

**ERWIN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MEETING MINUTES  
NOVEMBER 9, 2010  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
ERWIN, NORTH CAROLINA**

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Erwin with Mayor Patsy Carson presiding, held its Special Called Meeting in the Town Hall on Tuesday, November 9, 2010 at 7:00 P. M. in Erwin, North Carolina.

Board Members present were: Commissioners, Norma Ennis, Mark Whitman, Randy Baker, Frank Taylor, William Corbett and Michael West.

Town Manager Bryan Thompson and Town Clerk Cynthia Patterson were present.

Mayor Patsy Carson called the meeting to order at 7:00 P. M.

Commissioner Taylor gave the invocation.

Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**DOWNTOWN RETAIL OVERLAY DISTRICT**

Town Manager Bryan Thompson informed the Board that this is a very rough form however it gives the Board an idea what a downtown retail overlay looks like. The idea of an overlay district in general is to place regulations in this case language regulations of top of traditional downtown district from the downtown structures from Joseph's Dept. Store all the way down to part of Denim Drive and East H. Street and all the way down half way the property of Erwin Methodist Church, all this is central business district. What is important to note about this is in between Good Hope Hospital and the school area and surrounding area is residential uses. Those uses are by the ordinance standard are legal non conforming uses. This means technically if someone puts up their house for sale and stays vacant without being used as a single family residential dwelling for a period of 180 days or more they would be in violation due to the fact it was a legal non conforming use that was lost because it has gone beyond that 6 months period. There are a couple of ways to remedy this if this is the case. Do we want to maintain the legal non conforming nature of those residential units or do we want to save those residential structures so that they can continue as residential structures.

Commissioner Baker stated we need to go ahead and address this issue and put a method in place where it would allow staff to allow that mix use of residential and downtown business to be in harmony with one another rather than to put that property owner through a process going through a rezoning just to make it complete.

**MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2010 CONTINUED**

Mr. Thompson stated that there are a couple of options, we can completely change up the zoning district and reduce that central business district to traditional business district type store fronts and rezone this neighborhood kind of area to a neighborhood type zoned such as R-6. Another method would be to keep the zoning as is and just add to the table of uses residential (Single Family Residential). That option would allow residential uses in the district but would keep it classified as central business. A third option that kind of balances these two things is to keep the zoning district the way it is and amend the table of uses to allow single family residential in central business district then with the downtown retail overlay district that looks very specifically to the traditional store front downtown part of that district and put an overlay there that has its own unique uses and land use requirements so those would supersede the underline district so you kind of blend the best of both worlds and also allow this residential area to remain central business showing long term future intent is to have the downtown districts expand through natural attrition.

Commissioner Baker made a motion that the Board allow Staff to draft a Downtown Retail Overlay District with the amendment made in Central Business District to allow Residential Uses in the Central Business District as explained by Staff and prepare language to bring back to the Board and was seconded by Commissioner Ennis. The Board voted unanimously.

**REVIEW OF REVISED LANGUAGE FOR SIGN ORDINANCE**

Mr. Thompson stated that there are a number of additions and deletions in the new proposed language. Staff understands that part of the reasoning behind the request for revised language for these regulations is the old Joseph's sign located on the former department store. That in mind, Staff has not taken measurements of this sign to see if the five foot rule does or does not help this sign with respect to conformity with the regulations (or rather have the regulations make this sign a conforming sign) then Staff can take measurements to ensure this intent is met in the proposed language.

Commissioners looked at the proposed amendments to the sign ordinance, discussing at length outdoor advertising signs, billboards, freestanding, projecting and wall signs. They made recommendations that if the size or façade of an existing sign does not change, but rather only the copy, letters or text within the existing sign is modified, it would be permissible. It was also discussed to leave verbiage within the ordinance that billboards, which stipulate a 300-foot clearance between posted signs, remain the same.

The Board agreed to leave the existing ordinance, which requires a freestanding sign to not exceed a ceiling height of 35 feet or 200 square feet in area. The Board discussed changing the current artwork ordinance through the conditional use process. They each voiced concern that business owners be required to pay a \$250 fee upfront for a conditional use permit to display a proposed mural on their downtown businesses.

Mr. Thompson stated that Staff would revisit the verbiage of downtown art work and would discuss alleviating the required \$250 application fee for business owners in the town sign ordinance.

**MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2010 CONTINUED**

Mayor Carson stated that after having read the proposed ordinances, she found some of the language to be confusing and afraid some perspective business owners would find it very difficult to understand.

Commissioner Ennis agreed stating that they do need to be more user friendly and less intimidating.

**FACADE GRANT PROGRAM**

Mr. Thompson informed the Board that the draft guidelines and application for the façade grant program established by the town through the STEP program. The important things to establish is who or what body will be the decision making body for the selection of these grants. This could be done on the Board of Commissioners level, Planning Board, really any other standing committee or appointed ad hoc committee comprised of any number of interests in town to do the selection process. Mayor Carson stated that STEP had \$20,000. Mr. Thompson stated that how it's proposed is if you do a \$4,000 project then you will get reimbursed \$2,000 per store front and would be retroactive to any improvements they make.

The Commissioners stated that the selection committee should be made up with a 7 member board from various boards. Have each of the committees appoint or nominate the member.

Mr. Thompson stated that under Improvement Eligibility paragraph 3 it states that "Not undertaken prior to approval by the Façade Improvement Grant Selection Committee". We have had some activity in recent months that have spent money in doing Façade Grant Improvements and hopefully see some more however do we want to restrict this to those improvements that have not yet occurred and never been through the process in order to get award or do we want to retro fit the awards to a certain time frame so we can capture some of the work that has been done.

The General Consensus of the Board was that this should be retroactive that the business owners should not be punished if they have already taken the initiative to invest back into their property.

**PLANNING BOARD APPOINTMENT APPLICATIONS**

Mr. Thompson informed the Board that there are three (3) vacancies which include one (1) in-town member and two (2) out-of-town members. The two (ETJ) seats are being held by individuals who have served only one term and each is eligible for reappointment for a second term. Both members have filled out an application and they are Dale Ryals and Patrick Shackelford. The other application is an ETJ resident who is not currently serving on the Planning Board, Erica Gallion. At this time, there is no application for the in-town vacancy.

**MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2010 CONTINUED**

Commissioner Corbett made a motion to reappoint Dale Ryals and Patrick Shackelford to serve on the Planning/Zoning and Board of Adjustments Board and was seconded by Commissioner West. The Board voted unanimously.

(Page 7520 A-C)

**OFFICIAL COLORS OF THE TOWN OF ERWIN/OFFICIAL SEAL OF THE TOWN OF ERWIN**

Commissioner Taylor made a motion to Table this issue until Staff can do research and was seconded by Commissioner Ennis. The Board voted unanimously.

**DISCUSS BRANDING AND TAGLINE OF TOWN OF ERWIN**

Mr. Thompson informed the Board that the implementation phase of the STEP program is soon to start. One of the identified projects is branding and tagline creation for the Town. As the Governing Body of the Town you will have the final approval on the proposal developed by the committee involved in this project, this item was asked to be placed on the agenda in order to gain preliminary input from the Board to help guide the efforts of the committee.

It was the general consensus of the Board to see what kind of suggestions come in.

**REUSE OF GOOD HOPE FACILITY**

Mr. Thompson informed the Board that this is an idea that has been in the making for the past couple of months. The Association for Retarded Citizens (Arc) of Harnett has been speaking to Good Hope officials as well as the Town. Arc has an interest in using the old therapy building which has a pool and workout area, for evening activities for their clients. Additionally, there may be a desire to have this facility open during the day for senior citizen programming activities.

Commissioner Corbett asked the question about cost for this project. Mr. Thompson replied that the cost for renovations we have a ball park figure, the operational cost could vary.

Mayor Carson stated that Good Hope was willing to lease the property for \$1 per year and suggested if the facility is utilized, perhaps the Board may want to implement an age limitation for its usage.

Commissioner Ennis asked the question regarding the renovations to be able to use this facility. Mr. Thompson replied that renovations would be handled through Arc and fundraising outside of the Town.

Mayor Carson also mentioned that a meeting with ARC would take place on Tuesday, November 16, 2010 at 7pm.

It was the general consensus of the Board to get numbers of the cost.

**MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 9, 2010 CONTINUED****STEP IMPLEMENTATION CONTRACT WITH RURAL CENTER**

Mr. Thompson informed the Board that in order to move forward with the next phase of the STEP process, the contract document will need to be approved and executed.

Commissioner Baker made a motion to approve the Contract for STEP Implementation and was seconded by Commissioner Whitman. The Board voted unanimously.

(Page 7521 A-G)

**ADJOURNMENT**

Commissioner Baker made a motion to adjourn at 9pm and was seconded by Commissioner Whitman. The Board voted unanimously.

**MINUTES RECORDED AND TYPED BY  
CYNTHIA B PATTERSON TOWN CLERK**

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**Patsy M. Carson,**  
**Mayor**

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**Cynthia B. Patterson, CMC**  
**Town Clerk**