

TOWN OF WILSON'S MILLS
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
October 23, 2025

PRESENT: Mayor Fleta Byrd, Mayor Pro-tem JC Triplett, Councilmembers David McGowan, and Carolyn Dobbins.

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Administrator Leighanna Worley, Town Clerk Emily Matthews, Finance Officer Sherry Hudson, Human Resources Director Jennifer Martin, Public Works Director Patrick Moore, Planning Director Wendy Oldham, and Planning Board Member Doris Riley.

ABSENT Councilmember Randy Jernigan and Councilmember Tim Brown

CONVOCATION: Mayor Byrd declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order at 3:07pm.

STRATEGIC PLAN DISCUSSION WITH DEPARTMENT HEADS: Town Administrator Worley handed out a synopsis of what occurred at the Strategic Plan workshop attended by Council on October 8th and 9th. She said Council has a very rough draft included that will be reviewed today. Ms. Worley said the plan contains 4 main focus areas, 2 objectives for each focus, and 2 initiatives for each objective for a total of 16 action items. She stated the 4 focus areas are:

1. Safe, Vibrant, and Healthy Community
2. Economic Development
3. Safe, Reliable, and Sustainable Utility Services
4. Transportation

Ms. Worley explained for the first focus area it would include adding equipment at the Community Park such as a Tot Lot and inclusive equipment for children with special needs. She mentioned working with Johnston County Partnership for Children as well as the schools in Wilson's Mills to add this equipment. Ms. Worley reviewed the following objectives and initiatives for focus area 1:

- Objective 1: Support an active lifestyle for our residents by providing vital Parks and Recreational opportunities.
 - Initiative 1.1.1: Conduct public workshops to identify desired Parks and Recreational programs and facilities not currently offered, along with estimated costs.
 - Initiative 1.1.2: Prioritize desired projects and identify or seek funding options, including governmental and private grants, sponsorship, and volunteer efforts.
- Objective 2: Cultivate partnerships with local human service agencies, non-profit organizations, and other community institutions to support the needs of our residents.
 - Initiative 1.2.1: Involve citizen focus groups or other community engagement to provide information on human service needs and in responding to ideas and opportunities in the community.
 - Initiative 1.2.2: Provide multi-lingual information and access for our residents to social service organizations.

Councilmember McGowan said the initiatives are action items and asked how we plan to reach the public. Ms. Worley mentioned pop-ups in local subdivisions and planned question periods at HOA meetings. She also mentioned putting out surveys online and at town events to get citizen input. She said it would probably take 6 months to a year of continuous outreach in order to make an impact. Councilmember Dobbins asked about the newsletters that were sent out quarterly and she hasn't received one in a while. Ms. Worley said the newsletters are now emailed due to the citizens input on how they wish to receive town news.

Ms. Worley said after identifying what is desired at the park we would look into financial programs such as grants and sponsorships in order to receive funding for what equipment we would like.

Mayor Byrd asked if there is a way to send out flyers and newsletters in Spanish for those who are non-English speaking. Ms. Worley said that is something we can look into to make sure all citizens are remaining informed.

Councilmember McGowan mentioned having an informational tent at the Town Christmas event in December. Ms. Worley said the plan is for each department to have a timeslot in which residents can speak with them and ask questions. Councilmember McGowan mentioned having a table specifically for Town Council.

Councilmember McGowan asked about citizen focus groups and how to involve them in the process of updating the Strategic Plan. Ms. Worley said Wilson's Mills doesn't have many citizen focus groups within our town other than HOAs within the subdivisions.

Councilmember McGowan commented the word "safe" in the focus area doesn't seem to relate to the park and he thinks it relates more to the Police Department. Ms. Worley said in this case "safe" is aimed more towards making sure equipment is age appropriate and there is play equipment for all ages. Councilmember McGowan mentioned using the word "inclusive" instead.

Ms. Worley moved onto the second focus area, Economic Development. Ms. Worley said during the workshop Council went through the old Strategic Plan and reviewed what has already been done or in the process of being done regarding economic development. In the old Strategic Plan Council discussed updating the Community Park activities through a PART-F grant and Capital Improvement Plan. She said PART-F cannot be used until a Master Plan is done for the park. She also said the Capital Improvement Plan has not yet been completed so that has been added to the new Strategic Plan. She said the Unified Development Ordinance and future land use map also need to be updated and modernized.

Ms. Worley reviewed the following for the second focus area:

- Objective 1: Maintain infrastructure and amenities that are attractive and necessary to economic development.
 - Initiative 2.1.1: Visually show visitors and newcomers what the town has to offer by way of signs, banners, and other effective marketing tools.

- Initiative 2.1.2: Pursue funding options, including grants and savings, to pay for needed capital improvements.

Ms. Worley said this objective is more about the Capital Improvement Plan which would include physical projects such as sidewalks, streetlights, and sewer.

- Objective 2: Promote the unique character of the community (such as natural resources, historical background, proximity to interstates and metropolitan areas) to attract business growth.
 - Initiative 2.2.1: Inventory all community assets and evaluate how they could be further utilized to attract economic development to the town.
 - Initiative 2.2.2: Meet with key developers to review opportunities for private investments utilizing community assets (new restaurant in a historical area, tourism or other ventures along natural resource places, etc.)

The purpose of this objective is to get the needed plans together and Ms. Worley said she will be directing staff on the steps to take in order to get these completed. Mayor Byrd said she thinks this objective needs to be reworded for clarity. Councilmember McGowan suggested fringing a way to focus on historical places in town. Ms. Worley said Johnston County is planning a celebration for 250 years of incorporation and they are collecting historical information from each town. She said we have sent in information as well as historical photos for Wilson's Mills. She said as we focus on the town's history and assets we need to discover ways to utilize the assets to bring people into town.

Objective 1 was reworded as follows: Plan town amenities that are attractive and necessary to economic development.

Councilmember McGowan said he thinks we should work on making sure people know where Town Hall is located. Mrs. Riley suggested flags or banners to draw attention. Ms. Worley stated this would be part of the Campus Master Plan rather than the Strategic Plan and she made a note to refer to in the future.

Ms. Worley moved onto the third focus area, Safe Reliable and Sustainable Utility Services.

Ms. Worley said while we do not currently have utilities managed by the Town, we are in the process of creating a utility service agreement with the county and neighboring towns.

- Objective 1: Maintain a reliable water and sewer service that are accessible and affordable to all citizens and are provided at a high level of customer service and accountability.
 - Initiative 3.1.1: Develop written policy and procedure manuals for the utility systems operations and regularly review such for compliance and needed updates.

- Initiative 3.1.2: Have a revenue study performed to review the necessary revenues required from customers based on cost-of-service principles and regularly benchmark such against other peer systems.
- Objective 2: Ensure that the utility is economically sustainable long-term by current and projected customer base and, when applicable, review opportunities for partnering with other systems.
 - Initiative 3.2.1: Participate in state and regional reviews of utility system sustainability to determine best future options for the Town and region in ensuring long-term sustainability and quality at affordable costs for utility customers.
 - Initiative 3.2.2: Set up boundary agreement with surrounding towns that address utility services and annexation limits.

Ms. Worley said this objective doesn't fit the overall needs of our town and would need to be reworded.

Councilmember McGowan again mentioned "safe" shouldn't be included in this focus area because he feels it doesn't align with the purpose. Mrs. Oldham and Mayor Byrd mentioned that residents would want to know their water is safe to use within their home.

After discussion the focus area was reworded to "Ensure Access to Utility Services for All Citizens."

Mayor Pro-tem Triplett mentioned that most of the goals listed cannot be completed until an agreement with the County is done. Ms. Worley said as of right now this focus area is set to be worked on and completed in fiscal years 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 but we can change it if needed. Mayor Byrd said she thinks we need to keep it in the plan, but it needs to be reworded.

After discussion the objectives and initiatives were reworded as follows:

- Objective 1 Strengthen partnerships and agreements with counties and neighboring towns to ensure consistent access.
 - Initiative 3.1.1: Review and update interlocal utility agreements to ensure that the terms are current, equitable, and account for projected growth within the town limits and ETJ (extraterritorial jurisdiction).
 - Initiative 3.1.2: Establish a utility coordination committee with representatives from the town, county, and partner municipalities to meet and address service issues.
- Objective 2: Plan for long-term infrastructure development that supports growth and ensures service access for all citizens.
 - Initiative 3.2.1: Develop a utility master plan that maps existing service boundaries. Identifies underserved areas and outlines phased expansion strategies that align with the town's growth plans.

- Initiative 3.2.2: Pursue funding and grants for utility infrastructure improvements and extensions.

Ms. Worley said the final focus area is Transportation. She said this focus area focuses mainly on the giving bikers and walkers their own lane on roads but also focuses on all transportation. She reviewed the following objectives and initiatives:

- Objective 1: Improve connectivity and growth of neighborhood and downtown area by investing in road and sidewalk infrastructure.
 - Initiative 4.1.1: Develop a multi-year capital improvement plan for streets and sidewalk infrastructure projects, including expected funding sources to potentially include Powel Bill revenue, General Fund transfers, and long-term debt.
 - Initiative 4.1.2: Pursue a goal of ensuring safe walking access to schools by building paths or sidewalks that connect its local schools and recreation area to its residential streets.

Ms. Worley asked if Public Works Director Patrick Moore has a list of streets in town that need to be repaved. She suggested we change the roads that need to be repaved first to include a bike and pedestrian lane. Mrs. Oldham said most multimodal roads are owned by Department of Transportation as of right now.

Councilmember McGowan mentioned a bike path patrol plan for the Police Department. He said although we may not need it right now it would be beneficial to have it ready in the future.

Ms. Worley asked if the multimodal plan is in phases and Mrs. Oldham said yes, it is in 8 phases.

Ms. Worley said for initiative 1 we can look at Powell Bills funds, Chief can look at the highest traffic areas, and we can check with DOT on some of their owned streets that are close to needing repair and we can implement the bike lanes on those roads first. Mrs. Oldham mentioned the lanes would have to be at least 5 feet off the road so we would have to obtain easements in some areas.

Ms. Worley said initiative 2 seems to not be an action item so it needs to be reworded to make it more action based. She said for this initiative we would need to work with the property owners in the area and DOT to purchase the right-of-way.

Councilmember McGowan mentioned a bike path down to the park. Mrs. Oldham said the bike/pedestrian plan is on the Planning page of the town website.

Ms. Worley reviewed objective 2 and the initiatives.

- Objective 2: Enhance active lifestyle practices in the community by improving active transportation modes such as walking and cycling.
 - Initiative 4.2.1: Collaborate with local businesses to provide bike parking options throughout the commercial district.

- Initiative 4.2.2: illustrate on the Town’s website and other media sources how the town provides access to active transportation modes and enhance community experiences.

Ms. Worley mentioned we are looking into a grant from the county and it would apply to open space fees at the park and we plan to use some of the funds for a bike rack.

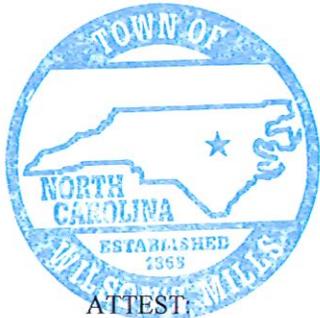
Ms. Worley said Council will be meeting Planning Board on Monday night during their Work Session. She asked if Council prefers to present the plan to Planning Board with the revisions or present the original plan that Council reviewed today. Mayor Byrd said to present with revised plan and Mrs. Oldham agreed.

Ms. Worley mentioned departmental reports are usually reviewed at the work session. Since this is a joint meeting with the Planning Board and a Closed Session is scheduled she asked if Council would like to skip review of the reports at the meeting and instead call with any questions. It was the consensus of Council that they would not review the departmental reports at the Work Session but instead call the appropriate Department Head with any questions.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Mayor Pro-tem JC Triplett and seconded by Councilmember David McGowan to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:26pm.



ATTEST:


EMILY MATTHEWS, CMC
Town Clerk


FLETA A. BYRD, Mayor