

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
FEBRUARY 26, 2024**

THE FRANKLIN TOWN COUNCIL held a special called meeting on Monday, February 26, at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room located at 95 East Main Street Franklin, NC.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jack Horton called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. with the following members present: Vice Mayor Stacy Guffey joined via zoom, Council Members: Joe Collins, Rita Salain, and Mike Lewis.

Council Members absent: David Culpepper and Robbie Tompa.

Vice Mayor Guffey began the meeting. Rory Dowling and Sarah Odio with Development Finance Initiative (DFI) along with Sarah Grymes of Dogwood Health Trust were on the call.

Vice Mayor Guffey arranged the meeting to discuss potential use of Town owned property or future Town owned property for affordable/workforce housing sites. He wanted to have this conversation with DFI as they have experience with developing these types of plans. He also included Dogwood Health Trust to talk about potential grant funding and resources.

Rory Dowling, Executive Director, explained that DFI-UNC School of Government advises communities in NC to attract private investment for transformative projects by providing specialized real estate development and finance expertise.

Sarah Odio, Associate Director of Housing, works with DFI Affordable Housing Services. She provided an overview of their services and successes in affordable housing in communities through the following model: idea, site control, feasibility, analysis, identify partners, ownership entity, design, entitlement, and acquisition. DFI also helps with the potential scope opportunity site development with stakeholder engagement, housing needs assessment, site suitability analysis, and high-level site & financial feasibility.

Ms. Odio said the goal of DFI is to get to a Feasible Public/Private Partnership.

Ms. Odio went over the Buncombe County case study.

Discussion was held on project cost and funding (HUD, private & local government participation).

Sarah Grymes, VP of Housing with Dogwood Health Trust, discussed their grant funding. Dogwood Health Trust puts thoughtful dollars into their communities. They help with feasibility studies and the plan to get the project started. They fund directly to the non-profit or county/municipality. They also like to fund to developers who are located in/or have strong ties to Western North Carolina.

Council Member Lewis asked if this included neighborhood revitalization and Ms. Grymes stated that it did.

Town Manager Owens commented that Dogwood Health Trust utilizes a variety of stakeholders, but the grant cycle has closed for this year. Ms. Grymes will update as to when the application process may reopen.

Council Member Collins asked what tools are available for pulling a project together: lower utilities, gift land, tax abatements? Ms. Odio said that their tools would be land and site control, economic development, and ability to pick your own partner. She also noted that the tools would also depend on what you were trying to achieve.

Discussion was held on inventory of available property and Vice Mayor Guffey mentioned partnering with Macon County on their housing study.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Joe Collins made a motion, seconded by Council Member Rita Salain to adjourn the meeting at 6:21 p.m. The motion carried by consensus.

C. Jack Horton, Mayor

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk