

TOWN OF COATS
Board of Commissioners
Thursday, May 12, 2022
Official Minutes

The Town of Coats Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Thursday, May 12, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Commissioners' Meeting Room at Coats Town Hall.

Members Present:

Mayor Chris Coats
Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley
Commissioner Allen Mosby
Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert
Commissioner Marc Powell

Members Absent:

Commissioner Shirley Allen

Staff Present:

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager
Connie Lassiter, Finance Director/Town Clerk
Teresa Brown, Library Director

Staff Absent:

Alton Bain, Town Attorney
Ken Storicks, Chief of Police
Rodney Pleasant, Public Works Director
Mike Collins, Parks & Recreation Director

I. CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Mayor Chris Coats called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Coats delivered the invocation and led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Coats requested to amend the agenda by adding a five-minute recess as Item V and moving New Business to Item VI, Manager & Department Updates to Item VII and Adjournment to Item VIII.

RESOLVED, to approve Agenda as amended.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Marc Powell, SECOND BY: Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert

APPROVED: 4-0, unanimously approved

II. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes – April 14, 2022, Regular Meeting; April 28, 2022, Recessed Meeting
- B. Approval of Attorney Bill – Services Rendered April 1-30, 2022
- C. Sell of Cemetery Plots C471 and C472

RESOLVED, to approve Consent Agenda.

MOTION BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, SECOND BY: Commissioner Marc Powell

APPROVED: 4-0, unanimously approved

III. PUBLIC FORUM

Mayor Chris Coats opened the Public Forum.

Hope Turlington of 327 S Railroad St, Coats, NC stated that she was here to speak for her sister, Connie, whose house is being condemned. Ms. Turlington thanked the Town for working with her on this and mentioned that they had gone to Habitat and the Coats Baptist Church in hope for help. Ms. Turlington said that they were working as hard as they can to do what they had been asked and once again thanked the Town for patience.

Gale Spears of 120 Gale Spears Dr, Coats NC said she was here to talk about notices of condemnation being put on houses. Ms. Spears asked the Board do they serve and care about the people or are they a Board that doesn't do anything to help them. Ms. Spears alleged that this lady (pointed to person in audience) had been told she could do it the hard way or the easy way by selling her property and wasn't told how she could get any help to do anything to her property. Ms. Spears asked the Board if it was them or the person telling them this. Ms. Spears said it was something to work on because the Town was getting a bad reputation and that they've completely wiped out the black neighborhood with threats and bullying and she came to tell Board before and hasn't seen any changes.

Tricia Bristow of 973 S Lincoln St, Coats NC and Hazel Stephenson of 220 S Railroad St, Coats NC presented the Board with a list of upcoming Chamber events. Ms. Bristow gave a reminder of the Chamber Banquet being held next Thursday. Ms. Stephenson invited everyone to come by to see the new Chamber office.

Harold Dixon of Mason St, Coats NC expressed that he was unhappy with things that go on in the Town. Mr. Dixon said he liked the people that run the Town but doesn't like some things that they do. Mr. Dixon said he had structural engineers say a house could be saved and then he's had to either burn the house, haul it off and one he tore down completely, another house he moved; a trailer he was given time to fix. Mr. Dixon mentioned the house Hope Turlington spoke of earlier and asked what happens if she doesn't have money for all things required, what can she do. Mr. Dixon implored to help as a community.

Mayor Chris Coats closed the Public Forum after hearing no one else.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING

Coats Unified Development Ordinance Draft

Town Manager Nick Holcomb explained that the draft of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) derived from the need to prepare due to the pressure pushing down from the Triangle area with Coats beginning to be a popular destination for residential development and what we hope will be commercial development as well. Mr. Holcomb stated that the Town contracted N-Focus to assist with the updating of the zoning and subdivision regulations ordinance and since then there had been multiple meetings on updates. Mr. Holcomb expressed the goals of the update were as follows:

- Clear process and guide for Staff, Planning Board, Governing Body, local property owners and professionals in the development industry
- Include state mandates clearly within the UDO, specifically flood damage prevention and watershed protection
- Introduce quality standards for future commercial development and major subdivisions; more zoning options for Town to offer in rezonings

Town Manager Nick Holcomb emphasized that the Public Hearing is on the UDO and had nothing to do with annexation noting that it was illegal to annex other than a voluntary annexation.

Rick Flowe of N-Focus explained that development planning is about setting standards and specifications and modernization of standards and specifications is key. Mr. Flowe stated that setting standards for subdivisions and making sure that you've got good infrastructure like sidewalks reach across the spectrum of people of all income, socioeconomic, racial and age levels; that it truly is about community. Mr. Flowe mentioned that the changes and updates were not made based on who somebody was, but it was about fixing the Town in anticipation of the wave that is about to hit. Mr. Flowe indicated that he was here to assist with any questions regarding technical aspects.

Mayor Chris Coats opened the Public Hearing.

Hope Turlington of 327 S Railroad St, Coats NC asked what Residential Main Street Transitions (RMST) means. Ms. Turlington expressed concern over the little lots that houses are on now if condemned will not be able to build back on with new setbacks and 10 foot is a lot of ground. Ms. Turlington suggested that a short booklet put in laymen's terms so the average person could read it be made available to people so they can understand what the Town wants.

Rick Flowe explained that the RMST is covering a lot of the older parts of town and doesn't have 10-foot setbacks as it is a transition zone because many of those parts of town were developed before there were any standards to follow. Mr. Flowe stated the RMST is intended to make a lot more homes out there conforming as what the old R-6 and R20/8 did.

Jonathan Daniel of 287 Williamstown Ln, Coats NC commented that a lot of his questions were answered before the meeting about the confusion of the ETJ being annexed. Mr. Daniel asked with the UDO is there a difference in regulations for those living inside the city limits or outside.

Mr. Flowe responded that there is no difference between in-town or out-of-town that it's purely based on district you are in.

Rick Grandinetti of 3785 Church St, Coats NC stated that it was a lot of pages with a lot of controls that put people on guard and even with the best ideas there will be push backs. Mr. Grandinetti expressed that every article should have been sent out one at a time because it was a lot to digest and requested to give people more time to read it. Mr. Grandinetti conveyed that there are a lot of times it contradicts and that it should be in laymen's terms.

April Dixon of 3785 Church St, Coats NC communicated her online research of three other towns that N-Focus had done ordinance and the problem is when you cut and paste something to make another town similar it removes the integrity and uniqueness and the reason of why people want to move to Coats for the small-town feel. Ms. Dixon encouraged everyone to read it and do research on their own.

Gale Spears of 120 Gale Spears Dr, Coats NC indicated that the map didn't reference the Sunny Acres Subdivision and asked why the first black subdivision built in Coats wasn't on the zoning map. Ms. Spears expressed that the homey feel of Coats is being taken away. Ms. Spears said the map didn't have Gale Spears Drive which is most of Sunny Acres and it has McLean Street and wanted to know when it was changed from McLean Drive. Ms. Spears stated that there were too many categories for a little town like Coats, and we need to look at it a long time before we adopt it.

Drew Parker of 102 Lilyanne Ln, Coats NC said he was speaking for Turner Matthews and that if passed it will increase the cost of living; policies are extremely stringent with many unnecessary; major

subdivision requirements will increase cost that will pass on to consumers; curbing, guttering, sidewalks, major landscape buffers are unnecessary; limiting lot sizes in agriculture districts to two and one-half acres will hurt value of landowners if or when they decide to sell. Mr. Parker went on to say that the draft gives authority for officers to come on your property at any time and there are enough rules already in place. Mr. Parker expressed concern with the permits required to cut down tree and install fence on your property and the parking requirements.

Brian Turlington of 1117 S Lincoln St, Coats NC asked how much roadside commercial property is available for businesses and if we give up that prime real estate for houses what are we going to have. Mr. Turlington stated that the Town is not ready for the boom and the roads are not ready and asked what the infrastructure would be.

Harold Dixon of Mason St, Coats NC stated that it was inevitable that we were going to grow; we need rules and regulations, but if you go by the pages, you will need permission to go to the bathroom; we need to grow in a way to help each other.

Craig Matthews of 496 Howell Rd, Coats NC stated that he had read it and hoped everyone had read it. Mr. Matthews conveyed his concern that it required more staff like Code Enforcement Officer and maybe a Watershed Administration Officer and Code Enforcement deputies allowed to enter any building to check for violations; subject to fines and penalties and resulting in a lot of buildings being torn down. Mr. Matthews said another concern was the subdivision requirements made it hard to keep in budget of what a buyer could afford; and limits the ability of buyers to buy good houses. Mr. Matthews asked Board to take time to look at the ordinances we already had and make amendments.

Ben Dixon of 1052 Old Stage Rd N, Coats NC expressed concern that a lot of the ordinance would turn the Town into an HOA and believed document to be a cookie cutter thing. Mr. Dixon asked to give it some time and make a few changes as it seems some things seem to be extreme.

Brian Raynor of 1346 Brick Mill Rd, Coats NC mentioned the ETJ being split through the middle of property and why wouldn't it follow the property line; that might have impact down the line. Mr. Raynor stated that he had not read the UDO and would like more time to review it, but he was familiar with Harnett County and asked if the Town was going to supersede County requirements or try to stay cohesive to not be too stringent and price ourselves out of businesses and residents coming in.

Max Matthews Jr of 1778 Clayhole Rd, Coats NC said we need a unified development ordinance as many of our current ordinances restrict a lot of things and don't give the Town Manager what he needs to do his job; the ordinance needs to simplify and unify with the County and local communities. Mr. Matthews stated that he had a problem with the minimum lot size of two and one-half acres in the ETJ even though he was against development and was for preserving farmland. Mr. Matthews asked the Board to give time to review ordinance and a tool to express concerns in writing to Nick and give Board information to make a viable vote on this.

Michelle Godwin of 870 NC 55 W, Coats NC stated that the Town of Coats definitely had needed a new UDO for many years; the one now is very outdated, but the new ordinance is way beyond what the Town needs at this time; it's way beyond what is required for our county.

Robert Godwin of 870 NC 55 W, Coats NC mentioned concerns with the allowance for private driveway that refers to a detail for private driveway, but detail is not there; as for two and one-half acres on the outskirts of town when you jump over imaginary line and you can have two-thirds of an acre in the county, and 120 foot setback is wasting almost a half of an acre in the front yard of a house. Mr. Godwin expressed that when you start trying to implement this you will find out whether it works or not;

properties in this area are irregular shaped, might be times when ordinance fits perfect but if not there is a way for a variance, but a \$400 fee for variance and simple text amendment is \$400; so if you do pass this, give a grace period on variance fees and text amendments. Mr. Godwin stated in the definition of a minor subdivision you can't do a minor subdivision on a tract of land less than five acres, so guess it's going to be considered a major subdivision, and you will have to come before the Board to get it approved on something simple; there's a void in there on a minor subdivision on a tract of land between two acres and five acres that needs looking at as there is a lot of parcels that might fall into that category between two and five acres that are going to have to come before the major subdivision process. Mr. Godwin conveyed the need for more time to hash this through and allow input, maybe a question and answer session with the community. Mr. Godwin inquired about no easements on a minor subdivision other than four lots off a driveway which we don't have a detail for so we don't know at this point if that's going to be a big paved street. Mr. Godwin raised the point of 60 foot right-of-ways when DOT will accept 50 foot; the Town of Angier has a nice development with 50 foot right-of-way with sidewalks, grass strip, curb and gutters so it works; 60 foot right-of-ways when trying to layout a subdivision you'll lose lots quickly on a larger tract of land. Mr. Godwin questioned the zoning map with some of the ag district touching right up against town and the new subdivision approved out there, will the ETJ have to be adjusted on that; there's stuff in town that's not farmland with vacant stuff that's not suitable for farming, but might be with water and sewer it could be developed so some of the zoning needs to be looked at a little differently especially when it's touching in the middle of town; if you want to grow the Town out, guess it will be rezoning and more money for the developers that will discourage them.

Mayor Chris Coats thanked everyone for their input and announced that there would be no vote on this tonight and would like to recess the Public Hearing and have another one at the July 14th meeting if the Board approves.

RESOLVED, to recess the Public Hearing until the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners on July 14, 2022.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Allen Mosby, SECOND BY: Commissioner Marc Powell
APPROVED: 4-0, unanimously approved

V. RECESS

Mayor Coats announced the five-minute recess at 8:35 p.m.

Mayor Coats reconvened the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Presentation of Proposed Budget & Set Public Hearing for Adoption of FY 2022-23 Budget Ordinance

Town Manager Nick Holcomb requested to set the Public Hearing for the Adoption of the FY 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance for June 9, 2022, during the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Holcomb highlighted some of the proposed budget items as follows (Reference 1):

- \$0.10 property tax decrease
- 5% COLA raise for employees
- Additional Police Officer

- Full Time Parks and Recreation position
- Increase of \$1.27 per month for Solid Waste fee

Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley commended Town Manager Nick Holcomb and Finance Director Connie Lassiter for their work on the budget and stated that this was a good budget.

RESOLVED, to set the Public Hearing for the adoption of the FY 2022-2023 Budget Ordinance for June 9, 2022.

**MOTION BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, SECOND BY: Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert
APPROVED: 4-0, unanimously approved**

B. Amend ARP Grant Project Ordinance

Town Manager Nick Holcomb reminded the Board that a Grant Project Ordinance was created in September to spend the ARP funds on AMI radio read meters and Water Infrastructure Repair. Mr. Holcomb informed the Board that since the US Treasury Final Rule for expenditures was given in January that the School of Government strongly suggested claiming the standard allowance and revenue replacement for those receiving less than \$10 million. Mr. Holcomb recommended that the Town elect to take the standard allowance and expend all ARP funds for law enforcement salaries and benefits beginning July 1, 2022, until funds are depleted. (Reference 2)

RESOLVED, to amend the ARP Grant Project Ordinance to expend all ARP funds for law enforcement salaries and benefits.

**MOTION BY: Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley, SECOND BY: Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert
APPROVED: 4-0, unanimously approved**

C. SCIF Grant Itemized Workplan

Town Manager Nick Holcomb presented an estimated list of cost for repairs and enhancements to the old Public Works Building that the Board agreed to use the SCIF Grant funds toward during the last meeting. Mr. Holcomb stated that although a vote was not necessary, he would like to hear from the Board on seeing the value in the estimated cost of items to make sure there were no feelings of wasting money before he seeks bids. (Reference 3)

Commissioner Allen Mosby conveyed that we need to make the building look good especially on the outside and that painting, windows, fence and cleaning up were of value. Commissioner Marc Powell stated that the enhancements would be keeping inline with our Downtown Beautification project. Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley commented that the list of repairs would bring the building up to the best it could be, and items should be put out to bid. Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert indicated that he was alright with it.

VII. MANAGER AND COMMITTEE REPORT

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, updated the Board on the following:

1. North Johnston Street paving project is underway and being done to DOT standards; should be completed in two to three days

2. The final Streetscape Plan should be ready in two weeks; the plan was funded by USDA grant at no cost to the Town
3. Chamber Banquet will be held on May 19th
4. Ethics Training for newly elected officials will be at 10:00 a.m. on May 26th at Town Hall
5. Downtown Streetscape Master Plan is anticipated to be presented to the Board next month to approve, deny or request changes to the plan.

Connie Lassiter, Finance Director/Town Clerk, informed the Board that a CD issued by First Bank was renewed on May 9, 2022, for a term of 18 months at .2% after no better rates were found when contacting five other banks.

Teresa Brown, Library Director, reported that the library had a total of 424 patrons and issued 5 new library cards in the month of April. Ms. Brown informed the Board that she along with Nick and Shannon had reviewed the draft of the Library Consolidation Agreement from the County given to the Board. Ms. Brown expressed that she feels that all the requests made had been fulfilled by the County.

Town Manager Nick Holcomb stated that the Town Attorney had reviewed the contract and found that the Indemnification section needed to be clear about parties at fault instead of holding each other harmless. Mr. Holcomb mentioned that he didn't have an update, but the Town Attorney should've relayed that to the staff attorneys with the County and hopefully that will be a minor adjustment made to the agreement. Mr. Holcomb mentioned that the final draft should be available at the June meeting.

Nick Holcomb, Town Manager, commented that the proposed Budget documents had the revenue and expenditure to date as of April 30th, so Finance Director/Town Clerk Connie Lassiter created a Financial Summary instead of the full Revenue and Expenditure Report showing individual line items. Mr. Holcomb stated that the full reports required a lot of paper and asked the Board for their thoughts on presenting a Financial Summary each month instead of the full reports with the knowledge that a copy of the full reports would be available for review in the Town Manager and Finance/Clerk office. Mr. Holcomb mentioned if the Board desired a full report could be included in their packets each quarter.

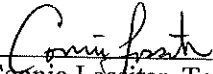
Commissioner Kelvin Gilbert expressed that the Financial Summary was a great idea. Mayor Pro-Tem Jerry Beasley stated that he didn't have a problem with it as long as it was available to look at each month and sent out quarterly. Mayor Chris Coats asked for consensus of Board and all agreed to the Financial Summary each month with a full report given quarterly.

VI. ADJOURN

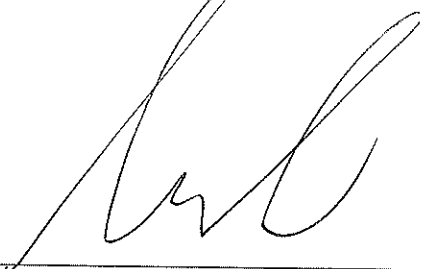
RESOLVED, to adjourn.

MOTION BY: Commissioner Marc Powell, SECOND BY: Commissioner Allen Mosby
APPROVED: 4-0, unanimously approved

Meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.



Connie Lassiter, Town Clerk



Chris Coats, Mayor