

**MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING
2018 PLANNING CONFERENCE
FEBRUARY 22-25, 2018**

The Board of Commissioners met with staff to discuss various issues. All related documents can be found in the complete agenda packet.

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2018
MATTHEWS TOWN HALL
232 MATTHEWS STATION STREET, MATTHEWS NC**

PRESENT: Mayor Paul Bailey; Mayor Pro Tem John Higdon; Commissioners Barbara Dement, Chris Melton, Jeff Miller, Kress Query and John Urban; Town Manager Hazen Blodgett; Assistant Town Manager Becky Hawke; Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

ALSO PRESENT: Finance Director Chris Tucker; Fire Chief Rob Kinniburgh; Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Director Corey King; Planning & Development Director Kathi Ingrish; Police Chief Clark Pennington; Public Works Director CJ O'Neill; Senior Planner Jay Camp, Zoning Administrator Mary Jo Gollnitz, Planner/GIS Dillon Lackey; Town Engineer Susan Habina Woolard; Town Landscape Manager Ralph Ramsaur

Turning the Queen Mary: Planning and Development Director Kathi Ingrish discussed some of the changes regarding development and associated philosophies that have occurred over the last few years as the community's interest and desire for different types of development has changed and development trends caught on nationwide. Proposed developments now often include items such as townhomes with rear alley access, senior housing diversity and alternatives to homeowner responsibility for all exterior maintenance. Rentals are becoming the preferred mode for many types of people across the country. Consistent application of the adopted land use plans and policies will ensure development that is appropriate for the town. Senior Planner Jay Camp noted that the department doesn't receive as many retail development proposals now as in the prior ten years or so. Inquiries about hotels/lodging is something staff sees more of these days. Mr. Miller expressed the desire for banquet rooms/conference space. Mr. Camp explained that staff advises this but the developers are more interested in locating limited service options in Matthews due to the town's suburban nature. They want to locate their banquet-style facilities in uptown Charlotte. Staff makes these concerns known but they can't force developers to do anything. Ms. Ingrish noted that staff will be working on an overlay district for the ENT to avoid another instance of by-right zoning development that the Board dislikes.

Ms. Ingrish explained the important of not only having the right uses but also ways for people to get there. Walking and bicycling is very popular and these activities need pathways away from traffic, made safe with lighting and interesting with landscaping and/or public art.

Ms. Ingrish noted that Matthews has been at its maximum geographical size since 2003, so the Town needs to look at the future when it runs out of development sites. The town has remained financially healthy due in part to ongoing new development adding to real estate tax revenue and there should be a plan to deal with it when that changes.

Discussion ensued regarding future development. The Board would like to avoid more extended-stay hotels and wants to be sure and high-density housing doesn't adversely affect its existing surrounding neighborhood. Mayor

Bailey noted that the citizen survey results included a number of comments about too much development and other complaints; he wanted the departments to review these comments and come back with ways to address them. The Board discussed the idea that the average taxpayer is not aware of everything that goes into development decisions. It is important to address these concerns.

Build-out scenarios: Ms. Ingrish reviewed the future of buildout. Matthews is running out of raw land for new construction and there are only a few larger parcels that are as yet undeveloped mostly because they don't have utilities or road connections. The Town currently sees an annual jump in tax base due to development; once that's lost there needs to be different ways of keeping the town afloat to provide services.

Ms. Ingrish explained that density is not equated with what it looks like. Matthews doesn't have very high density but there are opportunities to do a mix of densities without becoming overwhelmed. She reviewed different scenarios using low density and higher density development models. She explained that there are ways to increase residential density without losing the small-town feeling that Matthews prides itself on, with things like multigenerational and accessory dwelling units, cottage cluster and R-VS zoning and the like. If nonresidential density is increased it should be clustered near where people are living and come with amenities like public areas, plazas, coffee shops – ways to get people talking and facing each other, and perhaps moving via walking or biking. She recommended encouraging smaller multifamily developments of around 50 units or larger units with surface and structured parking and single family at 4-7 units per acre with preservation of trees and open space and more amenities with increased density. The option for higher density should be available and encouraged in areas that won't negatively impact existing areas.

The Board discussed these ideas. Ms. Dement prefers a seamless progression of development rather than clusters popped in the middle of existing lots, with transitions to help avoid disturbing the visual integrity of the area. Mayor Bailey is concerned more about doing the right thing rather than whether people will accept it. He said the Board needs to be aware of impacts to fire, police, etc. Mr. Urban noted that Matthews has developed over time to the linear slice between traditional single family development on the north and south sides of 74 with the strip in the middle that could allow neo-traditional New Urbanism development running in there. The boundary edges would be the blending points. A parks or open space system for the downtown area that expands out further would knit everything together. This could achieve the goals of adding newer development in the transitional areas while keeping the downtown core.

Tree Canopy: Planner/GIS Dillon Lackey reviewed tree canopy requirements and ways to address reduction in tree canopy in town. Several items have been added to the UDO, including additional incentives for parking lot tree islands; increased minimum tree canopy; a new requirement for a landscape supervisor for new development; the addition of a minimum large maturing tree requirement on single family lots of a certain size and the creation of a tree canopy fund. Other ways to enhance the tree canopy include public-private partnerships; education of residents, landscapers and developers; and increased budget for plantings and tree trimmings.

Mr. Lackey discussed the City of Charlotte's initiative to increase their canopy percentage to 50% by 2050. They have realized that this goal is not attainable. From this Matthews' staff has recognized that if the Town sets a specific goal it should be more quantifiable, such as a number of trees planted versus a canopy percentage. Staff recommends the following: increase funding for planting/replacement; set a quantifiable goal (staff recommends a goal of planting 1,000 trees over the next ten years); and contact Trees Charlotte to discuss partnering with this non-profit organization to promote tree planting in town.

Particular areas of concern include those along the road projects that will soon be underway. Zoning Administrator Mary Jo Gollnitz explained that when reviewing development plans, staff is looking to push trees back further so

they're not lost when the roads are widened so as to mitigate the impact where possible. Town Arborist Ralph Ramsaur noted that the town is losing land area to plant trees on as well.

Mr. Melton asked staff to forecast future canopy numbers based on current development plans, projects that have already been approved, build out scenarios, Small Area Plans, and any other known plans. Mr. Urban encouraged a tree replacement program so that saplings are placed near older trees that are close to the end of their life cycle. He also suggested offering some type of program to encourage homeowners to plant trees on their own property. Mr. Lackey noted that Charlotte partners with Trees Charlotte. It's the nonprofit agency that actually runs the program and the City lends out their landscaping staff to Trees Charlotte to help plant trees at special events. The Board continued to discuss ways to improve the tree canopy.

By consensus it was decided that staff will gather all the potential methods and bring them back to the Board for review.

Downtown Façade Program: Senior Planner Jay Camp reviewed this program which started in 2011 and resulted in six grants to date. The program runs under the auspices of the general statutes and is limited to certain historical buildings in the downtown district. The program hasn't been used much but it does work.

The Board discussed various facades in the downtown area and ways to encourage more participation in the program. Mr. Camp explained that they have heard from some businesses that they just don't want to deal with the hassle and time delays involved in the application process. He noted that the budget is \$4,000. Mr. Urban suggested keeping any unspent funds and rolling them over to be used for other streetscape improvements downtown. Mr. Blodgett suggested keeping the two programs separate and for staff to come back during the budget process with a budget number for downtown streetscape improvements separate from the façade grant budget.

Public Improvement Variances: Ms. Ingrish discussed the process for these variances, explaining that a lot of things can be handled by staff outside of this process, but some things do rise to the level of needing a Board-reviewed Public Improvement Variance. Mr. Melton said it sounds like options may be exhausted by the time it rises to the level of the Board, but he is tired of seeing these requests to avoid the rules. It's not up to staff to come up with ideas on behalf of the petitioner but the petitioners should be encouraged to get creative. Mr. Blodgett cautioned that the Board can be arbitrary in its decisions but staff needs to administer the code.

The Board then discussed Administrative Amendments. Ms. Ingrish clarified the difference between the two and explained that staff has been able to anticipate some things that come up but not always and attempts to ward off the need for an Administrative Amendment whenever possible. Some can be approved by staff and some rise to the level of Board approval. Ms. Ingrish noted that staff sometimes brings items to the Board's attention even though it could be decided at the staff level if there are significant factors associated with the request. Discussion ensued regarding the process.

By consensus it was determined that staff will not make any determinations on Administrative Amendments until they have been reviewed by the Board. Reviews will be done at regular meetings.

Downtown Pedestrian Crossings: Town Engineer Susan Habina Woolard discussed pedestrian crossings on North Trade Street. In November 2017 the Board directed staff to move forward with certain items, including lighting and curb extensions, and to come back to the Board with more information on other items.

Ms. Habina Woolard explained that there isn't enough room for a pedestrian refuge on North Trade Street unless a lane is removed. Staff would like to clean up some of the many signs cluttering the area and install pedestrian

warning signs. The Red Brick Partnership (RBP) and Transportation Advisory Committee were consulted and RBP members recommended LEDs for pedestrian-activated flashing warning signs at the crosswalks. Ms. Habina Woolard explained that people feel safer when they push a button so this is recommended over passive activation methods.

Discussion ensued regarding different types and locations of pavement reflectors as well as a possible permanent median. The group discussed the possible closing of the driveway at the Brakeman's Coffee lot. Ms. Habina Woolard explained there is a sharp incline there at the driveway and northern crosswalk. The business owners are open to the idea of closing the driveway and discussing other means of access as they recognize that this isn't an idea situation. Staff is still trying to contact the property owner for the adjacent property to discuss this. Another option would be to move the northern crosswalk down but this would require the removal of two parking spaces and would cause issues with the right turn movement. Eliminating the second crosswalk completely would simply encourage unsafe jaywalking. Staff is working toward the idea of the combined driveway and once the RFQ is out the responding engineers might have some other ideas.

Ms. Habina Woolard discussed the possibility of adding a narrow median by reducing the existing four 12-foot lanes to four 11-foot lanes. This would start at Old Depot Lane, skip the intersection, and continue for a little bit after the intersection. It wouldn't block anyone's driveway access. The goal of the median is to soften the aesthetic and to narrow the lane width, which will reduce speed. It would be a planted median, which is safer than the previously-discussed option of moveable planters. Movable planters are more appropriate for the edge of roadway and wide medians – they're not good between lanes of opposing traffic because of head on crash issues. Staff recommends a trial with a reduced lane width of 11 feet and use pavement markings to delineate a median. Mr. Higdon is not in favor of a median as it would be more difficult to load materials into vehicles after visiting Renfrow Hardware. Mr. Urban noted that the Red Brick Partnership business owners are in favor of a planted median. Ms. Dement asked if the Police and Fire Chiefs had a preference and Chief Kinniburgh expressed his preference for asphalt that can easily be driven over by fire trucks. It's important to keep two lanes of traffic in each direction so the trucks can maneuver around cars.

Ms. Habina Woolard reviewed the costs for the recommended items: \$47,000 for four LED signs and consolidation of some of the existing signs and \$90,000 to incorporate a trial lane reduction with a painted median in the next planned overlay of North Trade Street. Funds have already been planned for the surface treatment seal coat overlay and this would be additional work done at the same time.

Mayor Bailey said he's not opposed to making more aggressive changes to choke down traffic through downtown even more as a way to route drivers who are just passing through around the downtown area. He suggested dropping down from four lanes to two. Public Works Director CJ O'Neill noted that would mean that cars turning left would block the entire road in one direction and Mayor Bailey said he was ok with that. Ms. Habina Woolard recommended waiting to see how the upcoming road projects will affect things before taking drastic measures. Mr. Miller said the angled parking is difficult for people to back out from and adversely affects the businesses there. He prefers parallel parking. Mr. Melton asked if anything could be done quickly while other options are being researched – perhaps reflectors or restriping – to improve the pedestrian situation now.

Discussion ensued. By consensus it was decided that the issue of \$47,000 for the crosswalk signs will come back to the Board at a future meeting with more solid cost estimates along with the items that had already been approved.

Fire & EMS Personnel Needs: Fire & EMS Chief Rob Kinniburgh reviewed his proposal for a long-range strategic plan for an adequately staffed and trained department. Service level expectations have changed and the department must be fully staffed around the clock. The current model has the town staffed 65% by volunteers and the proposed blended model would have career firefighter/EMTs providing the minimum coverage needs at all times with supplemental coverage by volunteers. This would require hiring additional career staff and implementation of a 24-

hour shift rotation for career staff. His proposal calls for a staged implementation plan starting during the first quarter of fiscal year 2019.

The Board discussed staffing costs, training and experience. Mr. Blodgett recommended raising taxes to cover this and other needs. Discussion ensued. Mr. Melton asked about cost recovery from those who use services and Chief Kinniburgh explained that he will be bringing a cost recovery program to the Board for discussion in the future. Mr. Urban suggested highlighting the cost of providing these services in the tax bills. Mr. Blodgett explained that Mecklenburg County, which issues the tax bills, won't include that information but the Town could publicize the information itself.

Emergency Preparedness: Chief Kinniburgh reviewed the Town's involvement in emergency response planning. Matthews' Major Incident Plan will be updated and regular training for staff and elected officials and a biannual exercise plan will be implemented.

Retrofitting Downtown/Old Town Sidewalks: Ms. Habina Woolard reviewed potential sidewalk connections in the "Old Town" section of downtown Matthews. The Board discussed options for sidewalks near Outen Pottery and other areas. Mr. Miller encouraged a connection through to Fullwood Lane. Mr. Camp noted that staff has looked at the possibility of a public street connection but there was a lot of neighbor pushback and it's all privately owned at this time. Ms. Dement suggested leveraging the interest of ACTs residents who may be more in favor now. Mr. Query noted that Avington residents are interested in a connection to downtown.

After reviewing costs for various options Mr. Blodgett suggested focusing on the Outen Pottery area as the first step and then the connection from the pottery site to Main Street and then up to Alexander Street. Mr. Urban suggested saving money by installing sidewalks that are four feet in width rather than five feet. Mr. Blodgett noted that these items are not included in the CIP now.

Discussion of NC Highway 51 Improvements: Mr. O'Neill reviewed the transportation projects that are underway or scheduled to occur in the next few years. Regarding the South Trade Street widening, Mr. Melton asked staff to make periodic check-ins with the company to ensure it will be completed on time. Mr. Blodgett noted that the Board had committed additional funds to the 4 Mile Creek greenway tunnel with the caveat that the County had to build the greenway. He has since been advised that the County doesn't have the funds. They too want to build the greenway but don't know yet how to fund it. He will address this again once the final budget numbers come in.

Mr. O'Neill discussed the 485/Weddington Road interchange, explaining that the North Carolian Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has rolled this project into the 74 express lanes project and the contract is to be let this summer. The estimated cost for the Town's 10 foot-wide multiuse path and four foot bike lane is \$400,000; however this is a design-build project, which means that whoever gets the project could have a completely different design for this intersection and this estimated number could change.

Mr. O'Neill continued reviewing projects, including those on Highway 51. There are three sections of the Highway 51 project: intersection improvements and widening at Sam Newell Road, widening from Matthews-Mint Hill Road to Lawyers Road, and widening from Sardis Road to Monroe Road. This NCDOT project includes some access-restricting medians. It is NCDOT's responsibility to talk to the property owners but staff feels it best to talk to property owners directly to explain the projects and answer any questions. There was some discussion over the medians, with Ms. Habina Woolard explaining that the state uses medians for safety reasons. This is not yet in the design stage so changes may occur in the future.

Mr. Urban noted complaints from Windrow-area residents that they can't safely cross over the roundabout to access the shopping plazas. The existing pedestrian crossings are difficult to use. Ms. Habina Woolard noted that the upcoming lighting and landscaping additions should help with that as they should increase pedestrian visibility and help slow down drivers.

The group discussed the potential impacts of the Continuous Flow Intersection (CFI) design planned for the Monroe Road/John Street corridor. The Board is concerned about the impacts to the existing structures, traffic flow and downtown area. Mr. O'Neill noted that if the Board asks NCDOT to avoid using the CFI design then the widening will have to increase from six to eight lanes. The Board needs to be aware of the corridor-long impacts if this is changed. Staff is working with NCDOT to minimize the negative impacts of the proposed improvements.

Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of exchanging ownership of roads with NCDOT in an effort to minimize the impacts of NCDOT's road projects. If the Town gives Fullwood Lane to NCDOT in exchange for a portion of South Trade Street (to Fullwood Lane) then it could help alleviate some of these issues. South Trade Street and Fullwood Lane would both have to be improved to the proper standards and control of the Fullwood signal would be given up to the state. This will require continued discussion.

Mr. O'Neill continued reviewing projects. He noted that while many people think the John Street widening project will have the biggest impact on the town, he thinks it'll actually be the Independence Boulevard/74 widening that does so.

Update on Road Projects Including Repaving and Preserving Town Roads: Mr. O'Neill reviewed the concept of cost-effective road preservation, explaining that it is less costly to keep a road at a high level of quality with regular maintenance rather than wait until the quality drops significantly. Mr. Higdon noted that citizens won't understand and will question why roads that look good are getting fixed before others that are in worse shape. Mr. O'Neill agreed, noting that the other roads will still get worked on but it may take longer to get to the ones that are in such poor shape that they need full reconstruction. The good thing about the pavement survey process is that it's all based on numbers and it's easy to prove why certain roads are being worked on based on those numbers.

Mr. O'Neill reviewed the costs associated with various preservation methods and explained that he will be coming to the Board in the near future with a request for funding for rejuvenation and some reclamation in the current fiscal year. He recommended consulting with Kercher Engineering to perform a pavement condition survey in the next fiscal year at a cost of approximately \$40,000 and to increase the pavement maintenance budget to \$880,000 per year.

Open Discussion: None

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2018
MATTHEWS TOWN HALL
232 MATTHEWS STATION STREET, MATTHEWS NC**

PRESENT: Mayor Paul Bailey; Mayor Pro Tem John Higdon; Commissioners Barbara Dement, Chris Melton, Jeff Miller, Kress Query and John Urban; Town Manager Hazen Blodgett; Assistant Town Manager Becky Hawke; Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

ALSO PRESENT: Finance Director Chris Tucker; Fire Chief Rob Kinniburgh; Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Director Corey King; Planning & Development Director Kathi Ingrish; Police Chief Clark Pennington; Public Works Director CJ O'Neill; Senior Planner Jay Camp, Zoning Administrator

Mary Jo Gollnitz, Planner/GIS Dillon Lackey; Town Engineer Susan Habina Woolard; Parks Manager Scott Rawls

Purser-Hulsey Park Design: Parks, Recreation & Cultural Resources Director Corey King reviewed the conceptual design plans for Purser-Hulsey Park, which include amenities such as a splash pad, amphitheater, biking/walking trails and bike pump track. Mr. Higdon expressed concern about health issues - particularly Legionella bacteria – related to water features like splash pads. Mr. King explained that the water would run through the pump house and filtration system and an employee would be on site to mitigate other issues. Mr. Blodgett noted that people want a public swimming pool but a splash pad is a good alternative as a water amenity that is more affordable, easier to maintain and has less liability than a pool.

Mr. King explained that the Veterans Advisory Committee has asked if the playground equipment could be armed forces-themed. There was some discussion of the appropriateness and family-friendliness aspect of that theme. Ms. Dement said she would like to see a train theme at this site, perhaps with a war memorial of some type to passively honor service people rather than building a service-themed playground. Mr. Melton preferred a farm or rural theme and recommended some sort of structure to create a sense of arrival when entering from Matthews-Mint Hill Road.

Mr. King continued reviewing other design highlights, including a self-managed and automated two-acre dog park with an electronic key system. Mayor Bailey suggested tying it into the pet license system. Mr. King described a new amenity called a bike pump track that includes rolling hills for bikes. Staff is working with the Tarheel Trailblazers on the exact design. Mr. Blodgett noted that previous discussions included the possibility of including a fire training facility on this site but staff has since concluded that this site isn't the best fit for such a use due to the proximity of homes and the fire and smoke that would be present at a training facility. Land is still being reserved there for a potential future standard fire station. Mr. Query asked about a possible school being sited there and it seemed unlikely that that would happen. Chief Kinniburgh discussed the possibility of lining up the entrance/exit to the fire station lot with Marjorie Drive. Mr. Higdon talked about the possibility of using the wash building from the Bainbridge property as an equipment storage facility for the community gardeners. By consensus the Board agreed that it could be used for that purpose and shored up with modern material for stability.

Mr. King explained that the 2017 estimates for the listed amenities was \$4.3 million. One or two full time employees and a number of part timers would have to be hired to staff it. Site maintenance would have to be funded as well. Mr. Blodgett discussed methods of funding the park. The County owns the land so the Town can't put it up as collateral which means there are fewer options for financing. Mr. Blodgett recommended a bond referendum which, if passed by the citizens, would be accompanied by a corresponding tax increase to pay for the park. Mayor Bailey would like to find out if the County would sell the land to the Town. Mr. Melton said he's troubled by the thought of borrowing millions of dollars to build a park when the Town needs firefighters and police officers.

By consensus the Board agreed with the amenities as listed. Mr. King will develop the cost estimates and bring them back to the Board to request adoption of the park's master plan. He will also get costs for the wash house move and work. Mayor Bailey requested two cost versions with one to include the purchase of the land from the County.

Vision for Park/Open Space Acreage: Mr. King reviewed the 2007 Master Plan for Parks and Recreation, which projected service standards through 2017. As of 2018, the demand based on the established standards indicates a shortfall in mini and neighborhood parks and low in certain other amenities like pedestrian trails, tennis courts and swimming pools. These numbers are based on the 2007 plan and may no longer accurately reflect the desires of residents today. An updated master plan is needed to ensure that new service standards indicate the real needs of

the town and its citizens. The upcoming budget cycle will include a request for funding to go through another master plan process. The estimated cost is \$20,00-25,000.

Connecting Pleasant Plains Road to East John Street: *Mayor Bailey withdrew from this discussion due to his employment by Duke Energy, owner of the associated power lines.* Mr. King reviewed a potential trail along the Duke Energy power line property between Pleasant Plains Road and East John Street. It's already being used as an informal trail so staff approached Duke about formalizing a trail there. Duke is willing to allow it with some stipulations. They suggested a trail through the existing trees which would be useful coverage during hot sunny days. Mr. Melton said the area isn't as attractive as it may seem – it's full of scrub plants that get cut back further every year and is the first area Duke sprays with herbicides. He wouldn't want a trail there if the spraying continues. He also said hunters and dirt bike riders go there now and so there may be safety issues. He does support the proposed extension of the existing neighborhood path in between Merribrook Drive and Cindy Carr Drive. He would prefer to see a connection on McKee Road rather than under the power lines. Mr. Higdon said he would not support a trail located where the herbicide spraying occurs.

By consensus it was determined that this potential trail will be left on the list and staff will work to address the concerns.

Greenway Prioritization: Mr. King reviewed the ranking of eight proposed trails, explaining he was seeking Board consensus on the prioritization. There was some discussion of each with the general consensus that the trails listed are acceptable. Mr. King noted that the Board will see requests to build some portions during the budget process as part of the CIP. The specific rankings may change. Mr. Urban discussed his desire for more green space in downtown.

Public Art: Mr. King reviewed the existing art installations and potential future locations. Mr. Higdon noted that some of the greenway art is in rough shape and Parks Manager Scott Rawls explained that eight haven't been painted at all and staff is working to get those painted before the existing ones are repainted. The Board discussed mural themes and locations and was generally in favor of the potential locations.

Consider adding Memorial Day and Veteran's Day events: Mr. Blodgett noted that staff periodically is questioned why some events are not advertised by the Town, such as the Memorial Day event held in Stumptown Park. That is not a town-run event so it wasn't advertised by the Town. The Veterans Advisory Committee would like to work on some kind of festival and would like the Town to get involved. He asked if Board was interested in that.

Mr. Melton noted that this involves a decision on the level of involvement of Town staff. Staff has said that they would prefer to provide some technical help and be a resource but allow the advisory groups to spearhead new events and provide the required labor. In addition, he thinks the volunteer group's take on something creates a more valuable event rather than it being done by the staff. Mr. Miller said the Town should have its own events for Memorial Day and Veterans' Day. He would like to see these holidays and associated events promoted on the website. Chief Pennington noted that Town events require services like Police staffing for safety and Public Works staffing for cleanup.

By consensus it was decided that the Board will continue this discussion with the larger topic of town sponsorship of events.

CIP: Mr. Blodgett reviewed the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan). The board discussed various items including the possibility of discussing with the Quad the idea of sharing the use of a street sweeper between the participating towns and repairing the pillars at town hall with either fiberglass or block material.

The Board discussed Crestdale Road and Mr. O'Neill explained that no more improvements are planned at this time. Mayor Bailey noted the hedge that are growing out at the curve of the road and forms a blind spot near the Ballabox and Harris Teeter properties. Mr. O'Neill explained staff will discuss that with the property owners as the hedge is not located in the public right of way. Mr. O'Neill noted that there has been some success with the *no trucks* painting on the road and Ms. Habina Woolard reported that they've asked CSX to stop raising the rail. She also noted that they performed a speed study on Crestdale Road and if anything is done to flatten the curves, remove shrubs or similar then people will speed even more. The speed limit is 25 miles per hour and the 80th percentile is 39 mph, so any additional improvements made to the road will only encourage higher speeds. Crash data indicates that the highest number of accidents are due to people trying to exit Matthews School Road. Public Works and Police staff will be strategizing more ways to calm traffic. Mr. Miller asked about the relocation of the traffic light from Crestdale and Matthews-Mint Hill Road to Independence Point Parkway and Matthews-Mint Hill Road and Mr. O'Neill explained that it is scheduled to occur in the next several months.

Fund Balance Policy: Mr. Blodgett reviewed the Town's current fund balance policy calculation method which is different from the state's method. Staff recommends changing the fund balance calculation to be consistent with the state so Matthews is benchmarked correctly against other cities in North Carolina.

The Board discussed the merits of calculating unassigned and available funds. By consensus it was decided that the fund balance goal will remain at 34%. The available funds will be calculated consistent with state policy and staff will also report out the unassigned amount for informational purposes.

State of the Police Department: Police Chief Clark Pennington gave an update on the Police Department. He explained the move toward intelligence-led (data-driven) policing – a way of determining how and where agency resources are used based on data. He also noted the need for a workload study and the need to evaluate a traffic safety unit, stating there are about six accidents handled by patrol officers per day with two to three hours of work involved per accident. He noted that turnover is an issue and will likely continue as Huntersville will soon be hiring fifteen officers. He is also reviewing how animal control, fleet and telecommunications operations occur.

Mr. Query expressed concern regarding the safety of students in school trailers. CMS has said there are no issues but he would like to see camera systems installed in each mobile unit. Matthews could pay for them for the schools in town at a cost of about \$15,000-20,000. Mr. Blodgett suggested having Chief Pennington speak to the CMS Chief to determine if there are any gaps to be filled and then come back to the Board with that information. Mr. Higdon asked about local opioid abuse and Chief Pennington explained it's on a national uptrend. Matthews now has a policy in place that officers will no longer field test unknown powder substances/possible opioids for their own safety.

Firearms Discharge – This will be discussed later in the agenda.

Departure: The Board, Town Attorney Charles Buckley, Town Manager Hazen Blodgett, Assistant Town Manager Becky Hawke and Town Clerk Lori Canapinno departed to travel to 50 East 1st Street, Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina for the remainder of the Planning Conference.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2018
50 EAST 1ST STREET, OCEAN ISLE BEACH, NC

PRESENT: Mayor Paul Bailey; Mayor Pro Tem John Higdon; Commissioners Barbara Dement, Chris Melton, Jeff Miller, Kress Query and John Urban; Town Attorney Charles Buckley; Town Manager Hazen Blodgett; Assistant Town Manager Becky Hawke; Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

Discharge of Firearms: Mr. Blodgett reviewed the existing ordinance and methods by which the Police Department performs the reviews of each discharge permit application. The Board has discussed changing this process and can do so in the following ways: delegating authority to the Police Chief to review discharge applications rather than the Board; prohibiting the discharge of firearms, including bow and arrow; and stay out completely by not having an ordinance addressing it.

Discussion ensued regarding the complete prohibition versus allowing it to occur in the few areas deemed safe enough in town to accommodate the discharge activity. The Board then considered the ramifications of repealing the existing ordinance. By consensus the Board decided to ask the Police Chief for information on the state and local regulations that apply if the existing ordinance is repealed and whether or not a new ordinance would be required to make all discharge of firearms prohibited, and to fully define firearms.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2018
50 EAST 1ST STREET, OCEAN ISLE BEACH, NC

PRESENT: Mayor Paul Bailey; Mayor Pro Tem John Higdon; Commissioners Barbara Dement, Chris Melton, Jeff Miller, Kress Query and John Urban; Town Attorney Charles Buckley; Town Manager Hazen Blodgett; Assistant Town Manager Becky Hawke; Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

Board Discussion. The Board met to discuss various issues.

Citizen Survey: Mr. Blodgett reviewed the results of the recent survey. They were good overall but there was some decline in some categories, particularly leadership/direction, customer service and development/growth. There was some discussion of whether some of these responses could be related to specific issues. Mr. Urban noted that some comments were in direct conflict with each other. In addition, he saw a direct attack on senior communities. Mr. Melton requested that future surveys include a question to indicate in which part of town the respondent lives, which would show if there are specific areas of town that need to be addressed. This would be for the general neighborhood, not specific addresses. It would help inform the Board of areas in town that are unhappy or need more focused attention. Ms. Hawke noted that the current survey included polling location which could be used to analyze the results geographically. Dr. Friday would have to rerun some analyses and there would likely be some fee involved. By consensus the Board directed staff to find out the cost involved. Mayor Bailey noted an issue with parks and the need to see if it's because any particular area is currently underserved.

Mr. Higdon said he would like more information such as what specifically can leadership do to improve. He would like more questions that could result in constructive answers. Mr. Blodgett noted that the survey is already fairly long. He noted that the survey is done every two years but it's possible to do some kind of follow-up on an annual basis to drill down to get to the bottom of some of these issues. Mayor Bailey requested that staff go through all of the comments, determine where they apply - Board or department – and report back on how to address them. Ms.

Dement said the Town needs to communicate more about what is being done correctly too. She also suggested an open letter to the citizens as an acknowledgement of the fact that their concerns are being addressed.

Mr. Blodgett noted that communication was a recurring theme. The Board discussed additional ways they can communicate with the public, including forums with the full Board, casual events like coffee with a Commissioner, live videos and similar. By consensus the Board determined that staff will brainstorm on methods of public engagement that the elected officials can commit to maintaining.

Social media policy: This will be put back on a future agenda for further discussion at a public meeting.

Policy for Endorsement/Support of Town Events: Mr. Blodgett reviewed the existing policy, which allows for Town support of events in the form of publicity and banners if the events are run by the Town or if they receive tourism funds from the Town. Recently some of the Town's advisory committees have expressed interest in initiating their own events and/or supporting others' events. This has promoted staff to propose the addition of a third test: have the interested advisory committee vet the event, see how it fits in with their mission and then solicit the Board of Commissioners for approval. If the event is deemed to be something that fits in with the supporting committee's mission and is approved by the Board then the Town can help publicize the event on the Town's communication channels, put the event on the calendar and allow a banner if the event runners choose to pay for one.

Ms. Hawke noted that the Town should endorse events only - not fundraisers. Town Attorney Charles Buckley said the Town should avoid endorsement of services that the town government doesn't provide itself – i.e. no social services or similar. Governments can participate in federally-recognized holidays with no issues. Discussion ensued regarding the definition of sponsoring, endorsing and supporting. The requests for support could include anything from a simple request for advertising to funding or in-kind donation of staff time, so each request would have to spell out exactly what is being asked for in the request memo and the Board would have to approve each aspect on a case by case basis.

Staff will bring a draft policy to be adopted by the Board at its next meeting.

Endorsement of events: The Board was asked to endorse the Martin Luther King Jr. walk and the community forum on race relations. This is tied into the previous agenda item regarding a policy for Town endorsement of events. As was discussed in the previous agenda item, the event endorsement policy will be approved by the Board at the next meeting. These events will have to go through the appropriate advisory committees so they can review the requests, get more information on the agenda, list of panel participants, etc. so it can be listed in their recommendation memo to the Board.

Memorial Day & Veterans Day: The group discussed the possibility of the Town supporting something to mark these significant events. The American Legion holds a Memorial Day ceremony at Stumptown Park and it has been suggested that they might be interested in partnering with the Town for support. Staff doesn't know how much, if any, support would be requested. It's important to know if they're seeking logistical assistance, financial support, etc.

By consensus the Board determined that it was interested in doing something for both holidays. The Board will review the event endorsement policy at the next meeting and then the American Legion can be directed to follow that policy if it seeks Town support.

Employee Compensation Plan: The Board discussed what it means to be an “employer of choice.” The Board will be meeting with the MAPS Group in the near future to further discuss this issue.

Organizational Development: The group discussed employee training and development. Mr. Higdon suggested including diversity training as part of every new employee’s onboarding process. Diversity training for the Board will continue. Staff should work on a succession plan for the entire organization.

Human Resources Director Position: Ms. Hawke discussed the request to reclass the Human Resources Manager position to a Human Resources Director position and increase the pay scale accordingly in order to attract the necessary qualified candidate pool.

Motion by Mr. Higdon to approve the reclassification of the Human Resources Manager position to a Human Resources Director, along with corresponding changes to the job description and pay classification, and to include the HR Director in the quarterly report process. The motion was seconded by Ms. Dement and unanimously approved.

Vision Statements: Mr. Blodgett discusses the need to update the Town’s *Our Town, Our Vision* vision plan. The plan, which was completed in 2005 with the facilitation of Glen Harbeck, is the backbone of many of the Town’s actions. It’s important that the update captures the citizens’ current concerns and interests. Staff recommends hiring Mr. Harbeck to update the plan this year.

Motion by Mr. Melton to authorize the Town Manager to engage Glen Harbeck to update the vision plan as stated in Mr. Blodgett’s memo dated February 9, 2018, and not to exceed \$10,420. The motion was seconded by Mr. Miller.

Mr. Higdon disagreed with the need to hire a consultant to do the work, saying this work could be done with existing staff and would be a misuse of public funds to do otherwise. Mr. Urban said he believes this would be a great use of funds, particularly amortized over the number of years the plan will be in use. The recent survey results show that the Board needs to better respond to the wishes of the citizenry and this is an excellent way to find out what those wishes are. Ms. Dement noted that the use of an outside professional will take away any possible perception of bias that may have been come up if this work was done by Town staff.

The motion passed 6-1 with Bailey, Dement, Melton, Miller, Query and Urban in favor and Higdon in opposition.

Economic Development Roles: Ms. Hawke reviewed the economic development-related tasks of the Quad, the Matthews Chamber, the Economic Development Advisory Committee and the Red Brick Partnership. The group discussed the activities and focus of each group and concluded that there was little overlap and each are doing well with their own tasks.

Tax Increment Financing: Ms. Hawke reviewed various financing options as development tools. The group discussed Tax Increment Grants (TIGs) as the most viable option since they put the burden of financing on the developer and must generate the anticipated increased revenue before the grant is issued. This mitigates the risk to the government. The Greylock Ridge Road extension area is the best possible option at this time. It would require an interested developer.

By consensus the Board agreed to pursue a TIG agreement for the Greylock Ridge Road extension area.

Structured Parking: The group discussed potential public parking spots. Staff has an old list of potential new spots and that can be updated to include new options. Mr. Blodgett reviewed the potential for a surface lot at the town-owned property on John Street near the post office. 48 spaces could be added for an estimated \$245,000. This is not in the CIP at this time. Ms. Hawke noted the existence of mobile apps that can be used to find available parking spaces in a particular area.

By consensus the Board directed staff to update the list of potential parking spots and bring it back to the Board for review, to include Charles Street with the existing width, and to investigate a parking spot availability app or similar product.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2018
50 EAST 1ST STREET, OCEAN ISLE BEACH, NC

PRESENT: Mayor Paul Bailey; Mayor Pro Tem John Higdon; Commissioners Barbara Dement, Chris Melton, Jeff Miller, Kress Query and John Urban; Town Attorney Charles Buckley; Town Manager Hazen Blodgett; Assistant Town Manager Becky Hawke; Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

Board Meets with Manager. The Board met with Mr. Blodgett to discuss various issues.

Public Information & Zoning Application Evaluation Criteria: The group reviewed the zoning deliberation and decision-making process and the statutory authority that allows zoning requests to be approved and denied. They then reviewed best practices for emails with elected officials.

The Board discussed ways of improving the meeting process. Some meetings run very late which is difficult for all involved. The group discussed various methods, including limiting the number of zoning cases discussed in one meeting, placing a time limit on presentations from the applicant and speakers per zoning application, moving the public comment period to earlier in the agenda, and noting the time and working to move the discussion along. Staff was directed to get input from the Planning Department on this and report back to the Board.

Four-Year Staggered Terms: Mr. Blodgett reviewed the concept of moving to four-year staggered terms for the Mayor and Board to help with continuity. Currently there could be seven new members at each election, which would require a very steep learning curve for the newly-elected officials. Longer staggered terms allow time for newly elected officials to learn, gives them more time to work on town business instead of campaigning and allows them to see longer term projects come to fruition. Staff recommends moving to the four-year staggered terms; implementation could be delayed until a future election cycle if desired.

By consensus the Board agreed to put the question to the voters so the public can have their say. The Town can hold a referendum as part of the 2019 election and if approved made it effective with the 2021 election. Staff will put more information together and bring it back to the Board at a future meeting.

Legislative Agenda: The board reviewed the 2018 legislative priorities. Mayor Bailey requested the addition of endorsement of House Bill 704 as it will review the state's education system and consider options such as funding local schools.

Nature Preserve: Ms. Dement explained she would like to see areas of nature preservation that allow no other activities except walking trails. She suggested getting HAWK involved to make recommendations on suitable locations. The group discussed possible locations for such limited nature preserves of around four acres, including at the Grier property and the lowlands near Warner Park.

To Do List: The group prepared the list of follow-up items derived from this Planning Conference. The list will be reviewed by staff and then approved by the Board at a future meeting.

Adjourn. The Planning Conference adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno
Town Clerk