

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 28, 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 AUGUST 28, 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; Public Relations Director Melissa Demmitt; Public Relations Specialist Anaika Miller; Finance Office Manager Sherry Hunter; Director of Human Resources Dave Brahmstadt; Public Works Director Jim Lancianese; Superintendent of Streets Travis Moles; Events Coordinator Casey Jenkins; Police Chief Mark Sisson.

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

Councilman Stipes made a motion to hold the Introductions and Presentations prior to the Joint Public Hearing. Councilman Showalter seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

III. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Introduction of New Town Employees

1. Jim Lancianese, Public Works Director:
 - Chris Sartin, Safety Coordinator
2. Grant Hoover, Crew Supervisor, Stormwater:
 - Cody Sowder, Maintenance Worker, Storm Water
3. Michael Huesman, Crew Supervisor ROW Maintenance:
 - Joseph Cook, Maintenance Worker, ROW (Not Present)
 - Logan Ross, Maintenance Worker, ROW
 - Timothy Stuckey, Maintenance Worker, ROW

4. John Kirtner, Crew Supervisor, Utilities:

- Cody Caldwell, Maintenance Worker, Utilities
- Matt Richardson, Maintenance Worker, Utilities

5. John Shelor, Operations Supervisor, WWTF:

- Jason Calvert, Crew Supervisor, WWTF Maintenance
- Seth Dalton, Pump Station Maintenance Technician

6. Max Brown, Solid Waste Supervisor:

- Brandon Owen, Truck Driver, Solid Waste

7. Dave Brahmstadt, Human Resources Director:

- Breyona English, Human Resources Generalist

B. Presentation of Resolution in Recognition of Finance Officer Manager Sherry Hunter. Mayor Barber and Finance Director Val Tweedie presented Finance Office Manager Sherry Hunter with a resolution recognizing her retirement from the Town after 30 years of service. Mrs. Tweedie shared how valuable Mrs. Hunter was to her in reorganizing the Treasurer's Department when she became the Finance Director nine years ago, and she wished Mrs. Hunter much joy in her retirement years

IV. JOINT PUBLIC HEARING WITH THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Planning Commission Members Present: Harry Collins, Hil Johnson, Ashley Briggs, Jessica Davis, Catherine Clifton, Jeananne Kries.

A. Ordinance to amend Chapter 42 "Zoning" of the Christiansburg Town Code in regards to boardinghouses, hotel/motels and tourist homes.

Planning Director Andrew Warren reported that the Planning Commission Development Sub-committee has reviewed and recommended approval of the draft ordinance amendment that would require a Conditional Use Permit for boardinghouses with 1- 14 boarders in all business zones where boardinghouse use is permitted. It was noted that the current ordinance requires a CUP for boardinghouses with 5 – 14 boarders and permits 1 – 4 boarders by-right. In addition, the proposed ordinance amendment has revised the definition of *boardinghouse* and *hotel/motel*, and has removed *boardinghouse* as a permitted use in the B-1 Limited Business District and *tourist home* as a permitted use in the B-2 Central Business and B-3 General Business zoning districts.

Jared and Marie March, 2198 Sowers Road, Floyd, talked about the mixed reactions they have received regarding their intent to develop a boardinghouse on their property on Roanoke Street, and spoke about the rights of property owners to use their property in compliance with Town Code, without interference. Mr. March stated his belief that Council's reactions went against those who were investing in the Town at the complaint of a few individuals, and he stressed that they were doing something significant in the Town by helping those in need. He further added that it was the responsibility of the Town to take care of its citizens in need.

Lenny Hall, Sons of Thunder Ministry, 1352 Ridgeview Road, Floyd, said he was coordinating with the Marchs' in developing and operating the boardinghouse and coffee

shop and he talked about his personal experience, through his ministry, in giving people a second chance and a place to come home to after incarceration. Mr. Hall explained that the boardinghouse would operate as a business, with business hours, but would not be supervised all the time. He noted that the boarders would be in the process of recovery through the drug court system and the boardinghouse would help with transition into the community. Mr. Hall talked about his Christian viewpoint in caring for those in need and he offered to sit down with anyone interested to discuss the boardinghouse operation.

Brandy Hall, 1352 Ridgeview Road, Floyd, talked about her desire to serve those in need, not create fear in the community. Mrs. Hall said she has worked closely with former inmates who were committed to turning their lives around and that she had never felt threatened by anyone. She stressed that these individuals deserved a second chance and someone to care about them.

Marie Hager, 100 Patricia Lane, said she had received threats after speaking out against the location of the boardinghouse last month. Ms. Hager said she was a compassionate person but had great concerns with housing several former inmates in one location, which she believed could be a potential for relapse. Ms. Hager stated her support for providing boarding care for those in need, just not in a residential area, and not in a group setting, with no supervision. She noted that the residents of Roanoke Street were long-term Christiansburg citizens and expressed concerns with a potential decrease in property values as a result of a nearby boardinghouse business.

Karen Phillips, 3190 Roanoke Street, said the issue had nothing to do with Christian principles, and agreed that many individuals released from jail deserved a second chance. However, her concern was with the statistics on recovery and relapse, and the potential for crime, among recovering drug addicts, which she has worked firsthand with through her in-jail recovery meetings. Ms. Phillips also expressed concern with the show of disrespect to the sitting Council by those who did not agree with them.

Larry Martin, 2850 Roanoke Street, said the concerns with the issue at hand had nothing to do with Christianity or the Church, just the location of the boardinghouse within a residential area. Mr. Martin stated his support for the proposed ordinance amendment and asked Council to adopt it as presented.

Johnny Martin, 3295 Roanoke Street, thanked Council, the Planning Commission and the Planning Commission Development Sub-Committee for their time in studying this matter and expressed his belief that the proposed ordinance amendment would replace an outdated ordinance and put the Town and its citizens first, and he asked Council to adopt the amendment as presented.

Marvin Nunley, 15 Howery Street, talked about the many unknowns with operating a boardinghouse for former inmates in a location close to a residential neighborhood, that is distant from public resources, and is pedestrian unfriendly with poor lighting and no sidewalks. Mr. Nunley said he has helped many people through his church and has seen that often former inmates are not rehabilitatable, especially when drugs are involved. He also noted that some coming from jail could be pedophiles, and he stressed the primary role of the government to ensure the safety of its citizens. Mr. Nunley questioned who would provide funding to meet the needs of the boarders, and asked if there would be drug screenings and who would pay for those. He also questioned if the Town had the

police resources to respond to the high volume of calls to the boardinghouse, if it were to be the same as it was the last time the property was used as a boardinghouse, further noting that loitering was another problem with the previous boardinghouse. Mr. Nunley said he doesn't want anyone to become enemies over this situation, but that the concerns of the neighboring residents should be heard and the facts considered when deciding this matter.

Bob Duff, Pine Hollow Road, said he was not aware of the specifics of this particular issue, but wanted to speak in support of the program that provided for the transition of those released from jail into the community. Mr. Duff said the boarders would come into the community through a drug treatment program and would be individuals who had already committed to changing their lives.

John Lilly, Roanoke Street, noted his property adjoins the boardinghouse property. Mr. Lilly expressed his support for providing second chances to those wanting to change, but stated he did not support the boardinghouse location so close to a residential neighborhood, or on a site that might contain buried gas tanks. Mr. Lilly said he witnessed how the property operated in the past as a boardinghouse with many police visits and suspicious behavior, and he asked Council to support the proposed ordinance amendment.

Melanie Gusler, Smith Creek Road, Sons of Thunder Ministry, spoke in support of the boardinghouse on Roanoke Street and encouraged people to not condemn this effort to provide housing for those in need because of past incidences. Ms. Gussler talked about the importance of giving to others and stated that the boarders would be the Town's citizens to care for.

Patricia Knowles, 3225 Roanoke Street, expressed concern with the close proximity of the boardinghouse location to her home. She said she believed in second chances, but did not want to live in fear at her home. She asked who was going to take responsibility for the actions of the boarders, if there was any criminal behavior. Patricia asked Council to consider the safety of the neighboring residents when making its decision.

Peggy Martin, who lives next door to the boardinghouse property, said she had already expressed her wishes that the boardinghouse not be developed next to her home, and she noted that she had experienced harassment from the workers on the boardinghouse property.

John Knowles, 3225 Roanoke Street, talked about his experiences in understanding the nature of drug addiction, and its effects on users, while working in Christian missions in Mexico and Spain for twenty-four years, and he compared what he learned with today's opioid crisis. He explained to Council the ministry program put into place in Mexico and Spain to help addicts, which was a shadowing program designed to provide twenty-four hour a day shadowing of a recovering addict with an individual trained in breaking addiction. Mr. Knowles stressed that the addiction factor was so great that an addict could not be left alone for a minute without the danger of relapse, and he questioned if there would be adequate supervision provided for the boarders on Roanoke Street. Mr. Knowles said it was important to help those struggling with addiction, but that programs needed to be put into place to give it the best chance for success.

Barbara Martin, 2850 Roanoke Street, expressed concerns that a particular church in the area was being vilified for not expressing its support of the boardinghouse, and Mrs. Martin clarified that it was the neighborhood residents, on behalf of themselves, who were speaking out against the boardinghouse development.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Council Minutes of August 14, 2018.
- B. Monthly Bills.
- C. Schedule Public Hearing on October 9, 2018 for a Conditional Use Permit request by the Christiansburg Presbyterian Church, for an electronic messaging sign located at 107 W. Main Street (tax map nos. 526-A-203, 206) in the B-2, Central Business District.
- D. Council to set the personal property tax relief percentage at 37.14% as required by the Personal Property Tax Relief Act. Council is required to set the personal property tax relief percentage on an annual basis.

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

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- A. Councilwoman Sachs reported that the Central Business District Committee recently approved the first downtown mural to be displayed on the Police Department building. Also, a new LOVE sign is currently being developed for display downtown and the committee continues discussions on creating opportunity zones. Ms. Sachs invited all to attend the next meeting.

VIII. DISCUSSION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Christiansburg High School PTSA request for street closures for the Homecoming Parade to be held Wednesday, September 5, 2018.

Kim Lawson, CHS PTSA, was present to answer questions. Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the street closure request as submitted to the Town, seconded by Councilman Collins. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- B. Downtown Christiansburg, Inc. request for street closures for the Food Truck Rodeo to be held Friday, September 21, 2018.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the street closure request as submitted to the Town, seconded by Councilman Collins. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

C. Reappointment of Craig Moore to the Planning Commission for a four-year term beginning September 1, 2018 and ending December 31, 2022.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to reappoint Craig Moore to another four-year term on the Planning Commission, seconded by Councilman Collins. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Collins – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

X. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager Wingfield:

1. Request by Town Manager Wingfield to increase the limit for special events grants from \$3,000 to up to \$8,000. Several recent applications have exceeded the \$3,000 limit due to the costs of additional security measures during events. The grant pays for in-kind costs incurred by the Town and does not go to the organization. Council gave consent to increase the special events grant limit up to \$8,000.
2. The funding formula for the E-911 Authority has been discussed and the recommendation was to retain the 25%, with the option for review in the future. Council agreed with the recommendation.
3. Town Attorney Theresa Fontana has accepted the position of Assistant County Attorney for Loudoun County and tonight will be her last meeting with Christiansburg. Council thanked Ms. Fontana for her service to the Town and wished her well in her new position. Ms. Fontana said it was her honor and pleasure to serve the Town and that she loved the citizens of Christiansburg.

B. Town Attorney:

C. Other Staff:

XI. COUNCIL REPORTS

- A. Councilman Collins, no report.
- B. Councilman Bishop reported on the Dialogue on Race Summer Summit picnic held on August 25, and thanked Mark Sisson and Andrew Warren for their attendance, then reported on the Touch-A-Truck event, and groundbreaking for the Montgomery County burn building that was attended by several staff members.
- C. Councilman Showalter reported on the change in membership representation on the NRV Regional Commission membership, and welcomed new member localities Pulaski and Pembroke, and new chair, Mike Harvey. Mr. Showalter talked about the purpose of the commission and ongoing initiatives, including trail system extensions, meeting broadband needs, and the collaborative efforts to bring rail service to the New River Valley. Mr. Showalter thanked Mr. Collins for his service on the commission and invited all to attend the next meeting.

- D. Councilman Stipes reported on his attendance at a recent VDOT meeting to discuss ideas for raising revenue to address the transportation needs of I-81 that included the potential for a localized regional tax on fuel. Mr. Stipes then thanked Theresa Fontana for her service to the Town and noted that she would be missed.
- E. Councilman Huppert talked about the regional effort to bring rail service to the New River Valley, then reported on the success of the recent Heritage Days festival hosted by Montgomery Museum, noting that Sue Farrar had asked him to pass along to the Town how pleased she was with the Town's support of the event.
- F. Councilwoman Sachs, no report.
- G. Mayor Barber thanked Theresa Fontana for her service to the Town and expressed that she would be missed. He then reported that Ray Smoot had been appointed to fill a vacancy on the Virginia Transportation Commission, and reported on the success of the first Coffee with the Mayor event that had twenty-three in attendance. The next event is scheduled for October 6, with the location to be determined.

XII. OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Councilwoman Sachs reported that she had received comments about downtown trash cans being used during public events and recommended the Town do a courtesy business trash pickup along Main Street after public events.
- B. Councilman Showalter asked about the stormwater survey distributed to the public. Town Manager Wingfield replied that the Engineering Department was compiling the results of the survey to present at a future meeting.

XIII. ADJOURN

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

Michele Stipes, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor