

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 11, 2020 – 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 11, 2020 AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren, Clerk of Council Michele Stipes; Town Attorney Reid Broughton; Public Relations Director Melissa Demmitt; Engineering Director Wayne Nelson; Planning Director Wayne Nelson; Police Chief Mark Sisson; Rescue Chief Joe Coyle.

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of July 28, 2020.
- B. Appointment of Dr. N.L. Bishop as the At-Large Representative to the Board of Directors for the Virginia Tech/Montgomery Executive Airport to serve an unexpired term beginning September 1, 2020 and ending August 31, 2024.
- C. Resolution of Support for the New River Public Health Task Force's Community Wellness Commitment.
- D. Resolution of Support for Smart Scale Application for Parkway Drive Extension.

- E. Replacement of Rescue Medic 94 (ambulance) through Vest Sales and Service at a cost of \$219,674. The item was listed in the approved FY21 Revenue Recovery budget for \$260,000. The difference is the result of grant funding.
- F. Schedule a Public Hearing on September 22, 2020 for a Conditional Use Permit request by Colin Huff (applicant) for property owned by L & R Burch Properties LLC for a towing service at 3295 North Franklin Street (tax map no. 406 – A – 13E) in the I-2, General Industrial District. The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.
- G. Schedule a Public Hearing on August 25, 2020 for the 2020 Community Development Block Grant Annual Action Plan.

Councilman Bishop made a motion to remove Item B from the consent agenda for separate action by Council, due to his conflict of interest as a relative of Dr. N.L. Bishop. Councilman Showalter seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye, Hicks – Aye, Huppert – Aye, Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

Item B of the Consent Agenda. Councilman Showalter made a motion to appoint Dr. N.L. Bishop as the At-Large Representative to the Board of Directors for the Virginia Tech/Montgomery Executive Airport to serve an unexpired term beginning September 1, 2020 and ending August 31, 2024. The motion was seconded by Councilman Stipes who provided a brief background of Dr. Bishop's service within the community, and announced that all four locality members of the airport board had endorsed Dr. Bishop. Mr. Stipes mentioned that Mr. Al Bowman had served in this capacity since the inception of the board, and had recently retired. Councilman Huppert stated that Dr. Bishop was well known and respected in the area, and the board fortunate to have him accept the appointment. Councilwoman Hicks thanked Dr. Bishop for accepting the appointment, and Councilman Showalter expressed appreciation for Dr. Bishop's continued service to the community through his acceptance of the position. Dr. Bishop briefly spoke of his commitment to Christiansburg as a lifelong resident and CPD veteran, and thanked Council for the honor of being considered to serve the Town in this capacity. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Abstain; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

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

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Christiansburg Resident Engineer David Clarke to present the VDOT Salem District Locally Administered Projects 2020 Locality of the Year award.

Christiansburg Resident Engineer David Clarke shared a video of Local Programs Director Anthony Ford, along with Adam Czesnowski, Kenneth King, and Dr. Ray Smoot as they announced that the Town of Christiansburg had been selected for the 2020 Locality of the Year Award on August 3, 2020. Mr. Ford and Mr. King explained the measures of the Salem District award and congratulated the Town on scoring 64 points out of 68 for the year 2020. Dr. Ray Smoot talked about the importance of the recognition in working with the Commonwealth Transportation Board, and commended the Town on its performance in 2020. Dr. Smoot personally recognized Director of Engineering Wayne Nelson and Town Manager Randy Wingfield, and expressed appreciation for the support they have given VDOT through the years. David Clarke presented the 2020 Locality of the Year Award to Mayor Barber, who then presented the award to Wayne Nelson and his staff. Mr. Nelson thanked VDOT representatives for the award and for partnering with the Town in facilitating its transportation program. Mr. Nelson then thanked engineering staff: Executive Assistant Devon Eckstein, Assistant Engineering Director Justin St. Clair, Civil Engineer Samantha Holtzcheiter, and former staff members Jessie Nestor and Eli Mannon.

- B. Engineering Director Wayne Nelson to provide an update on contact with College Street property owners and residents in regards to stormwater issues.

Mr. Nelson reported that an information letter had been sent July 31 to property owners and renters along College Street, and a number of neighborhood meetings had been held to collaborate with residents on existing drainage problems and ways to mitigate the stormwater problems until a permanent solution could be completed. During the neighborhood meetings, residents were asked if they would be willing to donate property easements to the Town for project development, and Mr. Nelson reported that every resident contacted so far had indicated they would be willing to donate the required easement. Mr. Nelson noted that he would be working with staff on studying potential Town Code amendments related to fencing as part of addressing the drainage issues. Mr. Nelson further reported that it was important to hire an engineering consultant to assist with the efforts to address flooding concerns on College Street, and noted that the Stormwater Committee had agreed to accept proposals for engineering consultation. Mr. Nelson explained that, per the procurement policy, the consultation fee could not exceed \$80,000. Councilman Showalter recommended immediate action on a budget amendment for the RFP process, rather than waiting until the end of the first quarter. Councilwoman Sachs made a motion to approve a budget amendment up to \$80,000 for the hiring of an engineering consultant to assist with the College Street stormwater project. Councilwoman Hicks seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- C. Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren to present on the Christiansburg Placemaking Plan.

Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren updated Council on the Placemaking Plan for Downtown, Midtown, and Cambria areas that was started in December 2018, and had a heavy emphasis on the downtown area. Mr. Warren explained that the plan was built on extensive data collected from Christiansburg business owners, citizens, stakeholders, and Town staff, with assistance from Hill Studios in creating strategies to meet the goals of the plan. Mr. Warren presented for consideration the priority projects for each designated area, and described the steps involved in implementing each project. A copy of the plan was provided to Council for review, and Mr. Warren offered to answer questions. At Councilwoman Hicks' request, Mr. Warren clarified that Hill Studios was paid \$35,000 out of a budgeted \$70,000. Councilman Bishop added that it was important to note that the Placemaking Plan was not a Town of Christiansburg project, but was a collaborative effort with business owners and citizens of the Town.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

- A. Angela Akers, 345 Howery Street, addressed Council on behalf of her husband--a life-long resident of Christiansburg--regarding their family-owned house at 208 Cooper Lane, in which they had invested in the maintenance of, over the years. Mrs. Akers said that they had removed the porch from the house at the request of Building Official Jerry Heinline, and that the situation had been well-documented at that time. Her concern was with a recent phone call from Mr. Heinline notifying them that they owed money to the Town for work that was done in regards to asbestos abatement. Mrs. Akers stated that no paperwork or invoice had been provided to them by the Town at that time, and it concerned them enough that they felt Council should be aware of the situation.
- B. Dan Maderic, 595 Arrowhead Trail, a twenty-year resident of Christiansburg, expressed concern with negative comments he had heard about the Town, and expressed appreciation for the good quality of life offered in Christiansburg through its many amenities for people of all ages and abilities, both indoors and out. Mr. Maderic talked about the importance of outdoor recreation space and encouraged everyone to go outside and enjoy what Christiansburg had to offer. Mr. Maderic added that it was important that Council be able to do the job it was elected to do. Mr. Maderic also spoke on behalf on wage increases for Public Works employees.
- C. Don Potter, 250 Slate Creek Drive, addressed Council with concerns regarding the rezoning and Conditional Use Permit requests for Vinnie Avenue heard during the Public Hearing on July 28, 2020. Mr. Potter proposed that the type of development requested would not fit within the existing area neighborhoods, and he shared photos of similar planned housing developments as an example in comparison to the existing homes

along Vinnie Avenue and Slate Creek Drive. Mr. Potter noted he was not against development of the property, but was opposed to the proposed density.

- D. Ken White, 50 Weddle Way, addressed Council with concerns regarding the rezoning and Conditional Use Permit requests for Vinnie Avenue heard during the Public Hearing on July 28, 2020. Mr. White stated the sight distance from Vinnie Avenue onto Stafford Drive was a hazard and used an example of his recent near accident at that location as evidence. Mayor Barber commented that the Town had met with the owner of the property at the corner of Vinnie and Stafford, who had given permission to grade down the bank to improve sight distance. Mayor Barber reminded the public that the Public Hearing on this matter was held on July 28, 2020, and that only new information should be offered to Council at this time.
- E. I-Ping Fu, 50 Weddle Way, addressed Council with concerns regarding the rezoning and Conditional Use Permit requests for Vinnie Avenue heard during the Public Hearing on July 28, 2020. Ms. Fu noted that there were no sidewalks along Vinnie Avenue to improve safety for pedestrians, and she expressed appreciation for Mr. Potter's presentation. Ms. Fu said she was not opposed to the proposed development, just the proposed density, and she talked about the importance of leaving some undeveloped land for its beauty. Mayor Barber reminded Ms. Fu that the Public Hearing had already been held for this matter and that her comments did not differ from what she had expressed during the Public Hearing, and he closed the public comment period and moved onto committee reports.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Stipes and Bishop – Street Committee Report/Recommendation on:

1. Street vacation request by Gay and Neel, Inc. for an ordinance to vacate Scattergood Drive, N.W. right-of-way, (approximately 1.3 acres) from its western terminus at Diamond Hills Park and along the full portion of the right-of-way adjoining the property located at 680, 690, and 700 Scattergood Drive, N.W. (tax map no. 495-1-1C). This matter is a carryover from July 28, 2020.

This matter is a carryover from July 28, 2020. Councilman Stipes reiterated that the requested street vacation would provide more options for redevelopment of the existing property, and noted that the applicant had revised the initial plat to include a permanent ingress/egress to the Diamond Hills Park. Mr. Stipes noted that signage would be clear as to the public access to the park. The Street Committee has reviewed the request and recommended approval. Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the street vacation request, as revised, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Councilman Bishop noted that as a member of the Street Committee, he initially had concerns regarding the request, but was satisfied by the revised plat that protected access to the park. Council voted on the motion as

follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

2. Easement Exhibit From Records For NRV Marketplace, LLC Showing The Revised Location Of A Public Utility Easement Over a Portion of Tax Map # 436-5-1.

Councilman Stipes explained that the easement, located near the entrance of Marketplace, was for a pump station that was no longer there, and that the Town needed to retain an easement for utilities. Mr. Stipes added that current location of the easement interfered with placement of the Marketplace entrance sign. The Street Committee has reviewed the matter and recommended approval on motion by Councilman Stipes, seconded by Councilman Huppert. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Rezoning request by Caldwell Construction (applicant) for property owned by Sandra Hawks and Janice Blevins et al, located between the eastern and western terminus of Vinnie Avenue, N.W. (100 Vinnie Avenue N.W., tax map no. 435-A-45). The request is to rezone the approximately 4.52 acre parcel from R-1A Rural Residential to R-1 Single-Family Residential with proffers. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The Public Hearing was held July 28, 2020. The Planning Commission recommended approval 10-0.

Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the rezoning as requested, seconded by Councilman Showalter. Councilwoman Hicks apologized to Ms. Fu for being cut off from finishing her comments during the citizen comment period, and stated she understood her concerns with the density of the proposed development. Mrs. Hicks added that the decision was a difficult one due to the impact it would have on surrounding areas, but noted that the connectivity the neighborhood would bring was an important goal in town development. She further added that the developer had made concessions, after hearing citizen concerns, by reducing the number of homes and increasing the size of two lots that would adjoin the existing Vinnie Avenue neighborhood. Councilman Stipes commented that he initially had concerns with the proposed density, but noted that it was not inconsistent with Slate Creek, which was more densely built that what has been proposed, and he expressed appreciation for the transition of homes from one neighborhood to the next that the two larger lots would provide. Councilman Stipes said his concerns had been satisfied by the developer's revised plat. Councilman Huppert expressed appreciation for the presentation by Mr. Potter during the citizen comments period, and noted that he had visited one of the neighborhoods featured, and found it to be very nice, and he stated his confidence in the quality of construction by Mr. Rice and Mr. Caldwell. Mr. Huppert noted that something would eventually be built on the property and believed the proposed neighborhood would be beneficial to

Christiansburg. Councilman Showalter asked how quickly measures could be taken to improve sight distance from Vinnie Avenue onto Stafford Drive, and if improvements could be made to Vinnie Avenue, so the existing street would flow smoothly into the proposed new portion of Vinnie Avenue. Town Manager Wingfield said the Town would move quickly on improving the sight-distance at Vinnie and Stafford, and he would have engineering look into improvements to Vinnie Avenue. Councilman Showalter noted that typically VDOT road development standards recommend measures to slow down traffic, such as bends or turns in the road, and questioned if those measures could be considered for the Vinnie Avenue extension. Steve Semones of Balzer and Associates explained that the short distance of the proposed Vinnie Avenue extension prohibited the use of either of those traffic-calming measures. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- B. Conditional Use Permit request – contingent on the preceding request – by Caldwell Construction (applicant) for property owned by Sandra Hawks and Janice Blevins et al, for a planned housing development to consist of single-family homes at a density of development not to exceed 4.3 units per acre located between the eastern and western terminus of Vinnie Avenue, N.W. (100 Vinnie Avenue N.W., tax map no. 435-A-45) in the R-1, Single-Family Residential District. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The Public Hearing was held July 28, 2020.

Councilman Stipes made a motion to issue the Conditional Use Permit as recommended by the Planning Commission, seconded by Councilwoman Sachs, who reiterated the difficulty in making a decision on the request due to its impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods. Ms. Sachs said she heard from many residents in opposition to the proposed development based on a variety of concerns and could not support the development as proposed. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Nay; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye. Mayor Barber noted that the Street Committee could consider traffic-calming measures for Stafford Drive to further improve vehicle safety in the area.

- C. Small Business Recovery Grant Program and other Covid-19 Related Relief.

Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren provided background on the CARES Act, which provided funding to Montgomery County in the amount of \$17M, of which Christiansburg received \$3.2M, based on population. In response to the funding, a recovery grant program was developed in partnership between Christiansburg, Blacksburg, and Montgomery County that was intended to offset the business impacts during the pandemic. Mr. Warren provided an overview of the program, including eligibility criteria and eligible grant uses, as well as the steps in moving forward to finalize and launch the program within the next two weeks. Mr. Warren said he would provide Council with a complete list of eligible grant uses for informational purposes.

Council discussed the appointment of a committee to review grant applications for eligibility and allocation, and Councilman Showalter recommended no elected officials be appointed to the committee. Mayor Barber requested updates on the program as it progresses.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager:

B. Town Attorney:

C. Other Staff:

Police Chief Sisson and Chief Joe Coyle were present to provide an update on Covid-19 response. Chief Sisson reported that the New River Health District Task Force continued to meet each week and was working closely with the local universities and school district, in partnership with Virginia Department of Emergency Management, to mitigate community spread with school openings. Chief Sisson reported that over 18,000 tests had been given in the region, with 307 positive cases in Montgomery County, and 30 hospitalizations and 8 deaths region wide. Council talked about the proactive role the universities were taking to address COVID-19 as students returned to campus, and Councilwoman Hicks expressed concern that the schools were not doing enough to prevent community spread, based on what she has heard. Councilman Showalter recommended she reach out to the Town's school board representation for information on school policy related to COVID-19.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

A. Councilwoman Sachs, no report.

B. Councilman Huppert complemented the Town on the flowers planted throughout town, and reported on the recent ACCE walk/run fundraiser that raised around \$9,000 for student scholarships. Mr. Huppert also reported that Mr. Bob Shelton passed away last week, which was a loss for Christiansburg.

C. Councilman Stipes congratulated the Engineering Department and Town administration on achieving the VDOT Locality of the Year Award, and he briefly spoke on the importance of the recognition to future projects and the future of the community as a whole.

D. Councilman Showalter reported that the Stormwater Committee had recommended the Town move forward with the RFP process for the Sleepy Hollow storm water study, which was budgeted for this year. It was the consensus of Council to proceed with the RFP process as recommended. Councilman Showalter then congratulated the Engineering Department and Town administration on being named Locality of the Year

by the VDOT Salem District, and asked that Council's appreciation for the beautiful flowers around town be passed along to supervisor Micheal Huesman.

- E. Councilman Bishop, no report.
- F. Councilwoman Hicks expressed appreciation for Parks and Recreation Director Brad Epperley, his staff, and the Recreation Advisory Commission for supporting and hosting the recent, modified, Jill's Buddy Camp, which her child has participated in for several years. This year, instead of canceling the camp due to Covid-19, the recreation department prepared and delivered Jill's Buddy Camp care packages for each camper. She then expressed appreciation for the hand sanitizer dispensers installed at local parks.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Closed Meeting:

Councilwoman Sachs made a motion to enter into a Closed Meeting in accordance with Code of Virginia § 2.2-3711(A)(1), for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body. The Closed Meeting was for Council review of Town Manager. Councilman Stipes seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

B. Reconvene in Open Meeting.

C. Certification.

Councilwoman Sachs 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. The motion was seconded by Councilman Showalter and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes - Aye.

D. Council action on the matters. No action was taken by Council.

XII. ADJOURN

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 9:45 P.M.

Michele Stipes, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor