

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JULY 13, 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 JULY 13, 2021 AT 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor Samuel M. Bishop; Johana Hicks; Steve Huppert; Merissa Sachs; Bradford J. Stipes. ABSENT: Henry Showalter.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren; Town Attorney Reid Broughton; Executive Assistant/Clerk of Council Tracy Heinline; Police Chief Mark Sisson.

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Public hearing regarding an ordinance amending Chapter 30 “Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places” of the Christiansburg Town Code regarding provisions for utilization of public on-street parking by mobile food preparation vehicles (food trucks).

Town Manager Wingfield explained an ordinance had been drafted after a request from Iron Tree Brewery to allow food trucks in on-street parking. Mr. Wingfield explained the trucks would be limited to no more than 24 times per food truck, per calendar year. He stated there would be a permitting process for the food trucks and certain regulations would need to be maintained, such as pedestrian and vehicular safety.

Justin Sanders, DCI President, expressed support for the ordinance and stated that he felt it would not only create equity for downtown businesses, but it would also create a good attraction for those businesses.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of June 22, 2021.
- B. Purchase of Data or Cellphone Service and Related Devices with Verizon. This agreement costed approximately \$135,000 in Fiscal Year 2020-21, though the actual costs incurred under the agreement will depend on actual devices, data usage, and cell phone services.
- C. Cancel public hearing on July 13, 2021 and schedule public hearings for July 27, 2021 for a Proffered Rezoning request by Deerfield Home Estates LLC to rezone Tax Parcel 496 – ((A)) – 68 and 496 – ((A)) – 73 (4.711 acres) from Agricultural (A) and Two-Family Residential (R-2) to Single Family Residential (R-1) and a Conditional Use Permit for a Planned Residential Development on the same acreage. 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. Schedule a public hearing for a commercial auto garage at 1250 Roanoke Street for Tax Parcel 498 – ((7)) – 16A, 498 – ((7)) – 17A, and 498 – ((A)) – 113C by Glenwood Martin on behalf of Twin Oaks Properties LLC for August 24, 2021. The property is designated Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Councilman Bishop made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman Sachs. Council voted on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Chris Sanchez of Christiansburg Institute and Bob Poff of the Montgomery Museum of Art & History to present on proposed African-American History and Storyboard Project for the northeast quadrant of the Town Square (the U.S. Post Office quadrant).

Casey Jenkins, Executive Director of the Montgomery Museum addressed Council concerning the importance of African-American history in the Town of Christiansburg. He explained that in 2018 the Cultural Crossings brochure had been presented to guide visitors to historic markers, street art, and historic buildings in the area and expressed the importance of the entire history to be known. Mr. Jenkins introduced Chris Sanchez and Debbie Sherman-Lee with Christiansburg Institute, and Bob Poff from the Montgomery Museum of Art and History.

Bob Poff, Board Member of the Museum, explained to Council that he had been asked by the museum's board of directors to co-chair with the Christiansburg Institute to design signage for the town square. He wanted to clarify that this project was supported by both the town and the museum. Mr. Poff stated that several had recommended the storyboards be placed at Christiansburg Institute but felt the square, being the historic cultural center of the county seat, seemed to be the best location for building equality.

Chris Sanchez, Executive Director of Christiansburg Institute, presented to Council the importance of African-American history and introduced Debbie Sherman-Lee, Chair of the Board of Directors. Mr. Sanchez expressed his appreciation for the supporters that had

attended the Council meeting. He stated the storyboards had been compiled by Christiansburg Institute along with the Montgomery Museum board as well as CI staff and alumni. He stated that CI had been approached concerning a sapling from the 1902 Constitutional oak tree located on the square and Mr. Sanchez explained that CI was not interested in confederate monuments being taken down in the public square and wanted to promote black history instead. He referenced the first proposed storyboard that reflected on education and spoke about the many schools in the county that had been built using grants from the Julius Rosenwald Fund. He explained that along with those grants, the local African American population, and the county school board, several of the schools in the early twentieth century were built. Mr. Sanchez explained the second storyboard told the story of slavery and referenced Lewis Miller's drawings of slaves being auctioned in Christiansburg at the square. He expressed that this story was so important due to many not knowing this story of slavery in Montgomery County existed. He referenced a picture of slave cabins on Latimer Plantation that had once been on Scattergood Drive in Christiansburg and a picture of Jane Day Robertson, thought to be a former slave with her two children. Ms. Sherman-Lee talked about the community life storyboard which showed information about black communities, clubs, churches, businesses, and entertainment in the community. Mr. Poff explained the third storyboard had not been finalized due to needing more pictures from the community to tell the entire story. Mr. Sanchez talked about where they would like to place the storyboards in the square and explained that after researching downtown and looking at the quadrant they were mindful of the other memorials and wanted to add the African-American storyboards to enrich the community's education of black history. Mr. Poff asked that Council approve the placement of the three storyboards and asked for funding for the proposed walkways and benches, which was estimated to be \$14,000. Councilman Huppert expressed that he had been on Council for a long period of time and had never received so many emails as he had the last couple days in support of this project. Mayor Barber stated that Council had received 76 positive emails and 4 negative emails from the community but overall, there was tremendous support from the town, and he hoped that Council as a group could move forward rapidly with this project. Councilman Huppert expressed that he had previous concerns about school children visiting the square in the future with traffic being so close to the displays but has since been reassured that this would not be an issue. Councilman Bishop expressed his gratitude of the large community support that had gathered at the council meeting and expressed appreciation of the calm environment. Councilwoman Sachs inquired about QR codes and where they would be included. Mr. Jenkins explained the QR codes would more than likely be on a universal site that would be shared with the storyboards to raise awareness about black history and the two cultural organizations. Councilwoman Hicks thanked CI and Montgomery Museum for the presentation and recognized Christiansburg Institute for their contributions to the community. Mrs. Hicks stated she would like to see a unity water fountain at the square and expressed that she wished there was more space for more additions. She also referenced the proposed slavery storyboard and expressed concern for the last names listed as the slave owners. She stated she was concerned for those names being displayed and potentially being criticized in the community. Mr. Sanchez explained he would be open to meeting with Mrs. Hicks to talk more about a proposal on the subject. Councilman Stipes spoke in favor of the storyboard and asked for a show of hands from the audience who were in support of the proposal. Mr. Stipes stated that he had spoken with Councilman Showalter who was in favor of this project as well.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Katherine Carpenter, a former pastor at Asbury United Methodist Church in Christiansburg and current campus minister at Virginia Tech spoke to Council in support of the storyboard project. She explained there was a rich history of African-Americans in the community and a history of perseverance in the face of adversity. Ms. Carpenter stated that Christiansburg Institute was a bright beacon of light in Virginia. She expressed that people learning about African-American history would not divide but instead would strengthen their community and help everyone work together to build a better future. She urged everyone to listen and learn and work together and urged Council to be supportive of this storyboard project.

Gretchen Neinstein, 155 Greenway Drive expressed her full support for the African-American storyboard as a resident of the town and a teacher in the county. She explained that our duty as a community was to support African-American history and work to bring together the stories of our ancestors. Ms. Neinstein urged Council to vote yes for this project.

Megan Doney, educational teacher, addressed a previous concern about last names being listed on the slavery storyboard and explained that everyone needed to realize that atrocities were committed in the African American history and the white community could never imagine what kind of pain they had suffered and hoped that would be kept in mind.

Dr. Wornie Reed, 520 Quailwood Drive, Blacksburg spoke on behalf of the committee of the Dialogue on Race and explained that the committee enthusiastically supported the storyboard project. He expressed that this project had a simple but important objective, to express the African-American experience as a part of local history. Mr. Reed expressed sadness over the emails opposing the project and explained he was disappointed but not surprised. Mr. Reed explained that the Dialogue on Race began six years ago to combat those kinds of sentiments and urged Council to resist the opposition and support the project.

Jordan Bell of Roanoke, Virginia spoke in support of Christiansburg Institute and the proposed storyboards. He talked about a historical black community in Roanoke that had over 300 black businesses and expressed that children would not know the importance of black history in a community like that if it was not explained to them. Mr. Bell stated that a storyboard would tell the story of these individuals and would pass down a legacy that everyone could be proud of. He urged Council to help connect these stories and support the storyboards.

Bethany Mott, Floyd Virginia, expressed to Council that when she moved to this area, she was not aware of African-American history in Christiansburg. Ms. Mott also expressed that Christiansburg Institute was a tremendous jewel in the community. She stated her excitement for the storyboards and explained that this would help everyone move forward in acknowledging and understanding all aspects of history.

Erin McKelvey, Lusters Gate Road, Montgomery County, talked about being unaware of the location and history behind her current home and that it had been used as a slave plantation in the 1800's. She spoke about the location for the storyboards and stated that the buildings around the square, like the courthouse, post office, and jail embodied institutions of power in the community and would be important buildings to surround the storyboards. She explained this project of African-American history needed to be told in order for everyone to heal. Ms. McKelvey encouraged

everyone to see the opportunity this would bring to help educate those of us that do not know the history.

Noah Morris, recently moved to the area, addressed Council in support of the storyboards at the town square and stated that the history of this land needed to be told for the reconciliation process to begin in the community. He spoke about the current turbulent times in the world and expressed that we could choose to face our history or continue to ignore it. Mr. Morris stated that Council had an excellent opportunity to embrace history and make the community a better place.

Phoenix Keysey, resident from southwest, Virginia spoke about children being free from seeing images of slavery is a form of privilege because many children are reminded of it daily. She expressed that the storyboard images are kind and compassionate compared to the conversations parents must have in black homes and children are shocked when they grow up and find out on their own without these conversations. Ms. Keysey expressed that the whole community could learn greatly from these storyboards. She urged Council to take charge and support this project.

Sylvester Johnson, resident of Montgomery County and assistant vice provost for Humanities at Virginia Tech and directs the Center for Humanities. Mr. Johnson explained that when he first moved to this area, he was repeatedly told by people at Virginia Tech that there was not a black history here. He expressed that one of the compelling reasons to support the storyboards is that CI is doing urgent work to reverse what has been a long process of erasing the rich and complex history of the region. Mr. Johnson stated that connecting local history with national history was very important and there was still quite a bit to learn. He expressed that the storyboard proposal would be very transformative in the town.

Sharon Tomara, resident of Blacksburg and an architectural history professor at Virginia Tech talked about where the storyboards would be located and the significance of the public space. She explained there has been an incredible amount of history that has been erased and this would be a great opportunity to bring it back and to tell this story.

Arlene Lambert of Blacksburg, Virginia talked about the concern of the slavery storyboard and even though it may be hard to look at and read the last names, the story needs to be told.

Sally Walker, 2204 Glade Road, Blacksburg, Virginia, explained that as a parent and a farmer she had been excited to hear that Christiansburg Institute had a driving tour of Christiansburg that explored five significant history spots in the town. She explained that when her family attended the tour the first stop was the location of the auction block, near the post office but was disappointed there was no memorial. Ms. Walker asked Council to please support the storyboards project so things as important as slavery could be memorialized.

Mary Campagna, Cambria Street, talked about Christiansburg being rich in history and stated that most students were not aware of the real history in the area. She explained the best way to share this history is through the proposed storyboards.

Angela Lambert, resident of Christiansburg, spoke about the military being an important part of her family. She spoke about the teachings of different cultures belonged in the schools and explained that she had nothing against monuments being built in the square but thought the money could be used in a different way.

Joanne Boulding-Price of Lynchburg, Virginia explained that she agreed with the concept of the storyboards but expressed that at that time in history slavery was a way of the world. She expressed that slavery was eradicated in 1865 with the Emancipation Proclamation and the Civil War. She urged Council to consider that this nation played a role in eradicating slavery around the world.

Jennifer Nehrt, Curator at Christiansburg Institute, explained that the storyboard information had been in boxes for a century waiting to have the history told and felt this public information is needed to be shared so it can be celebrated.

Kai Duncan of Christiansburg, Virginia talked about the rich history of the black community and how important Christiansburg Institute was to the area. He explained that it was time to be proud of our history and time to move forward and heal from the past.

David Mann, 225 Lester Place, expressed that he had a deep affection for the Town of Christiansburg. He explained that he had been chosen a couple years ago to paint the mural in front of the Christiansburg Police Department and stated the art displayed is a police badge that is surrounded by many hands of different races and ethnicities. Mr. Mann explained that Council had been instrumental in making sure the mural came to fruition and urged Council to continue to support Christiansburg Institute and the Montgomery Museum.

David Pierce, Montgomery County, spoke about race being a large discussion around the world and cautioned the community to be mindful for blaming present day individuals for their ancestor's actions. He expressed concern for how the subject of slavery would be presented on the storyboards and urged Council to review this project carefully.

Nadine Edwards, York Drive, Christiansburg, addressed Council and explained there were many things the community could learn from the proposed storyboards. She stated that this project would give everyone a chance to heal and hopefully move forward. Ms. Edwards spoke about the urgency of the storyboard project and expressed that she would like to see Council vote on this subject soon.

Katherine King, Harless Street, Christiansburg, thanked everyone that came out to the Council meeting and expressed the importance of African American history. She stated the reason black history had been lost was because people stopped talking about it and expressed thanks to Christiansburg Institute and the Montgomery Museum for bringing this subject to light.

Dave Tay, former Christiansburg resident, expressed support for the storyboard project and urged the community to stand behind the project and support black history.

Ryan Wiesdock, chair of the New River Valley Greens, spoke on behalf of the organization in support of the storyboard project. He explained that as a historian he was glad to see the Montgomery Museum and Christiansburg Institute collaborate on the project. He stated that the storyboards would engage many in dealing with difficult history topics. Mr. Wiesdock explained this was a great opportunity to show the children in the community a real and local history.

Additional citizen comments were received via email and were recorded in the final minute book for reference.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Stipes and Bishop – Street Committee Report/Recommendation

1. Plat of Lot Line Relocation Between Tax Parcel 528 – ((47) – 2D and Tax Parcel 529 – ((34)) – 2A located in the Falling Branch Corporate Park.

Councilman Stipes explained this line relocation was located close to the former Dish Network building and the parcel was being reconfigured to move and accommodate a business interest there. Mr. Stipes stated a public utility easement was being proposed and the current lot line was being relocated.

Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the lot line relocation as recommended by the Street Committee. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

Councilman Stipes updated Council on additional measures from the Street Committee to provide guidance on Roanoke Street and First Street location where the one lane reconfiguration for additional parking in the downtown area was made. Mr. Stipes referenced a map that showed the benefits of the reconfigured lane and expressed the committee was taking additional measures to provide guidance to motorists, which included directional paint striping.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

A. Amendment of proffers for conditional zoned property for The Reserve at Round Meadows by Shah Development LLC (applicant/property owner). The change of proffers would allow an increase of five (5) additional lots for a total of no more than 56 single-family detached dwellings. The development is adjacent to Round Meadow Drive on Tax Parcel 494 – ((A)) – 62 and 63, Tax Parcel 495 – ((A)) – 64, and Tax Parcel 494 – ((A)) – 55E1 – 55E3.

Councilwoman Sachs made a motion to approve the amendment of proffers for conditional zoned property for The Reserve at Round Meadows by Shah Development LLC. Councilwoman Hicks seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

B. Revised Conditional Use Permit for a Planned Housing Development for The Reserve at Round Meadows subdivision by Shah Development LLC (applicant/property owner) to allow an increase of five (5) additional lots for a total of no more than 56 single-family detached dwellings. The development is adjacent to Round Meadow Drive on Tax Parcel 494 – ((A)) – 62 and 63, Tax Parcel 495 – ((A)) – 64, and Tax Parcel 494 – ((A)) – 55E1 – 55E3.

Councilwoman Sachs made a motion to approve the revised Conditional Use Permit for a Planned Housing Development for The Reserve at Round Meadows subdivision by Shah Development LLC as recommended by Planning Commission. Councilwoman Hicks seconded

the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

C. Discussion of proposed African-American History and Storyboard Project for the northeast quadrant of the Town Square (the U.S. Post Office quadrant).

Councilman Bishop stated he was in support of the storyboard project and felt his questions had been answered but felt Council should wait until the next meeting to vote in order to follow Town Council guidelines and policies. Mayor Barber explained this subject was not a public hearing and with public hearings Council does typically wait two weeks to vote. Councilwoman Sachs expressed that Council had originally talked about bringing it back to the Central Business Committee to discuss but explained she was fine with voting now on the storyboard. Councilwoman Hicks questioned the additional storyboards that would be displayed at the square. Mr. Poff explained there was space at the town square for future boards, but that CI and the Montgomery Museum were currently asking for just the three storyboards. Mrs. Hicks inquired if the sidewalks at the square would be brick or concrete. Town Manager Wingfield explained that after discussion with the Public Works Director there was talk of using stamped concrete rather than brick but ultimately it would be the Town's decision. Mr. Wingfield included that there had been discussions of a water fountain and an art display being displayed at the square. He explained there was no lighting for the square displays at this time but could investigate that for Council. Councilman Stipes expressed appreciation to everyone that had attended the meeting and stated his support for the project and would be comfortable with voting now since he would not be in attendance of the next council meeting. Councilman Huppert expressed his support for the storyboards. Councilman Bishop explained he wanted to retract his previous comment and stated he would agree to vote on the subject now since this item had not been a public hearing.

Councilman Bishop made a motion to approve the proposed African-American History and Storyboard Project for the northeast quadrant of the Town Square. Councilman Stipes seconded the motion.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned if the storyboards had been made. Mr. Poff stated the storyboards were in the process of being made but the third storyboard was still being completed due to needing more information and input. Councilwoman Sachs expressed that the art pieces would come later, and the Arts Advisory Board supported the project but would discuss it in the future once this phase of the approval of the three storyboards was completed.

Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

D. An Ordinance amending Chapter 30 "Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places" of the Christiansburg Town Code regarding provisions for utilization of public on-street parking by mobile food preparation vehicles (food trucks).

Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the Ordinance amending Chapter 30 "Streets, Sidewalks and Other Public Places" of the Christiansburg Town Code, for a trial period, regarding food trucks. Councilman Huppert seconded the motion.

Councilwoman Hicks expressed support for local businesses downtown and mentioned the concern of safety and town liability since the trucks would be parked in public areas. Mrs. Hicks questioned if the food truck owners would need to purchase liability insurance. Mr. Wingfield explained that the Town required a four-foot accessibility for sidewalks as well as a drawing of how pedestrian safety and vehicular safety would be handled. He stated that the Town could require a type of barrier if needed and informed Council that some type of minimum insurance could be required per Council discussion. Assistant Town Manager Warren added that this process would be similar to how the Town handles outdoor dining downtown. Mr. Wingfield explained the food truck would have to request a specific location to place their vehicle, and be at least 200 feet away from any restaurant, and fill out an application specifying dates. Mayor Barber explained that this type of decision typically falls under the authority of the Town Manager.

Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Sachs – Aye; Stipes – Aye.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Mr. Wingfield received a request from a property owner that joins a town property lot at the corner of Johnston Street and West Street. He explained the owner had inquired about purchasing the town lot. Mr. Wingfield explained the Recreation Department did not need this property and the Engineering Department had no use for it as stormwater management, so he believed the Town could sell the lot per Council's approval. He explained the Town would be open for anyone to purchase the land, but the adjoining owner has a definite interest. Council agreed to sell the property and proceed.

B. Town Attorney

No report.

C. Other Staff

No report.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Stipes
No report.

Councilman Huppert reported that last week town Administration was in court and inquired what the cost was for attorney's fees. Mr. Wingfield explained the attorney's fees associated with the court cost were a total of \$5,830.50 and the staff cost was a total of \$2,376.29. Mr. Wingfield explained this would be paid from the Town's general fund. Councilman Huppert inquired if there would have been a better way to spend this money instead of in court.

Councilman Bishop
No report.

Councilwoman Sachs agreed with Mr. Huppert and expressed that she would like Council to have a discussion on how this type of situation could be handled in the future. Ms. Sachs stated that the Arts Advisory Board had met and identified areas around the Town where art could be placed. She explained that a decision would be made in the next two weeks and by the end of summer the community would see the new art around town.

Councilwoman Hicks addressed the ongoing issue she has had with Town Council for the last year and stated that she had made a choice to forgive and move forward for the citizens that voted for her.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Tracy Heinline, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor