

CALL TO ORDER/
INVOCATION

Mayor Cook provided information to the audience regarding the topic and meeting procedures. She introduced the two deputies, staff and attorney. Council introduced themselves. She called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

COUNCIL
PRESENT

The following members of the Board were present: Mayor Virginia Cook, Council Members Brenda Banks, Jamie Hollowell, Wendell Hildebrand, Lee Lowman and Barbara Lowman.

STAFF PRESENT

The following staff members were present: Attorney Redmond Dill, Town Clerk Alice Sanders, Finance Officer Fredrick Rankins and Administrative Assistant Rebecah Isenhour.

CITIZENS
PRESENT

See attached sheet.

MEDIA

Evan Matsumoto, from the *Hickory Daily Record* was in attendance.

OPEN SPECIAL
MEETING

Mayor Cook opened the Special Meeting at 7:09 p.m.

ADOPTION OF
AGENDA

Council Member Hollowell made a motion to adopt the agenda. All voted in favor.

ORDER OF
BUSINESS:
COUNCIL TO HEAR
FROM TOWN
RESIDENTS
REGARDING THE
OLD SCHOOL
BUILDING

Mayor Cook informed the audience that the meeting is not a debate but a time for Council to receive input from the residents regarding the fate of the old school building. She stated that the financial fate of the building will only impact the residents of the Town. The building in question begins at the breezeway and continues left, towards the gymnasium. The current Town Hall office building will not be affected. She emphasized that each resident will be allowed three minutes to speak.

Attorney Dill stated that the Town residents will speak first, then other citizens will be heard. He stated that anyone that wishes to speak can sign up until 7:30 p.m. He also informed the audience that anyone can submit written comments to the Board at any time after the meeting.

The following Town residents made comments to the Board:

Cheyenne Lovelace – Ms. Lovelace stated that she was in favor of preserving the school building and suggested turning it into a residential area or retail area with a restaurant. She stated that if the

building will be demolished, she would like for Council to keep some of the bricks for use in the museum and to sell in order to raise money to help preserve other buildings. In addition, she suggested that if the building is demolished, that the area be turned into a small green space with a common area for citizens to sit and relax.

Mary Lowman – Ms. Lowman stated that she felt the building should be torn down. She agreed with a common area or a new building to be built in its place in order to bring more young people into the Town.

Richard Bell – Mr. Bell reviewed the three options Council has regarding the fate of the building and wished the Board luck with its decision.

Kenneth Mosteller – Mr. Mosteller stated that he did not want taxes to be raised and he doesn't want his kids to be paying for our past. He stated that he understood the sentimental value of the building, but did not believe the Town, nor his kids, could afford to preserve it.

Ben Honeycutt – Mr. Honeycutt expressed his desire to deed the property over to Preservation North Carolina in order to seek a developer to renovate the building for office, retail or residential use.

Marie Parkhurst – Ms. Parkhurst stated that she agreed with Mr. Ben Honeycutt's comments.

Jessica Sanchez Wilson – Ms. Wilson, a member of HHDA, spoke passionately to preserve the building and to deed the property to Preservation North Carolina.

Rondel Childres – Mr. Childres, a former Council member, stated that it would be more sensible to use the money that will be expensed to demolish the building to renovate the building and stated that the building is an asset to the Town.

Michael Stroupe – Mr. Stroupe, a former Council member, stated that if the building is demolished, Council will need to eradicate the bats and remove asbestos, working with state and federal agencies, for liability reasons. He stated that he felt the money used to demolish the building would be better spent in renovating the building or suggested deeding the property to Preservation North Carolina.

The following citizens made comments to the Board:

Michael B. Huffman – Mr. Huffman, a freelance historian, photographer and decorator for Burke and Catawba County, stated

that he would like to see the building restored. He suggested a senior center or a visitor center in order to grow and prosper.

Mark Lackey – Mr. Lackey stated that the school is more than sentiments and memories, but people's heritage. He suggested deeding the building to Preservation North Carolina.

Troy Smart – Mr. Smart suggested renovating the building for a library, senior center, and welcome center. He stated that the building has sentimental and historical values and is part of the Town seal.

Rex Lail – Mr. Lail, a member of HHDA, stated that he does his shopping and business in Hildebran. He spoke about preserving the heritage of the community and suggested renovating the building to generate revenue and promote growth and to preserve a part of the community that is almost one hundred years old.

Sherri Hughes – Ms. Hughes spoke about keeping the building in order to build a future and to keep young people in the Town.

Jim Jacumin – Mr. Jacumin spoke about the renovations that were done to the current Town Hall building and the pleasure it brought the community, as well as building the pool for the community. He suggested renovating the building in steps in order to preserve the heritage of many families.

Sparky Hurst – Mr. Hurst requested that the building be saved in order to preserve history. He suggested Preservation North Carolina be involved.

Beverly Aderholdt Lail – Ms. Lail stated that she was in favor of preserving the heritage of the building.

Linda Bridges Massey – Ms. Massey spoke about preserving the building in order to bring her children and show them where she went to school.

Johnny Childers – Mr. Childers, the Vice President of HHDA, stated that the HHDA has been planning a centennial celebration of the building in question. He stated that Kelle Huffman is researching grants to help preserve the building. He suggested the library be a part of the renovated building and suggested using Preservation North Carolina.

Gale Fulbright – Ms. Fulbright stated she agreed with every speaker that spoke about the heritage of the building. She requested the building be preserved.

Slyvia Lail – Ms. Lail stated that she would like the building to be preserved and renovated.

Elizabeth Tallant – Ms. Tallant stated that the building is like a cohesive glue that holds the community together and requested the building be preserved.

Each Council member thanked everyone for their input and opinions and stated that they will consider these comments when making their decision.

ANNOUNCEMENTS Mayor Cook informed the audience that a special meeting will be held on January 23, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council’s Chamber for the purpose of discussing events and planning for 2015. She emphasized that the school building will not be discussed at the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT All business being concluded, Council Member Hildebrand made a motion to adjourn at 8:15 p.m. All voted in favor.

ATTEST I attest these are the approved minutes of the Board.

Alice Sanders, Town Clerk

Virginia Cook, Mayor