

**Zebulon Board of Commissioners**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 3, 2025**

Present: Mayor Glenn York, Jessica Harrison, Beverly Clark, Shannon Baxter, Amber Davis, Quentin Miles, Gilbert Todd, Jr.-Manager, Kellianne Williams-Asst. Town Manager, Lisa Markland-Town Clerk, Bobby Fitts-Finance, Sheila Long-Parks & Recreation, Cate Farrell-Planning, Bob Grossman - Police, Sam Slater – Attorney

Mayor York called the meeting to order.

**PLEDGE OF ALLIEGANCE**

Commissioner Baxter led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Commissioner Baxter requested two amendments to the agenda:

- Pull Ordinance 2025-25 (UDO text amendments on regional mixed use) and table it until March 20<sup>th</sup> to allow staff time to address questions.
- Pull from new business the staffing addition in administration and asked staff to incorporate it into the 2026 budget cycle.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to approve the amended agenda. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

**SCHOOL RECOGNITION**

*Zebulon Elementary School*

Mayor York stated that student Alex Hancock could not be present. Mayor York recognized teacher Alicia Gregory, both from Zebulon Elementary School.

**PROCLAMATION**

Mayor York read a proclamation recognizing the Zebulon Elementary School Science Olympiad team. The proclamation highlighted the importance of science education and celebrated the team's sixth place finish. Elizabeth Baker was also recognized for her guidance and support in leading the students.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Scott Carpenter spoke about the February 27<sup>th</sup> Talk of the Town event. He expressed that while there were some helpful moments, the community wanted more dialogue with the Town rather than just talk. He stated that citizens submitted 70 questions at the event plus 14 questions beforehand, but only four questions were addressed. Mr. Carpenter requested copies of all questions submitted for the February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, as well as communication between staff and elected officials about handling public comments from that meeting.

Daniqua Stansell spoke on behalf of Wake Enterprise's SPARK program. She explained that SPARK is a grant program working with youth and adults with intellectual or developmental disabilities to find customized employment opportunities. The program encompasses a benefits counselor, job coach and care navigator to ensure clients are work ready. Ms. Stansell stated

they are looking to partner with small businesses to create opportunities for their clients to grow.

## CONSENT

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Clark to approve the minutes for December 2, 2024. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

## PRESENTATIONS

### *Smart Cities Presentations – Morrisville Commissioner Steve Rao*

Commissioner Steve Rao from Morrisville presented on smart cities initiatives. He explained that smart cities leverage technology, data and innovation to enhance quality of services, reduce costs, and improve quality of life for residents. He provided examples from Morrisville, such as sensors on sports fields to notify staff and residents of flooding, and visibility into facility usage for tennis courts and swimming lanes.

Rao highlighted Morrisville's smart city task force that brought in technology leaders and worked with departments to identify opportunities. He mentioned they are using AI for improved document searchability and have developed a chatbot called "Morris the Cricket" to answer basic resident questions.

Rao emphasized the importance of broadband expansion to enable smart city technologies. He suggested Zebulon could create jobs and spur innovation by working with organizations like RIOT that connect startups with towns to solve municipal problems.

Rao recommended next steps for Zebulon, including:

- Creating a Wake County Smart City Task Force to share best practices
- Forming an AI task force to explore uses in local government
- Identifying quick win pilot programs
- Establishing digital access hubs

He noted that leveraging technology could create a more connected, efficient and sustainable future for Zebulon residents.

Commissioner Baxter thanked Rao for his presentation and agreed it is important for Zebulon to consider how to make the town more accessible and utilize AI safely. She emphasized the importance of expanding broadband access in eastern Wake County.

### *Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Update – Quinton Taylor and Brandon Wiggins*

Brandon Wiggins, Chair of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and Quinton Taylor, Vice Chair, presented an update on recent Parks and Recreation successes and priorities.

They highlighted significant growth in Parks and Recreation programs from FY2023 to FY2024:

- 18% growth in summer camps
- 41% growth in athletics
- 36% increase in program attendance
- 4% increase in event attendance
- 12% increase in programs offered

- 10% increase in events offered
- 31% increase in rentals

For the FY2026 budget, the Advisory Board identified two priority areas:

- Land acquisition
- Increased staffing for programs and maintenance

Wiggins explained that while Zebulon currently has 167.8 acres of parkland, population growth will quickly outpace this. He emphasized the need to acquire land now before it is developed for other purposes. Benefits of land acquisition include protecting natural resources, ensuring green space access for future generations, and providing space for new recreation facilities.

For staffing, Wiggins noted recent hires of a general programmer and athletics coordinator will enhance programs. He stated additional maintenance staff are needed, especially during peak seasons, to keep facilities in good condition and avoid expensive contracted work.

Commissioner Baxter expressed excitement about moving forward with the Little River master plan. The presenters thanked the Board for their support and commitment to Parks and Recreation in Zebulon.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### *Planning*

#### **Annexation Little River Park – Ordinance 2025-26**

Cate Farrell presented on the proposed annexation of Little River Park. She explained the property is outside Zebulon's ETJ and consists of two parcels totaling 22.23 acres at 1800 West Gannon Avenue and 1228 Water Plant Road.

Ms. Farrell outlined the annexation standards from the UDO, including owner approval, ability to provide services, any outstanding debt obligations, and impact on public health/safety/welfare.

### **Public Hearing**

Mayor York opened the public hearing.

Mayor York asked for anyone wishing to speak in favor. There were none.

Mayor York asked for anyone who wished to speak in opposition. There were none.

Mayor York asked for anyone who wished to speak neither for nor against but just had comments.

Dr. Don Crohn spoke, asking about the goals and benefits of the annexation for Zebulon citizens.

No other public comments were made.

Mayor York declared the public hearing closed.

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Clark to approve Ordinance 2025-26

Mayor York asked if there was discussion.

Commissioner Baxter explained that annexation is necessary to move forward with the Parks and Recreation master plan and Little River master plan. She noted it would allow for legal improvements to the property and connection to City of Raleigh water.

Parks and Recreation Director Sheila Long clarified that annexation would allow the Town to follow Zebulon's development standards rather than Wake County's. She stated there would be little change in services since it is already a town park.

There was no further discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Ordinance 2025-27 – Little River Park Rezoning**

Cate Farrell presented on the proposed rezoning of the newly annexed Little River Park property. She explained this would assign zoning to allow for proper development and public utilities at the park. The proposed zoning was Residential Suburban (R2).

Cate outlined the standards for consideration, including public health/safety/welfare impacts, appropriateness for the location, and reasonableness in the public interest. She noted the Planning Board recommended approval as did staff.

Commissioner Baxter expressed excitement about moving forward with the Little River master plan.

Commissioner Miles made a motion, second by Commissioner Baxter to approve Ordinance 2025-27 for rezoning of 1800 West Gannon Avenue and 1228 Water Plant Road to R2, finding it consistent with the comprehensive land use plan and that standards of Section 2.2.25.J have been met. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously in a roll call vote.

#### **MANAGER'S REPORT**

Town Manager Todd thanked the Board for attending the recent Talk of the Town event. He stated it was a great opportunity to interact with residents and get their perspectives. Manager Todd said they were working through all questions submitted and would post answers on the Town website. He emphasized transparency, accountability and communication as priorities.

#### **BOARD COMMENTS**

Commissioner Davis announced an upcoming event on March 15<sup>th</sup> for the Elijah J. Hawkins Manor Foundation. The foundation would be collecting donations at Share Thrift Boutique in partnership with a local radio station. Davis encouraged support for this Zebulon-based organization that focuses on academic achievement, community outreach, mentorship and benevolence.

Commissioner Clark requested moving the March work session from the 20<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> due to a conflict. After discussion, no alternative date was identified. Clark also inquired about the status of several open positions, including Police Chief, Public Works Director, HR Director and Clerk. The Town Manager provided updates on recruitment efforts for these roles.

Commissioner Baxter reported on her recent attendance at the Town and State dinner in Raleigh. She highlighted concerns about House Bill 173, which would prohibit further expansion of extraterritorial jurisdiction for Wake County municipalities. Baxter explained this could be damaging to Zebulon's operations and hurt current and future residents.

Commissioner Baxter also mentioned her upcoming trip to Washington D.C. to speak with federal legislators on behalf of Zebulon. Finally, she recognized Women's History Month.

Mayor York thanked staff who assisted with the Black History Month program at the community center. He specifically recognized Mr. Desi Campbell for his work on genealogy and ancestry.

Mayor York also thanked local schools for inviting him to read to students for Black History Month. He expressed appreciation for the first Talk with the Town event and hoped to continue engaging citizens through similar programs.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Miles to go into closed session for personnel discussions as allowed by NC GS 143-318(a). There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

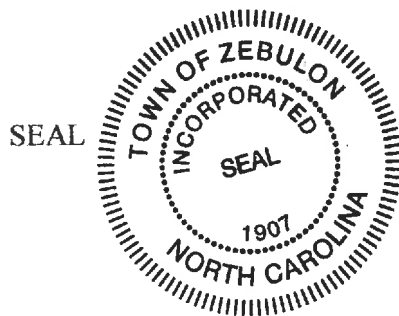
Mayor York called for a five minute recess.

NOTE: In closed Session Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Davis to come out of closed session. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

### **ADJOURN**

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

Adopted this the 7<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2025



  
Glenn L. York – Mayor

  
Ana Gomez Rindahl – Town Clerk