

“THE RIGHT TRACK”



Volume 22 Issue 3

<http://ci.spencer.nc.us>

February 2017

“Home of the North Carolina Transportation Museum”

FROM THE MAYOR

A year has passed since I was elected Mayor. Time moves much too fast.

With February approaching the Board will be preparing for the 2017 Planning Retreat. This year I'd like economic development to be our main topic of discussion. The decisions on how to continue to pursue basic needs of a town aren't easy when a community's tax base isn't growing.

The retreat will begin on Friday, February 17th, from 6pm until 8pm, and Saturday February 18th, starting at 8:30am and should end by 3pm. The Retreat will be at the Spencer Fire Department. The public is invited.

On Friday the 17th, I encourage you to come and express your thoughts and ideas during public comment. We all look forward to hearing from you.

At last year's retreat, a key topic of discussion focused on problem properties. During 2016, Town Staff, the Police Department, and our legal counsel worked extremely hard to amend and draft several new ordinances. The Board of Aldermen approved an increase of fines for civil violations, amended our dog tethering ordinance, approved a golf cart ordinance, and adopted a comprehensive Minimum Housing Standards ordinance. The ordinance was drafted and approved to establish new rules and regulations for the repair and or the elimination of unfit or unsafe housing conditions. I felt that new groundwork had to be put in place so that the town was not hindered in terms of enforcing potential violations. The safety of our residents is top priority. Safety delayed is safety denied.

In order to bring the words of the housing ordinance to life, the Town has contracted the firm, State Code Enforcement to assist our Code Enforcement officer. To date, the additional help has made a positive impact on correcting minimum housing violations.

In 2016 our Town Manager was instrumental in securing \$390,000 in contingency funding through the N.C. Speaker of the House of Representatives. The funds will be used to correct storm water drainage issues by milling and paving 4th Street from Salisbury Avenue to Carolina Avenue. The work is scheduled to begin Spring 2017. The Street Department has been working with the N.C. Department of Transportation to target and improve sidewalk steps and curbing for disabled residents.

During 2016 we made improvements to an outdated phone system and added new computer programs to assist the Town Clerk and the administrative staff. A computer was installed in the Mayor's office as well as technology improvements in the Land Management, and Town Manager's office. We also hired a part time accounts payable clerk. By hiring the new clerk, we were able to transfer the full time clerk back to the Police Department to assist in their administrative work. The move gave the Chief of Police more time for street patrol.

Also during 2016 the Board adopted a Bike and Pedestrian Plan for the Town. The proposed route is from Third Street to the Wilcox Bridge. At this time, we haven't received a starting time, but the plan is on the N.C. Department of Transportation list for

projects to be funded.

Our most expensive investment during 2016 was the purchase of a new sanitation truck. No more repairs could be made to our old truck. According to the men on the street crew, the new truck has made their work a little easier. Our street department personnel perform very labor intensive work so they deserve good equipment to work with. We appreciate them very much!

During 2016 we appointed a new Fire Chief and have plans to purchase a used ladder truck from the City of Salisbury Fire Department in 2017.

By the way, at the January 2017 Board of Aldermen meeting, our accountant informed us that we are in great financial shape!

As I begin my second year as Mayor, I recognize that doing nothing is not an option. The world is changing and we have to change with it. Challenges can't turn into obstacles. We have to start where we are, use what we have, and do what we can. Each of us as citizens have to be committed to being involved. Whether it be simply coming to a town board meeting, serving on a town committee or board, or communicating with a legislator for the betterment of Spencer. It takes all of us working together to be the best.

Mayor Jim Gobbel

FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

One major project is coming to an end as another major project is coming down the pike.

The Fred and Alice Stanback Preserve and Educational Forest (aka Spencer Woods) is in its final stage of completion. We are currently in the punch-list stage of this project and plan to have an official opening when the weather breaks. I have encountered many residents enjoying a stroll in the park. The primitive connector trail from 8th Street Park to the main portion of the park is complete. Feel free to check it out!

Private donations and two PARTF grants account for the vast majority of this investment. A total of \$1,145,000 was invested in this park with the town's total monetary contribution at 6% of this total investment cost.

Spencer received \$390,000 from NCDOT for stormwater and resurfacing improvements to 4th Street. This funding source was secured through the hard work of our state legislators, Representative Harry Warren and Senator Andrew Brock. We are scheduled to start this project this Spring with a projected Fall completion date. This funding source provides us the money needed to create a genuine fix to the top prioritized street issue in Spencer. Residents and business owners who may be impacted by this project will be contacted by town staff and McGill and Associates (the engineering firm).

Best Regards,
Reid Walters
Town Manager



FROM THE NC TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM

Over the past few years, the N.C. Transportation Museum has seen increased visitation, incredibly successful events, and increased visitation on a day-to-day basis. While we are very proud of those successes, it only happened with the help of some incredible partners.

As the museum welcomed over 32,500 visitors during THE POLAR EXPRESS™ Train Ride this past November and December, it would not have been possible without Lee St theatre providing more than 60 performers each night. Virtual Sounds, Inc. provided the soundtrack to the event each night. Debbie Suggs catering provided the hot chocolate and cookies. The Rowan County Convention and Visitor Bureau provided hotel packages for those visiting from out of town. Dozens of museum volunteers pitched in with staff to make the event magical to families. Partnerships are essential to our success. Our most important partner, however, is the community in which we live.

Salisbury Avenue divides the town of Spencer. On one side, you have the N.C. Transportation Museum, 60 acres of train tracks, historic structures, transportation exhibits, and more. Across the street, you have businesses, schools, homes, individuals, and families. Both sides of the street combine to make up a unique community, living and thriving in the 21st century, but with an amazing connection to the past, and an undeniable connection to each other.

After all, the town exists because of railroading. In the late 1800s, Southern Railway chose to make a large stretch of wooded land in Rowan County home to the largest steam locomotive repair facility in the southeastern United States. A community grew up around what came to be known as Spencer Shops. The town's name was chosen in honor of Samuel Spencer, the president of Southern Railway at the time.

In 2017, nearly 40 years after the railroad industry moved away from Spencer, that connection remains. Many of the families that now live in Spencer had family that worked for the railroad and some of those families still work for Norfolk Southern.

On any given day, classic steam or diesel locomotives roll across the museum grounds, moving representations of the history we preserve. Everywhere in town, whistles and diesel engine horns sound off – audible reminders of the town's history – as well as the present day.

During our largest events, when thousands of visitors fill the museum grounds, their experience at this museum is also affected by the businesses and citizens they encounter here in Spencer. We constantly hear how well our visitors are treated and we appreciate your contribution to their great experience.

We are partners. We are in this together. And we share each other's success. So feel free to come over and see what the museum has to offer. We are building on the success of those partnerships we have made. And 2017 just might be the best year ever.

Mark Brown
Information & Communications Specialist



HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS!

We have been updating the Town's Website at www.ci.spencer.nc.us so that we can provide you with the most up-to-date information that is both informative and educational for all. Here are just a few areas to find the latest and greatest things happening around Town, located in the left column on the home page:

"Town News" is where you can find the latest information, town hall closing notices, meeting cancellations, road work, water line problems, special events, etc.

"Frequently Asked Questions" is where you can view the most asked questions in the various departments of the Town. Your question could be answered the fastest by viewing these answers first.

"Newsletters" is where all town newsletters for the town are located at publication. If you lose yours or want to refer back to previous issues, here you go.

"Local Weather" is a quick link to view the current temperature, 7-day forecast, radars, and alerts from the National Weather Service for Spencer.

On the Land Management Page, under Governance, you will find information for Starting a Business in Spencer and Business being held by the appointed Town Boards. The outcomes of Re-zoning, Conditional Use Permits, Variance, and Certificate of Appropriateness could be found here.

We will continue to strive to provide you with the best access to the Town's Business so that together we can make Spencer the best place to Live, Work, and Play.

Troy D. Powell, MPA, CZO
Land Management Director

FROM OUR PUBLIC LIBRARY

Spencer Public Library has been honored to receive several special donations, lately. Mrs. Vickie Heidt gave our children's room a wooden train table with tracks and beautiful train accessories. Our children are enjoying creating an imaginary world for Thomas the Train. Mr. Mrs. Compton of Spencer donated a practical file cabinet for our office. The new owner of South Main Bookshop of Salisbury has donated many new nonfiction books which should be delivered to our library soon. A local church donated 80 new children's videos.

Over the Christmas holidays, teens helped decorate the library with snowflakes and trees. We have had Christmas story times for young ones and presently we are presenting story times at 4:00 p.m. on Thursdays. We have done story times featuring snowmen and penguins. On February 14th at 4:00 p.m., all teens are welcome to come and enjoy pizza and games. March 7th and 9th at 3:30 p.m., Mrs. Kim Sheeks, known as the Hat Lady, will host a Dr. Seuss birthday party for ages 3-10. You need to sign up for one of these days by March 1st. On April 22nd, we will have a Music Jam and Literary Arts Festival in the library park. This will be fun for all ages with musical groups in the gazebo. Artists and writers will be selling books and artwork. There will be food trucks and face painting. Look for posters and articles in Salisbury Post as the time approaches. This is a fundraiser for the library so come and support us.

Beverly McCraw, Librarian



Spencer Cal Ripken Baseball & Softball
Registration Dates

February 18, 10a – 1p (8th Street Ball Park)

February 25, 10a – 1p (8th Street Ball Park)

Boys and Girls ages 4-12

T-Ball, Coach Pitch, Minors & Majors Baseball, Softball, Buddy Ball

For more info visit:

www.SpencerCalRipken.com

Facebook @ Spencer Cal Ripken

FROM THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Brush and Yard Waste Pick-Up

Public Works wants to remind all citizens that all loose leaves, grass clippings and small debris will need to be bagged for pick-up during our “out of season” months. This includes **January 1st-March 15th** and **April 15th-September 30th**. **The leaf vac will run for a month, beginning March 15th and ending on April 15th for Spring cleanup.** **Please limit weight of bags to 50lbs or less per bag.** We also want to remind everyone to cut all debris into 6' lengths no thicker than 4" in diameter and place them on the curb with the butt ends facing the street. Our Brush pick-up service runs Monday through Friday on predetermined routes. We begin our week on the north end of Town and work our way South. If anyone needs additional or bulk brush pick-up they will need to call Town Hall for the issuance of a work order. Thank you all for the cooperation and attentiveness to our Town's ordinances.

Spring Mulch Give-Away— March 18th 2017, from 7:00 to 12:00.

Public Works will be having a mulch give-away on **Saturday, March 18th**. This corresponds with our Saturday recycling, so bring your recycling and get a free load of mulch. Mulch is Free for Town Residents, please bring I.D. Out of Town Residents will be charged \$5.00 a loader bucket. **Delivery will be available for In Town Residents Only, at \$10.00 a load. Delivery is on a first come first serve basis, with a maximum of three loads per residence, until 12:00.** Mulch is available other times of the year with a small charge for the loading. If interested please direct questions to Public Works 704-633-5331 or pwddir@ci.spencer.nc.us.



Curb-Side Garbage Collection

Public Works would like to remind citizens that the garbage route may be collected differently from week to week, so to make sure your garbage gets picked up, **please roll your container to the curb the night before your scheduled garbage day.** The containers must be rolled back no later than dusk on your collection day. Cans left on the curb are subject to code enforcement fines, so please be courteous and remove the containers from the curb at your earliest convenience. Pick-up for citizens that have filed the inability to participate form, remains the same.

If you have any questions feel free to contact Public Works at 704-633-5331 or pwddir@ci.spencer.nc.us.

Joel Taylor

FROM OUR LAND MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

Why Bring Your Business to Spencer! Marketing Spencer Begins with YOU! Here's what you need to know!

The Town of Spencer is located in Rowan County, North Carolina just north of Charlotte along the I-85 corridor. The town lies right in the heart of the Piedmont-Triad Region, approximately two-hours from the Appalachian Mountains and a four-hour drive from North Carolina's extensive coastline. The Town utilizes two main transportation corridors, Salisbury Ave (US Highway 29 N) and Long Ferry Road. The road serves drivers daily for business, regional travel to Royal Giants Park, Stanback Educational Forest and Park, Eighth Street Ballpark, Spencer Library, the three schools located in Spencer, and accesses the many residential and commercial areas of the downtown area. The North Carolina Transportation Museum, formerly Southern Railroad Company, salutes Spencer's heritage of a railroad town. The Museum was a major economic driver from the early 1900's to 1960's serving to repair trains and providing jobs and continues to impact the Town tremendously within the downtown district generating tourism of over 150,000 visitors each year.

Marketing Analysis Information (Partial – Call Land Management Director for Report)

The ESRI data suggests that within a five-mile radius of downtown Spencer there is more retail supply or surplus than retail demand or leakage. This means that Spencer's current retail demand (retail potential/leakage) is less than what is being supplied. The demand for retail goods is \$346,100,344 and the supply for these (or retail sales) is \$523,626,806. This leaves a retail gap (or surplus) of over \$177,526,462.



There is fairly significant traffic within the downtown district. 70 East at N. Salisbury Ave (North of the Transportation Museum) DOT Traffic count is 7300 per day. 70 West at N. Salisbury Ave (South of the Transportation Museum) DOT Traffic count is 8300 per day. These counts do not extend out to the Interstate, but we do know according to the NCDOT information that 64,000 vehicles on a daily basis are passing along I-85 and the exit to Spencer and the NC Transportation Museum, 62,000 are passing the I-85 Spencer exit at highway 52.

LOCATION - LOCATION – LOCATION

Spencer is located:

- ✦ In the exact center between Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, GA;
- 49 minutes from two Major International Airports, **Charlotte Douglas International Airport** and **Piedmont Triad International Airport.**
- ✦ Two active Railways with a 60 acre railway yard and an Am-Track Depot nearby.
- ✦ Interstate 85 - 1-mile away with multiple accesses
- ✦ Interstate 40 - Less than 20 miles
- Interstate 77 - Less than 25 miles

Troy D. Powell, MPA, CZO, HCO
Land Management Director

FROM THE POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Spencer Police Department always works diligently to keep the citizens of Spencer safe. This was especially true at the beginning of this month when we had some crazy ice and snow. Even though the weather the past few weeks has been warm and sunny, we are still in the prime of winter and the weather in North Carolina can change fairly fast. We were fortunate that there were no incidents or accidents in Spencer that could be attributed to our last bout of bad weather, but bad weather can be dangerous. To help prepare the citizens of Spencer for bad weather, the Police Department offers the following tips. Every winter, snow and ice are a major cause of traffic accidents with injuries. Unless you absolutely have to travel, the best way to stay safe during a snow or ice storm is to stay home and stay off the roads. Nonessential trips on dangerous roads can jeopardize your safety, and the safety of any emergency responders who must come to your aid if you become stranded or involved in a crash. If you must travel, travel prepared. Bring a cell phone and charger to call for help. Bring a blanket, snacks, water, and other items you may deem helpful if you do get stranded. Do not drive too fast for the current conditions and always allow extra space between you and other vehicles. Remember that brakes do not always work on slick roads. During snow and ice, please do not intentionally drive carelessly on the roadways and do not drive any vehicles that are not legal to drive on the roadway (such as ATVs or snowmobiles) as doing either of these acts are illegal. We encourage citizens to enjoy snow and ice by staying home and enjoying a nice cup of coffee or hot chocolate while building a snowman.

Whether it's warm or cold weather we encourage all residents of Spencer to help us reduce crime in this great town by doing some of the following. Make sure that you keep your houses, outbuildings, and cars locked. Believe it or not, most "break ins" are not really break ins. Many criminals choose unlocked houses and unlocked cars to break into because these are easier targets and draw less attention than breaking a window or picking a lock. Please lock your doors. Even in relatively small communities with little to no crime, criminals will steal from unlocked houses and cars. Be on the lookout for anything you think looks suspicious as well. Criminals are always coming up with new ways to commit crimes. If you see anything out of place, let us know. Even if you just see something suspicious or out of place please call 911 and report it, you may be tipping us off to the next crime trend.



The Spencer Police is happy to announce that we are now on Facebook! The page can be found at <https://www.fb.com/spencerpolice>. Please keep a check on our Facebook page for items that are of interest to Spencer. We will often post items of advice to prevent crime, news about what we are doing, news about crimes and other incidents that occur, and other items that deal with public safety in Spencer. We encourage citizens to send us messages on Facebook as an additional way to communicate with the Police Department. Please note that if you are having an emergency, call 911. Although we will try and respond to your Facebook message in a timely manner the page is not constantly monitored and responses may be delayed.

M.T. James
Police Chief

Trash Schedule for 2017

Holidays	**Town Hall Closed**		
Martin Luther King	Monday	January 16th	*** Monday will run on Tuesday (January 17th) *** Tuesday will run on Wednesday (January 18th) *** Wednesday will run on Thursday (January 19th)
Good Friday	Friday	April 14th	Town Hall Closed, No change in Trash Schedule
Memorial Day	Monday	May 29th	*** Monday will run on Tuesday (May 30th) *** Tuesday will run on Wednesday (May 31st) *** Wednesday will run on Thursday (June 1st)
July 4th	Tuesday	July 4th	Monday will run on regular schedule *** Tuesday will run on Wednesday (July 5th) *** Wednesday will run on Thursday (July 6th)
Labor Day	Monday	September 4th	*** Monday will run on Tuesday (September 5th) *** Tuesday will run on Wednesday (September 6th) *** Wednesday will run on Thursday (September 7th)
Veteran's Day	Friday	November 10th	Town Hall Closed, No change in Trash Schedule
Thanksgiving	Thursday / Friday	November 23rd & 24th	Town Hall Closed, No change in Trash Schedule
Christmas	Monday Tuesday	December 25th December 26th	*** Monday will run on Wednesday (December 27th) *** Tuesday will run on Thursday (December 28th) *** Wednesday will run on Friday (December 29th)
New Year's	Monday	January 1st	*** Monday will run on Tuesday (January 2nd) *** Tuesday will run on Wednesday (January 3rd) *** Wednesday will run on Thursday (January 4th)

*** Denotes change from regular schedule