

**CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 11, 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 OCTOBER 11, 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; Clerk of Council/Executive Assistant Tracy Heinline; Planning Director Benjamin Tripp; Finance Director Valerie Tweedie; Parks and Recreation Director Brad Epperley; Police Chief Mark Sisson

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Bishop.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

No adjustments to the agenda

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

No public hearings

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of September 27, 2022
- B. Schedule public hearing for 2021 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) for October 25, 2022

Councilman Bishop made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Councilman Jenkins. Town 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. Elijah Sharp and Kathleen Armstrong (New River Valley Regional Commission) and Beth Lohman (Friends of the Huckleberry) to present on the Huckleberry Trail Plan and role of Friends of the Huckleberry

Kathleen Armstrong, New River Valley Regional Commission, addressed Council concerning planning efforts for the Huckleberry Trail and noted three main goals that had been set to help frame those efforts. Those goals included work being done to identify areas that were mutually beneficial, documentation on how the Huckleberry Trail was currently being managed, and finally hearing from other long-distance trail managers and influencers. Ms. Armstrong presented to Council a graph referencing a timeline that highlights the important role that rail and transportation has had in informing the development of Montgomery County and the New River Valley. Ms. Armstrong concluded that recent collected GIS data was gathered to understand and document the existing Trail assets and amenities to see where future opportunities might be.

Elijah Sharp, New River Valley Regional Commission, addressed Council concerning the individual partners that work independently to make progress on the Huckleberry Trail. Mr. Sharp spoke about the Huckleberry Trail contributors and owners and explained how they were contributing to the Trail. Mr. Sharp referenced a summary graph and the five key partners of the Huckleberry Trail. He explained that Christiansburg, Blacksburg, and Montgomery County were owners and maintain the trail as well as being responsible for any planning that goes into the Trail. He added that Virginia Tech and Friends of the Huckleberry were Trail partners and landowners that are involved in the mapping process and fundraising and volunteer support for the Trail. Mr. Sharp talked about best management practices and maintenance at the Trail involving mowing, trash, and snow removal. He spoke about different resources for design considerations and highlighted some of the discoveries through the planning process. Mr. Sharp described future goals for the Huckleberry Trail including event coordination and more opportunities for people to contribute.

Beth Lohman, Friends of the Huckleberry greeted Council and talked about the plan to guide and sustain the Trail. She explained that with broad community support for connection to downtown Christiansburg and the passenger rail station, timing could not be better. Councilwoman Hicks expressed that she enjoyed the history walk at the Huckleberry Trail and asked if there would be cross-country competition events at the Trail at some point. Ms. Lohman noted there were currently running organizations in both Christiansburg and Blacksburg and that RunAbout Sports hosts several races throughout the year.

Councilman Showalter inquired if the subject of bicycle rentals had been discussed at any point. Ms. Lohman expressed that the need is there, and that the conversation is happening in the community. Mr. Showalter also asked about the speed limit on the Trail for bicyclists. Mr. Epperley noted that there was a speed limit of 15 mph on the Trail along with a speed limit sign.

Councilwoman Hicks mentioned that first aid boxes could be placed along the Huckleberry Trail along with water bottles. Councilwoman Hockett expressed appreciation for all the work being done on the Trail and asked if they could touch on the subject of the Trail app that individuals could download. Ms. Lohman answered that currently there are paper maps that are for sale in the local business community and an app that can be downloaded and used to see the entire trail. She explained that the app is a GPS enabled, pdf version of the map so cellphone service is not required to find where you are on the Trail.

- B. Presentation by Town staff and Christiansburg Institute, Inc. on the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's FY 23 Industrial Revitalization Fund Planning Grant program

Debbie Sherman-Lee, Christiansburg Institute, Inc. (CI) Board member introduced Chris Sanchez, Executive Director who spoke to Council concerning a partnership to pursue the FY 23 Industrial Revitalization Fund Planning Grant program. Mr. Sanchez summarized CI's work in the community and explained they had grown to a seven person staff over the years and touched on the history of Christiansburg Institute. Mr. Sanchez thanked the Town of Christiansburg for a portion of grant money that went towards a new roof for the historic Edgar A. Long building and explained that preservation projects continue for the structure. Mr. Sanchez talked about the Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF) and explained how the fund was an opportunity for local government to bring revitalization to blighted structures within their communities. Mr. Sanchez explained this grant was a grant for up to \$100,000 in soft cost planning and spoke about some of the assets the institute currently has. He explained that if the Town agreed to partner with CI, then the Town would apply for the grant and Christiansburg Institute would complete the planning work for the renovations.

Mr. Sanchez noted that the deadline for the grant application was the first week of November 2022 and the funds would be disbursed in the first half of 2023. Councilwoman Hicks asked Mr. Wingfield if he could estimate what the cost to the Town would be. Mr. Wingfield explained that the only cost would be staff time and reporting. Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren agreed that there would be staff time working with the state online grant portal to enter in the application. Councilman Showalter inquired if CI was in a place where they could meet the November deadline. Mr. Sanchez informed Council that CI was currently working on the grant and would be prepared to meet the deadline. Councilman Bishop asked if the funds would need to be used in a certain timeframe once approved. Mr. Sanchez explained that it is a year-grant application. He explained that there is also a second round of grant application for capital funding so a successful \$100,000 grant award would make CI eligible for up to a \$5 million grant in capital funding.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Paul Leichner, 160 Alexa Lane, addressed Council and stated that the Citizens Police Academy held by the Police Department has given him some insight into police work that he was not aware of before. Mr. Leichner asked if the Town would consider allowing police officers take-home vehicles. Police Chief Mark Sisson explained that several selected officers take home vehicles within the Town currently. Mr. Leichner suggested the policy be expanded to help with employee retention. He also expressed excitement for the new Huckleberry Park opening and added that his family enjoys the Huckleberry Trail and uses it often.

Steve Semones, Balzer & Associates, addressed Council concerning the rezoning for the property located at 1200 Buffalo Drive under Discussion and Action by Council. Mr. Semones informed Council that dumpsters for that site had been added to the master plan and the development will not use individual trash carts.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks reported on the Agency on Aging program and referenced a report for the 2021-2022 fiscal program that included totals for services provided to the community. Mrs. Hicks also reported that the Central Business Committee would offer recommendations to Council soon for the façade grants.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

A. Appointment of Julio Stephens to the Sustainability Committee

Mayor Barber introduced Mr. Stephens and explained he was currently a financial advisor for Edward Jones Investments and the former sustainability director from Radford University.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the appointment of Julio Stephens to the Sustainability Committee, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Town Council voted as follows: Councilman Bishop – Aye; Councilwoman Hicks – Aye; Councilwoman Hockett – Aye; Councilman Jenkins – Aye; Councilman Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

B. Rezoning request by Marjorie Ann Rhudy, property owner, and RWW 34 LLC, contract purchaser, to rezone the property located at 1200 Buffalo Drive, N.W. (Tax Parcel 556-((A)) – 84; Parcel ID 111028) 4.901 acres from A Agricultural District and B-3 General Business District to R-3 Multi-Family Residential with proffered conditions, to allow 49 townhouse units. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The public hearing was held on September 27, 2022.

Mr. Semones, Balzer and Associates reiterated that Council had expressed concern with overcrowding where trash carts were concerned at this site and explained that dumpsters would now be placed on the property instead. Councilwoman Hicks again

expressed concern for the issues with College Street stormwater and this property potentially adding to that issue.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the rezoning request to rezone the property located at 1200 Buffalo Drive, N.W., seconded by Councilman Bishop. Town Council voted as follows: Councilman Bishop – Aye; Councilwoman Hicks – Aye; Councilwoman Hockett – Aye; Councilman Jenkins – Aye; Councilman Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

Councilman Showalter noted the concern pertaining to future high-density development in small areas of the Town and not having a definitive plan for trash and recycling cart location. He expressed the need for guidance from the Planning Commission or the Water and Waste Committee to have an ordinance that would accommodate carts in the future.

- C. Conditional Use Permit request by Loy/Mary Burch II LLC, property owner, and Ron Frank Jr., lessee, to allow a public billiard parlor and poolroom on the property located at 3165 N. Franklin Street (Tax Parcels 406-4-28, 406-4-29, 406-4-30, 406-4-31, 406-4-32, 406-4-33, 406-4-54, 406-4-55, 406-4-56, 406-4-57, 406-4-58, being portions of Parcel ID 000437; 406-4-24, 406-4-25, 406-4-26, 406-4-27, being all of Parcel ID 000439; and Tax Parcels 406-4-17, 406-4-18, 406-4-19, 406-4-20, 406-4-21, 406-4-22, 406-4-23, being all of Parcel ID 000440); zoned 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 on September 27, 2022.

Councilman Bishop made a motion to approve the conditional use permit request to allow a public billiard parlor and poolroom at 3165 N. Franklin Street, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Town Council voted as follows: Councilman Bishop – Aye; Councilwoman Hicks – Aye; Councilwoman Hockett – Aye; Councilman Jenkins – Aye; Councilman Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

D. Revisions to the Community Support Grant Program

Councilwoman Hockett questioned if there would be an additional work session dedicated to the support grant program. Mayor Barber answered that Council had placed a policy in effect and the package was sent out a few weeks ago to view. Mrs. Hockett voiced her concern with the restricting of grant applications being submitted only three times in every five years. She expressed apprehension with eliminating good work that these organizations do in Town and felt it limited these non-profits. Mrs. Hockett noted that she would not be supporting the revisions at this time but only because she believes businesses could use the grant money and should not be restricted from applying.

Councilman Jenkins noted that the Community Support Grant Program needed to be looked at as an investment into the community, not a handout. Councilman Showalter asked if there had been any comments from organizations concerning this item. Mr. Wingfield explained there had been no comments received.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the revisions to the Community Support Grant Program, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Town Council voted as follows: Councilman Bishop – Aye; Councilwoman Hicks – Aye; Councilwoman Hockett – Nay; Councilman Jenkins – Abstain; Councilman Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

E. Town participation in the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's FY 23 Industrial Revitalization Fund Planning Grant program on behalf of Christiansburg Institute, Inc.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the Town participation in the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development's FY 23 Industrial Revitalization Fund Planning Grant program on behalf of Christiansburg Institute, Inc., seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Town Council voted as follows: Councilman Bishop – Aye; Councilwoman Hicks – Aye; Councilwoman Hockett – Aye; Councilman Jenkins – Aye; Councilman Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

F. Naming of entrance road into the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park

Town Manager Wingfield explained that for emergency 911 purposes the entrance road into the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park would need to be named. He noted that the name Huckleberry Park Drive was being considered and had been recommended by the Recreation Advisory Commission. Councilman Showalter and Councilwoman Hicks agreed with the new name for the road.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the name Huckleberry Park Drive at the entrance road into the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Town Council voted as follows: Councilman Bishop – Aye; Councilwoman Hicks – Aye; Councilwoman Hockett – Aye; Councilman Jenkins – Aye; Councilman Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

G. Christiansburg Huckleberry Park sponsorship program

Brad Epperley, Parks and Recreation Director updated Council on the Huckleberry Park sponsorship program and what is next for the new park. Mr. Epperley spoke about the all-inclusive amenities of the park and how the new park will bring one-of-a-kind experiences to Southwest Virginia. He noted that nearly 22% of Christiansburg's population was under the age of 18 and expressed that the Huckleberry Park would serve as a hub for recreation and inspiration to the youth of the community. Mr. Epperley talked about naming rights for the park and how this would be contracted through a bid process. He touched on the different levels of sponsorships and commitments and how small businesses and individual partners could benefit from being a part of the park. Mr. Epperley spoke about the RFP process for sponsorship, press releases and a campaign from social media as well as print standpoint. He explained that after the RFP process then meetings would be scheduled with prospective donors. Mr. Epperley concluded that potential sponsor contacts could be sent directly to Mayor Barber.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned how the Town would handle multiple organizations bidding on one level of sponsorship. Mr. Epperley explained that if there were multiple

organizations bidding on the RFP, then the Town would go into a negotiation stage. Mrs. Hicks also requested the Christiansburg logo be placed in a stained-glass structure in the main building of the park. Councilman Jenkins inquired about the timeline of the sponsorship drive and where the Town would like to be in the next couple years. Mr. Epperley expressed that a timeline has not been discussed but the most important item is the Diamond sponsorship due to the exclusivity of the sponsorship and then it could be discussed to set timeline goals.

Councilman Showalter made a motion to approve the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park sponsorship program, seconded by Councilman Jenkins. Town Council voted as follows: Councilman Bishop – Aye; Councilwoman Hicks – Aye; Councilwoman Hockett – Aye; Councilman Jenkins – Aye; Councilman Showalter – Aye; Councilman Wilson – Aye.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

A. Town Manager

Mr. Wingfield noted a correction to the timing for the Cambria Trail construction. He explained that \$90,000 was for surveying was in the current budget and that design and right-of-way acquisition would be next fiscal year with construction beginning in the fall of fiscal year 2025. Mr. Wingfield updated Council on the downtown park bathrooms and explained that \$72,000 would include the building, power, and water and sewer. Mr. Wingfield also added that the Christiansburg High School Homecoming Parade would be held October 12th at 7:00 p.m.

B. Town Attorney – No report

C. Other Staff - No report

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilman Showalter noted that as he was serving on the Parks and Recreation Commission, he wanted to express how lucky we are as a community to have these facilities and the staff members who offer these programs. Mr. Showalter expressed enthusiasm for the park sponsorship program.

Councilwoman Hicks thanked Mr. Wingfield for the update on the downtown park bathrooms and expressed the need for more bathrooms in each of the Town's parks. Mrs. Hicks added that Council attended the Virginia Municipal League Conference and gave a brief update.

Councilwoman Hockett presented to Council an opportunity to consider a partnership with the Peppers Ferry Regional Wastewater Treatment Authority. Mrs. Hockett asked Council to discuss what a study would look like and would it be appropriate. She explained that it would be potential for the Town to partner together and provide best service to the community with low cost. Councilwoman Hicks asked for more information and if there would be an expense for the Town or an impact to the citizens. Councilman Showalter agreed with supporting Mr. Wingfield

to have discussions with the Authority and reporting back to Council. Councilman Wilson and Councilman Jenkins agreed it was worth discussing.

Councilman Wilson noted an invite to Council to the New River Valley Regional Commission dinner at the end of October. Mr. Wilson added that the Police Academy had been a great success and expressed great output from staff. He reminded Council that Town Manager evaluations were due. Mayor Barber gave Council until October 17th to turn in evaluations for the Town Manager.

Councilman Jenkins expressed appreciation for the new mural Morgan Short has been working on in downtown Cambria and added it was a great contribution to the community. He noted that news Channel 7 had interviewed Ms. Short recently. Councilwoman Hicks commended Public Relations Director Christina Edney for a great job interviewing Ms. Short for the Town.

Mayor Barber thanked staff involved in the previous Rockin' Main downtown event and noted that the rescheduled food truck rodeo would take place in the spring.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:44 p.m.

Tracy Heinle
Tracy Heinle, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber
D. Michael Barber, Mayor