

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL  
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
SEPTEMBER 9, 2014 – 7:00 P.M.**

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA. WAS HELD AT CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN HALL, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA, ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2014 AT 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor James W. Vanhoozier; Samuel M. Bishop; R. Cord Hall; Steve Huppert; Bradford J. Stipes; Henry D. Showalter. ABSENT: None.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Barry Helms; Assistant Town Manager Randy Wingfield, Clerk of Council Michele Stipes; Town Attorney Theresa Fontana; Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie; Police Chief Mark Sisson.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

**PUBLIC HEARING**

1. Council's intention to adopt an ordinance vacating a 15-foot wide by 85-foot long public utility and drainage easement interior to the rear property line at 750 George Edward Via (tax parcel 495 – ((8)) – 13). Town Manager Helms reported that this request is due to an error in determining property lines when the property owner was preparing to build a garage. Due to the error, the property owner built the garage over the property line onto adjoining town property. Town staff does not foresee a need for the easements and supports the vacation request and following property disposition request.
2. Council's intention to adopt an ordinance in regards to disposition of approximately 0.02 acres of Town property located in the Diamond Hills Park adjoining 750 George Edward Via (tax parcel 495 – ((2)) – A). This request is contingent on the above request. Disposition of the Town's property as noted would bring the property at 750 George Edward Via into compliance with Town setback requirements. Town Manager Helms has studied this matter and recommended approving the request.

*Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to amend the agenda to add the Public Hearing matters for Council discussion and action. Councilman Hall seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None. The items were placed as #5 and #6 under Discussions by Mayor and Council Members.*

**REGULAR MEETING**

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

MAYOR BARBER called the regular meeting of Council to order and asked if there were any additions or corrections to the meeting minutes of August 26, 2014. Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

**II. CITIZEN'S HEARING:**

1. RUSSELL STONE TO PRESENT HISTORICAL CAMBRIA DOCUMENTS TO COUNCIL. Mr. Stone presented Council with historical documents held by his late father who served as clerk of council of Cambria for many years. The documents pertained to the history of Cambria and included information on the merger between Cambria and Christiansburg. Council graciously thanked Mr. Stone for donating the documents to the Town, noting that the items would be archived at Town Hall.
2. REPORT ON TOWN HALL AND POLICE DEPARTMENT PARKING. Assistant Town Manager Wingfield reviewed information included in the agenda packet that offered possible resolution to the parking concerns at Town Hall. It was noted that Police Chief Sisson would report on the Police Department parking later in the meeting. Parking at Town Hall has been an ongoing concern, especially on court days at the adjacent Courthouse and during

employee training sessions. Using an aerial map for clarification, Mr. Wingfield explained the proposed parking designations and proposed signage intended to reserve specific parking spaces for Town employees and customers. Suggestions for prohibitive parking signs were also included in the staff recommendations, which were supported by the Central Business District Committee and the Street Committee. It was noted that there is ample parking located behind the Montgomery County Courthouse, but that it is not as visible, or convenient, as the Town Hall parking lot for those doing business in the courthouse. Council expressed support for more aggressive signage pertaining to penalties for parking violations, and discussed raising the existing fine of ten dollars to a more substantial amount. Councilman Vanhoozier offered to add the discussion regarding courthouse parking to the next agenda for the monthly liaison meeting between Montgomery County, Blacksburg, and Christiansburg. Council discussed various ways to utilize the recommendations of staff and decided to focus on the placement of proper and highly noticeable signage, and/or the painting of parking spaces to mark specific designations.

3. CITIZEN COMMENTS:

Connie Turner of Alleghany Street thanked Council on behalf of the Christiansburg Alumni Return organizers for the support given by the Mayor, Town Manager, Police Department, and Public Works Department, during the 2014 Christiansburg Alumni Return event, which raised \$2,000 for the Christiansburg High School scholarship. She then asked about the status of the speed control measures planned for Alleghany Street, to which Town Manager Helms reported that, after a delay during the procurement process, the speed tables are finally on order and expected to arrive within the next few weeks.

III. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS:

1. APPOINTMENT/REAPPOINTMENT TO THE NEW RIVER VALLEY AGENCY ON AGING FOR OCTOBER 1, 2014 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2015. Scott Weaver currently serves as Town representative, while Councilman Steve Huppert serves as alternate. Councilman Huppert requested that he not be reappointed to this position. Mayor Barber recommended Town Council reappoint Mr. Weaver and to appoint an alternative at a later date. It was noted that Mr. Weaver's attendance and service in this capacity has been excellent. Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to reappoint Scott Weaver to serve another term on the New River Valley Agency on Aging, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None. Mr. Weaver was present and thanked Council for the reappointment. As a forty-two year member of the New River Valley Agency on Aging, he reported on the important services the agency provides the community. He then commended Council on its cooperative nature and service to the Town.
2. COUNCIL TO CONSIDER SETTING THE PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX RELIEF PERCENTAGE AT 39% AS REQUIRED BY THE PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX RELIEF ACT. COUNCIL MUST SET THE PERSONAL PROPERTY RELIEF PERCENTAGE EACH YEAR. Councilman Hall made a motion to set the personal property tax relief percentage at 39% as required by the personal property tax relief act, seconded by Councilman Huppert. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.
3. UPDATE ON FARMER'S MARKET STATUS. Councilman Showalter shared his vision for the farmer's market of starting small by closing off streets in the downtown area, instead of beginning with a land investment. He stressed the importance of developing a customer and vendor base as a first step, before moving forward with determining location. Councilman Vanhoozier expressed support for Councilman Showalter's comments and recommended contacting downtown merchants for input as part of the planning process. Mayor Barber said he was interested in appointing a committee that would involve downtown merchants, the Central Business District, and citizens, to assist in organizing the farmer's market. He asked that committee member recommendations be submitted to him for inclusion on a proposed member list for Council consideration. Councilman Showalter reminded Mayor Barber of his previous request for expansion of the Central Business District Committee and suggested using the same proposed membership list for that purpose. In response to an inquiry by Councilman Hall, Town Manager Helms reported that Town staff continues to monitor available grants that could be used to cover costs associated with the farmer's market. Councilman Huppert invited members of Council to visit the small farmer's market held at Corrine's each Saturday morning.
4. DISCUSSION ON OUT-OF-TOWN EMPLOYEE TAKE HOME VEHICLE POLICY. Police Chief Sisson reviewed with Council information regarding the current take-home vehicle policy, along with a spreadsheet providing a breakdown of the vehicles currently taken home and locations. This information was provided to Council in the agenda packet. Chief Sisson stated that this has been a consistent concern for Council and the community over the years. In 2012, a municipal policy was developed to place controls on the take-home vehicle program; two memos

dated February 8, 2012 and August 30, 2012 addressing and clarifying the changes were provided to Council for informational purposes. As a result of the changes made in 2012, the Police Department has seen a reduction in the number of take-home vehicles leaving Montgomery County. Chief Sisson explained the need for members of the Emergency Response Team to have take-home vehicles, even though several live outside Montgomery County. ERT officers provide emergency assistance in Christiansburg, Blacksburg, Virginia Tech and Montgomery County and are on call twenty-four hours each day. Four of the ERT members live in Floyd, but these are the best suited officers for the team, according to Chief Sisson. Chief Sisson discussed with Council the information provided that outlined the costs per month for officers to take vehicles outside Christiansburg town limits, noting that the older vehicles with higher mileage are assigned to those taking vehicles beyond town limits. Councilman Showalter noted that the issue is a department-wide concern and he urged Council to take an economical view in addressing the current policy. Councilman Hall asked that Chief Sisson provide Council with the collective mileage for vehicles driven into Montgomery County for comparison purposes. Chief Sisson requested that Council consider continuing the use of the take-home vehicle policy drafted in 2012, and to continue reducing the number of vehicles taken out of town limits through attrition. He stressed that the officers currently taking vehicles out of Montgomery County are critical to county-wide law enforcement operations, including under the existing Mutual Aid Agreement.

Chief Sisson then reported on the existing parking concerns at the Police Department. Using an aerial map, he showed Council the department's designated parking lots and explained that every available parking space is currently being utilized by the department. Chief Sisson expressed concern about the number of additional parking spaces that would be needed, should the Town disallow some of the take-home vehicles. Town Manager Helms and staff of the Engineering Department have looked into possible options to provide for additional parking for the Police Department. Councilman Showalter commented that it was his understanding that surrounding localities are able to meet their critical operations obligations without take-home vehicles, and he asked how this could be done in Christiansburg. Council briefly discussed the take-home vehicle policy in Blacksburg as a comparison. Councilman Vanhoozier recommended Chief Sisson review take-home vehicle policies of surrounding localities and present the information via email to Town Manager Helms for inclusion in the next agenda packet.

5. REQUEST TO ADOPT AN ORDINANCE VACATING A 15-FOOT WIDE BY 85-FOOT LONG PUBLIC UTILITY AND DRAINAGE EASEMENT INTERIOR TO THE REAR PROPERTY LINE AT 750 GEORGE EDWARD VIA (TAX PARCEL 495 – ((8)) – 13). The Public Hearing was held earlier in the meeting. Councilman Hall made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Councilman Vanhoozier. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier- Aye.
6. CONTINGENT ON THE ABOVE, A REQUEST TO ADOPT AN ORDINANCE IN REGARDS TO DISPOSITION OF APPROXIMATELY 0.02 ACRES OF TOWN PROPERTY LOCATED IN THE DIAMOND HILLS PARK ADJOINING 750 GEORGE EDWARD VIA (TAX PARCEL 495 – ((2)) – A). The Public Hearing was held earlier in the meeting. Town Manager Helm recommended selling the strip of land for the value of park land of \$207, which the adjoining property owner has agreed to pay. Councilman Hall made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Town Manager to dispose of the real property at a cost of \$207, seconded by Councilman Vanhoozier. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier- Aye. A subdivision plat reflecting this action will be presented to Council at a future meeting.

#### IV. COUNCIL REPORTS:

- a. Councilman Bishop reported that he will keep Council posted on the upcoming blood drive hosted by the Christiansburg Rescue Squad.
- b. Councilman Hall reported that he expects to email Council with the recommendations of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission regarding the Kiwanis Lease, prior to the next regular Council meeting.
- c. Councilman Vanhoozier reported that aquatic center staff and advisory board are preparing an informational presentation that will be presented to Council at the next regular Council meeting.
- d. Councilman Stipes noted the changed appearance of the Town logo and requested an opportunity to discuss the change as a Council during the next regular Council meeting.
- e. Councilman Huppert encouraged Council members to attend the showing of a movie about hemp at the Lyric on September 17 in order to gain a new perspective on the topic.

IV. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORTS:

1. PUBLIC HEARING REQUEST: Town Manager Helms presented the following requests and recommended setting the Public Hearings for October 28, 2014:

1. Rezoning request for property at 325 Falling Branch Road from R-2 Two-Family Residential District to B-3 General Business District.
2. Contingent on the above, a Conditional Use Permit Request for residential use in the B-3 General Business District, 325 Falling Branch Road.
3. Rezoning request for property on Depot Street from I-2 General Industrial District to B-2 Central Business District.

On motion by Councilman Hall, seconded by Councilman Vanhoozier, Council voted to set the Public Hearings for October 28, 2014 as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

2. PROGRESS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Town Manager Helms provided Council with an update on the progress of the Huckleberry Trail Bridge.
- A work session was scheduled for September 30, 2014 at 6:00 P.M. to discuss the proposed employee compensation plan.
- Town Manager Helms reported that the Town has experienced setbacks in upgrading the intersection at Roanoke Street and Depot Street; he will provide Council with an estimated completion date at the next regular Council meeting.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to bring before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 9:18 P.M.

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Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

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D. Michael Barber, Mayor