

SPENCER BOARD OF ALDERMEN PLANNING RETREAT
SATURDAY, JANUARY 31, 2009
SPENCER FIRE DEPARTMENT
8:30 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Jody Everhart
Mayor Pro-Tem Jeff Morris
Aldermen: Scott Benfield
Nick Bishop
Donnie Hinson
C. E. Spear
Ken Womble

Also present were Town Manager Larry Smith and Town Clerk Lisa Perdue.

Audience members present included: David Smith; Robert, Beth, and Caroline Nance; Jim and Marla Gobbel; Emil and "Toots" Sparger; and Susan Wolf.

Mayor Everhart opened the meeting with prayer and reviewed the Ground Rules for the meeting. He also introduced facilitator, Al Sharp, from Centralina Council of Governments.

Citizen Concerns

Beth Morris Nance showed pictures of the interior of Spencer Library, and suggested activities that could be held there, and ways to publicize the hours. She stated that Aldermen should be required to attend the NC Main Street program, and the town should develop an e-mail newsletter.

Review of Goals from 2008

Facilitator Al Sharp led Board members in a review of their goals from 2008 and asked them to grade their progress. Morris stated he felt there had been incremental progress; most goals have been accomplished (B+), but others need to be revisited. Everhart feels the new EDC Director is working well with Spencer. The Board is business friendly (B+ to C), but the economy is hard now for new businesses. Annexation options are limited, but voluntary annexation would be a win-win situation. Morris feels that planning for growth receives an A+, but historic preservation efforts need improvement (C). Spear sees active civic involvement from citizens as receiving an A. Bishop pointed out that there are certain problem properties in code enforcement efforts. The facilitator suggested that the Library should be submitted to the Stimulus Package. Morris wants the Board to decide what the mission of the Library should be. The new Interstate Business district currently being formed will facilitate the goal from 2008 of being business friendly. Bishop feels the Board deserves an A for retaining the tax rate while maintaining efficiency and providing full services, including purchase of a new fire truck. Everhart thinks the new policy for donations (must be a 501-C-3, with a public purpose) gets an A+ for providing accountability. Morris reported that the Rowan Municipal

Association plans to address Interlocal Agreements between municipalities, which may build the relationship with East Spencer (a goal from 2008).

Benfield stated that sidewalk and street maintenance from 2008 could have been better. Sharp confirmed that street maintenance had not been a 2008 goal. Bishop stated he felt the “worst thing” from 2008 was the demolition of an historic property. Better evaluation is needed earlier, but safety must be balanced with the façade.

Goals for 2009

Interstate Business District – The Planning Board will begin drafting the ordinance in February. Aldermen would like a progress report in April, and will ask for a time table for completion. The goal is to present the ordinance by August, for adoption by October. Aldermen would like to have another joint meeting with the Planning Board in May to review the draft outline.

Paving Schedule Policy – Streets should be on a 15 to 20 year rotation for paving. Approximately 60 to 70% of Powell Bill funds should be used for improvements. The Board would like to see a draft policy and rotation schedule by September. The town should pursue the availability of an intern to do a sidewalk study. Safe Routes to Schools is a priority. The plan and grant application needs to be started in the fall of 2009. Maintenance of streets should be ongoing, and staff should attend courses in the spring.

Annexation – Any involuntary annexation is currently on hold, due to ongoing legislation. Board members would like to have information on voluntary annexation by June 30 (outline the potential). Aldermen and/or citizens will approach property owners in the potential area. The race track property needs to become contiguous. The value of any property for sale in that area needs to be researched. The next step would be in July.

Library – Previous plans need to be reviewed. Preventive maintenance needs to take place, room by room if necessary. A committee needs to be formed, perhaps a “Community Events Committee”. A 501-C-3 group could help with the fundraising.

Economic Development Models (Rockwell) – Local resources can be tapped for information. The Mayor and/or the Board will contact other towns next fall for information to be shared by the November meeting.

Neighborhood Enhancement & Stabilization – CDBG funds are available for neighborhood revitalization. Staff should talk to the staff at Mooresville (Shelly Williamson). Self-education and innovation is the key. The Main Street program needs to be explored also. Staff will define the problems / opportunities by the May budget meetings. Block parties could be held to meet with citizens.

Partnerships with 501-C-3's – All parties involved need to be educated and co-trained in collaborative leadership. The goal is for a policy to be established by May. A contractual relationship may need to be established.

Inter-municipal Agreements – Objectives (annexation and extra territorial jurisdictions) need to be decided by September. Rowan Municipal Association will be discussing in March.

Improved Entrances – Signage was briefly discussed but was removed from the list of goals for 2009.

Funds from Salisbury for Water Extensions - \$50,000 per year may be available from Salisbury for water extensions. Spencer needs to take advantage of these funds if possible. A utility extension plan needs to be developed. Perhaps funds could be used for a water line on Snider Street. The Town Manager will research the agreement and meet with the Water/Sewer Committee within the next month, prior to the March Board meeting.

Community Appearance Commission

Eric Lentz reviewed the history of the crepe myrtles in the planters along Salisbury Avenue. Public Works staff took over the pruning of the trees about ten years ago. Presently, most of the trees are either dead or dying. CAC does not want the planters removed, but just wants the trees and plants in them to be properly maintained. They would prefer to continue to use crepe myrtles in the planters, but they should not be pruned. Once pruned incorrectly, they cannot be fixed. The best time to remove and replace the dead trees would be the fall, winter, or early spring. Board members agreed to discuss this at their budget workshop, but will need a cost estimate for the removal.

Historic Preservation Commission – No one was present from HPC.

Spencer Business Association

Beth Morris Nance reviewed the events from the 2008 Hometown Holidays and the plans for the 2009 event. A raffle ticket sale is being planned as a fundraiser.

Debbie Barnhardt thanked the Board for their support of the Business community. She feels that Spencer needs a downtown coordinator, and should partner with surrounding towns. She viewed SBA's goals from 2008 and their progress on each. A new idea is to hold a geocaching event, similar to a treasure hunt on the web. Incentives for new businesses may need to be considered.

Town Buildings / Facilities Needs Study

Town Manager Larry Smith presented his Town Buildings / Facilities Needs Study, reviewing the history and current use of Town buildings and giving several options for the Board to consider. Mayor Everhart will pursue information about land adjacent to the

ballpark. The Board is not interested in purchasing the lot at 520 S Salisbury Avenue from Steve Jarrett. The Town already has two lots on Seventh Street that could be used for a parking lot. The Board asked staff to get an estimate to add parking on those two lots to accommodate 25 cars. Spencer is currently trying to annex the weigh station property on the east side of Highway 29 from the State of North Carolina.

Benfield reported that he thinks the floors in the bathrooms at the ballpark need to be tiled.

The Library plans will be submitted to the Economic Stimulus Package. If that funding doesn't succeed, the Board will discuss again in about 90 days at their May budget retreat. A temporary "fix" should be considered at the Library to clean and cover the peeling paint until funds materialize. Staff will get a price for the custodian to clean the Library. Mayor Everhart will establish a new Community Events Committee.

Mayor Everhart and Aldermen reviewed the goals that had been discussed for 2009 and the effectiveness of the retreat. With no further business, Mayor Everhart adjourned the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa B. Perdue
Clerk to the Board