

**Dunn City Council**  
**Joint Special Meeting**  
**Town of Benson, City of Dunn, and Town of Four Oaks**  
**Thursday, December 17, 2020**  
**6:00 p.m., Dunn Municipal Building**

## Minutes

**PRESENT:** Mayor William P. Elmore Jr., Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Turnage, Council Members J. Wesley Sills, April Gaulden, Billy N. Tart, and Dr. David L. Bradham. **Absent:** Frank McLean. *Request for Special Meeting is incorporated into these minutes as Attachment #1.*

*Also present from the City of Dunn: City Manager Steven Neuschafer, Assistant City Manager Mathew Boone, City Attorney Tilghman Pope, and City Clerk Tammy Williams.*

*Present from the Town of Benson: Mayor Jerry M. Medlin, Mayor Pro Tem Casandra Stack, Commissioners Maxine Holley, Dean McLamb, William Neighbors and Max Raynor. Also present Town Manager Fred Nelson, Town Attorney R. Isaac Parker and Town Clerk Angela Thornton.*

*Present from the Town of Four Oaks: Mayor Linwood Parker, Commissioners Vic Medlin, Andy Hardy, John Hatch and Carles Surlis. Also present: Reid Williams, Development Coordinator and Town Clerk Martha Garris.*

Mayor Elmore welcomed everyone to the joint meeting at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Medlin gave the invocation and Mayor Parker led in the pledge of allegiance. Dinner was served.

### CALL TO ORDER AND INVOCATION

Mayor Elmore opened the meeting of the Dunn City Council at 6:38 p.m. and introduced those representing Dunn. He acknowledged Council Member McLean was unable to attend due to being sick.

### Partnership Opportunities for Economic Development

Mayor Parker shared the background on the proposed partnership – I-95/I-40 Crossroads of America Economic Planning Alliance which started with the Mayors and staff meeting and researching the possibilities.

Reid Williams, Town of Four Oaks Development Coordinator, presented an economic snapshot on the region which showed success with employers such as the Food Lion Warehouse, Ashley Furniture, Becton Dickerson, Berry Global and Rooms To Go but also lower median incomes than in surrounding areas including Harnett and Johnston Counties. He shared the benefits of a regional approach which included a broader base of resources; a centralized economic development operation; cohesive short and long term planning; a focused approach to addressing strategic issues such as workforce development; and increased coordination resulting in an efficient use of resources.

City Manager Neuschafer presented the proposed jurisdiction map, which encompasses the I-95 corridor, approximately four miles west and 2 miles east of I-95. The proposed jurisdiction encompasses 20 miles from exit 70 to exit 90. He added that there are several parcels over 50 acres each that total close to 12,000 acres in this proposed jurisdiction. The Partnership could capitalize on available infrastructure such as the railroad and airports, combining these assets with property that is ready to develop.

Benson Town Manager Fred Nelson shared the preliminary tentative Goals and Objectives to include:

- Goal 1 – Identify opportunity zones for commercial/industrial development within proposed jurisdiction.
- Goal 2 – Formulate relationships with local technical colleges and universities as well as the Department of Commerce to enhance workforce development in the region
- Goal 3 – Conduct a strategic visioning campaign to assist strategy formulation and resource alignment.

He also shared the proposed draft of bylaws of the organization to include representatives from each community and a share of the cost to include a formula for new industry recruited.

Mayor Parker shared that initial discussions were received with favorable feedback with the NC Department of Commerce as well as elected representatives Congressman David Rouzer, Senators Jim Burgin and Brent Jackson and Representatives Howard Penny and Larry Strickland. He also talked about potential partners such as the Department of Agriculture and Harnett and Johnston Counties. He shared that the main goal is to spur growth for the region and raise the overall quality of life for people in these communities.

Mayor Pro Tem Bradham felt the partnership was a great idea and the towns could get more traction working together. He did inquire on how the communication will work between the organization and the three town boards and how often will the organization's board meet. Mayor Parker said he felt they will probably meet monthly with oversight from the three boards as it is getting started. Council Member Turnage said that goals would need to be established with timelines to measure success.

Mayor Elmore stated that if the boards agree to move forward staff from each community will begin to move the process forward in the establishment of the partnership organization. All three boards will work together to develop the bylaws and structure of the 501C-3 organization. City Attorney Pope shared the value of having a separate 501C-3 organization for the partnership's efforts are the other available funding sources

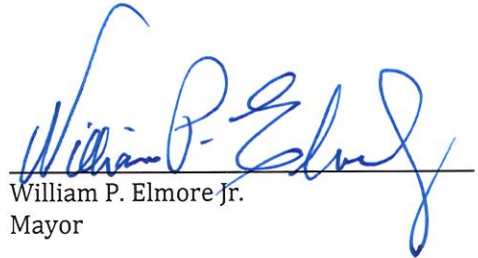
and the ability to do things that governments are not allowed to do but are important for economic development such as give away land and handle confidential matters privately.

After additional discussion from each board represented, motion by Mayor Pro Tem Bradham and second by Council Member Turnage to support and move forward with the forming of the I-95/I-40 Crossroads of America Economic Planning Alliance. **Motion unanimously approved.**

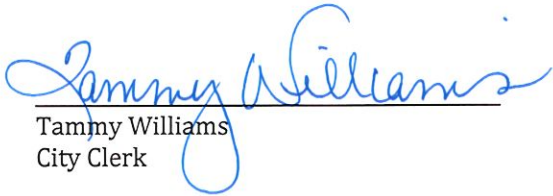
Moving forward with the partnership was also formerly approved by the Town of Benson Board of Commissioners and the Town of Four Oaks Board of Commissioners.

With no further business to discuss, motion by Council Member Sills and second by Council Member Gauden to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m.



  
William P. Elmore Jr.  
Mayor

Attest:

  
Tammy Williams  
City Clerk