

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 8, 2022 – 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 MARCH 8, 2022, AT 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor Henry Showalter; Samuel M. Bishop; Johana Hicks; Tanya Hockett; Casey Jenkins; Tim Wilson.

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 Mike Kelley; Chief of Police Mark Sisson; Police Officer Mike Nelson.

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Wilson.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

Mayor Barber noted there was no Monthly Bill List for the agenda. Item B. had been added to the Consent Agenda in error.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of February 22, 2022
- B. Monthly Bill List
- C. Resolution recognizing March 21, 2022, as Down Syndrome Awareness Day

D. Award contract to Boxley Materials Company in the amount of \$579,043.50 for construction of the Primary Extension Paving – Roanoke Street, Depot to US 460 Bypass Interchange subject to VDOT's concurrence.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda items A., C., and D. Councilwoman Hicks seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Councilman Bishop – Aye; Councilwoman Hicks – Aye; Councilwoman Hockett-Aye; Councilman Jenkins – Aye; Councilman Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

A. Police Chief Mark Sisson to provide update on the AXON body camera program

Chief Mark Sisson presented the new AXON body camera and passed one of the devices around to Council. Mr. Sisson explained that thirty-two new dash cameras had been installed in police vehicles in November 2021 as well. He expressed that the new AXON program was a logistical project that took many people to bring to fruition. He talked about the goals of the program and how both the body and dash cameras would enhance the accountability of the officers and reduce citizen complaints. Mr. Sisson also noted that after training of personnel, the new Taser 7 had been issued to sworn designated officers in February 2022. He explained that according to research, post users of the Taser 7 expressed there was over a 60% reduction in officer and citizen injury. Mr. Sisson explained that his department was in the process of scheduling Axon Academy officer training for the Taser 7's and for de-escalation of mentally ill suspects. He talked about the capabilities of the new body camera and the in-car system including audio redaction and facial/object redaction. He also included that Town residents could upload a home security recording to the cloud-based system if needed and those transcriptions could be provided to the courts for prosecution. Mr. Sisson concluded that in the future he would like to see the Town take advantage of the Axon Air system that would include drones for the Police Department.

Councilwoman Hockett questioned the storage of the body camera content and how long footage could be kept. Mr. Sisson answered that the Police Department follows the Virginia retention rules to keep and redact evidence. Councilman Wilson asked if the Police Department currently utilizes drones. Mr. Sisson explained that the Police Department uses the Sheriff's Department drone if needed but there was currently allowance in the budget for a drone and expressed that it would cost approximately \$30,000 for one.

B. Engineering Director Mike Kelley to provide Engineering Department update

Mike Kelley updated Council on the Engineering Department and talked about the department's core responsibilities. Mr. Kelley explained the department was primarily responsible for the Town's compliance and supporting other town departments with compliance. He touched on environmental programs and Engineering's responsibility for administering several programs that originate at the Federal level with the Clean Water Act. He talked about the Virginia Stormwater Management Program (VSMP) and how the Town is responsible for plan review, construction inspection and post construction

responsibilities. Mr. Kelley spoke about the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Program (MS4) and the responsibility of the Engineering Department to address stormwater pollution and improve impaired waters. He explained the Engineering Department takes the lead as far as private land development in the Town and the focus of this review effort is the staff Technical Review Committee (TRC). He explained the committee provides a review and approval process for private development projects. Mr. Kelley presented Council with FY 2021 land development statistics and included totals for plan review, utility installation, and right-of-way permits. He talked about the Town's GIS system and explained it was maintained by the Engineering Department and basically is designated to capture and store geographical data. He stated that the public had access to the GIS system as well and that it was accessible through the Town's website. Mr. Kelley walked through the process of capital projects in Engineering and expressed that the process begins with discussions with the project stakeholders and developing the "project need". He explained that from this discussion items would be developed in support of the project. Mr. Kelley concluded with several videos showing capital projects the Town had worked on recently and some that are still active. Councilwoman Hicks inquired if the Engineering Department was involved with the Town's Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Kelley explained that the department would provide technical support for the development of the Comprehensive Plan.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Charles Robins, 1720 Old Farm Village, addressed Council concerning a need for a community garden in the Town. He explained that due to food costs rising he felt a community garden could aid in helping citizens in Town that could not afford to shop. Mr. Robins asked if Council could help find an answer for locations for a garden. Mr. Wingfield explained there were currently three locations in Town for community gardens and expressed there could be additional alternative locations. He noted an area on Roanoke Street (former Eanes property), a location near Kamran Court, and a property off Route 114 (in Slate Creek Commons) were three locations that currently have community gardens. He explained that these locations had not been tilled but the Town had utilized in the past. He added that he and Parks and Recreation Director Brad Epperley were reviewing alternative locations before authorizing the tilling process to get started. Councilman Showalter asked Mr. Wingfield to please keep Mr. Robins updated on the situation. Councilwoman Hockett inquired if there were signs at these locations. Mr. Wingfield answered that currently there were no signs for the community gardens, but they were open to the public since they are on Town property.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Central Business Committee

Councilwoman Hicks reported that the Central Business Committee was currently working on a description of the committee and welcomed input from Council. Councilman Jenkins explained the committee wanted to widen the scope of what Central Business is and to look at all the historic and commercial districts. Mr. Jenkins also explained that by utilizing the Placemaking Plan the Regional Commission had provided,

they could move forward with how that informs the committee's decision in all the commercial areas.

B. Street Committee

Councilwoman Hockett reported a parking issue on Hampton Boulevard in Town and explained that large trucks were parking on both sides when staying in the area. Mrs. Hockett expressed that this limits access for first responders as well as access to the daycare center in that area. She explained the Street Committee had recommended "No Parking" signs on one side of the street and the signs would continue down into the cul-de-sac.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

A. Resolution for the disposition of a Town-owned lot at the intersection of West Street and Johnston Street (Tax Parcel 497 – ((12 Sec 3)) – 16A; Parcel ID 070451). The public hearing was held on February 8, 2022.

Mayor Barber explained this item had been placed out for bid and Joseph Stump (owner of the adjoining properties) had offered a bid of \$1,500. Mr. Wingfield explained the County assessment on the property was \$5,900 and the lot was not large enough to build on.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the resolution for the disposition of a Town-owned lot at the intersection of West Street and Johnston Street and accept the offer. Councilwoman Hockett seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

B. Conditional Use Permit request by Rockstep Christiansburg, LLC for operation of a carnival from April 27, 2022, through May 8, 2022, on property located at 782 New River Road N.W., (Tax Parcel 435 – ((A)) – 41; Parcel ID 007741) in the B-3 General Business District. The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The public hearing was held February 22, 2022.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the conditional use permit request for operation of a carnival at 782 New River Road N.W. Councilwoman Hicks seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

C. Conditional Use Permit request by Taylor E. Linkous and Blair Lawton, LLC for a business auction house on property located at 2790 Roanoke Street (Tax Parcel 501 – ((5)) – 2; Parcel ID 030021) in the B-3 General Business District. The property is designated as Business/Commercial on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The public hearing was held February 22, 2022.

Councilwoman Hicks stated that at the last Council meeting she had asked for information on the items that would be auctioned at this property. Mrs. Hicks expressed that firearms and ammunition had not been included. She expressed concern that several citizens in Town had an issue with the selling of firearms and ammunition. Mr. Linkous explained that they follow federal arms licensing regulations and were currently registered with the State Police, similar to pawn stores.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the conditional use permit request for a business auction house located at 2790 Roanoke Street. Councilwoman Hicks seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

D. Sunset Cemetery burial plot sales prices

Town Manager Wingfield informed Council of the opening of a new section at Sunset Cemetery and explained that burial plot fees are typically increased with cemetery expansion. He stated that currently the fee is \$1,000 for a burial plot and the Town would like to increase that fee to \$1,200. Mr. Wingfield explained the new addition would hold 840 new burial plots. Councilman Showalter expressed his concern on raising the plot fees and stated he would not vote for an increase due to the pandemic and inflation. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that the cemetery does allow payment plan options for this type of service and there was not a great deal of restrictions.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the increase in Sunset Cemetery burial plot fees. Councilwoman Hicks seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Nay; Showalter – Nay; Wilson – Aye.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Mr. Wingfield reported there would be a budget work session Tuesday, March 15th at 6 p.m. at the Town Hall.

B. Town Attorney

No report.

C. Other Staff

No report.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Showalter

Mr. Showalter reported that the Recreation Advisory Commission held a meeting February 7th and one of the main items discussed was the ballot boxes placed at the Town Hall, Recreation Center, and the Aquatic Center. He explained the ballot boxes were for the citizens to recommend a name for the new park. Mr. Showalter also announced that on April 22nd there

would be an event at the Recreation Center with the theme "Dress as Your Era". He also reported that the Farmer's Market would open again in May. He touched on the impact of the Recreation Advisory Commission and what they do for the community. He expressed that they had pushed out 164 meals to seniors in the area with grant funding.

Councilman Bishop
No report

Councilwoman Hicks

Mrs. Hicks asked Councilman Showalter what he predicted for the future location of the Farmers Market and questioned if it would stay at the Recreation Center parking lot or move back to Hickok Street. She stated there had been an increase in visitors since the market had moved to the Recreation Center location. Councilman Showalter answered that Assistant Event Coordinator Marty Gordon would communicate with the Central Business Committee about the future of the location. Mr. Showalter proceeded to inform the new Council members the reason for the Farmers Market previous and current locations. He explained the community had requested a location in downtown Christiansburg. He noted there had been several discussions pertaining to the market's location. He explained it was moved to the Recreation Center due to a capital project and that Council could make the decision to move it back to Hickok Street when needed or let it remain at the Recreation Center. Mayor Barber expressed it was successful at the Recreation Center and he would like to see it remain there, but it was Council's decision. Mr. Showalter brought up the difficulty of getting the community downtown into the central business area and explained that residents may prefer the Recreation Center location.

Councilwoman Hockett
No report

Councilman Wilson
No report

Councilman Jenkins
No report

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:22pm.

Tracy Heinl
Tracy Heinl, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber
D. Michael Barber, Mayor