

**WINCHESTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING
MONROE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
300 W. CROWELL STREET
MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28112
FEBRUARY 17, 2025 – 3:00 PM
AGENDA
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1. Call to Order – Chair/Councilwoman Anthony
2. Welcome and Introductions Anthony
3. Approval of Minutes – November 6, 2025 Regular Meeting Anthony

STATUS AND UPDATES:

4. Winchester Revitalization Updates Watson/Wells
 - a) Winchester Community Engagement Session 2 Wells
5. Other Business (if any) Watson
6. Adjourn Anthony

Next Meeting: March 5, 2026 @ 3:00pm

**WINCHESTER REVITALIZATION COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING
MONROE CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
300 W. CROWELL STREET
MONROE, NORTH CAROLINA 28112
NOVEMBER 6, 2025 – 3:00 PM
MINUTES**

The Winchester Revitalization Committee of the City of Monroe, North Carolina met in the City Hall Council Chambers located at 300 West Crowell Street in Monroe, North Carolina at 3:00pm on November 6, 2025 with Chair Surluta Anthony presiding.

Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem Surluta Anthony (Chair), Mayor Robert Burns, Council Member Julie Thompson, Eleanor McGinnis, and Clerk Angie Carnes

Members Absent: Eric Hall, Celestine Alsbrooks, and Minnie Atwater

Staff: City Manager (CM) Mark Watson, Assistant City Manager (ACM) Lisa Hollowell, Assistant City Manager (ACM) Jeffrey Wells, Economic Development Director (EDD) Teresa Campo (Staff Liaison), Senior Planner Keri Mendler, Planner I Patrick Blaszyk, and Grant Administrator Lisa Kerner

Visitors: None

Item No. 1. Call to Order and Item No. 2. Welcome and Introductions. Chair Anthony called the Winchester Revitalization Committee Meeting of October 2, 2025 to order at 3:01pm and welcomed everyone in attendance. A quorum was present.

Item No. 3. Approval of Minutes – October 2, 2025 Regular Meeting. The Minutes from the October 2, 2025 Regular Meeting were presented for review and approval. Council Member Thompson made a motion to approve the October 2, 2025 Minutes as presented. Council Member McInnis seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Item No. 4. Winchester Revitalization Updates.

- a) **Winchester Clean Up/Ground Penetrating Radar.** CM Watson introduced ACM Jeffrey Wells. ACM Wells stated property management has cleaned the underbrush out of the redevelopment area now that the growing season is complete and to also make it easier for Resolve to access the redevelopment area because they will be onsite next week to conduct some ground penetrating radar mapping to identify some of the old infrastructure there that is still underground. He advised property management was able to unearth more of the turntable when they were out there working, but there was still more to find, and we

would look forward to seeing those results. He advised that additionally, Council approved the revised contract for LandDesign and that was moving forward, and the public engagement session had been scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 4, from 5:00pm – 8:00pm at the Winchester Community Center. ACM Wells advised it was scheduled to be a drop-in style workshop where folks could come anytime during that window to provide some feedback on the redevelopment concepts as well as offer their fresh ideas and would be festive for the season with some hot chocolate, cookies, and to try to entice participation as we were getting cranked up for Christmastime. He advised they were creating a large-style postcard to send to the entire community and extras would be made that could be provided to the committee to hand out. He advised it would also be translated into Spanish. He went over the wording and design and advised everyone hoped for a good turnout.

b) **Land Design Update.** ACM Wells indicated that was his update (above).

c) **Boundary Survey & Other Technical Document Updates.** CM Watson stated SSA Sholar was not able to attend the meeting but CM Watson advised he believed the survey and all the other documents necessary for the City to have taken in the parcel that was donated way down on the tip had been completed. The boundary survey had been done but we hadn't received the actual documents, but we had received some preliminary boundary survey drawings. He advised the surveyor did mark the property corners and the actual property line that existed between the City property and CSX, so we knew exactly where that was located now. CM Watson also advised he thought it was good timing that we had checked with CSX because the huge pile of cross ties that was there during the July site visit, CSX had a contract with a recycler for all that material and they came and got all that and CSX had moved all of their supplies that they had stored there off of our property, so they had it all lined up and categorized all their railroad ties and iron pins and rails, and all that stuff had been moved off of our property. He advised it was very easy now to really get a sense (especially since property management had cleared some additional brush away) of exactly where our property was at and what the development area was going to entail. He advised with all the railroad supplies out of the way, there was a lot of usable developable area in there now that you could see everything clearly marked, all the corners were marked and all the lines were marked. Chair Anthony advised she was glad they were being very good neighbors, and CM Watson advised they had been very cooperative and very friendly when we had talked to them.

Item No. 5. Brownfield's Environmental Status/Remnant Properties Update. CM Watson advised all the Brownfield's work for that area on the far end was in process along with some of the Brownfield's mitigation plans but nothing new to report. He advised it was all in process but nothing of significance was new to report. ACM Wells advised there was one new thing in that we did submit the small triangular parcel on the very west side that we just acquired to be part of the Brownfield's. Chair Anthony inquired if that was the Catawba property and ACM Wells advised that was correct.

Item No. 6. Winchester Ave High School – Historical Research/Canvas Photo Design. SP

Mendler advised the historical research and memorabilia cataloging project kickoff was yesterday and unfortunately no one showed up so she asked the committee to get the word out to the community to bring items/photos they had to the next session which was the next Wednesday, November 12. She advised if there were some that weren't local anymore but they had items they would like to have photographed, they could get in contact with her and she would arrange for a way to get the information through the internet and email, so we did have ways to get information if people weren't in the area anymore.

SP Mendler presented photos that Payton Mills, Webmaster, took on the trip to Belmont. SP Mendler advised in the past there were a couple of discussions on how to visually share the history of the Winchester community through murals or photographs or maybe some larger signs on the outside of the Winchester gym, or inside the gym or community center. She advised that CM Watson had brought up Belmont as an example and Clerk Angie Carnes had suggested a field trip to Belmont so that was done on October 7. Teresa Campo, SP Mendler, Payton Mills, and Angie Carnes went on the trip. SP Mendler advised a photo from her phone was shown at the last meeting that showed the google street view of the picture that was on the building that CM Watson had mentioned. She mentioned a photo on the screen that was from the same time frame and was showing where some of the images had peeled off so not sure what it was made of but it was almost like a paper mache or something glued to the brick but when discussed with the individuals at the City of Belmont, they indicated that people were picking at it and it wasn't very sustainable. She advised on the trip to Belmont, the photo on the bottom right of the screen showed that same building wall and the photos had since been removed. She advised they met with some individuals who worked with Belmont's Downtown and they said it had been gone for quite a while but not really sure and the pictures from google were from 2022, so it didn't last very long. She advised she had the opportunity to take a close look at the building to see how those were adhered, there weren't any type of anchors, leaving her to believe that it was some type of canvas or paper actually adhered to the brick. She advised that even though the trip was originally to learn about that particular project, they learned a lot. She advised they met with the Downtown Coordinator for Belmont and she took them on a walking tour of downtown Belmont and showed all of their murals. She advised they had an entire webpage dedicated to their murals, and SP Mendler presented a collage of photos that she put together of the murals. She stated they had a lot of different types of murals, different mediums for signage, there were a lot of actual painted brick and painted concrete and they also had metal or PVC signage, and they had wraps that wrapped their utility cabinets to make them more visually appealing. CM Watson advised Monroe had quite a few of those large utility cabinets in the downtown area that might be good candidates for those wraps. SP Mendler advised a particular project they saw was in Abbey Alley which was across from the building they originally went to look at, that had a "Portraits of Our People" art project and you could see all the partnerships that were involved, Gaston Arts Council, North Carolina Arts Council, City of Belmont, Gaston Sign Company, Nellie's Southern Kitchen, and **the Belmont** Middle School Eighth Grade Art Students were who actually took the photos, so this was a public arts project, but this particular project appeared to have been installed about a year ago. She advised it appeared that there were four panels that made up the length of the project and they were a lightweight PVC material. She advised it had been up for about a year and it wasn't

faded and was still in really good shape, so material wise, that might be a good option depending on where these signs might be going. Mayor Burns inquired if this was on any type of corkboard or anything like that, and SP Mendler advised it was adhered directly into the brick. She advised the images were actually printed on the material and then the panels were attached to the brick. Chair Anthony inquired if it had any type of preservative sprayed on it, and SP Mendler advised she didn't think so but that it was just the materials they used were made to withstand the elements of being outside. She advised she did try to call the Gaston Sign Company that presumably did this project to ask further questions and was unfortunately not able to get in touch with them, but it was in very good shape and showed no fading and still looked brand new. SP Mendler advised based on that and knowing what little she knew about the other project, she would recommend proceeding with some type of PVC lightweight materials or maybe metal, but relying on a sign contractor who really knew their stuff and determining with them the best material to use based on where the signs ended up going. She advised moving on to inspiration to gather some feedback on what we were thinking, there were different ways you could do photos, murals, collages, and showed diagrams on the screen of blocked, more organized versus organized but sort of individual photos that had been rounded or cropped and sort of phased so it looked like a uniform or seamless piece and then she showed two illustrations of a school where they had their sports photos showing different options. She displayed a diagram of pictures in the shape of a tree and indicated she wanted to show the tree and in doing research saw the tree and thought it would be nice if something similar but relevant to Winchester could be done so she thought something could be done in the shape of a buffalo, so she asked Payton Mills, Webmaster, if she could put something together and SP Mendler thought she "knocked it out of the park" and displayed a collage of photos in the shape of a buffalo that Payton Mills created. Everyone loved it! Chair Anthony said she liked this and the shape of it being in the buffalo since that was the mascot and said it was a really good idea. SP Mendler advised we would have to get with a sign company but she didn't know why somebody out there wouldn't be able to create a sign with a custom shape like this with all the tools and equipment that are out there today. CM Watson advised he thought there was a collage of historic photographs (that he thought they collected from the heritage room) in the shape of Union County in the lobby at American Bank that he thought was a similar concept to what was being talked about and maybe to go take a look at that. Chair Anthony said she liked the idea of collages and the idea that people had to look at the pictures and try to identify people, it made you stop to think and remember it all. Member Thompson said tell Payton she gets a thumbs up!

SP Mendler went over the presented photos and received the committee's preferences. CM Watson advised the picture on the slide that had the name of the school, the one wall of the gym that is across from the bleachers, the long wall, would be a really good candidate for that, or in the hallway as you were coming in the gym. Chair Anthony agreed and advised she liked the black and white as well. SP Mendler confirmed the committee liked the upper right version of the picture and gave some direction of where to go with the photos.

SP Mendler advised Jason Puckett and Payton Mills (both in the City's Communications Dept) went to the genealogy room at the library and were able to get a ton of images, and they were also going to go to the Heritage Room to see if they could get anything. Chair Anthony advised Jason Puckett told her he was able to pull a lot of the pictures from the flash drive and SP Mendler

advised that was where a lot of the pictures came from. Chair Anthony advised she was going to pick up some annuals and bring them to SP Mendler on the 11th or 12th.

Item No. 7. Discussion – Covering at Front of Winchester Community Center. ACM Hollowell gave a presentation regarding the Winchester Community Center and indicated she wanted to get the committee’s feedback on several things. She presented photos to get some ideas of options on what the front of the community center would look like regarding the roof pitch (gable/hip/flat) and the doors and structure that currently existed where the doors were, whether or not the committee was happy with those, ceiling fans, furniture, etc. She presented photos of the front of the community center and then presented options for the committee to review. After discussion, ACM Hollowell advised the decision points were the roof pitch everyone was a fan of was the gable roof and/or the combination of the gable and hip, the door in the middle with possible windows replacing the other doors, the columns square and not rounded and white and wood, and then the types of railing would be the white wood or the wrought iron and CM Watson advised building code would dictate the railings. ACM Hollowell asked wrought iron vs. wood and Mayor Burns asked squared or rounded wrought iron, and she asked if the committee was a fan of the wrought iron and the answer was yes. ACM Hollowell asked if the committee wanted to keep steps from the outside to walk up and enter onto the porch without having to go inside the community center and the answer was yes, and the furniture was the committee liked the porch swing, gliders, and some rocking chairs and at least two ceiling fans, and the bottom of the porch deck would be wood. Mayor Burns advised to make the front door look very residential. Member McGinnis asked the purpose of the ceiling fans and when they would be turned on and off. ACM Hollowell advised if you were accessing from the inside, they would be turned on and off from the inside. Mayor Burns asked if you could put timers on the fans and CM Watson advised a switch could be on the outside as well. ACM Hollowell indicated she and Ryan Jones had heard loud and clear what the committee’s interests were and that the project would get transitioned to property management to get into the final design and pricing, and they would bring it back to the committee to see what it looked like and possibly have it considered in the next year’s budget.

ACM Hollowell also advised that in January, Mr. Hilliard with the Winchester Community group had invited some City Staff to go out there and meet with them and the plan could be shared and anyone who wanted to go could go. She indicated she would get the project cost, how it would be paid for, the plan for construction, and then there would be a big grand opening where all the neighborhood could come. Mayor Burns advised there should be a cookout. Chair Anthony indicated when it was presented, it needed to be presented as this was the plan so it couldn’t be dissected and switched around.

ACM Hollowell also informed that John Dillard who was the state rep for CSX was going to be in Monroe on January 4th which was the day of the next meeting, and he would be meeting with some City Staff earlier that day but maybe he could come to the next meeting and get introduced to the committee since he would be a neighbor and Chair Anthony said absolutely.

Item No. 8. Other Business (if any). SP Mendler advised they had added something to the website. She advised the Monroe Living episode on Winchester revitalization had been added as well as a sign up for email updates so if people were asking about the project, they could go there and sign up to receive emails. She advised then there would be a list of email addresses so when we had events like the LandDesign public engagement or the memorabilia, etc. we could send out an email blast and we would have a nice working email list, and to please let people know that feature was now on the website.

Item No. 9. Adjourn. There being no further business, Council Member Thompson made a motion to adjourn the Winchester Revitalization Committee Meeting of November 6, 2025. Mayor Burns seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:42pm.

Surluta Anthony, Chair

Attest:

Angie Carnes, Clerk



MEMORANDUM

DATE	February 9, 2026	PROJECT #	1024248
PROJECT NAME	Winchester Revitalization Initiative		
PURPOSE	Community Engagement Session 2 Outline and Next Steps		
SUBMITTED BY	Jeffrey Mis, PLA		

Open House Run-of-Show

The second Community Open House is scheduled for February 17, 2026 and is intended to confirm understanding, test priorities, and gather focused feedback on draft directions for the Winchester redevelopment area, linear park, and greenway connections. This session is not intended to select a final concept. Instead, it will help identify which elements, priorities, and experiences from the draft concepts should carry forward into a preferred, hybrid direction.

The format will be a drop-in, conversational open house with multiple stations, allowing for one-on-one discussion over sketches and draft ideas.

Tone and Setup

Session 2 will follow a similar station-based format to Session 1, but with:

- Less structured activities
- More informal conversation and discussion
- Greater emphasis on sketches and concept testing

Because the meeting occurs during **Black History Month** and near **Valentine’s Day**, the Open House will feature a light “**I Heart Winchester**” theme. This theme is intended to celebrate community pride and legacy by reintroducing select historic materials from Session 1 and reinforcing Winchester’s identity, without distracting from the planning work.

Meeting Objectives

- Reaffirm the project goals and Winchester’s history
- Confirm that community feedback from Session 1 has been accurately understood
- Present three draft concept approaches for the redevelopment area and linear park
- Present the proposed greenway alignment and typical sections
- Explore how identity, storytelling, and branding could be expressed differently within each concept
- Gather clear, targeted feedback to guide concept refinement

Next Steps, Post-Open House Session 2

Community input will be documented and used to inform the next phase of master plan development – concept refinements and developing the implementation framework. The final concept plan will likely be a hybrid option of the three concepts presented at this event.

Stations and Content

1. Introduction and Context

- Repeat “Introduction” board from Session 1
 - Project Schedule
 - Overview of Project Components
- What We Learned
 - Repeat “Community History” board
 - Repeat “In Their Words” board
 - Can also set up Vimeo on a laptop again to play the recorded interviews
 - Repeat “Current Conditions” board as a reminder of existing conditions
- What We Heard: Community Session 1 (new board)
 - Key takeaways from what we heard
 - Direct quotes from Winchester residents (pulled from “Notes from Winchester” activity and other written comments)
- **The Ask:** The public will review to confirm accuracy and completeness
 - Does this reflect what you shared?
 - Is there anything that should be emphasized more strongly as the project moves forward?

2. Proposed Greenway – Infrastructure

- Present the proposed greenway alignment that creates a local loop within the neighborhood and provides direct connections to Downtown Monroe, tying into the Historic Downtown Greenway, the Bearskin Greenway, Belk-Tonawanda Park, and future Carolina Thread Trail
- Present typical sections for the alignment
- **The Ask:** The public will review and provide direct feedback on the greenway alignment and proposed sections.
 - Comfort with facility types?
 - Okay with reallocation of residential street space?
 - Additional connections or improvements to consider?

3. Three Design Approaches (the Core of Session 2)

- This station will be organized around the three draft concepts, with each concept presented as a coordinated approach to site design, open space, storytelling, and placemaking.
- Present three (3) concept plans that emphasize distinct planning priorities and alternative design approaches. These approaches were previously presented to the Winchester Revitalization Committee at the Visioning Session.
- All of the concepts generally have the same “kit of parts,” with different scales, building mixes, open space layouts, and approaches to storytelling and identity.
- In addition, this station will feature a centralized “charrette table” with trace paper and printed

versions of each concept, allowing participants and the design team to sketch ideas and explore concepts collaboratively in real time.

- **Concept A: Park Commons (new boards)**
 - Organizing Idea: The linear park becomes the heart of Winchester, with development serving to frame and support it.
 - Uses and Intensity
 - Lowest-intensity option
 - 1–2 story, inward-facing buildings
 - Cultural, educational, and nonprofit-oriented uses
 - Activity focused within the park, not the street
 - Open Space Character
 - Calm, immersive park promenade
 - Spaces for reflection, remembrance, and quiet gathering
 - Clear sense of arrival and procession
 - Greenway Role
 - Functions as a contemplative destination, not just a route
 - Slower-paced, shaded, and inward-focused
 - Designed for walking, reflection, and intentional visits
 - Branding and Storytelling
 - Subtle, layered, and immersive
 - Storytelling integrated into landform, materials, and spatial rhythm
 - Emphasis on memory, legacy, and dignity rather than visibility
 - Key Tradeoff
 - Strong sense of meaning and identity, but less daily activity and regional visibility
- **Concept B: Community Commons (new boards)**
 - Organizing Idea: The Community Center and linear park form a shared neighborhood “living room” for daily use.
 - Uses and Intensity
 - Moderate, human-scaled intensity
 - 1–2 story buildings supporting community services, food, and daily needs
 - Activity centered around the Community Center node
 - Open Space Character
 - Flexible, social, and family-oriented
 - Play, lawns, shaded seating, and informal gathering
 - Designed for repeat, everyday use
 - Greenway Role
 - Functions as a neighborhood loop and social connector
 - Supports walking, biking, and short trips
 - Emphasizes safety, comfort, and accessibility
 - Branding and Storytelling
 - Warm, familiar, and people-centered
 - Identity expressed through art, naming, oral history, and daily use
 - History present but not dominant
 - Key Tradeoff
 - Strong sense of belonging and comfort, but less formal identity or economic

emphasis

- **Concept C: Main Street (new boards)**
 - Organizing Idea: Winchester Avenue becomes the primary spine where community life and economic activity meet.
 - Uses and Intensity
 - Highest-intensity option
 - 1–3 story, street-facing buildings
 - Local-serving retail, food, maker spaces, and flexible outdoor activity
 - Activity concentrated along the street
 - Open Space Character
 - Linear, active park integrated into the streetscape
 - Seating, shade, and small plazas visible from the street
 - Designed for movement and everyday interaction
 - Greenway Role
 - Functions as a high-visibility connector
 - Supports commuting, errands, and pass-through activity
 - Reinforces Winchester’s connection to Downtown Monroe and the broader network
 - Branding and Storytelling
 - Bold, visible, and embedded in daily life
 - Storytelling integrated into pavement, lighting, storefronts, banners, and wayfinding
 - Identity expressed through movement, activity, and presence
 - Key Tradeoff
 - Strong economic and civic energy, but less space for quiet reflection
- **The Ask:** The public will review and provide direct feedback on the different concepts. What are the elements of each that people like? Is there a preferred design approach that should be prioritized above the others?
 - Which elements of each concept feel most successful or meaningful?
 - Are there specific features or ideas that should carry forward into the preferred direction?
 - Does the logo and imagery feel authentic to Winchester?
 - Which approach best reflects the community’s history, culture, and future aspirations?
 - Additional Guiding Prompts
 - Preference for active street life versus quieter, park-focused spaces
 - Desired level and visibility of storytelling and cultural expression
 - Comfort with inward-facing development versus street-facing activity
 - Balance between economic activity and open space
 - Importance of everyday gathering spaces versus special events and programmed uses