

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 13, 2015 – 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 OCTOBER 13, 2015 AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Barry Helms; Assistant Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Clerk of Council Michele Stipes; Town Attorney Jim Guynn; Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie; Planning Director Nichole Hair; Aquatic Director Terry Caldwell; Public Information Specialist Allison Long.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER BY MAYOR BARBER.

II. CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Council Meeting Minutes of September 22, 2015

Councilman Showalter requested that an amendment be made to the minutes, section VIII. Council Reports, Item *d*, to reflect that it was Town Manager Helms who visited the owners of InVision to commend them on recent decorative improvements to their downtown storefront, and that the Central Business District Committee also commended them on the improvements. Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to approve the consent agenda with the corrections to the minutes as requested by Councilman Showalter. Councilman Hall seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.

III. RECOGNITIONS:

IV. CITIZEN'S HEARING:

1. Tourism update by Lisa Bleakley, Executive Director of the Montgomery County Tourism Development Council. Lisa Bleakley thanked Council for the opportunity to provide them with an annual update on tourism in Montgomery County, and she thanked Council for its continued fiscal support which makes it possible to increase tourism in Christiansburg. Ms. Bleakley noted that FY 2014 would be the focus of the update, but information for FY 2013 would be included for trending purposes and to provide context. Included in the report was information on the number of visitors to Montgomery County, estimated using athletic event information from the recreation center and the aquatic center, and event/business information pertaining to Virginia Tech. Ms. Bleakley reported that she hopes the county will be awarded a research visitor profile grant that would provide for empirical data for a more accurate visitor count. Council heard information regarding Montgomery County visitor spending, taxes, the number of jobs related to tourism, and payroll, as compared to the state. A three-year tourism trend comparison indicated an increased upward trend in Montgomery County in each area presented. Ms. Bleakley spoke specifically to Christiansburg lodging and food tax revenues, which also showed an upward trend over the three-year period. As a destination, Ms. Bleakley provided information that indicated Christiansburg experienced an overall increase from 56% to 61% hotel occupancy rates, and noted that an increase in room rates was also realized during the three-year comparison period. The tourism strategic plan continues to be a focus of the Montgomery County Tourism Development Council, and Ms. Bleakley provided a summary of the goals outlined in the strategic plan. Ms. Bleakley spoke about the importance of branding to a community and discussed various ways Christiansburg is being branded. Council was given an overview of the tourism website, currently under construction, that will reinforce the Christiansburg, Blacksburg, Montgomery County brand. Councilman Showalter commended Ms. Bleakley on tourism efforts to establish partnerships within the community, and Councilman Hall commended her on the trail guide and other destination brochures distributed within the community. Councilman Huppert asked if there were ongoing discussions concerning a future visitor center in Christiansburg. Ms. Bleakley responded that

the new park-and-ride to be constructed on Roanoke Street near I-81 has been considered as a possible location for a small welcome center, but that it was too soon to develop plans for a facility. In the meantime, the Tourism Development Council will continue to find other ways to distribute information to the public. At Councilman Huppert's request, Ms. Bleakley spoke briefly about how much it costs the Town annually to fund the Tourism Development Council. Council thanked Ms. Bleakley for the informative update.

2. Citizen comments:
 - a. No one to speak.

V. STAFF REPORTS:

1. Update on the Police Department by Chief Mark Sisson. Police Chief Sisson began his presentation by outlining the various divisions within the Police Department, and the services provided through each. He spoke in depth about the department's accreditation, the accreditation process, and the importance of this certification to the department and the community. Chief Sisson introduced the body camera pilot program that will launch November 2015, and expressed his support for the project, calling it protection for both citizens and officers. Council was provided the Crime Prevention Report for FY 2014-2015, that included information on public events and public training. In closing, Chief Sisson reviewed with Council the future goals and objectives of the department that included improved technology, continuing public information, effective staffing, departmental training, and improved communications. Chief Sisson offered to answer questions of Council. Councilman Huppert commended officers of the department for their handling of the recent Confederate flag situation at Christiansburg High School, and Chief Sisson noted that in addition to officer presence at the high and middle schools, a SRO has now been placed in the elementary schools. Councilman Hall reported on a presentation at the recent VML Annual Conference that provided discussion on drug investigations for motels and extended stay rental rooms, and the cost incurrence for these investigations. Councilman Hall said he spoke about Christiansburg's meth lab policy during the meeting and the presenter, a police chief, stated that he had actually spoken with Police Chief Sisson in the past about how Christiansburg handles its drug situations, and that Christiansburg is considered a crime prevention model within the law enforcement community. Councilman Stipes commended the Police Department on the partnerships it has forged within the community, noting the upcoming fall festival that will highlight numerous community partnerships. He thanked Police Chief Sisson for providing strong leadership for crime prevention and community involvement. Mayor Barber said he is proud of Police Chief Sisson, and the entire Police Department, for providing a constant source of leadership within the Town. A hardcopy of the update provided by Chief Sisson is attached to these minutes.

VI. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS:

1. Council action on:
 - a. Town Council's intention to adopt an ordinance in regards to a rezoning request by George Smith, agent for Peppers Ferry Investments, L.L.C. for property located at 915 Peppers Ferry Road, N.W. (tax parcel 434 – ((A)) – 16) from R-2 Two-Family Residential to B-3 General Business. The property contains 1 acre and is scheduled as residential in the Future Land Use Map of the Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The Public Hearing was held September 22, 2015. The Planning Commission voted unanimously, with three members absent, to recommend that Town Council approve the rezoning as requested. Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to accept the Planning Commission recommendation to approve the rezoning as request, seconded by Councilman Stipes. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.
2. Discussion regarding the Council Follow-up Task List. Mayor Barber reported that he and Town Manager Helms were in the process of updating the list and would have a current list for Council review at the next regular Council meeting. Council agreed to set a work session date during the October 27th meeting for the purpose of discussing the outstanding tasks on the list.

VII. CLOSED MEETING:

- a. Councilman Hall made a motion to enter into a Closed Meeting under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(7), for consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body; and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. For the purposes of this subdivision, "probable litigation" means litigation that has been specifically threatened or on which the public body or its legal counsel has a reasonable basis to believe will be commenced by or against a known party. Nothing in this

subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter. The Closed Meeting pertains to Backcountry.com. Councilman Vanhoozier seconded the motion and Council was polled as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.

- b. Reconvene in Open Meeting.
- c. Certification. Councilman Hall moved to certify that the Town Council of the Town of Christiansburg, meeting in Closed Meeting, to the best of each member's knowledge, discussed only the matters lawfully exempt from open meeting requirements by Virginia Law and only such matters as are identified in the Resolution to enter into Closed Meeting, seconded by Councilman Vanhoozier. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.
- d. Council action on the matters. No action was taken by Council.

At Councilman Huppert's request, Brian Hamilton, Director of Economic Development for Montgomery County, reported on the continued vacancies in the Market Place shopping area. Mr. Hamilton said he has worked with the property broker over the years to bring businesses to the shopping center, but no deals have been secured. The three large retailers that have considered the Market Place location ultimately passed on locating in the region.

VIII. COUNCIL REPORTS

- a. Councilman Bishop reported that last night Fire Chief Hanks attended the Rotary Club meeting on High Street. During the meeting, Chief Hanks presented members of the club with safety items, and they gave him teddy bears to give to children who are experiencing stressful situations, as a source of comfort.
- b. Councilman Hall reported that the Water, Sewer, and Solid Waste Committee will meet in the near future to discuss its continued focus on recycling efforts; and he recommended that the town website provide a link to the new tourism website, once it is operational. He then reported on the first annual Getting Scary on the Huckleberry, scheduled for October 31, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. The 5K run/walk was organized in partnership with the Montgomery County Public School through the assistance of Shane Guynn. Breakfast will be provided and participants are encouraged to wear a Halloween costume. A trunk or treat event will be held for children aged eight to eleven.
- c. Councilman Vanhoozier reported that Detective Brown and his partner are scheduled to make a presentation to Kiwanis on October 22, 2015 regarding internet pornography; he expressed his appreciation for the Police Department's willingness to bring internet education and awareness to the community.
- d. Councilman Stipes expressed his appreciation for Council's company and comradery at the recent VML Annual Conference.
- e. Councilman Showalter reported that the Central Business Advisory Committee met earlier this evening and continues to work to establish a defined area of interest. The advisory committee members are working well together and are providing valuable input that will be an asset to the Central Business District Committee.
- f. Councilman Huppert reported that he was happy to hear that the Farmhouse restaurant will be reopening under new ownership. He stated that he believes that the new owners will be successful in turning the restaurant into a community asset.
- g. Mayor Barber reported that representation is needed on the Cemetery Committee and he asked Council to provide recommendations for consideration.

IX. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORTS:

1. PROGRESS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- The Swimming Saves Lives Foundation has approved a grant of \$15,000 to the aquatic center for adult swimming lessons.
- A work session to discuss the Truman Wilson property master plan was scheduled for November 12, 2015 at 6:00 P.M.
- The Town received a letter from Asset Solutions Corporation offering the Town the option to purchase the corner lot of Hickok and First Street for \$125,000. Council discussed the offer and concluded that the Town does not have a need for the property at this time.

X. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 9:10 P.M.

Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor