Paul Henkel, and unanimously carried, Planning Retreat of March 07, 2022 was adjourned at 4:03 p.m.

  
Kimberly H. Davis, Town Clerk



  
Teross W. Young, Jr., Mayor