

**City Council Regular Session  
March 9, 2026**

The City Council of the City of Elizabeth City met in Regular Session on Monday, March 9, 2026 in Council Chambers, located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Municipal Administration Building, 306 E. Colonial Avenue, Elizabeth City, NC.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Kirk Rivers  
Mayor Pro Tem Johnson Biggs  
Councilman Joseph Peel  
Councilwoman Rose Cartwright  
Councilman Jarvis Gibbs  
Councilman Kem Spence  
Councilwoman Katherine Felton  
Councilman Ronnie Morris  
Councilman Tim Jackson

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Chief of Staff Monica Cole  
City Attorney Bill Morgan  
Electric Superintendent Donnell White  
Chief of Police Eddie Graham  
Public Utilities Director Dwan Bell  
Fire Chief Chris Carver  
Interim Finance Director Brian Lewis  
Development Services Director Carl Best  
Planner II Dylan Lloyd  
Parks and Recreation Director Stacy Williams  
Grants Administrator Jon Hawley  
IT Director Matthew Simpson  
ECDI Director Debbie Malenfant  
IT Systems Analyst Pedro Holley II  
City Clerk April Onley

Mayor Rivers called the City Council's Regular Session to order at 7:00 p.m. Councilman Gibbs provided the invocation, after which Councilwoman Cartwright led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. Agenda Adjustments and Approval:**

Mayor Rivers directed the Council's attention to the prepared agenda. He asked that two items on the Consent Agenda be removed for consideration during the March 23, 2026 Work Session: *Consideration – Approve Investment Policy and Adopt Corresponding Resolution* and *Consideration – Approve Repayment of Loan from Electric Fund to Water / Sewer Fund*. Additionally, Item E on the Regular Agenda – *Consideration – Call for a Public Hearing – SUB 02-25 Sanctuary @ Tooley Harbor* would need to be removed and brought back at a later date. He advised that a staff write-up had been left on the dais for the Council: *Consideration – Approval of Budget Amendment for Electric Substation Materials*. Councilman Spence requested the addition of a *Closed Session for Personnel as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6)*. Mayor Pro Tem Biggs asked that the first item on the Regular Agenda become *Update – Staff Report on Former River Wind Property*. Councilman Gibbs requested *Discussion – Parking on Cedar Street* be added to the Regular Agenda.

**Motion was made by Councilman Kem Spence, seconded by Councilwoman Katherine Felton to approve the agenda as amended. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Biggs, Peel, Cartwright, Gibbs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**2. Comments from the Public:**

Mayor Rivers inquired of the Clerk if there were persons present who wished to speak before the Council. Upon the Clerk's reply that there were speakers, he asked that they be called forward.

**Speight Bunn – 1304 Fairfax Avenue, Elizabeth City, NC** – Mr. Bunn said he lives adjacent to the property formerly known as River Wind and was concerned about the condition of the building itself, as well as the feral cat situation. For more than 10 years this property had been an ongoing issue. It had various owners, none of whom were local. They all followed the same pattern, which was minimal comment or response to the neglect. The number of calls and complaints connected to the property was 254, which shows this is not an occasional issue. He understood the owners were entitled to due process and that protections existed for good reason, but this structure has repeatedly endangered the neighborhood for years. Remediation has failed. Has the current owner developed a plan? Do they have a cost assessment? Has the City been contacted by them? As long as the building stands unsecured, it will attract vandals and animals. It attracts feral cats, which are continuing to grow in population. The Catch and Release Program can work, but it is only a sporadic effort and continued feeding has sustained the public nuisance. He believed the City had a duty to address that problem. The cats are now unmanaged in a residential neighborhood. He asked that the cats no longer be fed in the River Wind neighborhood. He also asked that the Council take steps to finally resolve the issue of the property itself.

**Sarah Pugh – 900 Riverside Avenue, Elizabeth City, NC** – Ms. Pugh thanked the Council for letting her speak before them and for supporting business development, tourism and the advancement of culture in Elizabeth City. These things go hand-in-hand when we try to develop our tax base, particularly our waterfront. People are attracted to our downtown, but when they see the dilapidated shipyard with broken windows, graffiti, and overrun with feral cats, it is an unfortunate situation. Some of the potential residents ask why the City won't do anything about the conditions. No one knows why the City won't clean up the eyesore. A new owner of the shipyard should remove the derelict boats and get rid of the trash. Likewise, if the owners of the River Wind building won't clean up the mess, will the City tear down the building and bill the owners? Residents should be given the answer to these questions.

**George Jackson – 1523 Rivershore Road, Elizabeth City, NC** – Mr. Jackson asked the City to exercise their police powers to hopefully preserve the existing River Wind building and keep it from falling into total disrepair. He read from an excerpt from The Daily Advance from when the former site operated as under the Albemarle Hospital. He provided Attorney Morgan with a document that included a court of appeals ruling where modifications had been struck down including fencing that cut-off the river's sightline.

**Jeff Terry – 1105 Riverside Drive, Elizabeth City, NC** – Mr. Terry also expressed his concern with the former River Wind property. He thanked Chief Graham for personally being out there addressing vandalism and trespassing at the property. He felt that the decaying property was bringing down all the home values in the area, and was a time-consuming distraction for police officers. The building's decay appears to have accelerated in recent months, continuously being vandalized and becoming a breeding ground for feral cats. The building is also covered in graffiti on many of the street-facing walls. He urged the Council to move beyond just "discussion" and take action on this ongoing problem.

**Erich Dix – 921 Riverside Avenue, Elizabeth City, NC** – Mr. Dix felt that the River Wind property was becoming a serious problem. This was being brought forward tonight because the recent level of lawlessness has become more brazen. Teenagers could be seen smashing the windows out from the inside in an online video. They only fled when they realized they were being filmed. Out-of-town owners have refused to deal with this for years. He requested that the Council take action to hold the owners accountable. There needs to be a secure property barrier and a commitment that does not allow the neglect any longer.

**Robert Martin – 229 Pleasant Drive, Elizabeth City, NC** – Mr. Martin stated that he had a concern about the water usage displayed on his utility bill. He received a usage report that said he had a leak that consumed 717.4 gallons of water in one hour when he was not home. During the snow storm, the City announced they had detected leaks and they were turning off water until they were fixed. He was told that a note was left on his door, but he did not see one. His water was turned off though. He crawled under his house and tested his faucets, but could not locate a leak or any sign of one. He made several calls to the City, and was told he would get an answer, but he has yet to get a response.

### **3. Public Hearings:**

#### **a. Hold a Public Hearing – Annexation Tanglewood Crossing;**

Mayor Rivers declared the public hearing open and inquired of the Clerk if there were persons present who wished to offer comments before the Council. The Clerk confirmed that there were, and called them forward.

**Randy Keaton – 209 Orchard Drive, Elizabeth City, NC** – Mr. Keaton advised that the City receives four main streams of revenue from residential property. Water will be provided by the County for this project. Electric service will be provided by Albemarle Electric. There is brand new information tied up in Sentate Bill 663, which requires that sewer from future homes be counted in capacity figures now. Brunswick County was the first to experience this, and Elizabeth City could be next. Once a City reaches 80%, they are subject to freezes. The City will have 2,800 new units ready for sewer shortly, which will add about 800,000+ gallons of sewer. We will be close to 90% capacity for sewer, not counting commercial connections. DEQ is not likely to approve this. Part of this property lies within a customer choice area, so AEMC has been contacted to serve. The City is not required to approve annexations. Annexations are a privilege. This should be tabled and revived once the new substation is built. If approved as is, the City will lose a major revenue stream and may be driven into a moratorium. He urged the City to do its research before proceeding.

**Jan Berry – 2124 Nixonton Road, Elizabeth City, NC** - Mrs. Berry explained that she owned property behind this development, and she and her husband have a 40 ft. right-of-way. It bears to the left going down 17 to the back of the railroad track. That 40 ft. right-of-way is all she's concerned with and wanted to ensure the Council knew about it. There are no telephone poles, cable poles, trees, etc., because they travel through there with combines and farming equipment. Everything has been recorded at the Register and it has been there for years. It cannot be moved due to the railroad track; you cannot get another easement due to that. She just wanted everyone to be aware of that this existed and could not be adjusted.

Having no further speakers, Mayor Rivers declared the public hearing closed. He turned to the Council for their comments.

Attorney Morgan said he spent a good deal of time on the phone today with the owner and the contract purchaser. When the legal description was prepared by their engineer, they did have some errors. He needed to further verify some descriptions. These boundaries, if annexed, will become part of the City's boundaries. He spoke with Director Bell today who did some quick calculations as far as the new state bill. Director Bell thinks we are in compliance, but needs more time to be certain. He would recommend that both public hearings be tabled as they are tied to one another.

**Motion was made by Councilman Joseph Peel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson Biggs to table further discussion on the annexation for Tanglewood Crossing until the April 13, 2026 Regular Session. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs, Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**b. Hold a Public Hearing – RZ 05-25 (Companion Item to A);**

Mayor Rivers declared the public hearing open and inquired of the Clerk if there were persons present who wished to offer comments before the Council. The Clerk replied that there were several speakers, and called them forward.

**Sean Lavin – 308 Planter's Run, Elizabeth City, NC** – Mr. Lavin appreciated that the Council had tabled consideration of the two hearing items, giving both the City and Council the opportunity to get things together. He would like a chance to get the land use plan into compliance so everything can be fully vetted. He echoed previous comments that he was eager to work alongside the City to get things done.

**Carl Witten – 800 West Church Street, Elizabeth City, NC** – Mr. Witten said that he was a candidate for County Commissioner At Large in the fall. He believed that Councilman Peel earlier discussed that our resources are greatly taxed already. If we are talking about rezoning for residential use, it would likely to be better to rezone for commercial use. Much of our workforce in Pasquotank County is going elsewhere to work because we do not have enough commerce here to allow people to remain here to work. He proposed that we try to rezone property commercially to hopefully bring in businesses that will provide more than one to five jobs. He asked the Council to be careful about how they moved forward.

**Paula Crawford – 1715 Providence Road, Elizabeth City, NC** – Mrs. Crawford told the Council that she lived in Elizabeth City since 1973. She was concerned about the children. Our

schools are severely overcrowded and now you want to add more homes, more apartment complexes. We have a lot of housing coming in, but there is nothing for our children to do here. We should think more of our children. We used to have a mini-golf course. We had a skating rink. We don't have any of those things anymore. Our class sizes are nearly 30 children per room. You can't do it, it's too much pressure on teachers. We are losing teachers to Virginia because conditions are too much here. The hospital is so small. We've had people have C-section births and end up dismissed the next day because there is no room for them. We've had two major sewer spills recently. There is a lot good about Elizabeth City, but there's a lot of bad too. We don't care about our children. I would like to see my granddaughter grow up in a place where someone cares about her.

Having no further speakers, Mayor Rivers declared the public hearing closed. He invited the applicants for their comments.

**Melissa Venable – 1403 Greenbrier Parkway, Chesapeake, VA** – Mrs. Venable stated that there's long been a master plan for Stockbridge at Tanglewood and there is capacity within the system. She said they also heard about the new ruling on sewer and the issues with Brunswick County. The plan was to expand utilities over within the site. There are some water pressure concerns, but the idea was to finish the loop with Stockbridge at Tanglewood South and Mount Everest, where it would also go past that to the bypass and help the existing commercial out there. There is a comment on the schools in the packet, and they have said that they do welcome the growth. Unfortunately, it often takes the residential to come to get the commercial. They do think the rezoning request in front of the Council is unique. The ETJ area has been somewhat slated for rezoning and growth. A master plan sat on the property for about 20 years with major development shown on the property, a lot of office space, big box, storage, but none of it came to fruition. The big box stores have somewhat gone away since 2009-ish and more so since COVID. This will help support the commercial along Halstead, and it is a mix of uses and housing types. There are open space green areas for pickle ball, a pool, a clubhouse, etc. They don't want to label the community as "active adult" because they don't want to pigeonhole themselves. The property today is zoned Industrial and Commercial. They committed on their plan that they would only have parking and signage on one side of the roadway to specifically keep a wide enough pass-through for busses and cars to get through safely. The woman with the recorded easement has been noted, and there's actually about a 75-foot separation there. When we tap into the waterline at the bypass it will help us with pressure, but we can utilize AEMC if you let us, although that would also have to come back for a later decision.

**Scott Stamm – 1403 Greenbrier Parkway, Chesapeake, VA** – Mr. Stamm echoed the comments that this place has been master planned for some time, since at least 2007/2008 to have a water connection back to the bypass to complete the loop and then carry it north. The County does have a meter that is restricting flow through an 8-inch line, but we will tie into a 12-inch line that will bring in better flow. The master plan did call for a severe amount of commercial space and concrete/asphalt area for stormwater. There is an existing pump station, which was designed to handle a portion of the proposed development and some of the flow of the Stockbridge development. The existing parcels and the flow removed account for 191,000 gallons of available sewer flow. There is also another proposed additional pump station for Mount Everest South for the Halstead force main. Stormwater would be handled by the onsite VMPs and ponds. They would be required to provide stormwater management so that the runoff meets the provisions shown on the plan.

**Motion was made by Councilman Joseph Peel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson Biggs to table further discussion on RZ 05-25 until the April 13, 2026 Regular Session. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs, Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. Motion carried.**

#### **4. Approval of Minutes:**

##### **a. Consideration – Approve January 26, 2026 Work Session Minutes;**

**Motion was made by Councilman Kem Spence, seconded by Councilwoman Katherine Felton to approve the minutes with any necessary corrections. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs, Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**b. Consideration – Approve February 9, 2026 Regular Session Minutes;**

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson Biggs, seconded by Councilman Kem Spence to approve the minutes with any necessary corrections. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs, Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. Motion carried.

**c. Consideration – Approve February 23, 2026 Work Session Minutes;**

Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson Biggs, seconded by Councilman Kem Spence to approve the minutes with any necessary corrections. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs, Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. Motion carried.

**5. Consent Agenda:**

Mayor Rivers read the Consent Agenda item into the record, as follows:

- a. Consideration – Approve Investment Policy and Adopt Corresponding Resolution** (*Removed to Upcoming Work Session During Agenda Adjustments*);
- b. Consideration – Approve Cemetery Mowing Contract;**
- c. Consideration – Adopt Street Closing Ordinance for 2026 NC Potato Festival;**

**ORDINANCE #2026-03-01**

**AN ORDINANCE DECLARING A ROAD CLOSURE FOR THE ANNUAL NORTH CAROLINA POTATO FESTIVAL**

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of Elizabeth City acknowledges a long tradition of providing an annual springtime festival for the pleasure of its citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of Elizabeth City acknowledges its citizens realize a financial benefit from holding the annual North Carolina Potato Festival event; and

**WHEREAS**, the City Council of Elizabeth City acknowledges the festival event requires approximately six days to install signing and traffic control, amusement and entertainment structures and equipment, food and other vendors, and other attractions, and also requires approximately ten (10) hours for removing same, and litter;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED**, by the City Council of Elizabeth City pursuant to the authority granted by G.S. 20-169 that they do hereby declare a temporary road closure during the day(s) and times set forth below on the following described portion of a **State Highway System route**:

- **Date(s) and Times:** 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, May 12, 2026 until 6:00 a.m. Monday, May 18, 2026.
- **Route Description(s):** S Water/Southern Avenue Street (SR 34/1164) between E Ehringhaus Street (US Business Highway 17) and Shepard Street; E Ehringhaus Street, eastbound lanes from S McMorrine Street to S Water Street (SR 34/1164)
- **Date(s) and Times:** 10:00 a.m. Thursday, May 14, 2026 until 6:00 a.m. Monday, May 18, 2026.
- **Route Description(s):** E Ehringhaus Street (US Business Highway 17), all lanes from McMorrine Street to S Water Street; S Water Street (SR 34/1164) from E Ehringhaus Street (US Business Highway 17) to E Church Street

- **Date(s) and Times:** 10:00 a.m. Friday, May 15, 2026 until 6:00 a.m. Monday, May 18, 2026.
- **Route Description(s):** North and South Water Street (SR 34/1164) from E Church Street to E Colonial Avenue; Water Street southbound lane from Elizabeth Street to Colonial Avenue.

**SECTION I. EFFECTIVE DATE:** This Ordinance to become effective when signs are erected giving notice of the limits and times of the event, and implementation of adequate traffic control to guide through vehicles around the event parameters.

**SECTION II. SEVERABILITY CLAUSE.** If any section, or part of provision of this Ordinance is declared unconstitutional or invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, then it is expressly provided and it is the intention of the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City in passing this Ordinance that its parts shall be severable and all other parts of this Ordinance shall not be affected thereby and they shall remain in full force and effect.

**READ, CONSIDERED, AND ADOPTED** at a regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City, North Carolina, during which a quorum was present, held on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of March 2026.

\_\_\_\_\_  
E. Kirk Rivers  
Mayor

*Attest:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
April D. Onley, NCCMC  
City Clerk

**d. Consideration – Approve Budget Amendment for Street Resurfacing);**



we are bound to with this. We have a great team who works diligently, but sometimes the issues outweigh the time constraints. Sometimes the time gets to be a problem with the legality we have to follow. He would just like staff to come back with a timeline of what we can do, what we can't do, and what the timeframes are that we are legally bound to follow.

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson Biggs, seconded by Councilman Joseph Peel to add an update on the former River Wind property to the March 23, 2026 Work Session.**

Councilman Peel pointed out that as a side note, the feral cat issue is huge. If we could have staff return with some recommendations on how to address that, it would be good. There are at least 60 of them running all over the place. Can we make it illegal to feed them?

Attorney Morgan noted that it had been a while, but he thought the City might have an ordinance in reference to feral cats. The Clerk confirmed that there was one and would send it to the Council.

Mayor Rivers stated they could discuss that further during the work session as well. He added that the SPCA is open again and being managed by the County. He asked if there were any other questions the Council had that staff would need to prepare for that date.

Councilman Peel doubted that people knew they should not be feeding the cats, so we needed to ensure that people were aware.

Mayor Rivers asked that in addition to the River Wind property, the Council also received an update on the Shipyard and Ice Plant as well.

**Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs, Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson, Against: None. Motion carried.**

**b. Consideration – Joint Appointment to Animal Control Board (By Motion and Roll Call Vote);**

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson Biggs, seconded by Councilman Joseph Peel to approve the joint appointment of Howard Gerry Anderson to serve as the SPCA's representative on the Animal Control Board. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs, Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. A roll call vote followed, which yielded the same results. Motion carried.**

**c. Consideration – Stormwater Management Ordinance Update;**

Grants Administrator Jon Hawley told the Council that the project in question had been substantially completed. We were provided funding and worked with Weston & Sampson to go through our ordinance and attack anything not in compliance. Emily DiFranco is participating virtually. The requested action tonight is not final, formal adoption, but simply Council endorsement for grant closeout purposes.

Mrs. DiFranco explained that this is part of looking at ways to move coastal communities in a forward concerning resilience. Phase 1 is community engagement and Phase 2 is planning. Phase 3 is engineering and rain gardens, planting and considering the stormwater ordinance and how it should be updated. The demonstration rain garden at Knobbs Creek has been implemented. In the spring of 2025, they identified what was already in the stormwater ordinance and then checked into barriers that needed to be clearer. In the fall, they had a series of meetings where they presented proposed ordinance updates with the Planning Department for review. Nature-based solutions are just mimicking systems found in the environment. Green infrastructure is defined by NCDEQ. They want to minimize disturbed area, maintain natural buffers and work with the existing terrain. They have reviewed several sections of the UDO and provided some suggested language. This will return in the future for a public hearing and eventual approval.

**Motion was made by Councilman Joseph Peel declaring endorsement on the progress to the stormwater management updates. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson Biggs. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs, Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**d. Consideration – TDA Application for MACU;**

Councilman Peel said he felt that this item should be tabled until the Council received a presentation.

Mayor Rivers explained that this application is not the same one that came forward previously. MACU came to the Council and TDA once for \$150,000, but that was denied. This is a new application that says they will use the money to advertise and promote events in the City. The new process from the TDA is that they will approve it first and then send it to different organizations depending on who they are asking for money from. If the organizations deny it, that's it. We can request that Amy Alcocer come to attend the next meeting if you'd like. The application is contingent on both the County and City approving it, so if one or the other denies it, it sounds like it will not go forward. So, TDA will give \$10,000 if the County gives \$10,000 and the City gives \$10,000. The total will be \$30,000 between all three parties. It's not a lot for advertisement. They pay us for use of the baseball field, we have our events there, and we have a good working relationship.

**Motion was made by Councilman Kem Spence, seconded by Councilwoman Rose Cartwright to approve the application for \$10,000 contingent on the County's approval as well. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs, Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**e. Consideration – Call for a Public Hearing – SUB 02-25 – Sanctuary @ Tooley Harbor *(Removed to Future Meeting During Agenda Adjustments)*;**

**f. Consideration – Approval of Budget Amendment for the Purchase of Electric Substation Materials *(As Added During Agenda Adjustments)*;**

**Motion was made by Councilman Joseph Peel, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson Biggs to approve the budget amendment for the purchase of electric substation materials. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs, Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. Motion carried.**



Mayor Rivers pointed out that if the Council wanted to institute the traffic calming policy, it would go to the Police Department. The Police will do their study and bring their recommendation back to the Council and we can approve it or deny it from there.

Councilman Gibbs felt this situation was a little bit different because it's just parking. Director Bell opined that it was still traffic calming, but there's no speed, just parking.

Councilman Peel pointed out that the issue is people are parking where they don't belong.

Councilman Gibbs continued that when he spoke with the owner of the daycare, she told him she would be putting something up in her parking lot. It's not currently posted, but it should be common sense. She will be putting signs up about private parking and towing being enforced. Even last Thursday, there was confrontation between parents and pickleball players.

Councilman Jackson was familiar with the area being discussed. Are we saying talking that the daycare side of the street all the way down would be no parking? Director Bell said no, just her little area there in front of the daycare.

Mayor Pro Tem Biggs urged the Council to be cautious as both Parks and Rec and a lot of community partners worked hard to get those courts there. We don't want there to not be sufficient parking there. We need to look at the area and make sure there's parking on whatever street it is. If we're having traffic problems because of increased use of the facility, which isn't a bad problem to have, but you also don't want people parking all over the curb. We can't say no parking 8-5 because of one business. Fortunately, this business has onsite parking. Is there a route or opportunity for us to look at parking on the other side of the courts where there seems to be a big grassy area? They have tournaments there every weekend. This problem is not going away.

Director Williams advised that Parks & Rec is looking at that as part of their comprehensive plan. That is an option that you will see coming.

Mayor Rivers noted that the Council put the policy in place in order for the Police Department to go out there, look at the numbers, and fully assess the situation. People need to be able to get out there and pick up their kids. This Council wants to make sure we address the issue, but let the Police Department come back and say, "Take up these two spaces, three spaces," whatever. That's why we put it in place. This is the first time it has come back to us outside of the traffic humps. Do we block the whole street, two streets? That's why we have an officer tell us what to do. We can have it back at the work session in two weeks and have the necessary signs put up. The Police Department can bring back the report and we can go from there.

Councilman Gibbs said he had tried to be as simple as possible. He probably got more calls about getting pickleball set up than anyone on Council. Now, we're talking about safety. Also the verbal confrontation and conflict between parents and pickleball players. He understood the traffic calming policy as far as speeding and all that, but at this point, common sense is out the window. If someone feels big and bad enough to park in front of the daycare and on the daycare lot, the conflict is going to escalate when Pro-Tow is snatching cars out of the lot. It all generated from them not allowing the pickleball players to use the restroom and it's been an issue ever since. Thankfully, they got the porta john out there and it was better. It was brought to me and I'm bringing it to all of you because it's on the verge of being bigger. There's a sense of entitlement with some of the pickleball players. At least that is what was said to me in reference to the conflict, that they seem to feel they can do whatever they want to do.

Councilman Spence concurred that this is not a traffic calming issue. Traffic calming is checking the speed, counting the cars. We are talking about people being disrespectful and inconsiderate. That's the bottom line. I don't care how they do it, wrong is wrong. They're doing wrong and there is nobody in this building who wants a child to have to walk across a street to go in a building. Two or three spots in front of that daycare is not going to hurt that pickleball traffic. A lot of the parents picking their kids up are rushing home from work and don't have time to walk half a block to the daycare. When these people went on this property and started urinating, they did that intentionally. They are being mean and you can't do that and not expect anything to happen. When it comes to a mother or father and their child, you're asking for trouble. If we don't nip this in the bud, we're going to have trouble. I hope we're ready to say we did not take action for this. This is a common sense policy.

Mayor Rivers asked if they were just to pick two or three spots. He just heard two or three spaces, that's the question. I'm not trying to push it off. It's just how long, how many, what is the exact thing we do?

Councilman Peel agreed with everything Councilman Spence just said and he agreed with Mayor Rivers too. If we're talking about three spaces and the lady is going to put up towing signs in her lot, then let's go ahead and say agree to do that. And then let's get the police chief involved and see if there are other places that need to be reserved for the center or if we can direct the pickleball people to another street or whatever with some signage. That would be what I recommend.

Councilwoman Felton suggested five parking spaces because it needs to be the length of the daycare property on that side. When we're talking about a child trying to get into school as opposed to a pickleball player from 8-5, I would quickly say the child needs to get to school. How long is that going to take for this to be done?

Chief Graham stated that staff could meet tomorrow and check into it to determine the safest route to proceed.

Councilman Jackson could imagine the players getting an attitude and not caring about those kids when they weren't getting what they wanted. You don't want someone treating kids like that or being around kids like that. That's total disrespect. The responsibility of the pickleball players, they have to take accountability for what they're doing. When I go to Food Lion, I have to park where I have to park. Self-responsibility has to play a role somewhere.

Councilman Morris pointed out that Councilman Gibbs started off saying reserve the spaces from the daycare to the parking lot. That's not hard. That's not that many. We're having a long discussion for something he's already stated.

**Motion was made by Councilman Kem Spence to block off three parking spaces in front of the daycare and have Director Williams and Chief Graham check into other potential parking for the pickleball players. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Katherine Felton.**

Councilman Peel requested a friendly amendment that the City communicates with the pickleball players that they need to get their act together or we'll close the courts down.

**Councilman Kem Spence and Councilwoman Katherine Felton accepted the friendly amendment.**

Mayor Pro Tem Biggs asked if the signs would say something like 15-minute parking since it's technically a loading / unloading zone. Could we make that part of the motion as well?

**Councilman Kem Spence accepted the friendly amendment, as did Councilwoman Katherine Felton.**

Councilwoman Cartwright felt that the City might also want to consider is putting up signage at the courts about our expectations about respect or whatever.

Councilman Jackson concurred that the rules should be in place so no one could say they didn't know.

Mayor Rivers agreed that the rules should be erected at all courts and park facilities.

**Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs, Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**7. Closed Session: As Allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5) for Contract Negotiation and NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) for Personnel;**

**Motion was made by Councilman Joseph Peel at 8:49 p.m. to enter Closed Session as allowed by NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5) for Contract Negotiation and NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6) for Personnel. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson Biggs. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs,**

**Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. Motion carried.**

Mayor Rivers announced there would be a five-minute recess to clear the room.

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The Council returned to open session at 9:57 p.m.

**Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Johnson Biggs to authorize Manager Goodson and Mayor Rivers to enter into a contract for land purchase as described earlier with the amount not to exceed \$425,500. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Katherine Felton. The budget amendment, provided the Council is in agreeance increased to capital outlay equipment for purposes of acquiring said land. Those voting in favor of the motion were: Gibbs, Cartwright, Peel, Biggs, Spence, Felton, Morris and Jackson. Against: None. Motion carried.**

**8. Adjournment:**

Having no further business to be discussed, Mayor Rivers adjourned the meeting at 9:58 p.m.

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E. Kirk Rivers  
Mayor

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April Onley, NCCMC  
City Clerk

