

The Smithfield Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, July 7, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Smithfield Town Hall. Mayor John H. Lampe II. presided.

Councilmen Present:

M. Andy Moore, Mayor Pro-Tem
Roger A. Wood, District 4
Emery D. Ashley, At-Large

Councilmen Absent

Marlon Lee, District 1
J. Perry Harris, District 2
Travis Scott, District 3
Charles A. Williams, At-Large

Administrative Staff Present

Paul Sabiston, Town Manager
John Blanton, Interim Fire Chief
Pete Connet, Interim Public Utilities Director
Paul Embler, Planning Director
Gary Johnson, Parks & Rec Director
Tim Kerigan, Human Resources/PIO
Michael Scott, Chief of Police
Greg Siler, Finance Director
Shannan Williams, Town Clerk

Present:

Bob Spence, Town Attorney

Staff Absent:

Lenny Branch, Public Works Director

The invocation was given by Mayor Lampe followed by the Pledge of Allegiance offered by Isaac Wells of Boy Scout Troop 776.

Mayor Lampe explained that due to a lack of quorum by the Council, the Town could not hold an official meeting. He explained that the Council would still hear the Presentations and Citizens Comment because no action was required by the Council. No formal actions were taken by the Council in attendance.

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Recognition of the Promotions of Sergeant Brian O’Branovich to Patrol Lieutenant and Master Police Officer David Johnson to Patrol Sergeant.

Chief of Police Michael Scott informed the Council that the Police Department recently promoted Brian O’Branovich to the position of Patrol Lieutenant and David R. Johnson to Patrol Sergeant. Lieutenant O’Branovich and Sergeant Johnson were administered their Oath of Office and their badged pinned on by their wives.

2. Administering Oath of Office to new Police Officer Miguel Renteria

Mayor Lampe administered the Oath of Office to new Police Officer Miguel Renteria and welcomed him to the Town of Smithfield.

3. Report from the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield

Margaret Marshall Director of the Public Library of Johnston County and Smithfield informed the Council that the Library had received two federally funded grants for FY 2015-2016. These grants were made possible through funding from the Federal Institute of Museums and Library Services (IMLS) under the provision of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and administered by the State Library of North Carolina, a division of the Department of Cultural Resources.

Ms. Marshall explained that the EZ Literacy and Lifelong Learning Grant in the amount of \$43,200 will allow the library to establish literacy centers focused on the adult population throughout Johnston, Harnett and Sampson Counties. Working with partner institutions, the affiliated libraries in Johnston County, Triangle South Literacy Works, Harnett County Libraries, Sampson County Libraries, literacy tutors and students using the centers will have easy access to adult literacy material. The centers should be operational by March 2016

The second grant is the NC Cardinal Migration grant. This will allow the Library to join NC Cardinal a growing consortium of North Carolina public libraries with the goal of sharing resources and expanding opportunities through using a single online catalog.

The Library also received the Cara Lee Powell Priest Endowment for Johnston County in the amount of \$2,000. This grant will be used to purchase downloadable audio books which will be available to all patrons through the 3M e-book platform.

Additionally, the Library had been chosen as a runner-up winner in the Sirci-Dynix "Love Your Library" Contest. The annual contest allows library users from all over the worlds to submit nominations letters or videos to show how much they appreciate their library. Ms. Marshall expressed her appreciation to DSDC Director Sarah Edwards for nominating the Library for this award.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS:

- Sarah Edwards Executive Director of Downtown Smithfield Development Corporation expressed her appreciation to the Town's Fire, Police Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments for all their hard work and efforts during the event.
- Tony Nixon Chairman of the East Smithfield Improvement Organization read the following letters in response to the recent hate crime vandalism that occurred in Smithfield

- 1) *To the Mayor, Member of the Council and fellow citizens of the Smithfield and Johnston County area; good evening.
Tonight I wish to call your attention to the sleeping giant that has awakened within our nation and within our community. It truly has nothing to do with a flag, but moreover an attitude that has existed and persisted from the dawn of humanity; prejudice. There has always existed an attitude of selfishness and greed that are the elements of prejudice. The effects of greed can be felt throughout our society. Corporations have crushed the lives of countless people in their quest to make a profit. As a society, we have sought luxuries at the expense of workers and their wages. We put our material comforts ahead of justice for others. God is not pleased with this. Instead of wanting to hear the truth, we would rather hear counselors tell us about how much more money we are going to get or what great legacy we will leave as a family heritage. It would be wrong for me not to inform you that the Lord wants us to repent of our evil ways so we can hear the truth and seek justice for our fellow Johnstonians who are still being oppressed. Greed has been the driving force behind much of the injustice of our past and present. So often, society's message is to get all we can, even at the expense of others. But the true higher calling for humanity is for us to seek out the welfare of the poor and weak. One way that we can do that is fight against modern slavery, and its ideals that continue to plague our society. There is clearly one thing we should have learned in this community by now, and that is that we cannot justify evil and wrongdoing in our community, nor those who still perpetrate it upon others. As I close this statement, let me reflect that of the over 6 decades I have been connected with the town of Smithfield, and expressly East Smithfield. I can't remember a time when I observed a group of Caucasian males parked in a predominately black neighborhood, at a black church, taking their dirt bikes off their truck and race around the parking lot of that church, but this is what happened on last Thursday at Shiloh Christian Church, in the Belmont section of East Smithfield, in an area once known as Johnston Bottom. It was the attitude these young men exhibited after being asked to cease this activity and remove themselves from the premises; it was one of defiant disdain. No, I have never seen anything like this until the events of Charleston, SC and the call for the removal of the Confederate flag.
It is way past time for Kum Ba Yah meetings and time for a commitment toward actions that will eradicate the things that divide us as a community. I stand ready for the reactionary meeting, so we can become proactive for the future of our community.*

*Respectfully submitted,
Elder Kenneth J. Matthews, Overseer
Shiloh Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*

2) July 7, 2015

As chairman of the East Smithfield Improvement Organization a group committed to the betterment of our community, an advocate for those underserved I thank you for the opportunity to address you.

As long as I can remember our community has been known locally, regionally and even nationally as the home of the Ku Klux Klan a group known for intimidation, exclusion and hatred. The sign that welcomed many to our town with the words "KKK Welcomes you to Smithfield" came down in 1977. Fast forward to 2015 someone spray paints a vehicle with a racial slur and the letters KKK, we are reminded once again of the ugliness of our prejudicial and contentious past. Is this what we as a town want to be known as today?

What will our elected officials do to insure the safety and pursuit of happiness of its citizens? I applaud the Mayor for his quick public response and challenging all citizens to rise above those who try to promote hate, now you have as town leaders have an opportunity and duty to denounce individually and collectively the actions this individual or individuals displayed to stir up controversy and divide our town on June 25th 2015. This act was done with the intent of hatred and intimidation it is a "Hate Crime". We cannot and must not allow anyone to take us back as a town to those days of spray painting, cross burnings, masked robed marches and other acts of violence and intimidation towards people of color. We cannot change our past, however we can influence our future, will that future be led by those who desire to do what's right or those who are simply afraid to take a stand.

Join us as we stand with all who want a better community that includes all of its citizens.

*Tony Nixon, Chairman
East Smithfield Improvement Organization*

- Crystal Roberts Chairperson and Rick Childrey Executive Director of the Greater Smithfield Selma Chamber of Commerce presented the following letter to the Council condemning the recent hate crime incident that occurred in Smithfield.



Adjourn

There being no further business, Mayor Lampe adjourned the meeting.
The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:35 pm.

ATTEST:

John H. Lampe II, Mayor

Shannan L. Williams, Town Clerk