

Town of Branchville
Work Session
Thursday March 9, 2017

A Work Session for the Town of Branchville was held on March 9, 2017 at 6:30PM at the Town Hall. A notice with the time, date, and place of the meeting was posted on the front door of the Town Hall at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Mayor Dickson called the meeting to order.

Roll Call indicated that Mayor Dickson, Mayor Pro Tem Jennings, Councilman Blankenship, Councilman Ott and Councilman Oliver was present. Councilwoman Bryant and Councilman Dukes was absent.

Welcome of Guest: Mayor Dickson welcome Mr. Kevin Summers and turned the meeting over to him. I am Kevin Summers and with me is my brother Jasper Summers and Don Dubury, whom is in real estate, and John Summers, who lives here in Branchville. Mr. Kevin Summers is 48 years old, and lives in Atlanta, GA, where he studied innovative technology. He wants to come back to Branchville, SC and would like to bring to this work session some things that would improve the life and town of Branchville. His objective for this work session is economic growth, jobs, shopping and housing. He has four ideas that he believes can help meet some of the needs for Branchville. Mr. Summers spoke on the four ideas.

Outdoor farming and housing – on his father’s property, 200+ acres for technology enabled farming and housing. Grocery Store – a grocery store, which would have to be 13,500 square feet, and must have 60 to 100 parking spaces. Indoor vertical farming – Technology jobs.

All of the above named would create jobs, growth, housing, and shopping to Branchville, SC. Request from the town or county coverage for outdoor farming was; police security, low interest loans, lower taxes (property, business and state taxes) and infrastructure with utilities; electrical, water and sewer. For the housing option, the USDA Rural Housing Development was discussed and what was available through that program.

The Grocery store would be a Name Brand grocery. Requested from the town for the grocery store was: Donation, sale or lease of land, police security, loan offering, for the town to build the store and lease back to him, bonded loan by town, tax reductions on property, business, state and sales taxes. Infrastructure was utilities, electrical, water, sewer, parking and leverage with suppliers for material, contractor labor, etc.

Indoor farming – Request from town ideas was existing building in town, freight depot or old gym, police security, loan offering, remodel building and lease back, bonded loan, tax reductions on property, business, state and sale taxes. Infrastructure was utilities, electrical, water and sewer. Leverage suppliers for material, contractor labor, etc.

Technology jobs – would manufacture IDT sensors. Request from the town was same as previous request.

Mr. Kevin Summers had done surveys and studied the area as well as representatives from the brand name potential grocery store company.

Mayor Dickson said he would rather work with someone from this area, Branchville. Our assets are limited, we would make contacts and will discuss land as we move forward. Mayor Dickson asked would the potential grocery store name brand build store, and per Mr. Summers no, they will not build the store. Mr. Kevin Summers says that the town could build and he would lease, or that he build on the town's land. At this point Mayor Dickson had to excuse his self for a previous meeting.

Councilman Blankenship asked if Mr. Summers was planning to do all of these ideas at once. Mr. Summers replied no, the ideas would be accomplished as his team and the town could do. Councilman Blankenship said that he could not see why, if done right, why these ideas would not work.

Councilman Ott said we have land that could be worked with, but his concern was the guarantee loan. In the past loans of this type did not work out. Mr. Summers said that the town was not big enough for two stores to compete.

Councilman Blankenship said we as a council could utilize, clean up and make usable areas such as the old gym. Councilman Ott asked what idea Mr. Summers would want to proceed with first, if it all worked out. Mr. Summers needs commitment for all four ideas. Anything that makes jobs is good. Timeline for the grocery store would be one year. Indoor farming possibly 6-9 months. The housing and farming idea is a 10 year program. The sensor making business would work in the hardware store across the street from the town hall or possibly in a potential strip mall.

Councilman Blankenship said that the draw for the town the school. There is a housing shortage. If I had money I would build houses for rental. As I said before, a grocery store is needed, and would work if done the right way. The grocery store, housing and jobs are all needs. There is not a high end housing market here. We are not sitting on cash. Mr. Summers said you have land and the school use as leverage to attract business. The Industrial Park would attract other businesses, but you must have something to offer them. Need to work on Industrial Park.

Councilman Ott said, create jobs first, get people here with money we want to work with you. The county taxes are collected by the county, water and sewage we can handle. Councilman Blankenship said as far as the roads are concerned we would go county council, who would go to DOT; and say this is what is needed for roads.

Councilman Oliver said a grocery store would bring customers to shop. He agrees on building instead of renting so that people could own. Says these would make revenue for the town. The grocery store would provide jobs. If we don't put people to work we won't have anything. We need to move forward with technology.

Mr. Jasper Summers spoke briefly of the need for all of the above issues.

Mr. Summers said, don't underestimate, you (the town) can help with cleanup of building and land, water and sewer, electrical, Contacts with contractors to build building. Contacts are very important, cash you may not have but you have land.

Council thanked Mr. Summers and his guest for coming and that they would discuss these matters. Meeting adjourned at 7:50PM.

Town Clerk
Faye Connelly