

Zebulon Board of Commissioners
Work Session
Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2025

Present: Mayor Glenn York, Jessica Harrison, Shannon Baxter, Quentin Miles, Beverly Clark, Amber Davis, Gilbert Todd, Jr.-Manager, Sheila Long-Parks & Recreation, Edwin Killelte-Police, Kerry Burke-Police, Bob Grossman-Police, Chris Perry-Fire, Cate Farrell-Planning, Eric Vernon-Attorney

Mayor York called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

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

Town Manager Todd read a statement of resignation stating that certain expectations from the Board he thought required him to do things that were unethical. He thanked the staff, residents and members of the Board who supported him. His resignation was effective immediately.

Gilbert Todd, Jr. left the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Parks & Recreation – Gill Street Park Update

Sheila Long provided an update on the status of Gill Street Park. She reminded the Board that Gill Street Park was a former landfill from pre-1960's that was redeveloped as a park in the 1960's. In fall 2023, there was public engagement regarding playground improvements and Board discussion about adding bathrooms. In April 2024, preconstruction soil testing identified elevated lead levels, confirming contamination. In August 2024, the Board accepted DEQ's offer to join the pre-regulatory landfill program for additional soil testing and assessments.

Sheila reported that DEQ hired Hart Hickman to conduct further investigation and develop a plan to address the contamination. She noted that repurposing landfills as parks was common practice during that time frame, and many communities were dealing with similar issues. Hart Hickman submitted another report to DEQ the previous week and was working to secure access to neighboring properties for additional testing.

Sheila proposed creating a capital project fund using \$785,850 available in the FY 2025 budget, including \$500,000 for bathrooms, \$110,000 for playground replacement, and \$30,000 for community planning. She explained that this would recognize the project would occur over multiple years and prevented funds from reverting to the general fund annually. She presented two ordinances to establish the fund and move the existing funds into it.

Sheila also presented an opportunity to consider relocating the park to a larger parcel of town-owned land near Zebulon Middle School and East Wake Academy, which could allow for

additional amenities and potential partnerships. She emphasized this was just an option to consider and not a recommendation for immediate action.

Commissioner Miles expressed concern about moving funds without engaging citizens first, as they had expected the funds to be used for a bathroom. Sheila Long clarified that creating the capital fund would solidify the Town's commitment to the project and keep the funds dedicated to Gill Street Park.

Commissioner Baxter asked about the timeline for receiving the full DEQ report. Sheila estimated it could take another year due to difficulties securing access to neighboring properties and the involvement of multiple state agencies.

There was extensive discussion about how long it would take for the bathrooms to be built at Gill St. Park and the possibility of partnering with others in the area to do more.

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Baxter to approve Ordinance 2025-30. There was no discussion, and the motion passed with a vote of 3-2 with Commissioners Davis and Miles voting against, and Commissioners Clark, Harrison, and Baxter voting in favor.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Harrison to approve Ordinance 2025-31. There was no discussion, and the motion passed with a vote of 3-2 with Commissioners Davis and Miles voting against, and Commissioners Clark, Harrison, and Baxter voting in favor.

PLANNING – REGIONAL MIXED-USE

Cate Farrell presented an update on the proposed Regional Mixed Use (RMU) district text amendment. She reviewed the standards for UDO text amendments, including consistency with the comprehensive plan, addressing community needs, and ensuring efficient development.

Cate provided context on vacant land in Zebulon's future growth area and explained how the RMU district fit into the range of densities allowed in town. She presented examples of what RMU developments could look like and how they compare to existing non-residential districts.

Cate outlined the benefits of allowing RMU as a by-right district choice, including promoting fiscally productive development, providing predictability for investors, and enhancing quality of life for residents. She detailed the proposed changes to the UDO, including dimensional standards, design standards, and updates to the table of uses.

There was discussion about the utility allocation policy points and how that worked with a mixed-use development

The Board discussed lowering the threshold for changes to the number of residential units before requiring board approval from 15% to 10%. The Board agreed to lower the percentage to 10%.

They also debated removing blood and tissue collection sites from the allowed uses table, Pawn shops were discussed and the thought of removing them from the use table and ultimately decided to keep it as a special use permit.

Commissioner Baxter made a motion, second by Commissioner Davis to approve Ordinance 2025-25, finding that the RMU district is consistent with the Grow Zebulon comprehensive land use plan and meets the standards of UDO 2.2.0.21.G as amended to lower the threshold of amending the number of residential units from 15% to 10%. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Police – C.A.R.E. Unit Update

Captain Killette provided an update on the Community Advocacy and Resource Enhancement (CARE) Unit, which embedded two master's level social worker interns in the Zebulon Police Department. The unit had received over 140 referrals since September, impacting 213 children and their families.

For Q1 2025, the CARE Unit offered services to 54 children who had experienced trauma. The most common issue addressed were mental health (38.5%), family support (33.3%), and youth and peer support (28.2%). Captain Killette reported that 82% of cases assigned during Q1 were still open, with about 1 in 10 families accepting services.

Captain Killette presented data showing that 83% of households that accepted and engaged with CARE services did not have another call to their residence, while 100% of households that did not accept services had repeat calls. He emphasized the program's success in breaking the cycle of repeat calls and trauma for children.

Sarah Jump, one of the social work interns, shared personal experiences from the program. She described how families often felt neglected or dismissed by other services in the past, and how the CARE Unit provided genuine connection and support. Ms. Jump shared success stories, including helping a family find specialized dental care for a child with autism and supporting a teenager with mental health needs.

Officer Burke, who initiated the program, expressed her excitement and gratitude for its development. She highlighted the emotional impact on families who finally felt heard and supported.

The Board expressed appreciation for the program's success and requested comprehensive data for the entire duration of the project.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Baxter to go into closed session. There was no discussion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Mayor York called for a 5 minute recess.

Note: In closed session, Commissioner Harrison made a motion, second by Commissioner Baxter to come out of closed session.

ADJOURN

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

Adopted this the 7th day of July, 2025

SEAL



Glenn L. York – Mayor

Ana Gomez Rindahl – Town Clerk

