

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL  
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 24, 2018 – 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, VIRGINIA, ON JULY 24, 2018 AT 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor Bradford J. Stipes; Samuel M. Bishop; Harry Collins; Steve Huppert; Merissa Sachs; Henry Showalter. ABSENT: None.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren; Clerk of Council Michele Stipes; Town Attorney Theresa Fontana; Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie; Engineering Director Wayne Nelson; Director of Aquatics Terry Caldwell; Public Relations Specialist Anaika Miller; Events Coordinator Casey Jenkins.

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

- A. Moment of Reflection
- B. Pledge of Allegiance

**II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA**

- A. Councilman Stipes made a motion to add the presentation of CHS student resolutions as Item A under Introductions and Presentations and to move Introductions and Presentations to Section V and Citizen Comments to Section VI. Councilman Showalter seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

**III. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

**IV. CONSENT AGENDA**

- A. Approval of Town Council meeting minutes of July 10, 2018.
- B. Monthly Bills.
- C. Council Resolution of Support for Fiscal Year 2020 Smart Scale Applications for the following projects:
  - N. Franklin Street – Peppers Ferry Road Connector Route
  - Parkway Drive Extension to S. Franklin Street
  - Falling Branch Road Extension to Sherwood Drive
  - N. Franklin Street – Depot Street Intersection Improvement Project.
- D. Resolution in Recognition of Christiansburg High School Boys 4 x 800 Meter Team.

E. Resolution in Recognition of Rachel Lloyd, Christiansburg High School Girls Varsity Pole Vaulting State Champion.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Councilman Collins. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

Councilman Stipes noted that the Cambria Trail project that Council agreed on May 22 would be included as the fourth project in the Smart Scale application, was not included because the engineering plan development was not far enough along to score well on VDOT's Smart Scale Program. In light of this, Councilman Stipes proposed that further engineering plan development take place this year to make the project more attractive for funding in 2019.

**V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

- A. Presentation of Resolutions in Recognition of Christiansburg High School Boys 4 x 800 Meter Team, and Resolution in Recognition of Rachel Lloyd, Christiansburg High School Girls Varsity Pole Vaulting State Champion by Mayor Barber and Henry Showalter. Copies of the resolutions are attached herewith.
- B. Introduction of New Town Employees:
  - 1. Terry Caldwell, Director of Aquatics
    - Blake Holman, Program Coordinator

Mr. Holman spoke briefly about the themes and events of CAC summer camp programs and explained the Our Town Program.

- C. Shelley Fortier, Executive Director of Habitat for Humanity of the New River Valley, to present on the operations, priorities, and goals of the organization.

Shelley Fortier thanked Council for the opportunity to speak and presented on the goals of Habitat for Humanity and the organization's involvements within local communities. Using slides, Ms. Fortier highlighted details of the houses built by the non-profit organization in collaboration with Virginia Tech, local governments, and in Floyd, with students from Giles Technical School. Ms. Fortier talked about the organization's goal to build communities in partnership with local governments that meet the needs of various demographics. In addition to building homes, Habitat also provides potential homebuyers with financial counselling and mortgages, which serve to increase economic stability within the community. Ms. Fortier talked about the challenges faced by the organization and avenues of revenue that include fundraisers and proceeds from ReStore, and she offered an overview of the organization's 2017 accomplishments that included the completion of three houses and counselling to seventy-four families. Council thanked Ms. Fortier for her presentation and for Habitat's involvement in the Christiansburg community.

**VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS**

- A. The following citizens spoke in opposition to a Conditional Use Permit application recently studied by the Planning Commission requesting a boardinghouse for use as a halfway house at 3195, 3197, 3205, 3215, 3235 Roanoke Street. The CUP applicant subsequently withdrew the Conditional Use Permit application and lowered the density to conform with the B-3

General Business zoning. The potential developer is in the beginning phase of renovating existing buildings to house one to four residents as a by-right use in the B-3 General Business zoning district. It was noted that the existing buildings had been sent notices off demolition or repair by the Town earlier this year, but at this time had not been demolished.

1. Larry Martin, 2850 Roanoke Street, requested the urgent attention of Council to the potential opening of a boardinghouse for use as a halfway house at the addresses noted above. Mr. Martin said that for years the property operated as a boardinghouse and he offered to Council the police reports filed for problems on the property. Mr. Martin also offered Council a copy of a Town-issued letter informing that the condemned property would be demolished by March 30, 2018. Mr. Martin explained that his mother lives next door to the property being developed and he expressed concern for her safety. He provided statistics on rates of reoffence and called attention to the fifty-seven neighboring residents that attended the Planning Commission meeting to speak in opposition to the property being developed into a boardinghouse.
2. John Lilly, 3135 Roanoke Street, commented that he was not against halfway houses, but believed the location on Roanoke Street would be inappropriate due to the close proximity to residential neighborhoods, a daycare, and churches, further noting that the location was not near resources that former offenders often require. In closing, Mr. Lilly questioned why the Town did not follow through with its schedule to demolish the buildings in March 2018 as stated in the noted Town letter, noting that back taxes were owed on the property and the buildings unfit for inhabitation. Mr. Lilly asked for consideration by Council.
3. P.L. "Dude" Griffith, 290 Patricia Lane, expressed concern regarding the potential boarders and questioned why a halfway house would be operated near residential neighborhoods. He urged Council to protect the safety and integrity of the surrounding area by intervening on behalf of the residents.
4. Marie Hager, 100 Patricia Lane, expressed opposition to allowing the property on Roanoke Street to be used as a halfway house and questioned whether the potential developer had a plan to address issues that might arise from housing former inmates including jobs, transportation, and access to resources. Ms. Hager said she used to live in Pulaski where the halfway houses were problematic and she pointed out that the chosen location on Roanoke Street was near a daycare, churches, and private residences. Ms. Hager asked Council to consider the comments expressed.
5. Danny Sowers, 80 Dunlap Drive, talked about the daycare, churches, and soccer fields located within close proximity to property, and questioned who would monitor the residents of the halfway house, noting the property was not located near restaurants, grocery stores or community resources.
6. Irvin Phillips, 3190 Roanoke Street, talked about the statistics on repeat offenders and expressed concern that the safety of the surrounding neighborhoods would be compromised if a halfway house were permitted. Mr. Phillips further noted that Roanoke Street was heavily traveled and did not offer sidewalks for pedestrians, and he questioned means of transportation for the residents that would live in the halfway house.
7. Johnny Martin, 3295 Roanoke Street, asked Council to consider the comments heard and to intervene and prevent the property from being developed into a halfway house. Mr. Martin stressed that he was not opposed to any business, but that the chosen location was within a residential neighborhood that was well represented by every adjoining property

owner at the Planning Commission meeting and at tonight's Council meeting. Mr. Martin asked Council to not allow the operation of three side-by-side halfway houses at the Roanoke Street location.

8. Peggy Martin said she lives beside the property on Roanoke Street and she reported that the potential developer had been there this week taking down boards from the windows and doors. Noting that the property had been condemned by the Town, she questioned if the potential developer had been granted permission to unboard the property. Ms. Martin questioned the motives of the potential developer in choosing to operate a halfway house and she urged Council to consider the comments heard and to intervene on behalf of the neighboring residents.
9. Terry Dohoney, 70 Patricia Lane, questioned the motives of the potential developer, noting he believed federal funds would be obtained to renovate the property into a halfway house, and he questioned the Town for not following through with demolition. Mr. Dohoney said there was much more to the issue than what has been addressed and he asked Council to consider the safety of the surrounding neighborhood and the good of the entire Christiansburg community in this matter.
10. Dave Potts, 1177 Goodwins Ferry Road, Newport, Virginia, owner of 3155A Roanoke Street, said he believed halfway houses were needed, but that the property on Roanoke Street was not an appropriate location for a number of reasons. He talked about the condition of the property that led to it being condemned, and he expressed discouragement that the property had not been demolished by the Town. Mr. Potts attended both Planning Commission meetings on the matter and he expressed his belief that an unsupervised halfway house would cause problems in the long run.
11. Aubrey Rook, 695 Tower Road, questioned why the Town had not taken ownership of the property for back taxes and why the property had not been demolished.
12. Barbara Martin, 2850 Roanoke Street, expressed concern that property values would decrease, which would in turn decrease revenue to the town through taxes if a halfway house were allowed to operate at the location on Roanoke Street. Ms. Martin asked the Town to do a site visit tomorrow for asbestos, lead and other EPA safety hazards, and requested that access to the property be denied until declared safe by professionals.

Town Manager Wingfield explained that the property was currently zoned B-3 General Business, and once condemned, the property owner had the option to renovate or board and secure the property. He noted that back taxes had been paid prior to submission of the Conditional Use Permit application, and he explained the provisions for the B-3 General Business zoning as they pertained to the Roanoke Street property. Mr. Wingfield was unsure if the Building Official had approved unboarding the property. Councilwoman Sachs asked for clarification on the B-3 General Business provision that allowed boarding houses as a by-right use for one to four residents without Council approval, and Councilman Stipes noted that many emails had been received from neighboring residents and that the concerns were clear. After further discussion, Council requested Town Attorney Fontana provide them with options for consideration in a precise and expedited manner.

## VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Councilman Collins expressed appreciation for the support of Mayor Barber and volunteer ACCE students at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Lung Transplant Foundation Motorcycle Ride on July 22, 2018.
- B. Councilman Huppert reported on various upcoming swim meets at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center.

### VIII. DISCUSSION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Councilman Stipes made a motion to assign a zoning ordinance review in regards to boarding houses to the Planning Commission, seconded by Councilman Huppert. Council discussed the Town's program to address dilapidated properties, and Councilman Showalter expressed dismay to learn that property owners were given the option to board up properties. Councilman Showalter stressed that boarding up was never an option discussed by Council and should not be a part of the program. Councilman Showalter further stressed that it was his understanding that the only two options authorized by Council with regard to condemned properties were to renovate to code or demolish. Town Manager Wingfield commented that the town has traditionally allowed boarding up when told dilapidated properties were in the process of changing ownership, which was the case with the property on Roanoke Street. Mr. Wingfield talked about the approach taken by Building Official Jerry Heinline in addressing the thirteen identified dilapidated properties in town, which included the town's demolition of two properties in 2017 to the cost of approximately \$25,000. Councilman Collins stated that information was needed from Town Attorney Fontana as to the Town's options in moving forward in this matter, and Council requested a copy of the list of condemned properties. Council voted on the motion to assign a zoning ordinance review to the Planning Commission as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

### X. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Town Manager Wingfield:
  - Announced the promotion of Andrew Warren, former Planning Director, as Assistant Town Manager.
  - August 28, 2018 - Schedule a Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Commission to amend *Town Code* pertaining to boardinghouses, on motion by Councilman Stipes, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.
- B. Town Attorney:
- C. Other Staff:

### XI. COUNCIL REPORTS

- A. Councilwoman Sachs talked about the importance of supporting local small businesses through the Town's purchasing policy and she requested a committee be formed to address small business purchasing. Councilman Stipes noted that he had received comments from several small business owners who were concerned that the Town's purchasing policy overlooked local businesses. Council agreed it understood the constraints with State procurement laws but expressed support for the appointment of a committee to study the matter to ensure the Town was doing what it could to support local small businesses. Town

Manager Wingfield was directed to work with the appropriate staff and the Town Attorney on this matter and report back to Council in ninety days.

- B. Councilman Huppert expressed support for the development plans for Marketplace and the improvements to the NRV Mall.
- C. Councilman Stipes recommended Council approve and present a resolution in recognition of Kathy O'Dell, a Christiansburg Middle School math teacher who was recognized by the National Science Foundation with the Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching for K-6 Math.
- D. Councilman Showalter requested Council approve and present a resolution in recognition of the efforts of Dr. Scott Mann and Mr. Bob Poff for their efforts to beautify downtown Christiansburg through artwork. The Central Business District Committee is scheduled to discuss the matter at its next meeting.
- E. Mayor Barber reported that the Roam NRV Bike Share Program would officially launch on August 1<sup>st</sup> at the NRV Mall. He then talked about the announced plans for the development of Marketplace and noted he was pleased that local investors would be involved.

## XII. OTHER BUSINESS

## XIII. ADJOURN

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:51 P.M.

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Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

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D. Michael Barber, Mayor