

SPENCER BOARD OF ALDERMEN PLANNING RETREAT
SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2012
SPENCER FIRE DEPARTMENT
8:30 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Jody Everhart
Mayor Pro-Tem Jim Gobbel
Aldermen: Scott Benfield
Kevin Jones
Jeff Morris
David Smith
Reid Walters

Also present were Town Manager Larry Smith and Town Clerk Lisa Perdue. Citizens present in the audience for portions of the meeting were: Debbie Barnhardt, Marla Gobbel, and Beth and Caroline Nance. Mayor Everhart welcomed everyone and introduced our facilitator, Paula Bohland, from Community Integration Training, Inc., and her scribe, Sandy Buechler.

Accomplishments and Successes from the Past Year

The following were listed by Board members as accomplishments from 2011:

- Smart-sized government
- Continued with Safe Routes to Schools sidewalk program
- Capitalized on public & private partnerships, ex. Spencer Woods
- Met with Uwharrie Commission ref: NC Finishing property
- Established paving schedule
- Listed with DOT for potential pedestrian trails
- Library re-opened

Public Comment

Debbie Barnhardt, a local realtor, feels we need to attract young couples and others to move to Spencer or retirees from up north. She would like to see the Town capitalize on “Go Green” – recycling, etc.

Visioning for the Future

Paula asked Aldermen what they see as the “North Star” for Spencer (what leads them as Aldermen)? Ideas submitted prior to the meeting and also during the meeting included:

- Viable Business District
- Spencer Woods
- Proactive Town Staff
- Citizen Involvement
- Highlight Local Resources (NCTM)
- Plan for Finishing Plant
- Police Department and Fire Department
- Recycling Program

- Well-Functioning Public Works
- Main Street Program
- Aldermen Visibility in the Community
- Adequate Funding, Grants, & Resources for Town
- Sustainable Community – safe clean neighborhood
- Viable Residential Districts
- Make Spencer a destination, not just NCTM but also downtown area
- Strong Schools
- Help NCTM
- Library – multiple uses
- 8th Street ballpark
- Stewardship of Community
- Small Town Charm – pocket / neighborhood parks
- Market Affordable Housing
- Zoning as an Incentive
- Great Marketing Plan

Positive & Possible – in 5 years – by February 4, 2017

This is the beginning for a 5 year plan of what the Aldermen would like to see for Spencer:

- Spencer Woods – trails and overlook complete, access and signage
- Spencer Fun – events, flotilla, sidewalk and trails across river and into Davidson County through public / private partnership
- Active Main Street program – artwork downtown, architecture improved, signage
- More accessibility to Charlotte
- Acting on the Marketing Plan
- Tie in Spencer events with events at the NCTM – i.e. Museum vanity plates, legislative resolution to fund NCTM
- City support – signage, information kiosk
- SRTS program near completion
- Housing has improved through effective code enforcement and more police visibility
- Tie in green ideas to Spencer Woods
- Town is maintained and kept clean
- Employee morale good, possibly through incentives, perks and bonuses
- MSD – Municipal Service District – discussion with Spencer Business Assn.
- Recycling – actively discussing door to door pickup
- Fees coming in for use of Town facilities

February 4, 2012 – currently

This illustrates the stretch of where the Aldermen vision Spencer in their 5-year plan compared to where they see the town currently and what is offered.

- Offer façade grants, no actual Main Street program, business association, downtown trash (litter) picked up
- Apply again this year for STMS
- Spencer Woods – just initial planning now, partnership with LandTrust
- Marketing Plan – none currently
- Residential areas need to be cleaner
- Safe Routes to Schools needs to be continued
- No formal relationship with NCTM
- I-85 bridge being built
- Largest contiguous historic district in NC
- 3 properties on NC Historic Registry
- No employee bonuses
- Water rates and contract with Salisbury Rowan Utilities

Benchmarks to occur by 2/4/14 (within 2 years)

This is a record of what has to happen per the Aldermen's suggestions based on the goals and visioning for Spencer.

- Communication with citizens and easy access to information
- Communication with representatives in Raleigh
- Communication with private partnerships
- Grants / resources, Small Town Main Street
- Strong, active Business Association
- Have visible tangible results – more businesses, awnings on businesses
- Interns to help with business and downtown development
- Landscaping improvements at one particular site (TBD)
- Spencer Woods – trails and parking and signage; non-profit will be functioning
- Marketing plan – have plan done and implementation steps established
- Go Green – continue Arbor Day celebration. Ask Town staff to research refurbishing vehicles to extend their life (cost savings, etc.) (not pooled vehicles)
- Stormwater issues – Have design and detailed plan for 4th Street stormwater repairs
- Safety and Diversity – Recruit applicants from Spencer and reach out to minorities for fire department and police department
- Residential Revitalization – establish a plan for neighborhood revitalization; neighborhood watch; work with realtors; look for grants to help homeowners in a particular neighborhood

Short term goals – February 4, 2013

To facilitate the longer range visions and goals; these are steps to be completed within a one-year timeframe.

- Vote and submit Main Street program application. If STMS not received, continue action steps anyway

- Marketing plan – “All Spencer All the Time”. Begin by deciding who to market to, then how do you accomplish it (will require professional assistance). Needs to be done this year.
- Develop relationship with NCTM – personal visit with staff to start dialogue
- Review staff input on recycling and make decisions on information. Ex. An additional site, improve Sowers Ferry site, outsource, extended hours, mobile truck
- Neighborhood revitalization – involve Community Appearance Commission. Homeowners need to be responsible – need to plan how to encourage that responsibility
- Maintain equal funding for Safe Routes to Schools (sidewalks)
- Partner with non profit and help raise funds for Spencer Woods
- Implement plan for stormwater. Review stormwater issues and prioritization of previous information from engineer

Aldermen each ranked the goals from the short term goals. The results were:

1. Main Street program
2. Marketing plan
3. Make homeowners responsible for property
4. Spencer Woods
5. Work with NC Transportation Museum
6. Recycling...reviewing staff options
7. Stormwater
8. Safe Routes to Schools

Who to Enroll to help achieve the goals

- Community Appearance Commission
- Trading Ford Historic Commission – for partnership for Flotilla
- Hometown Holidays – tour of homes
- LandTrust – acquisition and grants funds
- Other local governments
- NC Transportation Foundation
- Staff
- City of Salisbury
- Spencer Partnership
- Uwharrie Commission
- General Assembly
- Volunteers / Citizens
- Other Main Street programs
- Tourism Board
- Rowan Works
- Rowan Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Chamber of Commerce

- Media

Action Steps

1. Main Street – Vote (put on agenda). Submit application. Look at the budget. Work on the application items that don't require funds
2. Marketing – Put information on the website. Activate the business association. Make information accessible by the website (agenda); explore the options. Explore options and cost of marketing plan
3. Homeowner's responsibility – Look at the budget and discuss options (code enforcement, etc.). Ask attorney what's feasible. Staff get information from other governments.
4. Spencer Woods – steps are already established.
5. NCTM – By the March meeting, adopt a resolution to the General Assembly encouraging them to fund the Museum. Mayor visit NCTM. Investigate vanity plate for the NCTM; work with the NC Transportation Foundation; needs General Assembly approval.
6. Recycling – steps have already been discussed.
7. Review stormwater information from staff.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa B. Perdue, CMC
Clerk to the Board