

Town of Mount Olive
August 5, 2024
Regular Board Meeting
Minutes

Mayor Jerome Newton called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. Those in attendance per roll call were Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay, Commissioner Delreese Simmons, Commissioner Danny Keel, Commissioner Tommy Brown, Commissioner Vicky Darden, Town Attorney Carroll Turner, Town Manager Jammie Royall and Town Clerk/Administrative Assistant Sherry Davis.

Mayor Jerome Newton delivered our invocation and Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Jerome Newton read the Conflict of Interest Statement; there were no conflicts.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion to approve the published agenda. Commissioner Tommy Brown made a motion to approve the published agenda. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion to approve the July 1, 2024 Regular Board meeting minutes. Commissioner Delreese Simmons advised there were some discrepancies in the minutes. He said there were some things in there that he did not say and some of the things he said were not in the minutes. Town Clerk Sherry Davis advised him to get the changes to her. Commissioner Delreese Simmons made a motion to table until the next meeting. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then opened the public forum. He stated the ordinance on our website states the public can speak for ten minutes. He asked if there was another ordinance that limited it to three minutes. Town Clerk Sherry Davis responded yes it was passed about a year ago. Mayor Jerome Newton then asked if that ordinance was published on our website or if a copy was available at this time. Town Clerk Sherry Davis advised it has not been updated on the website and she does not have a copy with her but it was passed. Mayor Jerome Newton said since the website states ten minutes and there is no copy present, he is going to allow those signed up for the public forum to speak ten minutes.

Ms. Cindy Bell of 109 Ramblewood Drive, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-658-5491. She provided her assessment of the Town's performance. She feels we are not moving forward in a timely manner. She stated there are always excuses for the failure. She commented there are no job descriptions, flooding issues, lack of lighting and physical accountability. There are personality issues and not even real problems above your accountability for such actions. She wanted to know why Mayor Newton was not advised of last month's censure. Is it because he is not the same type of mayor and listens. This is not a game and something has got to be done. She said stop the secret meetings. She commends the citizens of District 1 and District 2 for showing up to the meetings. She is very afraid with no change.

Mrs. Brenda Davis of 101 Ramblewood Drive, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-658-4552. Her written comments are attached as a part of the minutes.

Ms. Annette Kirby of 112 Ramblewood Drive, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-922-3410. Her written comments are attached as a part of the minutes.

Ms. Angela Williams of 1008 South Breazeale Avenue, Mount Olive, NC 28365, 919-273-3315. She is here on behalf of her brother Carvis Lee Williams as well as herself. Mr. Williams lives at 1012 South Breazeale Avenue, Mount Olive, NC 28365. She said she was told by Town Attorney Carroll Turner to praise Mount Olive. She said her grandfather worked at Mount Olive Pickle Company. Her priority is to make sure her brother is taken care of. She is waiting on her disability and is standing up here again because she had to go down after the accident. The man driving should not have been on the road. Someone told her that is a risk we take. She stated her home is still a problem. Former Mayor Pro-Tempore Steve Wiggins is here today that promised her help. She went to Wayne County first so they would be aware of the problem. Charity begins at home and why can't she build. The water department stated this has been going on for fifteen years. She said the greenest thing in Mount Olive is the University of Mount Olive soccer field. We cannot build or grow, that is not right and we need to do better. She provided two alternative numbers 910-429-1158 and 919-273-3315. She agrees with Annette Kirby and Cindy Bell. She asked if she was being recorded today. Commissioner Delreese Simmons responded yes you are. If you are not heard this time, the citizens should have an attorney who works for them.

Commissioner Delreese Simmons stated even though a Resolution of Censure was passed, he is still working for the citizens and is not going to stop. He doesn't care about the paper but does have one question; who will apologize? We are not the black community; his district has blacks, whites and Hispanics. Someone please apologize. He said he would apologize; he has never called his district the black community. It has all people. Commissioner Delreese Simmons asked why there are no commission reports; he commented Miss Sherry told him that former Mayor Kenneth Talton approved them.

Commission Delreese Simmons said the other commissioners are never going to agree with him. District 1 and District 2 were apart at one time but now we are together. He stated he will fight for the south side and does not care about the North Carolina Pickle Festival. He commented the citizens elected a mayor who does not get any respect. He admitted that he did not respect him at first but now he does. The mayor fights every day for this town for only four hundred dollars per month. Commissioner Delreese Simmons advised he is willing to work with these commissioners for the betterment of the south side. He receives calls from the north side as well. He could talk about the airport. He mentioned the email sent the other day, two commissioners said their contact with Town Attorney Carroll Turner is privileged. He said he has been in trouble and knows a lot about the law.

Mayor Jerome Newton thanked them for their comments and closed the public forum.

Mayor Jerome Newton then requested a motion to go into a Public Hearing Regarding the Special Use Permit Request by Mary Miller for the Property Located at 110 North Chestnut Street, Parcel # 2572876800 to Renovate the Building into Residential Apartments. The Property is Located in a C-1 Downtown Commercial District. Commissioner Danny Keel made the motion to go into public hearing. Commissioner Tommy Brown seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Ms. Annette Kirby stated she is very much in favor of Mary Miller getting this special use permit. Ms. Angela Williams requested a point of clarity, is there water and sewer connections. Mary Miller responded there are both water and sewer connections at the location. She stated she just completed renovating the little gray house on the corner of James and Church. She has been through this process numerous times and checked out all this information before she even bid on the property. Code Enforcement Officer Justin Hill advised the Planning Board has recommended approving this request. Mrs. Pernell Brickley asked who is on the planning board. Code Enforcement Officer Justin Hill stated if she would come to his office, he would get her the information.

Mayor Jerome Newton asked if there were any other comments. He then request a motion to come out of the Public Hearing and back into regular session. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay made the motion. Commissioner Tommy Brown seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action- Memo- 08-06 Consider Approval of Planning Board Recommendation to Grant A Special Use Permit to Mary Miller Regarding the Property Located at 110 North Chestnut Street. (Old Driver's License Office). The planning Board recommendation was unanimous decision all for the building being renovated into residential apartments.

Sec. 59-120 (e) (1) special uses for residential apartments

Sec. 59-120 - C-1 Downtown Commercial District (e) Special uses (1) Residential apartments

159-120 (e) - Special uses may be permitted upon the approval of the Board of Commissioners in compliance with Article V.

Mayor Jerome Newton requested a motion to approve Action-Memo 08-06. Commissioner Danny Keel made the motion. Commissioner Vicky Darden seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action- Memo- 08-07 Consider Approval of Resolution Adopting Community Development Block Grant Plans. Grant Administrator David Harris advised this is a requirement of the 2023 CDBG-Neighborhood Revitalization Project because the previous compliance plans expired in June. By adopting the Resolution, the following 15 compliance plans that are required by the Rural Economic Development Center will be approved/adopted for a three-year period in accordance with CDBG requirements. The Board does not have to adopt each plan individually. The only action needed is a motion adopting the Resolution. He have updated the plans and policies based on the most recent CDBG templates. He stated the town is affirming non-discrimination practices.

- Citizen Participation Plan
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Equal Employment and Procurement Plan
- Equal Opportunity Plan
- Excessive Force Policy
- AFFH Fair Housing Plan
- Fair Housing Complaint Procedure
- Language Access Plan
- Local Jobs Initiative Section 3 Plan
- Policy for Equal Opportunity
- Procurement Standards Policy and Plan
- Residential Ant displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan
- Section 504 Grievance Policy and Procedure
- Temporary Relocation Policy

Mayor Jerome Newton asked if there were any further questions. He then requested a motion to approve Action – Memo 08-07. Commissioner Tommy Brown made the motion. Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton then discussed Action Memo –08-08- Reconsider Stay of Condemnation on the James Dove House located at 107 North Chestnut Street. He turned this over to Town Attorney Carroll Turner. Town Attorney Carroll Turner advised Mr. James Dove is here tonight. Mr. Dove has prepared a plan of action as requested and emailed it to us. The town is hesitant to tear down an historical structure. The six- month extension was up tonight. The demolition order can be stayed or stopped. If the board lifts the stay, you are authorizing demolition. If not, it stays as it is now.

Code Enforcement Officer Justin Hill stated Mr. Dove has repaired the roof, cleaned the porch and mowed the grass. He feels the structure is sound. Commissioner Delreese Simmons said it is really not that bad and wondered why Mr. Dove was asked to come here

tonight. Town Clerk Sherry Davis advised at the February 2024 meeting the board voted to revisit this item at the August 2024 meeting. Code Enforcement Officer Justin Hill stated these goes back to 2022.

Commissioner Tommy Brown made a motion to allow the stay on the James Dove House located at 107 North Chestnut Street. Commissioner Danny Keel seconded the motion and it was passed 5-0.

Mayor Jerome Newton discussed his experience at B's on Breazeale, He had no idea there was a wellness center there. It is amazing there are places here we do not even know about. He was very impressed, you never what business you are driving by.

Mayor Jerome Newton stated it appears there is a question of whether or not there is attorney/client privilege regarding municipal elected officials. If there is, the individual official should pay for the attorney services themselves. He asked Town Attorney Carroll Turner to provide documentation to clear this matter up so it does not have to be addressed anymore. Mayor Jerome Newton feels attorney/ client privilege presents somewhat of a conflict of interest instead of clarity. He needs to see the General Statute. If the town is the client then everyone is under that umbrella. He thinks whether you have a board vote of 3-2 or 4-1, each side should have council and there should be no appearance of conflict of interest. Transparency starts with us.

Mayor Jerome Newton stated, we as a board must come together, whether he has a vote or not he is still the face of the town. This is not about friendship or fellowship, it is about leadership. Mayor Jerome Newton advised he cannot do it, he does not have the power but you as citizens do. He commented one town, one community, one Mount Olive. The board cannot do things without letting the mayor know because it looks shady. The board has that power and should speak with the mayor beforehand. We need to work together and every commissioner up here wants that to happen. We have to come together, personalities have no place. We were elected to work together; he is reaching out to the Board of Commissioners for the betterment of this town. When I-795 opens, we do not want people to come through Mount Olive to go purchase the same items in Goldsboro. We need to support our mom and pop stores. Give them the opportunity to match. Mayor Jerome Newton thanked everyone for coming out.

There being no further business Mayor Pro-Tempore Barbara Kornegay made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Danny Keel seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

Our next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 9, 2024 at 6:00 P.M. in the board meeting room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jerome Newton
Mayor

Sherry Davis
Administrative Assistant/Town Clerk

I would like to start with the request that my comments be accurately included in the minutes of this meeting. I have presented a typed statement to the clerk to assist in this effort. The minutes from July 2024 have misquoted me and presented a different perspective than originally intended. I haven't raised concerns about this in the past to try not to create extra work or conflict. However, I find this issue offensive and disrespectful.

I would also like to encourage future use of Zoom and live recordings of open meetings to promote citizen participation and recordings for clarification as needed.

I would also like it to be noted that our town ordinance allows citizen comments to limit of 10 minutes- not the restricted 3 minutes as published on the agenda.

Our agenda provides us with no updates on previous or current town issues: moratorium, lighting, signs, flood preparations in leu of the upcoming Storm Debbie. Can we get an update tonight?

A year ago, several citizens started trying to understand why our community was still under a sewer moratorium. MO citizens were experiencing property damage, environmental spills, & loss of business revenues. Our focus- do anything possible to help our community.

During the time since, we -this community – have uncovered several very serious issues.

1. **Conflicts in providing prosperity for all** - segregated services and development among neighborhoods.
2. **Lack of transparency**- undisclosed airport budgets & funding; unspoken & unpublished state audits; irregular procedures & processes; avoidance of responding to questions/issues; limiting officials availability to citizens for questions or expression of concerns/views; monthly board meeting newspaper coverage of citizen concerns suddenly stopped and sometimes down right falsehoods.
3. **Lack of accountability within the city government**- lack of transparency related to accountability for state and local laws and regulations; disregard of established policies and procedures; lack of corrective action plans.
4. **Special interest priorities**- lack of transparency related to use of tax dollars by special interests and gifts of property to limited liability organizations with stated interest for town. How are they helping?

There are a number of apparent conflicts of interest that seem to be influencing the decision of the commissioners and town leadership. It seems there is a need for more disclosure on behalf of the commissioners and employees. I recommend developing a formal disclosure and conflict of interest policy and ordinance to avoid these potential conflicts and allow accountability.

Respectfully,

Annette Kirby

When I looked at the agenda for tonight I immediately noticed a change...there was no allotted time for Mayor, Manager and Commissioners reports. In other words, there would be no feedback to the citizens regarding ongoing projects and issues of concern such as the Moratorium, street signs, storm preparations for this weeks severe weather and so forth. Therefore specifically addressing one of these issues.

Street Sign Replacement Timeline, as presented to the public:

- **September 12, 2023** - Town Board Meeting - Dennis Draper spoke on the lack of street signs. Mayor Talton told Town Manager, Jammie Royall, to resolve the sign issue as soon as possible. This had been a recurring citizen complaint, Mr. Royall introduced the idea of a sign machine and was asked "are we capable of making signs?"
- **October 10, 2023** - Town Board Meeting - Mayor Talton absent. Mayor Pro Tem Wiggins conducted the meeting. Purchase of sign machine for \$15,000 was approved with **no** discussion.
- **January 8, 2024** - Town Board Meeting -Mr. Royall was absent. Mitchell Davis gave a sign machine update: machine being received in pieces, the room required wiring and HVAC for temperature control, blanks needed to be ordered. Once everything is received, he would figure out how to run it and that the signs would be mounted in a manner that the wind could not blow off.
- **February 5, 2024** - Town Board Meeting - Mr. Royall reported all parts of the sign machine had been received. The process just needed some "tweaking" but should have signs by the end of February
- **February 12, 2024** - Ordinance and Working Meeting - Mr. Royall gave a sign machine update, final piece received today and should be put together this week". Mr. Royall to order software, blanks and scheduling training that he will perform. Mayor Newton asked that Mr. Royall keep this within a **30** day timeline.
- **February 15, 2024** - Scheduled appointment with Mr. Royall, that Commissioner Darden joined. Mr. Royall said they "were uncrating the machine as we speak". He again said the end of February for signs to be in production.
- **March 4, 2024** - Town Board Meeting - Mr. Royall reported "we have finally received the sign machine and I have to reschedule training due to my surgery. Currently, I am rescheduling it."

Mount Olive Town Board Meeting

August 5, 2024

Submitted by Brenda Davis

- **April 1, 2024** - Town Board Meeting - Mr. Royall showed the public a sample sign. He informed everyone the sign machine was up and running. "You should start seeing them go up in the next few weeks."
- **May 6, 2024** - Town Board Meeting - Mr. Royall's report stated "they had not had time to work on signs. We will work on it this month and place them in June."
- **June 3, 2024** - Town Board Meeting -Mr. Royall responded to a question on the status of the sign machine, "it's a complicated process".

All of the above statements were made publicly. As of last week, the sign machine **is not nor ever** has been in operation. The street sign shown at the April meeting was purchased. We must remember that the enormous amount of missing street signs has been a citizen complaint for over a year. This issue is a serious safety and communication issue for this town. Why has this problem not been resolved?

To date, we do not know the total cost of the project, the true cost of a sign produced in Mount Olive, or if we are capable of producing signs? The decision to purchase a sign machine by this board has certainly not addressed the problem. Would it have been cheaper and faster to contract street sign replacement? Is anyone asking these questions?

We are now a year later! Elected representatives have a duty to conduct oversight of the use of taxpayer funds. You **approved** the expenditure, but where is the oversight, the accountability?. Where is the good judgment? Misinformation continues to be shared at the expense of the safety and well being of the citizens? I ask again, how many signs could've been purchased for \$15,000? It seems to be another royal mistake.