

Summary Minutes and Conclusions  
1<sup>st</sup> Comprehensive Plan Steering Meeting  
December 14, 2020

Members Present:

Gary Brown, President, Louisburg College  
Fannie Perry, Chairman, Louisburg Town Planning Board  
Betty Wright, Louisburg Town Councilmember  
Matt Winslow, NC House Member, President Winslow Homes  
Kim Baker, Louisburg Historical Society  
Dr. Rev, Rosby, Pastor, South Main Street Baptist Church  
Keith Smith, President, Pete Smith Automotive  
Scott Hammerbacher, Planning Director, Franklin County  
Monique Watkins, Economic Development Coordinator, Town of Louisburg

Member Not Present

Robb Griffin, Tri Properties, Inc.  
Pier Williamson, Attorney, Williamson and Jolly  
*(Ed note: Mr. Williamson was later interviewed by Philip Slayter for his input)*

Also Present:

Jason Epley, Benchmark Consulting  
Philip Slayter, Planning Administrator, Town of Louisburg  
Jon Franklin, Louisburg Town Administrator

The meeting was opened by Jason Epley of Benchmark Planning who requested that each member introduce themselves. Following introductions, Mr. Epley gave a short presentation on the comprehensive planning process. This element of his remarks was followed by a brief overview of key demographic and economic trends affecting the region, Franklin County and the Town of Louisburg (*Powerpoint slides attached*).

After a pausing to allow for questions on the presentation, Mr. Epley moved to core of the evening's objective – drawing out the Committee's views on four key perspectives of the Town. *Note that the issues listed are not in rank ordered.*

### **A. What Are The Town's Major Strengths?**

This question drew the broadest consensus of opinions among the group. Key views taken from the discussion included:

- 1) Diverse and robust Downtown
- 2) Small Town Atmosphere coupled with Family Friendly
- 3) Presence of Louisburg College
- 4) Progressive City Government
- 5) A sense of community pride and unity
- 6) Geographic center for trade and transportation
- 7) Presence of a strong faith community
- 8) Strong neighborhood identity especially the Historic District

### **B. What Are The Town's Weaknesses?**

Among the group this question appeared to bring out no single compelling viewpoint but rather a range of issues that seem to be descriptive of smaller individual barriers to change and improvement of the Town. Noted were:

- 1) Affordable housing
- 2) Small core of community civic leadership
- 3) Lack of more industry
- 4) Appearance of Bickett Boulevard
- 5) Louisburg College (2 year degrees vs 4 year programs)
- 6) More robust hotel, restaurant and retail options
- 7) Perception of high utilities
- 8) Need for more active recreational options
- 9) More incentives for small business (community internet, education, etc.)
- 10) Quality of the local public schools

### **C. What Opportunities Do You See For The Town and What Can Be The Town's Future in 5 to 10 Years?**

These answers to these last two questions were expressed as extensions of the first two questions with some narrower focus on the scope and characterization given by participants. This led to a blending of responses. Key points highlighted were:

1. Attention to regionalism where solutions or planning for capital facilities or programs that would examine countywide or system approaches such as recreation or utilities.
2. Increased use and development of the Tar River

3. While encouraging growth recognize that Louisburg's small-town lifestyle is a key Town asset and preserve that brand.
4. With the continued redevelopment of Bickett Boulevard the Town should enhance its "front porch" to appeal to new business prospects.
5. A recognition that Louisburg College is a key asset that should be maximized through its expansion to a four-year program.

As the planned time limit for discussion was reached the Steering Committee wrapped up discussion with Mr. Epley stating the next step in the process would entail information gathering by their staff and present more detail aspects of the town growth development potential. A second meeting date was not scheduled but would be announced once they had an opportunity to digest the remarks taken this evening.