

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
RETREAT/ PLANNING SESSION
FEBRUARY 22, 2025**

THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL held a special strategic planning session on Saturday, February 22, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. at Cope Hall at Andy's Trout Farm, Otto, NC.

1. Call to Order- Mayor Jack Horton

Mayor Jack Horton reconvened the meeting at 8:45 a.m. with the following members present:

Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey, Council Members David Culpepper, Joe Collins, Robbie Tompa, Mike Lewis and Rita Salain.

Staff members present: Amie Owens, Sarah Bishop, Nicole Bradley and Town Attorney John Henning, Jr. Mia Overton from The Franklin Press was also in attendance.

2. Council Discussion Items:

A.) Mission, Vision, Values and Goals

Town Manager Amie Owens provided examples of a mission & vision from for the Town. There was discussion about the examples and other suggestions/wording adjustments were made.

Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Joe Collins to approve the Town's Mission Statement - Our Mission is to preserve our Town's character while encouraging new opportunities that better the lives of all who call Franklin home. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

Council Member David Culpepper made a motion, seconded by Council Member Joe Collins to approve the Town's Vision Statement – Franklin is a vibrant town with healthy, active citizens and visitors, safe surroundings, sustainable businesses and services that support smart growth, invests in people and infrastructure and that honors heritage and creates opportunities. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

B.) Main Street Coordinator/Main Street Program

There was discussion about a Main Street Coordinator position and the Main Street Program. Questions were asked about what a person in this position would do, where would they sit and if there was enough work for it to be a full-time position. A subcommittee (Town Manager Owens, Councilman Tompa and Vice Mayor Guffey) was formed to review the position and the program. Mayor Horton asked the subcommittee to get together for review in March so that the Board can discuss in April.

C.) Business Incentives

There was discussion about Potential Economic Development/Business Incentives.

Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to approve the menu of nine (9) potential incentives as presented. The motion carried. Vote: 5- 1. Councilman Culpepper voted in opposition.

D.) Parking Downtown

Town Manager Owens researched parking decks for downtown parking. The cost of a 2-level parking deck from Metromont would be approximately \$1.7 million. The parking lot on Palmer Street currently has 42 parking spaces. If a parking deck was constructed there it would add an additional 58 spaces. It would take around 7 months to construct a parking deck.

Town Attorney John Henning, Jr. stated that the Town has authority to tax \$5 per vehicle for parking. Councilman Culpepper said he doesn't see a need for additional parking. He feels that funds should be spent on walkability/livability and shouldn't be vehicle dependent.

There was additional discussion on partnering with Macon County since the County Court House and County offices are on Main Street.

Mayor Horton asked if a parking study could be completed to better justify this large of an investment.

Discussion was held about making a portion of Stewart Street one-way from Phillips Street to the first intersection near the Rathskeller.

Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Robbie Tompa to set a public hearing for Monday, April 7, 2025 at 6:05 p.m. or as closely thereafter as possible to receive public input on making Stewart Street one-way as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote 6 – 0.

E.) Whitmire Inclusive Play Area

Town Manager Owens discussed the restroom construction for Whitmire Inclusive Playground area. She provided options for the facilities and stated that the cost would be around \$250,000 - \$300,000. The facilities would be prefabbed and would take approximately 10 months for completion.

Councilman Culpepper had to leave the meeting at 9:55 a.m.

Mayor Horton called for a brief recess at 9:57 a.m.

Mayor Horton reconvened the meeting at 10:09 a.m.

Additional discussion was held on the restrooms.

Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to approve the restroom design SS-154-2FAM Stadium Series by Public Restroom Company or something closely thereof. The motion carried. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

F.) Street Closure Policy

Town Manager Owens presented the Street Closure Policy. This policy was drafted to help address some of the concerns noted by downtown businesses and impact on their sales when streets are closed.

Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to approve the Street Closure Policy as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

The new policy will be sent to previous event sponsors and posted on the Town's website.

G.) Boards and Commissions

There was discussion on changing the number of board members on the ABC Board from 3 (three) members to 5 (five) members.

Council Member Robbie Tompa made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Guffey to approve change in ABC Board membership from 3 (three) members to 5 (five) members. The motion carried. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6-0.

The ABC Board Chair and ABC Store Manager will be notified, the openings will be advertised and the change will go into effect in May.

TDA Board membership was discussed and there are no issues with the membership on the TDA Board. There is one vacancy for an individual who collects occupancy tax within the city limits.

H.) Town and County Partnerships

There was discussion on continuing the partnerships between the Town and the County and reviewing the existing interlocal agreements. The Macon County BOCC liaison is meeting regularly with Town Manager Owens and Councilman Tompa.

I.) EPTC Support Request from Angel Medical Center

Town Manager asked Town Council to review and let her know if it's something Town Council would like to pursue based on the request from Clint Kendall.

J.) Items from Town Attorney

Town Attorney John Henning, Jr. discussed downzoning regulations. This is a legislative topic that is currently being discussed. He said it all has to do with nonconforming uses in zoning. He went over the new changes of downzoning by local governments. He stated Town Council needed to let local leaders know they were in support of the repeal of Senate Bill 382. A Resolution to repeal will be brought to the March 3, 2025 Town Council meeting.

Town Attorney Henning also discussed possibly making updates to the Town Charter.

K.) Other items from Town Council

- **Town Website**
Councilman Tompa would like to see an update to the Town's website. The cost would be around \$20,000 - \$25,000. A Request for Proposal (RFP) will be sent out and it can be included in next year's budget.
- **Beautification (Roundabouts)**
There was discussion about beautifications in the roundabouts. This will require NC DOT approval and will be included in next year's budget.
- **Interlocal Agreements (LBJ Sewer Line) – Mayor Horton will discuss with Town Manager and Town Attorney**
- **Housing – incentives/partnerships**
There was discussion on housing incentives and partnerships. The Town will continue to develop relationships.
- **Greenway Connector (Allman Drive)**
There was discussion on completing the Greenway Connection in Allman Drive and a possible partnership with Macon County to complete the project.
- **Planning Board Process (Notifications for rezonings)**
There was discussion about advertising the Planning Board meetings/public hearings for rezonings.
- **Speeding (Downtown)**
There was discussion about speeding downtown and how to make it stop.

3. Closed Session

A.) *Enter into closed session under NC General Statute § 143-318.11(a)(5) to discuss acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange or lease*

Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to enter into closed session under NC General Statute § 143-318.11(a)(5) to discuss acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange or lease at 11:32 a.m. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6- 0.

7. Adjournment

Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Mike Lewis to adjourn the meeting at 11:58 a.m. The motion carried unanimously. Vote: 6- 0.

C. Jack Horton, Mayor

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk