

# NEWS AND UPDATES

**Federal Grant funding for home repairs**  
 Just before Thanksgiving, the Town received good news from the NC Department of Commerce, of Spencer's \$750,000 in Community Development Block Grant award for a Neighborhood Revitalization Program. The project will include the rehabilitation of at least ten (10) deteriorated or at-risk homes in Spencer. Once the Town and NC Commerce approve grant agreements, the Town can begin accepting applications from homeowners which will then be reviewed by the local Housing Selection Committee. This committee will confirm the application process and scoring parameters, which will be available to the public. Please contact Kyle Harris with questions at 704-633-2231 x28.

**Community comes together to celebrate the holidays in a safe way**



Local volunteers partnered with Town officials and staff to help make the December 12 Spencer Hometown Holiday Drive-in a success that benefited community members and local businesses. Staff from every department pitched in on a variety of items to help close out a tough year on a high note. Mayor Williams and Beth Nance of Spencer Hometown Holidays are already looking for partners to plan several events for 2021, while enhancing relationships with the NC Transportation Museum, Salisbury's 'Tis the Season Spectacular, and others. Stay tuned!

**Town moves ahead on key Strategic Plan goals**  
 In December of 2020, the Mayor and Board of Aldermen received a Strategic Plan progress

update. Town officials and staff revisited these topics in early February of 2021 to begin planning for the coming year's budget. The Town Manager will present a recommended budget for FY 2021-22 in May, which the Board will consider in June to take effect July 1.

**Rolling out a new brand and website**  
 Town officials and staff have partnered with Miller Davis Agency in Salisbury to refresh the Town's brand identity in line with the county-wide "Be an Original" initiative. The Board of Aldermen have identified the Town's new tagline as "Rowan's Original Gateway," paying tribute to Spencer's historical identity in transportation, the unique development opportunities along the Yadkin River, and focus on enhancing trail and recreation assets to improve the quality of life. This effort includes building a new website, which will be launched as spencernc.gov when complete. We look forward to sharing more in the months to come.

**Find your spot to take your shot**  
 A year into the COVID-19 pandemic, we continue to follow local, state, and federal health and safety guidelines. Recent months have moved us into a more hopeful phase, as free COVID-19 vaccine is available to all who want it, subject to guidance and supply limitations. State public health officials want to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible given the limited supply of vaccines. North Carolina moves through vaccination phases by aligning to federal priorities while empowering local vaccine providers with the flexibility to move to the next priority group as they complete phases and have vaccines available. Rest assured: you have a spot to take your shot. To find out more about COVID-19 in Rowan County and find out about testing and vaccination, visit [rowancountync.gov/1561/COVID-19](http://rowancountync.gov/1561/COVID-19), call 980-432-1800 (Option 1 for vaccine info), or email [covid-19@rowancountync.gov](mailto:covid-19@rowancountync.gov). You may also call the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) COVID-19 information line at 866-462-3821.

**Upcoming events on May 1 - Mulch in the morning, live music in the afternoon**  
 After many cancelled events in 2020, the Town and other partners are excited to announce two events on May 1. In the morning, Public Works staff will make free mulch available to Town residents. Pick up will be available at the Public Works Facility on Sowers Ferry Road, or for \$10 it can be delivered to your property. First come, first-served. Call 704-633-5331 for more information.

Starting at 2:00 p.m. come to a safe, socially-distanced live music event at Library Park featuring R&B/Hip-Hop/Gospel artist Virtuous, bluegrass from One Fret Over, and more! See Checking in at the Spencer Public Library in this issue for details.

**Spencer Cares - Community Clean up on May 15**  
 The Town of Spencer is partnering with local organizations for our first ever Spencer Cares Community Clean Up day on May 15. Although we offer weekly bulk trash collections for residents, this special event will also offer collection for additional items like scrap metal, appliances, electronics. Residents should place all items at the curb prior to Saturday, May 15. Certain items will be collected that day and others will be located and collected between May 17-21. **Need assistance getting an item to the curb, or would you like to volunteer to help those who need assistance? Call Town Clerk Stacy Craven at 704-633-2231 by May 11.**

**COMMUNITY CLEAN UP**  
 One time event for residential addresses in town limits.

- Place old furniture, appliances and other bulk items at the curb **before May 15**
- Call 704-633-2231 if you need help or to volunteer to move items to the curb.



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**FROM THE MAYOR**  
**A Vision for Brighter Days Ahead**  
 by Jonathan Williams

Hello Spencer friends! Who would have thought one year ago that we'd still be battling the COVID-19 pandemic? Personally, I thought life would be back to normal within a couple months, if not sooner. Wow, was I wrong! While the past year can be described in a myriad of words - strange, confusing, scary, heartbreaking, and unprecedented - perhaps the best description is "disconnected." In our isolation, quarantining, and social distancing, we have been apart.

I, as much as anyone else, am looking forward to being back together: welcoming a packed room to our Town Board meetings, holding community events, hosting citizen engagement meetings, and celebrating our wonderful town...together. The COVID-19 pandemic has deeply impacted our businesses, citizens, and schools. We now look forward to brighter days ahead and toward a time of togetherness and continued progress in the Town of Spencer. Your resilience, fortitude, and perseverance has amazed me during this time.

Even during the grip of the pandemic, Spencer has been making progress towards the vision of a brighter future. Here are just a few highlights, some of which you can read more about in this issue.

**Renewal and Revitalization:** Construction at our new Town Hall and Police Department started in January and should be done in October or November. We're updating the look around the business district, including maintenance on planter boxes and new plantings. Soon, 10 to 20 homes in Spencer will be renovated as part of a \$750,000 federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), in partnership with the Salisbury Community Development Corporation (CDC). Private developers are hard at work constructing new homes throughout the town. We are working with the local Soil and Water Conservation District and NC Dept of Agriculture to solve some of the Town's stormwater drainage issues, including 17th Street.



**Parks and Recreation:** This Spring, volunteers have repaired and cleared new trails in Stanback Educational Forest, which is growing due to a generous gift. We have grants to begin construction of the Yadkin River Trailhead on the Rowan County side of the Wil-Cox bridge, near the old NC Finishing Company site. With a \$3.5 million grant commitment from NCDOT, we're envisioning a bikeway and greenway from the Yadkin

River into downtown Spencer and continuing out to Grant's Creek. We are also committed to raising funds, through a private capital campaign, to construct a park in Park Plaza as a second phase to our ongoing renovation project. More details will be available soon!

**Economic Development:** We continue to work with the Salisbury-Rowan Economic Development Commission (EDC), State and Federal legislators, and property owners of the North Carolina Finishing Company towards cleaning up and re-developing that site, as well as marketing other sites in the area, to provide a boost to our Town's economy and create additional jobs.

**Community Engagement:** We have adopted a new town logo, and are working towards re-branding, including a new town website for better communication with our citizens. The Town's Community Appearance Commission was reestablished and they are already hard at work. Finally, a team of partners is planning a variety of community events for 2021, including a grand holiday celebration for the end of the year.

**Over the past several months I've had a chance to speak about Spencer's progress with civic organizations throughout Rowan County, neighboring communities, and elected officials, and our message has been consistent: Spencer is the place to be in Rowan County!**

Thanks to each of you for being a partner for this great town, and I look forward to brighter days ahead for Spencer's future.

At your service,

<p><b>Mayor</b> Jonathan Williams</p> <p><b>Board of Aldermen</b>                  Patti Secrest (Mayor Pro-Tem)                  Bob Bish                  Sharon Hovis                  Steve Miller                  Sam Morgan                  Pat Sledge</p>	<p><b>Town Manager</b> Peter Franzese</p> <p><b>Staff Leadership Team</b>                  Stacy Craven, Town Clerk                  Kyle Harris, Planner                  Michael James, Police Chief                  Michael Lanning, Fire Chief                  Joe Morris, Special Projects Planner                  Joel Taylor, Public Works Director                  Faith Wilson; Finance Officer</p>	<p><b>Key Contacts</b>                  Town Hall: 704-633-2231                  Fire: 704-637-6135                  Library: 704-636-9072                  Police 704-633-3574                  Public Works: 704-633-5331                  Call 911 for Emergencies                  Rowan Co Public Safety                  Non-Emergency line:                  704-216-8500</p>
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# MANAGER'S NOTES

## Opportunity and Gratitude

by Peter Franzese

As Spencer's new Town Manager, I want to begin with a thank you to the community members who have welcomed me with kindness. Thank you to the Town staff, who have embraced the new guy and demonstrated their commitment to service over several years of transition. And certainly, thank you to Spencer's Mayor and Board of Aldermen, who have provided me with the exciting opportunity to serve this community.

Working with Interim Town Manager Dave Treme from October until December was a



bleeding. Our transition time allowed me to not only learn about the organization, but also benefit from an incredible mentor. Spencer is fortunate that Dave Treme was able to serve for 18 months, providing needed organizational stability and making progress on key priorities of the Mayor and Board of Alderman. He supported Town staff and called on experts here in Rowan County and beyond to bring valuable partnerships and resources to Spencer. In a fitting tribute upon his farewell, December 18 was proclaimed David W. Treme Day in Spencer, and a Staff Development Fund was established by the Board in his name to offer continuing educational opportunities to Town staff.

In addition to Mr. Treme, I would like to thank John Sofley, who assisted the town with Finance needs over the last few years and was critical to securing the financing needed for the new Town Hall and Police Department project; Accounting Clerk Christie Hutchinson, who stepped in as acting Finance Officer; Joe Morris, who managed day-to-day Planning and Zoning activities before transitioning to a

special projects role; and Tammy Hatley, who served as Interim Town Clerk since late September.

After 12 years working for the City of Concord, I am excited to join a team of talented professionals and dedicated elected officials working to improve the quality of life in Spencer. As one of several new members of the Town's leadership team, we thank you



for the warm welcome and look forward to working with you. Others include: Stacy Craven, Town Clerk; Kyle Harris, Planner;

Michael Lanning; Fire Chief; and Faith Wilson; Finance Officer.

We join Police Chief Mike James and Public Works Director Joel Taylor (both serving since 2010) and are just part of the group of over 50 people who serve the community in full-time, part-time, or volunteer roles across our administrative, public safety, and public works services.

Other new Town staff include James Osborne, Code Enforcement Officer; Michael Eudy, Public Works Sanitation Crew member; Kathy Stubbs, Part-Time Public Works Crew Member. A special recognition goes to Martin Brigman, who retired December 31 after 21 years of service to the Town of Spencer with the Police Department.

On behalf of the Town staff, thank you for allowing us to serve you. While living, working, and learning in a pandemic has made the last year unlike anything any of us are accustomed to, I remain excited about what lies ahead.

# 2021 TOWN OF SPENCER HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Town offices will be closed for various holidays, as noted in the following schedule. Please note there may be other service impacts as indicated for each holiday. Please call Town Hall with questions at 704-633-2231.

Week of	Holiday	Date(s) Observed	Additional Service Impacts
Jan 18	Martin Luther King Day	Mon Jan 18	• One day delay in Trash collection • Library open Tues-Thurs
Mar 29	Good Friday	Fri April 2	
May 31	Memorial Day	Mon May 31	• One day delay in Trash collection • Library open Tues-Thurs
July 5	Independence Day	Mon July 5	• One day delay in Trash collection • Library open Tues-Thurs
Sept 6	Labor Day	Mon Sept 6	• One day delay in Trash collection • Library open Tues-Thurs
Nov 8	Veterans Day	Thurs Nov 11	• All Bulky collection on Friday
Nov 22	Thanksgiving	Thurs/Fri Nov 25, 26	• No Bulky collection this week
Dec 20	Christmas Eve	Fri Dec 24	
Dec 27	Christmas, New Year	Dec 27, 31	• One day delay in Trash collection • Library open Tues-Thurs • No Bulky collection this week

# EXPANSION OF STANBACK EDUCATIONAL FOREST

## One of many future recreation opportunities

In late 2020, Salisbury-based Three Rivers Land Trust (TRLT) announced a \$10,000 award to assist in the acquisition and transfer of approximately 50 acres to the Town of Spencer. This land will roughly double the existing Fred and Alice Stanback Educational Forest and Nature Preserve and connect the existing preserve to Grants Creek. There is potential to develop additional trails and a canoe/kayak access on Grants Creek at this location.

"Three Rivers Land Trust is thrilled to have been awarded these funds from the Duke Energy Foundation for this incredible conservation project in Rowan County," states Executive Director Travis Morehead. "This is a much-loved recreation site in Rowan County, used by the residents of Salisbury and Spencer and visitors to the area, as well. Public access has been a focus of our organization since its inception, having transferred over 5,700 acres of land to the public trust."

The private landowner who owns this property is providing the land at a bargain sale, and another private donation in the amount of \$10,000 has been received as well. In addition, TRLT was provisionally awarded the remainder of the funding needed to purchase these lands from the NC Land and Water Fund and expects those funds to be available soon. To learn more about this project or Three Rivers Land Trust conservation mission, please contact Crystal Cockman, Director of Conservation of the Land Trust at 704-647-0302 or crystal@threeriverslandtrust.org.

Meanwhile, Town officials and staff have been exploring how to leverage public and private funding to plan and construct several transformational recreation projects, ranging from a trailhead on the Rowan County side of the Wil-Cox Bridge over the Yadkin River...to several miles of greenway trail between the river, downtown Spencer, and Grant's Creek/



Stanback Educational Forest. The concept of developing a park in front of the new Town Hall at Salisbury Avenue and Fifth Street is an additional key amenity in this vision. Together, the town hopes to identify over \$2 million in funding to turn the vision into reality over the coming years. This amount, combined with \$3.5 million previously awarded to the town

by the NC Department of Transportation, will allow locals and visitors to enjoy some of the most robust and unique greenway/trail networks in the region, while turning the Wil-Cox Bridge into key connection of statewide interest between the Carolina Thread Trail to the south and the Piedmont Legacy Trail to the north.

# CHECKING IN AT THE SPENCER PUBLIC LIBRARY

This winter, Spencer Public Library continued serving visitors while following COVID-19 health and safety guidelines. Key features and exhibits included "Keeping It Cool," featuring igloos, penguins, and Pete the Cat; US Presidents; and Black history ranging from brave youngsters like Ruby Bridges to famous leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King.

With recent outdoor gathering limit changes, we are in the final planning stages for the annual event for families in May that has become a tradition, but had to be cancelled in 2020. On Saturday, May 1 from 2-5 p.m., the event at Library Park (300 Fourth Street), will include local and regional musical artists. Musicians include Virtuous (Kia Rice) who focuses on jazz, R&B/Soul, Hip Hop, and



contemporary gospel; One Fret Over, young fiddle and guitar performers with a bluegrass flair; and more!. Our goal is to bring the whole community together, celebrate local talent, and just have some fun. The Library will be open to explore during this event, and we are working to have food trucks as well.

As a reminder, you can visit the library and check-out new books each Monday/Tuesday 11 a.m. - 6 p.m., and Wednesday from noon until 5 p.m.