

Why North Wilkesboro? Board Considers What Town Offers, Other Topics

North Wilkesboro commissioners discussed their top priorities for 2015 in a retreat at Town Hall Saturday, including relocating the town's fire station, identifying a marketing brand for North Wilkesboro and continuing efforts to address blighted properties.

Fire station relocation

Another top issue listed for 2015 was the relocation of the North Wilkesboro Fire Station.

Commissioner Bert Hall said he hoped the fire station could be moved away from a residential area. It's currently at the top of Ninth Street Hill.

South said the major consideration in relocating the station is increasing building size.

"The primary issue is that there's too much equipment in too small of a building," he said. "There's not enough room for the size and scope of equipment we have. They can't properly store everything, and also have enough room to meet and work and train."

South said the town is looking at two possible new locations for the fire station. Each site involves rehabilitating and expanding an existing building, rather than all new construction.

While commissioners agreed that a larger building is needed, Mayor Robert Johnson and Commissioner Debbie Ferguson said it's also important not to spend excessive money on the building's aesthetics.

Mayor Robert Johnson said he's heard Fire Chief Jimmy Martin say, "Buildings don't put out fires," And that's always stuck with me," Johnson said.

Mrs. Ferguson said there are other important ways to spend money improving how something looks.

"As long as we are meeting the needs of our citizens, it is my opinion that we should focus on the streetscape," she said. "We could change lives today and in the coming years by changing the look of our community."