

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL  
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MAY 25, 2021 – 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 MAY 25, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren; Town Attorney Reid Broughton; Executive Assistant/Clerk of Council Tracy Heinline; Finance Director Valerie Tweedie; Engineering Director Wayne Nelson; Assistant Engineering Director Mike Kelley.

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to separate the bill list from the other items under the Consent Agenda due to inquiries she had. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Fiscal Year 2021 – 22 Budget.

Finance Director Valerie Tweedie updated Council on the 2021–2022 proposed budget. Mrs. Tweedie reported that the estimated expenditures in FY 2021 for capital projects had been updated and approximately \$1.8 million in projects would rollover to next year that would not be completed in FY 2021. She explained the PAC units for the Aquatic Center had been pushed out to FY 2022-2023 and replaced with rework of the lighting in both the leisure pool and the competition pool due to the lighting being a more pressing issue. Mrs. Tweedie explained an error correction in the budget for the radio shop explaining a reduction of \$275,000. She touched on the addition of the American Recovery Act funds to the Revenues and Expenditures for FY 2022 in the amount of \$3.115 million. She expressed that the Town had received an additional grant for new body cameras for the Police Department. She also added that \$50,000 had been added to the budget for the Town's share of repairing one of the 911 towers. Mrs. Tweedie concluded that the next steps in the

budget process would be consideration of comments from the Public Hearing, adjustments to the budget as needed, consideration of more work sessions, and then approval of the final budget.

Hearing no further comments, the Public Hearing was closed.

#### IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Minutes of May 11, 2021.

Mayor Barber requested a correction under Citizen Comments in the Minutes of May 11, 2021. The minutes showed *Ken Potter* as the speaker, the correct name was *Ken Baker*.

B. Monthly bill list.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned the status for Downtown Christiansburg Inc.'s application to the state and inquired if the Town should provide the \$4,500 annual support to them or wait for their application to be approved. Town Manager Wingfield explained that the state requirement was for soliciting donations, not for contributions from local governments. Attorney Broughton agreed that charities are required to register with the state before soliciting for donations. Councilwoman Sachs replied that DCI was in the process of working to address any issues with the state and they were looking into working with the Community Foundation of the New River Valley, when celebrating the GiveBigNRV day. Mrs. Sachs explained she did not see a reason to delay the grant money.

Councilwoman Sachs made a motion to approve the monthly bill list as provided. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- C. Schedule a public hearing for July 13, 2021 for a Rezoning request by Deerfield Home Estates LLC to rezone Tax Parcel Nos. 496-A 73 (4.711 acres) from Agricultural (A) and Two-Family Residential (R-2) to Single Family Residential (R-1) with conditions. The proposal is to construct 24 single-family detached dwellings. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.
- D. Cancel public hearing on May 25, 2021 and Reschedule on June 8, 2021 for a Conditional Use Permit request by John D. Elmore for a contractor storage yard in the General Business (B-3) zoning district at 710 Peppers Ferry Road, N.W. (Tax Parcel 435-((A)) – 23)). The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned item D under the Consent Agenda and asked if the neighbors would be notified of the Public Hearing. Mr. Wingfield explained that the Public Hearing requires certified letters be sent to all adjoining property owners and if the address was vacant then the appropriate property owners would still be notified.

Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve items A, C, and D of the Consent Agenda. Councilwoman Sachs seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

## V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Chris Sanchez, Executive Director of the Christiansburg Institute, Inc., to present on their operations, programs, and capital project.

Mr. Sanchez reported that he was pleased to update Council on the progress thus far of the renovations for the Edgar A. Long building located on Scattergood Drive and proceeded to show images of the reconstruction of the building. Mr. Sanchez explained the history of the Long building. He talked about Christiansburg Institute working closely with the Department of Historic Resources to restore the building. He explained there would be over 9,000 square feet of usable space in the Long building and touched on the concept phase of the plans for the interior. Mr. Sanchez also shared pictures of the 2020 Juneteenth celebration at the historical site and talked about the recovery of a time capsule. Mr. Sanchez spoke about the grant funding CI was applying for and how that \$10,000 would go to capital improvements on the exterior of the Long building. Councilman Huppert questioned the grant application cut-off date to apply. Mr. Sanchez explained he was not sure of the deadline, but he had written all the grants himself in the past and was not made aware of the deadline this past year, as in previous years. He explained that Town Manager Wingfield had notified CI that other applications had been approved after the deadline and indicated he would pass it along to Council for consideration. Councilwoman Hicks thanked Mr. Sanchez for updating Council and appreciated being informed of how the grant money was being used. Mayor Barber questioned the total estimated cost of the reconstruction of the building. Mr. Sanchez explained that lumber cost had increased tremendously due to the pandemic, but CI had estimated approximately \$5 million to reconstruct the building, which included the HVAC system, fire system, etc. Councilman Bishop thanked Mr. Sanchez and CI Inc. members for the work they had completed so far on the building. Councilman Showalter expressed that about five or six years ago Council had met with the CI alumni and discussed creating an authority to have borrowing power. Mr. Showalter questioned how much closer they were in that process. Mr. Sanchez explained that final details should come later with more discussions and the negotiation stage would be in the near future.

- B. Public Arts Plan drafted by Public Arts Advisory Board.

Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren gave some history on the Public Arts Advisory Board that was formed in early 2020. He explained the Public Arts Plan is reviewed annually and revised if needed and that adjustments are made in accordance with changing trends in the culture and within the Christiansburg community. Mr. Warren explained the art selection and process and how art could be purchased or lent to the Town by an owner or the artist. He explained that funding could include grant opportunities, artist-initiated projects and/or donations. He also spoke about the life spans of pieces of art and how the art was maintained. He shared images of art around the Town and explained most of the potential art locations identified so far were places such as Town or Government buildings, Town greenspaces, etc. Mr. Warren concluded that the Art Plan would soon be posted to the Town's website with available video and then a public meeting would be held on June 8<sup>th</sup>. Councilwoman Sachs recognized Public Arts Advisory Board member Paula Alston and thanked her for serving. Councilman Showalter questioned the amount of discussion of the

public art requirements per the planning code. Councilwoman Sachs explained that the board preferred the art be placed on Town property so planning codes would not have to be changed.

#### VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Chris Waltz, 1370 Rigby Street, expressed that he had contacted the state concerning the Downtown Christiansburg, Inc. application and explained that it does include all contributions and soliciting grants from governments. Mr. Waltz communicated that he had discussed and gave the state examples including community support grants from the Town and DCI's current solicitation for the Pocket Park on Main Street. Mr. Waltz informed Council he had received an email from the state that had an official complaint form attached that he could complete. He expressed that included in the complaint form was a section that inquired if any other agencies or governments had been contacted. Mr. Waltz explained that he had contacted Council through email and attached the letter from the state explaining it was a \$5,000 fine for each violation.

Mayor Barber asked Attorney Broughton if this statement was correct. Mr. Broughton explained that it was more than likely an accurate statement according to the state code in order to register but as far as the grant process, he did not believe it was considered a charitable donation.

#### VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Sachs reported to Council that a Central Business Meeting would be held May 26<sup>th</sup> at noon.

#### VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Dedication of a private drainage easement over four (4) recreation areas identified as Tax Map 465 – 27A that in whole total 0.546 acres from the Town of Christiansburg to Oaktree Townhomes, Phase II Homeowners Association. The public hearing was held May 11, 2021.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the above dedication of a private drainage easement. Councilman Stipes seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- B. Conditional Use Permit request by New River Soccer Association (applicant) on behalf of Marjorie Ann Rhudy for a private recreational facility in the Agriculture (A) zoning district at 1200 Buffalo Drive, (Tax Parcel 556 – ((A)) – 84). The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The public hearing was held May 11, 2021.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the New River Soccer Association private recreational facility conditional use permit request as recommended. Councilwoman Sachs seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- C. Rezoning request by JBC Properties, LLC, for approximately 4.82 acres of a 5.311-acre parcel from A Agriculture to R-1 Single Family Residential. The subject property is located at 345 John Lemley Lane, S.E. and is identified as Tax Map Number 502 – ((17))-23 (Parcel ID 120239). The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan, (Case #RZN-2021-04). The public hearing was held May 11, 2021.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the rezoning request by JBC Properties, LLC. Councilwoman Sachs seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- D. Water rates proposed for Fiscal Year 2021-22. The public hearing was held May 11, 2021.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion requesting Council to waive the water rate increase and allocate money from the American Recovery funds instead. Hearing no second from Council the motion died.

Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the proposed water rates for Fiscal year 2021-22 and expressed that the Town of Christiansburg is still, out of necessity, subsidizing the provision of water service. Mr. Stipes explained his use of the word subsidizing had to do with the wholesale cost of water and distributing water as well as upgrading the Town's system as necessary. He explained the Town was still incurring cost to provide water and the Town's goal was to become a self-sustaining operation. Councilman Showalter inquired how much it would cost the Town if water rates were not raised. Finance Director Tweedie explained that it would cost about \$700,000 with no water rate increase and that money would need to come from the general fund. Councilwoman Hicks referenced the grant the Town would be receiving in the upcoming years from the American Recovery Act and inquired why the money should not be placed into the water fund. Councilwoman Sachs seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Nay; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

- E. Agreement with Axon for Police Body Cameras.  
Town Manager Wingfield informed Council the contract was still being written and would like to extend the vote until the next Council meeting.

Councilwoman Hicks asked about Christiansburg Institute and if Council would like to include the grant request as part of the community support total for the budget. Councilwoman Sachs expressed that she would like to review the application before approving the budget. Councilman Bishop agreed. Council agreed to review the application and then proceed with any questions or concerns at the next Town Council meeting.

## IX. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Town Manager  
Mr. Wingfield reminded Council of the reception for Lisa Bleakley this Thursday, the 27th from 11am – 1pm at the County building. Ms. Bleakley, Executive Director of the

Montgomery County Virginia Regional Tourism, has accepted a position with the City of Virginia Beach and will be leaving her position on June 9<sup>th</sup>.

B. Town Attorney  
None.

C. Other Staff  
None.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Stipes reported that Ms. Debbie Sherman-Lee, chair of the Christiansburg Institute Board was in attendance of the Council meeting. He explained he grew up in Blacksburg and was not familiar with Christiansburg Institute early on, but it had become a passion of his. He spoke of the importance of the facility to observe history and felt it was great that you could go where history happened and expressed interest in helping Christiansburg Institute with the restoration of the Long building. He expressed the need to preserve the historic building for public access and to facilitate an authority that could give the money for renovations and urged the community to get involved.

Councilman Showalter  
None.

Councilman Huppert reported that he agreed with Councilman Stipes and supported Christiansburg Institute. Mr. Huppert also reported that Parks and Recreation Director Brad Epperley appreciated Council attending the groundbreaking of the new park. He reported on the Farmers Market opening on the previous Thursday and how there were 650 people in attendance. Mr. Huppert also reported that the Recreation Center hosted a cancer screening on May 20th and gave out Covid vaccines the next day. He reported that the Aquatic Center summer program is full, and the waiting list is full for private lessons as well. Mr. Huppert reported that the Sunset Cemetery would be holding a service for Memorial Day at 6pm. He informed Council that he had placed a document at each of their seats and asked each Council member to look over the document and make changes or additions. He explained the referenced item would be placed on the next Town Council meeting agenda.

Councilman Bishop  
None.

Councilwoman Sachs  
None.

Councilwoman Hicks recognized the community engagement concerning the “sign wars” in the Town and expressed that it had not only brought great attention to the Town of Christiansburg but it had had a positive impact in the community as well. Mrs. Hicks addressed Councilman Huppert and referenced the document that had been handed out and stated that she felt the accusations and conversations had already been handled and felt the resolution was another personal attack. Mayor Barber explained the document that had been referred to, was a Resolution for Reprimand of Councilwoman Hicks and announced it would be on the agenda for the next Town Council meeting.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:15pm.

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Tracy Heinline, Clerk of Council

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D. Michael Barber, Mayor