



CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

City Council Chambers

Monday, January 13, 2025 at 7:00 PM

MINUTES

Members Present

Mayor, Becky S. Smith, Council Members: Brenda Boyd, Brent Guffey, Nellie Floyd, Michael Brooks and Allen Hook were all present. City Manager, Josh Ross and City Attorney, David Smith were present. Council Member, Donnie Griffin was absent. A quorum was present.

Call to Order, Prayer, Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Smith called the meeting to order. Shepherd's Grove Holiness Church, Assistant Pastor Christie Brown led the audience in prayer. Mayor Smith asked for a moment of silence for all present to remember Brad Kelly, an employee who lost his life the night before. Mr. Kelly was a stellar employee and all-around father. He will be missed by his family, co-workers, and friends. Mayor Smith led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adjustment and Approval of the Agenda

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the January agenda was approved with no revisions.

Special Presentation

Gaston County 250 Presentation-

Adam Gaub, Director of Communications for Gaston County, addressed the Board about the upcoming Gaston 250 celebration. In July 2026, it will be the nation's 250th birthday. To commemorate the nation's Independence Day, a committee, Gaston250, has been created. The County has received \$10,000 in grant funds to assist with upcoming celebration marketing efforts.

Request to Speak/Opportunity for Public Comment

Mayor Smith opened the floor for public comment. The following came forth:

- Nick Coccaro of 512 S. 12th Street: Mr. Nick addressed the Board regarding the Boys & Girls Club. Mr. Coccaro is requesting that the City assist the Boys & Girls Club with finding a new location. Additionally, there is an ongoing conversation with Gaston County Schools to cut the transportation to the Boys & Girls Club. Mr. Coccaro is requesting that City administration partner with the Boys & Girls Club to seek a solution.
- Courtney Womack of 517 Costner School Road: Ms. Womack addressed the Board regarding economic development and community growth. Ms. Womack encouraged the Board to balance the incoming growth with the demands of the community. The city has seen businesses like Mustafa's and Robinson's pharmacy come and go.

- Aaron Grosdider of 517 Costner School Road: Mr. Grosdider addressed the Board regarding natural gas permits, the Land Development Code (LDC) and the numbering of city vehicles. During a recent conditional zoning, the Mayor and City Council allowed a developer to forego installing natural gas, in lieu of a \$25,000 donation to the Fire Department. Per Mr. Grosdider's research, the cost for permitting, trenching, and urban zoning fees for the proposed development would have been more than \$25,000. Thus, the City should stick with administering the LDC and making developers install natural gas lines. The city is a small gas distributor and we need as many gas sales as possible to generate revenue. Additionally, city vehicles need to have numbers on them to ensure safety.
- Bryan Hoffman of 704 S.15th Street: Mr. Hoffman addressed the Board regarding the student of the month appreciation program. Mr. Hoffman works at the Highland School of Technology in Gastonia and knows many students who would like to be recognized by Mayor and City Council.

Public Comment Acknowledgment

Mayor Smith recognized City Manager, Josh Ross to provide clarification on some items discussed during public comment:

- The city cannot require developers to use natural gas in future developments. This is not something that is permitted by code or by NCGS. Additionally, the city cannot use natural gas funds for general fund expenditures. Natural gas is an enterprise fund.

Consent Agenda

The following items on the Consent Agenda were unanimously approved by motion of Brenda Boyd:

1. **Approval of Minutes**: City Council will consider adopting Regular Meeting minutes of the December 9, 2024 meeting.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Proclamation

Mayor, Becky S. Smith read the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Proclamation aloud and declared Monday, January 20th, 2025 as Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

By motion of Nellie Floyd and unanimous vote, the proclamation was adopted. A copy of the proclamation is available at City Hall.

Establish Public Hearing

City Manager, Josh Ross addressed Council regarding an Economic Development Incentive Level 1 for Project Garland. Gaston County Commissioners have adopted a similar resolution to provide an incentive for a private entity.

By motion of Allen Hook and unanimous vote, a public hearing will be held at the February 2025 Regular Meeting on Monday, February 10th, 2025 at 7:00 PM to hear public comment regarding an Economic Development Incentive Level 1 for Project Garland.

Public Hearing: Rezoning Request CD 04-2024 (610 S. Skyland)

By motion of Michael Brooks and unanimous vote, the public hearing was opened at 7:33 PM.

City Manager Josh Ross addressed the Board regarding the rezoning application. Michael Cruse on behalf of Five Holdings, LLC is seeking a rezoning of 1.35 acres of land zoning Neighborhood Residential (NR) to Neighborhood Residential-Conditional District (NR-CD). The intent of the property owner is to subdivide the property into three (3) lots for single-family homes. Mr. Ross informed the Board that this project was submitted late last year. Typically, a project of 3 homes would not be classified as a major

subdivision. However, there is the creation of a new road and extension of utilities, making this project a major subdivision. This rezoning request has come before the Planning Board twice and had some elements added. The developer would offer 4 parking spaces in exchange for installing one portion of sidewalk and a green strip. A full set of condition and reliefs were discussed as outlined in council packet.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in favor of the rezoning request. The following individual came forth:

- Brian Herendez of 105 Helen Avenue: Mr. Herendez stated that the plans were nice. However, he wanted to know if he would get a fence and if his property tax would increase. Mayor Smith informed him that he was in favor of the Parkview Commons project along N. 12th Street. However, this is the public hearing for a project on S. Skyland Drive. Thus, you are at the wrong public hearing. Contrary to the legal ad that ran, the City has postponed the Parkview Commons public hearing.

Mayor Smith asked if there was anyone present to speak in opposition of the rezoning request. The following individuals came forth:

- Sheila King of 612 S. Skyland Drive: Ms. King spoke on behalf of her mother, Dolly Adams, who lives at 612 S. Skyland Drive. Ms. King stated that she and her mother had concerns of lights shining in to the home, fencing or guardrail installment. Ms. Adams has lived in the community for over 45 years and this area has been peaceful. Thus, she would like to see it remain the same. Additionally, this project would encourage people to cut through the neighborhood and walk to the park.
- Shirley Hence of 705 S. Skyland Drive: Ms. Hence addressed Council as a city resident of over 43 years old. The neighborhood is peaceful, and the road is already busy. Ms. Hence expressed her concerns about the new people and traffic issues approving this development would bring into city.
- Courtney Womack of 517 Costner School Road: Ms. Womack addressed an area of relief regarding the project. The citizens of Bessemer City have been fighting for additional sidewalks. Ms. Womack does not believe that the project should be approved with any sidewalk reliefs. There should be the installation of sidewalks on both sides.
- Jesse Gamble of 611 S. Skyland Drive: Ms. Gamble addressed Council regarding her concerns of parking and traffic. The proposed project is directly across from her driveway and the new residents would be backing up on to her property. She is worried that this may become a dangerous traffic pattern in the future.
- Dajuan Savage of Five Holdings LLC: Mr. Savage addressed the Board as the developer to answer questions. When the project initially was initiated, the plan was to build 4 homes, but it was later changed to 3 homes. As the second parcel listed on the application was not sold to Five Holdings LLC. The intent of Five Holdings LLC is to place three families in the homes and not rent the homes. Additionally, they would like to leave a natural tree line as a barrier for lighting and install a fence. Mr. Savage and his team have walked the area and would like to produce something that the city can be really proud of.

Council Member, Allen Hook inquired about the natural tree length and the height of the proposed fence.

By motion of Brent Guffey and unanimous vote, the public hearing was closed at 7:59 PM.

Ordinance- Zoning Map Amendment

By motion of Michael Brooks and unanimous vote, the ordinance regarding the zoning map amendment for property located at tax parcel #211801 (0.83 acres) was tabled to the January 2025 Work Session.

City Manager's Report

City Manager, Josh Ross, addressed the Board regarding the following:

- Central Drug Store Bid: The city is still conducting the upset bid process for city property located at 112 West Virginia Avenue. Last month the initial bid was received for \$260,000. However, the bid is up to \$280,000.
- New Restaurants: The city has two new businesses set to open soon. There will be a restaurant opening in Blossom's and a restaurant called TexMex Backwood Grill will be opening next door to City Hall at 128 West Virginia Avenue.
- Solid Waste Issues: City staff is aware of the solid waste issues that are occurring with waste bins and bulk pickup. We are actively working to educate the public on the change in collection. Citizens now must call Waste Pro to pay and schedule bulk item pickup.
- New Staff Member: The city has hired Jamie Watkins to be the City's Planner and Stormwater Administrator.
- NC Main Street Conference: The City's Juneteenth Festival will be recognized at the 2025 NC Main Street Conference for the best public and private partnership.
- Brad Kelly: The City has suffered a tremendous lost. Brad Kelly was an amazing person and hard worker. He will be missed, and we ask that everyone keep his family in your thoughts and prayers.

Council General Discussion

Mayor Smith opened the floor for Council general discussion. Council Members, Nellie Floyd, Brenda Boyd, Brent Guffey and Michael Brooks joined the Mayor in expressing their sorrow for the Kelly family. Council Member, Michael Brooks inquired about some code enforcement issues and commended staff for their speedy response times in the snowstorm. Council Member, Brenda Boyd commended Brad Kelly on being a fine gentleman and dedicated staff member. Council Member, Brent Guffey inquired about the burning of brush piles on Costner School Road. Council Member, Allen Hook commended the Fire Department on a great Christmas dinner.

Adjournment

Being no further business to come before the board, by motion of Allen Hook and unanimous vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 PM.

Becky S. Smith, Mayor

Hydeia Y. Hayes, City Clerk