

**Town of Garner
Board of Aldermen
February 2, 2009**

The Garner Board of Aldermen met in regular session on Monday, February 2, 2009 at 7:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Board Room

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Williams, Mayor Pro Tem Alderman Kennedy, Alderman Marshburn, Alderman Johns, Alderman Behringer, Alderman Singleton had an excused absence

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Hardin Watkins, Town Manager; Rodney Dickerson, Assistant Town Manager; Bill Anderson, Town Attorney; Brad Bass, Planning Director; Lin Jones; John Hodges, Garner Revitalization Association Director

CALL MEETING TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE - Mayor ProTem Kennedy

INVOCATION - Mayor ProTem Kennedy

STATE OF THE TOWN ADDRESS FROM MAYOR WILLIAMS

Mayor Williams presented his message to the Town as follows:

Mayor's State of Garner 2009

It would be easy to spend time talking about the bad year we are in not only locally but as a country in 2008. I choose not to do that. I think we've heard enough. There are lessons learned and plans undone that will impact the future, and we will learn from them once again. As we enter 2009, we're going to be positive and spend our time reflecting on our strengths...the same strengths that have made us a proud and vibrant growing Town and community for over 103 years. We will continue to depend on our many dedicated citizens who volunteer to serve on boards, commissions and who organize and operate youth sports programs, hold fundraisers, community gatherings on behalf of the Town. To the extent that we can, we will partner with them in the future. Last year I referenced three things about Garner that remain true a year later: 1) we're a safe community... 2) a growing community, and ...3) a friendly community. In spite of the challenges we may face, we must always work to preserve that safe community, encourage growth and maintain a friendly reputation. We will continue to support our emergency service providers as they work to maintain our status as a safe Town and community. While a forecast predicts slow growth, we must go the extra mile to work with those developers who are still making investments in our economy and community. We will continue to work with the Chamber of Commerce to promote our strengths and ensure that we are blessed as a friendly Town, by continuing to promote our Town by reaching out to our citizens, and responding to their needs. As I enter my second year as Chair of the Wake County Mayor's Association, I can see on a regular basis how Garner stacks up to our neighbors in the County. Ladies and gentlemen, I can tell you that we are doing very well! Here are a few examples that come to mind:

Garner Police Department reaccredited by CALEA- March 2008

Speaking of safety, the Garner Police Department was reaccredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. The Garner Police Department is a model for other agencies thus receiving the prestigious "Flagship" designation as a national leader in law enforcement administration.

Inter Local Agreement for Fire/EMS Station #4

The Town of Garner believes in forging partnerships and working with our neighbors to accomplish common goals. This can clearly be seen in the approval of an interlocal agreement with Wake County to build a fire station off Raynor Rd.

Garner Transitions to Wake County for Animal Sheltering Services

Many times throughout the year, the Board has to make some really tough decisions which are also very emotional issues for our citizens. This year we transitioned animal control sheltering to Wake County, and so far it has proven to be a beneficial move. Decisions like this are what make serving as elected official in town government so noble; you weigh the pros and cons for the benefit of the citizens as a whole.

Ralph Stanley concert

In November, Ralph Stanley and Lorraine Jordan were featured in a concert held at Garner's Historic Auditorium. Dr. Stanley is a bluegrass icon who is known throughout the world. This signifies that Garner is on the radar screen and can be a key player when it comes to attracting quality talent to this area.

White Deer Park groundbreaking

The Town is currently embarking on its biggest construction project ever. White Deer Park will be a gem in an already successful park system and a regional destination for those that enjoy nature. The park will feature a LEED certified nature center, picnic shelters, interactive amenities and Garner's first stretch of greenway.

First White Deer Road Race was a success

The Inaugural White Deer Dash 5K road race was a huge success and brought in runners as far away as Morehead City. The Family Fun Run signifies what Garner does best: bring families together for fun and safe entertainment.

Miss North Carolina Winner

In 2008, the Miss Garner Pageant celebrated its 50th anniversary. What better gift than to have Amanda Watson win the Miss North Carolina Pageant. For the fourth time, a Miss Garner has gone on to win the Miss North Carolina crown. If that wasn't enough, we had two consecutive Miss Garners in the recent Miss America pageant. Amanda Watson and Kendra Perry represented us well and brought national recognition to our small town for accomplishing this rare feat.

Garner Road Overlay

A constant goal of this Board is to beautify all areas of town. With the hard work of some citizens and town staff, we approved a Garner Road Overlay District that will lay the foundation for aesthetic improvements on the Garner Road corridor. The Board is committed to doing its part for North Garner. The Town, in conjunction with Garner Revitalization Association, is in the process of developing a streetscape plan for several locations around the downtown core.

Garner Rd. Sidewalk ribbon cutting

The Board continues its commitment to making Garner a walkable community. The sidewalk on Garner Rd. was completed. That stretch of sidewalk closed a

segment that will allow citizens to travel from the Garner Rec. Park to the Senior Center to the Auditorium and beyond. The Town will now turn its attention to completing a loop on Aversboro and Vandora Springs roads.

Garner Economic Development Bus Tour

Garner held its first Garner Economic Development Bus Tour. In partnership with the Garner Chamber, the Town was able to show off what it has to offer. The tour brought in scores of business professionals who really did not know the real Garner, only what they heard. The overall consensus was one of surprise and satisfaction for having taken the time to attend. The tour expelled some myths and left most everyone with what we have been saying for years---"Garner is a Great Place to Be."

Fidelity Bank ribbon cutting

Fidelity Bank opened its new location on Hwy.70. In a time when you hear nothing but bad news coming from the banking industry, it is good to know that smaller community based banks are continuing to expand and prosper in Garner.

Butterball ribbon cutting

Ribbon cuttings and ground breakings are two of the things I enjoy most as Mayor of Garner. No recent ribbon cutting may be as important as the Butterball, Inc. corporate headquarters ribbon cutting last fall. The lasting impact that will have on this community remains to be seen, but I believe it will be a positive step in the growth of this community as a place to work and do business.

Golden State Foods groundbreaking

As you hear of the daily job losses and business closings, we can stand proudly and announce the future emergence of jobs in the Garner market. Golden State Foods broke ground last February in the Greenfield North Business Park.

Reduced Water/Sewer Rates

In spite of the negative financial news you hear everyday on the national and state fronts, Garner has some positive news that has benefited every citizen. Last July the water and sewer rates were reduced thanks to the leadership and foresight of past Boards. The leaders entered into a utility merger with the City of Raleigh in 2001. We were criticized by some for "giving our system away." It was a necessary move to keep our community viable and environmentally sound. Now everyone that gets a utility bill can get some satisfaction knowing it is lower and that Town leaders have their best interest in mind, in addition to major improvements to the system.

Town Employees Participate in a Variety of Community Events - Relay for Life, Jane Ball 5K, White Deer Dash, Community Litter Sweeps, SCOR, United Way, Public Safety Day, Christmas Parade, Community Tree Lighting just to name a few.

United Way award

Town staff showed its commitment to the residents of Garner by donating over \$15,000 for improving the lives of others by running a successful United Way campaign. The Town received a President's Award for last year's campaign and expects to receive another for exceeding the Town goal this year.

NCRPA award

We all know that the July 3rd Celebration is a feather in our cap and the most impressive event in Garner. Now, the state knows because the event was awarded a North Carolina Recreation and Parks Association award for its ability to bring the community together and for its family oriented theme.

Likewise the Aldermen, not only invest time on the Board to make Garner better, but have also made personal choices to get involved and play active roles in civic and community organizations. Alderman Marshburn was selected as President of the Garner Rotary Club - June 2008. Alderman Johns continues to be a leader in his church. Alderman Singleton still volunteers for Meals on Wheels and is a vital part of the leadership at his church. Mayor Pro Tem Kennedy is a deacon in his church, in addition to being active in the Rotary Club. Alderman Behringer serves as a leader in the Garner Women's Club. That is just to mention a few things the Board member are involved in the lists go on and on.

The Town currently has a 41% fund balance that will be a benefit as we brace for the unknowns that lie ahead as we weather these challenging economic times. This balance indicates that tough decisions of the past and present Boards were wise during the budget process. I must commend the Board and staff for taking proactive steps to continually ensure we come out of this in good financial standing. The choices are difficult but there is a universal understanding that we must all make some sacrifices for the good of the Town. I am reminded of a quote from Jim Collins: "The old adage ' People are your most important asset' is wrong. People are not your most important asset. The right people are!" And we have the right people in place to make the Town of Garner the best place to live, work, shop and play. I am proud to represent you as Mayor. Thank you.

PETITIONS AND COMMENTS - None

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion: Johns
Second: Kennedy
Vote: Unanimous

CONSENT

Minutes from December 1, December 1 Special Meeting, December 16, 2008 and January 5, 2009

Action: Consider Adoption of Minutes

Wake County Tax Report, January 2009

The Wake County Board of Commissioners has approved non-cash rebates for \$102,537.27 for taxes from 2002 to 2008. These actions occurred in the period from November 1 through November 30, 2008 and are presented for approval.

Action: Approve Tax Releases

Easement Compensation for Aversboro Road/Vandora Springs Road Sidewalk Project

The Town Attorney has continued to evaluate and negotiate the appropriate reimbursement to Charles Goodwin, the property owner at 900 Forest Drive, which involves replacement of shrubs. A recalculation results in an increased compensation of \$240.00.

Action: Approve Additional Compensation of \$240.00

Motion: Marshburn
Second: Kennedy
Vote: Unanimous

Preliminary Public Hearing on the FY 2009-2010 Budget

Presenting: Rodney Dickerson

Mr. Dickerson said this preliminary budget hearing is to receive input from the public on programs or projects they would like to see considered for inclusion in the proposed budget. He presented the Board with the FY 2009 - 2010 Budget calendar.

Mayor Williams opened the hearing. No one came forward with comments, so the hearing was closed.

Action: Receive Comments; No Action Required

Ordinance Adopting Zoning Petition, Residential to Service Business, Bobbitt Drive

Presenting: Brad Bass

Mr. Bass reported that Roland and Louise Dutton have petitioned to rezone a .31 acre tract of land from Residential-10 (R-20) to Service Business (SB) located on Bobbitt Drive. The applicant requests general use zoning therefore no conditions are proposed. The Public Hearing was held Planning Commission unanimously recommends approval at its meeting on January 12, 2009.

Action: Adoption of Ordinance No. (2009) 3543; the request, Z-08-01, complies with the Town's comprehensive Growth Plan and will allow appropriate types of business at the described location which will provide opportunities for access to goods and/or services useful to the surrounding area.

Motion: Kennedy
Second: Johns
Vote: Unanimous

Request from Garner Volunteer Fire-Rescue, Inc. for an Additional Firefighter

Presenting: Chief Phil Mitchell

The Garner Volunteer Fire-Rescue, Inc. is requesting funding for a new firefighter position. Wake County has agreed to fully fund one firefighter position, but it is contingent upon the Town of Garner's agreement to fully fund a position as well. The Wake County Fire Commission Ad Hoc Committee identifies Garner and Fuquay as experiencing a large growth in building and population thus leading to an increased call volume. This new position would give these two departments the capability to maintain three person crews on responding apparatus.

Mr. Dickerson said the additional firefighter was not in this year's budget because the Wake County Fire Commission had not decided how it would allocate the twelve personnel throughout the County when the budget was submitted.

Mr. Dickerson reported that the Wake County Fire Commission has a staffing subcommittee that determined 45 firefighters are needed throughout the County. After budget submittal and review by the Wake County Manager and

Board of Commissioners, up to 23 positions were allocated in this year's budget; with no guarantees for future positions. The Fire Commission decided to only allocate twelve positions in light of the economic downturn and uncertain conditions. The Staffing Sub-Committee was unhappy about this and stated that they wanted all or nothing. With so many departments requesting personnel it would be difficult for them to decide who got the extra manpower. Therefore, the Fire Commission appointed three individuals to an Ad Hoc Staffing Committee to allocate the positions.

The Ad Hoc Staffing Committee recommended that Garner Volunteer Fire-Rescue, Inc. get one of the twelve positions with the condition that the Town of Garner matches that position. The positions are for current operations and not to staff the proposed Fire Station #4. A question was raised at the last Fire Commission meeting in January about what happens if the municipalities do not match the positions. The answer is they would go back to the Ad Hoc Staffing Committee to make a recommendation.

The Wake County Fire Marshall created a model to allocate these same twelve positions. In that synopsis, a position would be allocated to the Garner Fire Department without a match from the Town of Garner. It was noted that this plan was more consistent with the Long Range Business Plan. The information on both approaches was presented at the Ad Hoc Staffing Committee meeting. However, a staff recommendation was not requested when the matter went to vote by the full Fire Commission. The Fire Commission went with the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Staffing Committee.

Chief Mitchell said he is here in a support role and introduced Joe Sample. Mr. Sample has been a member of the Garner Volunteer Fire-Rescue Board of Directors since November.

Mr. Sample said we do not need to sacrifice public safety even during a depressed economy, noting that sirens mean help and we don't need to short public safety. Mr. Sample said 13.2 percent of the calls are understaffed. The Department cannot send a truck unless three fire fighters are on an engine or two on the Rescue Truck. If a rescue call comes from Station One, then a fire call comes in short on Station Three and must bring in some from Station Two (S.R. 1010). Of 4,478 calls, 147 were overlapping, meaning Station One is out on a rescue call and another on rescue and fire call. The Department works hard to get around the labor shortage. Wake County recognizes that Garner and Fuquay are under staffed. Wake County will fund a position for Garner if Garner will match another. To hire staff and equipment will cost \$43,893.54 or \$18,000 for the remainder of this budget year. The Fire Department is requesting the Town match Wake County's offer for public safety reasons so when you are in need of help, a siren comes to your rescue. Mr. Sample said he welcomed questions or comments.

Alderman Marshburn, referring to the staff report, asked where the twelve positions were recommended. Once that question was answered, he asked if any of these positions benefit the population near proposed Station Four. Mr. Sample said that those plans have not yet been finalized.

Alderman Behringer asked if these two new positions would create a 24 hour cycle. Mr. Mitchell said this would complete the cycle.

Alderman Kennedy asked if someone from the Fire Department has been soliciting funds for a new truck. Chief Mitchell said the Department is trying to raise money for equipment. If the fund raising is not successful, they will not continue.

Alderman Behringer asked Mr. Mitchell if he had ever had a situation where they could not respond. Chief Mitchell said they can get assistance elsewhere; there is a mutual aid agreement with the City of Raleigh, but it

