

**BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINI RETREAT
MINUTES
MARCH 23, 2023**

Present: Glenn York – Mayor, Quentin Miles, Beverly Clerk, Shannon Baxter, Jessica Harrison, Larry Loucks, Joe Moore – Town Manager, Lisa Markland – Town Clerk, Eric Vernon – Town Attorney, Sheila Long – PR Director, Mike Clark – Planning Director, Bobby Fitts – Finance Director, Chris Ray – PW Director, Chris Perry – Fire Chief, Jacqui Boykin – Police Chief

Meeting called to order at 8:30am

Commissioner Loucks made a motion, second by Commissioner Clark to approve the agenda. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Joe Moore gave a brief review of the topics for the day.

Joe gave general comments on growth and the cost of providing services with that growth and how that could be accomplished. He also spoke about the fact that real estate would find a way to provide for the demand and what happens when a municipality says no to growth. It was explained that it was necessary to have enough housing and a diverse type of housing. How the region was growing, demographics of the area, type of development and density to meet the demand all played into how the Town would need to adjust.

The other topics to be discussed were the bond referendum, transportation impact fees, and the Main Street advisory board.

Mike Clark gave a brief overview of the presentation and presenters and then introduced Mitchell Silver.

Mitch Silver stated Zebulon had very competent staff and praised them for their work. Mitch spoke about living in a small town in North Carolina, New York City and Raleigh and explained how they were alike in many ways, but different.

Mr. Silver continued by discussing trends and emerging issues, the job of the Board was to serve the public interest, and what it meant for Zebulon with the number of people moving to the Raleigh and Cary areas being the second highest in the nation. He stated there was a ripple effect of housing prices that affected Zebulon

Jessica Harrison came in.

The generations and how they were involved in the growth of the community and what each generation found important influenced how the Town grew.

- Greatest Generation

- Silent/Mature Generation – 77- 98 Traditional American Generation
- Baby Boomers – 58-76 Decision makers of today great recession occurred, materialistic generation “angry generation”
- Generation X – 41-57 Me generation, family of steps, not materialistic
- Generation Y – 27-40 most destructive and place matters want to live in the city for the experience, want choices, trophy kids, soft, racially and culturally tolerant - different
- Generation Z – 6-26 understand gender identity, streaming, bus generation, rise of social media, environmentally conscience
- Generation Alpha – 0-5yo lived through the pandemic

Mitch explained that 50% of the population wants to come to town for an experience and he continued by stating there should be at least 11 destinations in our community.

Commissioner Miles asked if the social district was considered an experience for visitors and Mitch Silver stated that it was.

Population by race was changing in Zebulon

National Presentation on critical elements that communities needed were discussed.

- Healthy Living and want sidewalks – pickleball will continue to grow
- Access to recreational amenities and can’t do it alone work with the county buy a place not just a home.
- Traditional neighborhood and want choices. Want townhomes and strong sense of place
- Placemaking – authentic and memorable have the power of 10 with 10 things to go to
- Post Covid – rethinking of outdoor spaces – meta city – work from home
- Housing Choices – diversity of product types
- Access to Social gathering places – want a place to go and have social interaction
- Understand the value of land

Purpose of Planning

Mitch reviewed the role of planning and stated it was like retirement planning – necessary. This was where we want to be in 2030 and how do we get there. It was the publics plan not the Board of Commissioners plan.

Mayor York asked how often the plan needed to be updated and Mitch explained it should be reviewed annually and updated every 5 years.

It was stated that the Town should manage growth and change, but don’t stop it. Mitch said that Zebulon needed to offer predictability to developers and the public; not making a decision and just kicking it down the road doesn’t make it go away but does upset the public and developers.

Mitch shared the implications of not doing something and said that staff should be given the same opportunity because they know the community better than anyone else. He went on to state if the Board said no to something they were also saying no to something else, such as if you say no rentals – the Board was saying no to seniors and people coming out of college were not welcome.

The Board had to decide if they were going to have a plan with a blueprint to follow or be a deal making town that did things willy nilly. Mitch stated it was always best to be a plan making town.

Mayor York discussed the bills in the legislature that are counterproductive as a municipality.

Mr. Silver stated that they needed to decide where to build dwelling units, places for jobs, infrastructure and open space because Zebulon was going to run out of land if it continued to build just single family homes with low density and sprawl.

Mitch explained that the numbers were different for the City of Raleigh than they would be for the Town of Zebulon.

Commissioner Baxter asked what kind of square footage municipalities would need. Mitch Silver said he could come up with a formula.

Commissioner Baxter asked what percentage of open space per person should be. Mitch explained it was 20% for a dense city, but Zebulon was a lower density area and already had open space in front and back yards.

Setting a vision was necessary. There needed to be three plans and have a direction.

- Strategic Plan - Spoke to values and family is not the same as households
- Land Use plan should be part of the code
- Transportation Plan
- Reviewed 3 areas said that we were on trend
- Do want to have a 2040 or 2050 plan

Mitch said Zebulon needed to look at the land use maps and determine where they would be willing to allow for multi-story structures

Commissioner Miles asked about gentrification. There was discussion about the topic.

Zebulon needed to create a blueprint on how to make things happen. A picture of Morrisville was shown of where you can live and work and thrive. Pick the intersection, for growth, building height, shopping etc.

Mayor York brought up North Hills stating he didn't think it would work but it works very well, and he was surprised by the growth in that area because of it.

Commissioner Baxter asked how they could push for the Town of Zebulon to look like that. Mitch stated it was the plan and the code that was used to incentivize building downtown and make it easier to get developers to do what the Town wanted and harder to do what the Town didn't want. The Town needed to pick the locations that made the most sense – Mitch stated that Park Village was nothing but now it was an experience and the Town needed to capture that experience. Commissioner Miles stated that he had been there, and it was great. Mitch said the Town needed to do what they wanted, where they wanted it and make that their plan.

Corridors where light rail or bus stops were, was where to build and it was the vision and should be all part of the framework. Mayor York asked about the effect on the property value and Mitch stated that light rail would increase the price.

Commissioner Miles asked about land that was available and if the Town should buy it for future use. Mitch explained in some cases that would be appropriate if they wanted to control the property but that was really a separate conversation. Really need to have code to incentive the uses they wanted and others that disincentive the things you didn't want.

Mitch stated that land has value, and they have to create property and sales tax revenue. Land was a finite commodity so it would not be good to put the Town at risk by purchasing property. It was best to be smarter in how the Town created land value. A return on investment should be done on all projects.

How the Town determines land use determines revenue and where are the right land uses to create more value. Buildings that were 3-4 stories would be good for the Town. Housing affordability and accessibility was very important and with almost 70% owner occupied properties the Town needed more rentals to bring in more people and ages to the community. Such as housing that was geared toward seniors with the cottages that were clustered, and accessory dwelling units.

Mitch stated that Zebulon was missing the middle and needed to ensure housing choices for all. The question to ask yourself was – Was Zebulon offering choices that include affordability and accessibility.

Mitch stated that Planning Director Mike Clark was on it and knew what he was doing and listening to his recommendations would benefit the Town.

There was discussion about gentrification and rental properties and Mitch stated that they had to do what was right and respect a private to private transaction. Renters were the ones that can get pushed out. Mitch stated that habitat for humanity, grants, and explained that there were ways to do things to help with repairs and organizations getting involved. The Town of Zebulon could not do it on its own.

Mitch explained that they couldn't just say no because it will cause the housing market to increase the price of all homes across the board. Instead, by providing a high inventory which would increase choices and make the prices go down.

Mitch stated that land availability, growing smart, and having to do something or do nothing and what does the plan look like. Mitch stated he had met with the Zebulon Planning staff, and they were on it. He continued by saying they had to understand the urgency 10 years before it was urgent.

Mitch shared his point of view

- It is a lot of work, plan making is so important
- Look at your shopping centers – 2-3 story (look at 6-forks)

Mitch stated there needed to be a townwide comp plan vs multiple plans needed to do a macro vs a micro approach.

BREAK 10 minutes

Reconvened at 10:50

Mike introduced Eric Lamb on transportation

Eric Lamb stated that the Town of Zebulon was at the right place to be having these discussions on transportation. Traffic was the single most complained about topic on all developments. He continued by stating that congestion was an indicator of success, and they could not build their way out of congestion. It was necessary to create alternatives for people to get around and it was necessary to grow to create less total traffic.

Eric expressed his happiness to see Zebulon had an impact fee and comp transportation plan. Plans were in place to show that there were designations on three lanes and six lanes, and it was necessary to have developers work within that plan. Public/Private partnerships were very important because no one could do it all on their own. Working with developers was very important.

Trips were discussed and predicting where they went was very important. Eric also explained that horizontal development created more traffic than vertical development. The Town needed to make places walkable, and it was greener to be walkable. If the Town could build and increase density and then the traffic would decrease. By putting in sidewalks it created connectivity and walkability.

Commissioner Loucks asked how to factor in the state roads and should the Town want to keep them state roads. Eric explained that for Hwy 96/97 they did not want to widen roads that would change the character of the Town. They should be protective of the Town and interstates would

increase traffic. He stated they needed to be intentional on what to do and should not build to accommodate traffic

11:45 Recessed for LUNCH until 2:00

Called back into session

BOND REFERENDUM

Bobby introduced Ted Cole

Ted Cole explained about bond ratings with Moody's and S&P and that the Town wanted to maintain or move up in the bond rating so that it was less expensive to borrow money.

Commissioner Baxter asked about maintaining a \$1.5 million debt load and Ted stated we should keep the current debt payments to allocate towards something new like general obligation bonds being discussed.

Commissioner Baxter inquired if there was an area that was tied to Five County Stadium. There was discussion about the three classes of improvements at the stadium and the estimated cost.

Joe explained that the presentation was to understand the tax implications of a bond referendum. The board has to discuss and determine what they want to do with the stadium.

If a referendum was held the Town would have seven years to issue that bond but not required to do so. It was possible to get a three year extension. However, the Town has to use a planning rate and debt structure the LGC would be comfortable with.

Joe stated that facilities and fire may be some that could wait since there were partners. But transportation funding would be a bond project and we might be able to fund Old Bunn Road with general fund and impact fees.

Recess

Called back into session at 2:55

Mike introduced Michael Dennis with Remy Kemp who would be presenting on the Traffic Impact Fees and how the Town could restructure how they are charged and use

The Commissioners asked about the traffic numbers on Pippin and their impact.

Commissioner Loucks asked if anyone had done research on smart vehicles and how that would change things. Mr. Dennis said that there probably would be some effect, but no studies have been done yet.

MAIN STREET PRESENTATION

Teresa Piner made a presentation on Main Street and the need to appoint a board so that they could move forward with the process.

There was discussion on the terms and limits as well as the size of the board. Commissioner Clark stated that having 5-7 was not too many on the board but did not think it should be any larger. The Board agreed to having seven on the board.

Commissioner Baxter stated that she wanted additional time before selecting the individuals that would serve.

There was discussion about how the process would go to appoint people to the board. It was explained that they could be nominated and then voted on it. Shannon Johnson stated that the terms were normally determined in the first board meeting, and most will volunteer for a term length between 1-3 years.

Commissioner Miles asked about an elected official on the board. Ms. Johnson stated that she never had an elected official on the board. She explained that by having an elected official on the board it gets a little muddy.


Lisa Markland explained the use of a confidential ballot and how it would work.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to table the appointment of the Main Street board until April 3, 2023. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Louck made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to adjourn. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Adopted this the 5th day of June 2023.




Glenn L. York – Mayor


Lisa M. Markland, CMC – Town Clerk