

Dunn City Council
Regular Meeting
 Tuesday, March 25, 2025
 6:30 p.m., Dunn Municipal Building

Minutes

PRESENT: Mayor William P. Elmore Jr., Mayor Pro Tem J. Wesley Sills, Council Members April Gaulden, Raquel McNeil, Billy N. Tart, Alan Hargis, and Dr. David L. Bradham.

ABSENT:

Also present: City Manager Steven Neuschafer, Assistant City Manager Billy R. Godwin, Finance Director Cary McNallan, Chief of Police Cary Jackson, Parks and Recreation Director Brian McNeill, Human Resources Director Connie Jernigan, Public Works Director Dwayne Williams, Collections and Distribution Manager Billy Cottle, Water Plant Manager Ian Stroud, Wastewater Plant Manager Donrie Dukes, Administrative Support Specialist Sydney McKoy, City Attorney Tilghman Pope, and City Clerk Melissa R. Matti.

CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Mayor William Elmore called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He welcomed everyone in attendance and asked that cell phones be silenced.

The meeting opened with an invocation by Reverend Tim Inman, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Council Member Raquel McNeil.

Mayor Elmore recognized a group of ladies from the Clinton, North Carolina Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority in attendance.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENT AND APPROVAL

Council Member Bradham moved to approve the agenda. Council Member Hargis seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Motion unanimously approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Mayor Elmore explained the rules for public comment, noting there was a 3-minute time limit per speaker. He clarified that comments on items scheduled for public hearings later in the meeting would not be allowed at this time. No members of the public came forward to speak during the general public comment period.

CONSENT ITEMS

- Revision to Minutes – December 10, 2024 – Regular
- Minutes – January 7, 2025 – Special Call
- Minutes – January 14, 2025 – Work Session
- Minutes – January 28, 2025 – Regular
- Consideration of Proposed Summer Hours
- Approval of Budget Amendment – DYB World Series Improvements
- Temporary Street Closing – Broad Street Block Party

Motion by Mayor Pro Tem Sills and second by Council Member Gaulden to approve all consent items. Motion unanimously approved. *A copy of the Budget Amendment (BA-2025-29) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #1)*

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND/OR DECISION

Special Use Permit SUP-25-02

115 Venus Drive

PIN 1526-28-1604.000

City Attorney Tilghman Pope opened the public hearing for Special Use Permit SUP-25-02, a request by Isham Halabasi for a special use permit to allow a duplex on approximately 0.25 acres at 115 Venus Drive. He explained the quasi-judicial nature of the hearing and swore in those wishing to testify. The meeting was conducted in accordance with special due process safeguards, and all parties were given the opportunity to question witnesses about their testimony.

Planner, Abby Manning presented the staff report, emphasizing that the request was consistent with the city's land use plan and future land use map. She noted that the property is zoned R-10 Residential and surrounding properties are also zoned R-10 and used for residential purposes. Manning pointed out the alignment of the request with city goals to encourage a range of housing types. The applicant, however, did not present any testimony or evidence during the hearing.

No one rose to speak in favor of the application. Opposition to the request was expressed by several residents.

Dr. Gwen McNeill spoke first, voicing her concerns about potential depreciation of property values, increased traffic congestion, and alteration of the single-family neighborhood's character. She highlighted the lack of notification to residents regarding the proposed duplex. She stressed the potential negative effect that the duplex, if approved, would have on the Grove Park neighborhood.

Pam Tenaguro, who lives at 119 Venus Drive, also opposed the application. She raised particular concerns about the area's drainage and the absence of sewers, especially considering fire safety. She pointed out the difficulty with water drainage if a fire broke out, given that there's no sewer system on the four corners of her street. Tenaguro also noted that her primary concern was about these infrastructure issues rather than the type of residence itself.

Another long-term resident, **George Munns**, who has lived in Grove Park for over 30 years, expressed his opposition to the change in zoning from single-family to duplex, asserting a desire to maintain the neighborhood's

existing residential characteristics. He briefly stated that the community was initially intended for single-family dwellings, and introducing duplexes would alter the established environment.

Pamela Williams addressed the council on behalf of her sister, who owns an adjacent property. She echoed concerns about the potential drop in property values and the likely disruption of the neighborhood's long-term residential character. She mentioned that residents invested in single-family homes with the understanding that this would remain the status quo, expressing worry that increased traffic and potential short-term rentals could undermine the neighborhood's stability.

After closing the public hearing, the City Council discussed the six required criteria for approving a special use permit.

- Council Member Bradham moved that the use will materially endanger public health and safety. Council Member Hargis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Council Member McNeil moved that the use does not meet all required standards of the ordinance. Council Member Hargis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Council Member Hargis moved that the use will negatively affect the values of adjoining property. Council Member Tart seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Mayor Pro Tem Sills moved that adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, sanitation and other necessary facilities are not being provided. Council Member Gaulden seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Council Member McNeil moved that the establishment of the proposed use will impede the orderly development and improvement of surrounding property. Council Member Gaulden seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- Mayor Pro Tem Sills moved that the requested use is not in conformity with the city's adopted comprehensive plan. Council Member Hargis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Based on the findings that all six criteria were not met: Council Member Hargis moved to deny Special Use Permit SUP-25-02. Council Member Gaulden seconded the motion. The motion to deny the special use permit passed unanimously.

Conditional Rezoning CZ-07-24

E Wake St. and E. Johnson St.

PINs 1516-98-9355.000; 1526-07-3272.000; 1526-17-0584.000; 1526-07-6565.000; and 1526-08-5581.000.

Mayor Elmore opened the public hearing for conditional rezoning case CZ-07-24, which involves a request to rezone five parcels from R-10 and R-20 to R-7 CZD, allowing for the development of a 147-lot single-family subdivision on 71.8 acres. Planner Abby Manning presented the report, highlighting that the request aligns with the city's future land use map and goals. The planning staff recommended the approval of this rezoning request with specific conditions.

Marie Farmer, representing the applicant NVR/Ryan Homes through the Parker Poe law firm, presented details about the proposed development. She emphasized that the project includes beneficial features such as 23 acres of natural open space, street trees strategically planted to enhance the environment, pedestrian sidewalks for improved connectivity, and effective stormwater management controls involving three wet ponds to mitigate environmental impact. Farmer specifically requested approval for a reduction in side setbacks from the standard 10 feet to 7 feet, which they believe would allow for a greater variety of housing types and therefore more diversity in home sizes and prices.

Several council members took issue with this requested reduction in setbacks, expressing concerns that it might lead to a crowded and less appealing neighborhood environment. In response to these concerns, Farmer indicated flexibility on the part of the applicant, stating a willingness to maintain the standard 10-foot setbacks if the council found the reduction problematic.

Nathan Romberg, a traffic engineer with extensive experience, offered insights into the traffic implications of the development. His analysis indicated that the subdivision would be a low traffic generator, with 95% of vehicular movement expected to utilize the primary access point on Johnson Street. The analysis concluded that this traffic distribution would not necessitate significant improvements to Johnson Street itself, although there would be modifications at the entry to East Johnson Street to accommodate ingress and egress lanes.

Residents voiced opposition to the rezoning. **Dr. Gwen McNeill** raised concerns about increased traffic, especially on the already narrow Johnson Street, echoing fears of congestion and safety issues. She was particularly worried about the impact on the Grove Park neighborhood's integrity and character.

Vicki Spears expressed her concerns over potential overcrowding, infrastructure strain, increasing property taxes, and the effects on the historic Black cemetery nearby.

Larry Cameron focused on potential traffic flow changes and stormwater drainage management, seeking reassurance from developers on handling these potential challenges.

James Taylor noted fears about altering the character of the predominantly retired community, adding worries about potential increases in crime due to the influx of new families.

James Rankin, who owns property adjacent to the proposed development, was mainly concerned about how the rezoning would affect existing property boundaries and the handling of stormwater drainage.

Following the public input and deliberations, the council, weighing the pros and cons, reached a consensus to abide by the standard 10-foot side setbacks rather than granting the requested reduction to 7 feet.

Council Member Sills made a motion to approve the rezoning case CZ-07-24 with conditions as originally printed, specifically updating condition C4 to require 10-foot setbacks. Council Member Hargis seconded the motion.

In favor of the approval, Council Member Sills highlighted the good reputation of Ryan Homes for creating well-planned neighborhoods with active Homeowners Associations (HOAs), which ensure that community standards are upheld.

Mayor Elmore acknowledged the valid concerns raised by residents throughout the discussion, reiterating points about potential overcrowding, property taxes, and other neighborhood impacts.

After discussion, the motion passed 4-2, with Council Members Gaulden and McNeil voting against the motion.

Consideration of Ordinance to Demolish House

305 W Greenwood

PIN# 1516-35-6273.000

John Ganus presented the staff report on the minimum housing case for 305 W Greenwood Street. He detailed the timeline of inspections, notices, and orders issued since November 2023. The house is vacant and deteriorating, with an assessed value of \$24,440. Estimated renovation costs exceed \$56,000.

Frederick McNeil, the property owner, spoke in opposition to demolition. He explained he inherited the property and has been working to clean it out and make repairs as a single parent with limited time and funds. He requested more time to complete repairs room-by-room.

Timothy Hart, a relative of the owner, argued that the inspector had not identified any structural integrity issues requiring permits. He stated the owner was confused about permit requirements and asked the council to table the decision to allow time for repairs.

Decision

After discussion, Mayor Elmore suggested tabling the item to allow the owner time to consult with the Building Inspector about required permits and repairs.

Council Member Hargis moved to table the item until the next regular council meeting. Council Members Gaulden and Council Member McNeil seconded the motion. The motion passed with Council Member Sills opposed.

Ordinance to Extend Corporate Limits

ANX-02-25 – N. Powell Avenue

City Manager Steve Neuschafer presented the voluntary annexation request for 18.21 acres on North Powell Avenue.

Don Curry of Curry Engineering spoke in favor on behalf of the applicant.

Decision

Council Member Tart moved to adopt the ordinance to extend the corporate limits of the city of Dunn as presented and assign it to the appropriate ward [6]. Council Member Hargis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. A copy of the Ordinance to Extend the Corporate Limits of the City of Dunn(02025-08) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #2.

Consideration of Grant Application

Caboose Park

Downtown Director, Karyn Lindsey requested authorization to apply for a Rural Downtown Economic Development Grant to renovate the building at 107 S. Railroad Ave and develop an adjacent pocket park. The grant would be for up to \$850,000 with a 5% city match required.

Council Member Alden moved to authorize city staff to apply for the Rural Downtown Economic Development Grant. Council Member Bradham seconded the motion. The motion passed with Council Members Sills and McNeil opposed.

Approval of Eastside Pump Station

Bid Award

Assistant City Manager, Billy Godwin presented the bid award for the Eastside Pump Station project, the final component of mandated infrastructure upgrades. The low bid from T.A. Loving Company was \$10,316,335.00. Funding includes a \$3.5 million USDA grant, \$8,626,000 USDA loan, and \$712,202 from city reserves.

Council Member Bradham moved to approve the attached resolution tentatively awarding the ESPS project to T.A. Loving Company in the bid amount of \$10,316,335.00 Council Member Gaulden seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. A copy of the Resolution of Tentative Award – Eastside Pump Station Project (R2025-16) is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #3.

Approval of Parks & Recreation

Budget Amendment

Parks & Recreation Director, Brian McNeil reported that bids received for bathroom renovations at the Dunn Community Center came in substantially higher than the \$80,000 budgeted. He rescinded the budget amendment request and will reassess options.

Administrative Reports

Financial Report/Assessment Update

Finance Director Cary McNallan presented the February financial report. Cash investments totaled \$11,284,000. Property tax collections to date were \$5.2 million of the \$5.7 million budgeted. Sales tax receipts for November were \$303,000, nearly identical to last year. Building permit revenue was at 60% of budget.

Announcements/Information

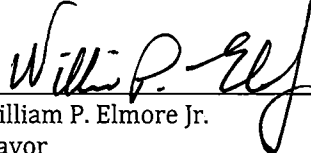
Mayor Elmore announced:

- A City Council work session scheduled for April 8 at 6:30 PM
- The next regular council meeting scheduled for April 22 at 6:30 PM

Council Member Hargis inquired about the status of a street closure application for an upcoming Friends Fighting Cancer benefit event. The City Manager indicated it was still being processed.

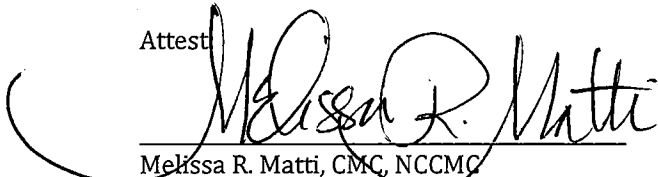
Closed Session

Mayor Pro Tem Sills moved to go into closed session under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, condition of appointment of a public officer or employee. Council Member Tart seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously and the council entered closed session.



William P. Elmore Jr.
Mayor

Attest



Melissa R. Matti, CMC, NCCMC
City Clerk

