

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 12, 2024 – 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 12, 2024, AT 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor Tanya Hockett; Samuel M. Bishop; Kim Bowman; Johana Hicks; 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; Public Works Director Jim Lancianese; Assistant Director of Public Works, Streets Travis Moles; Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell; Engineering Director Mike Kelley; Finance Director Valerie Tweedie; Police Chief Chris Ramsey; Public Relations Director Christina Bolt

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

A. Moment of Reflection

Mayor Barber noted the passing of Life Rescue Squad Members Marvin Jones and Larry Duncan.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilwoman Hockett.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to table item J. under Discussion and Action that pertained to a lease proposal for a portion of Town property at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center. Mrs. Hicks asked that the item be postponed until Council received further information. Councilwoman Bowman seconded the motion. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Nay; Jenkins – Nay; Wilson – Nay. Due to a tie vote of Council, Mayor Barber voted Aye to table item J. under Discussion and Action.

Motion Approved

Town Attorney Reid Broughton explained to Council a public hearing would need to be held before the Town could lease a property. Mayor Barber asked Mr. Wingfield to set the public

hearing for the March 26th Town Council meeting. Town Manager Wingfield clarified the item could be discussed before setting a public hearing.

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. Issuance of Virginia Resource Authority (VRA) bond for improvement projects at the Wastewater Treatment Plant

Finance Director Valerie Tweedie explained to Council a notice of the Public Hearing was advertised as required under applicable law for the Wastewater Treatment Projects. She explained the Town had been granted a low interest loan of 0.5% to complete the projects. She further noted that as an added benefit, \$450,650 of the loan has been designated as a “Principal Forgiveness Loan.” Mrs. Tweedie noted the projects to be funded included the construction of a new building to house two centrifuges and a rotary drum thickener for efficient biosolids dewatering, crucial upgrades to the main electrical building, replacement of two influent Archimedes screw pumps, and replacement of both aerated grit and bar screen equipment.

There being no public comments the public hearing closed.

B. Rezoning request by Radford Development of Virginia, LLC, property owner, and Hy-Tek Collision, LLC, applicant, to rezone approximately 2.265 acres of property located on the east side of the intersection of Badger Street, N.W. and Elk Drive, N.W. (Tax Parcel 525 – ((A)) – 44A; Parcel ID 026060) from B-3 General Business District to I-1 Limited Industrial. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Trevor Kimzey, Director of Engineering Foresight Design Services, addressed Council on behalf of Hy-Tek Collision and noted the application was straightforward and asked if Council had any questions.

Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren explained this would be a new building that would sit on an adjacent lot to the existing building on Badger Street and that the business would relocate from their existing building to a larger vacant property north of the existing property.

There being no further public comments the public hearing closed.

C. Conditional Use Permit request by Radford Development of Virginia, LLC, property owner, and Hy-Tek Collision, LLC, applicant, to allow for an automobile and truck or recreation vehicle assembling, painting, upholstering, repairing, rebuilding or reconditioning, body or fender work, including a commercial garage, towing service, or automobile body shop on approximately 2.265-acres of property located on the east side of the intersection of Badger Street, N.W. and Elk Drive, N.W. (Tax Parcel 525 – ((A)) – 44A; Parcel ID 026060) in I-1 Limited Industrial. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Trevor Kimzey, Foresight Designs Services, asked Council if they had any questions pertaining to the Conditional Use Permit request. Councilwoman Hicks questioned if there would be clarification pertaining to the length of time the vehicles could stay on the property and if the vehicles would require tags. Mr. Warren and Mayor Barber clarified there were several conditions the Planning Commission had recommended that governs the timeframe of the vehicles on the property.

Bryan Rice, Rice Realty and Landsales, addressed Council and explained he owned the property adjacent to the business in question and expressed it would be beneficial to the community to have a dependable automobile body shop.

Michael Myers, Owner of Hy-Tek Collision LLC, spoke to Council and expressed his efforts to keep his business productive and the facility clean. Mr. Myers noted the new building was an opportunity for growth for employment in the town and expressed he would be hiring approximately 20 – 25 extra employees. Mr. Myers asked Council to take action this evening due to time constraints.

Mayor Barber asked Council if a motion was desirable to act on the requested Conditional Use Permit. For lack of motion the item would be voted on in two weeks.

There being no further public comments the public hearing closed.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of February 27, 2024 and March 4, 2024
- B. Schedule a public hearing on April 23, 2024 for a Conditional Use Permit request by Howard M. Thornton, Jr. and Gayle W. Thornton, property owners, and PCKK Partners, LLC, applicant, to allow a contractors equipment storage yard on property located at 520 and 540 Depot Street, N.E. (Tax Parcel 497 – ((A)) – 40; Parcel ID 007903) in B-3 General Business. The property is designated as Downtown/Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.
- C. Schedule a public hearing on April 23, 2024 for a rezoning request by Johnny C. Martin, Jr. and Amelia F. Martin, property owners and applicants, to rezone property located at 3345 Roanoke Street and a portion of property located at 3301 Roanoke Street (all of Tax Parcel 502 – ((9)) – 6; Parcel ID 007453 and a portion of Tax Parcel 502 – ((9)) – 5C; Parcel ID 090517) from A Agricultural to B-3 General Business. The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.
- D. Schedule a public hearing on April 23, 2024 for a Conditional Use Permit request by Johnny C. Martin, Jr. and Amelia F. Martin, property owners and applicants, to allow for an amendment of an existing Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow for the expansion of a contractors equipment storage yard on property located at 3345 Roanoke Street and a portion of property located at 3301 Roanoke Street (Tax Parcel 502 – ((9)) – 6; Parcel ID 007453 and a portion of Tax Parcel 502 – ((9)) – 5C; Parcel ID 090517) from A Agricultural to B-3 General Business.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Virginia Tech – Montgomery Executive Airport Director Keith Holt to present on airport operations

Mayor Barber recognized N.L. Bishop who currently serves on the Airport Authority Board. Airport Director Keith Holt gave a brief history of the Virginia Tech – Montgomery Regional Airport. Mr. Holt spoke concerning new projects at the airport including the updated LED runway lighting and the runway extension, which was completed in August 2020, extending the runway from 4,500 feet to 5,500 feet. He explained the projects were grant funded 98% with a combination of federal and state grants. Mr. Holt noted that the extension of the runway caused traffic to increase by 25% and fuel sales doubled due to larger aircraft using the longer runway.

Mr. Holt spoke about a variety of companies that flew in and out of the airport and added that emergency aircraft use the airport as well, stating that during an emergency, 911 has the ability to open the airport's gates if airport staff is not available. He added that sports-chartered aircrafts used the airport as well noting that it is a timesaver and a convenience for the players and coaches in the area.

Mr. Holt spoke about the economic impact that airports bring to their area and noted that pre runway extension Virginia Tech-Montgomery Executive Airport generated \$10.5 million in annual economic activity. He noted that this amount would be updated soon by the state to reflect the new airport extension. Mr. Holt also explained that taxes on aviation fuels were used for the grant programs that improve aviation infrastructures. Mr. Holt spoke about the future of the airport and the needed improvements and updates to the facilities. He added that the airport would like to identify more community events incorporating the airport and the importance of educating the community. Mr. Holt explained the airport had worked with a company named Beta Technologies to install an electric aircraft charger. He added that in February of 2024 the airport had the first fully electric aircraft land, recharge, and takeoff at the airport successfully.

Mayor Barber questioned if there were landing fees for the aircraft. Mr. Holt explained there were landing fees and they were based on the size and weight of the airplane. He added that landing fees can be waived if the airplane purchases enough fuel at the airport. Councilwoman Hicks asked if the airport would eventually be an international airport and if they would be self-funded in the future. Mrs. Hicks also questioned if the airport would eventually accommodate passenger planes in the future. Mr. Holt explained that the airport has had several international planes enter the airport and

added that the airport's goal is to ultimately be self-sustained but noted debt owed currently. Mr. Holt added that to embrace passenger planes flying into the airport a business justification would be warranted. He explained there were additional federal rules as well as it being costly to the airport. Mr. Holt noted that the community would need to grow in order to support passenger planes. He added that additional land would have to be purchased to extend the runway further to accommodate those larger aircraft.

Former Councilmember and Airport Authority Board member Brad Stipes expressed the importance of the airport to the community as well as his appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the Board.

- B. New River Valley Aquatics, Inc. (H20kies) Head Coach/Director Scott Baldwin to present lease proposal for a portion of Town property at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center, 595 N. Franklin Street (Tax Parcel 497 – ((A)) – 279; Parcel ID 010896) for tenant use

Scott Baldwin recognized coaching staff, members of their Board of Directors, swimmers, and parents in the audience and gave a brief history of the H20kies Aquatics program. Mr. Baldwin noted his 20 years of coaching swimming and explained there were currently 265 swimmers/families enrolled in the H20kies program. He explained the program offers competitive coaching and aquatic instruction to athletes ages 5-18 years old. Mr. Baldwin further explained the H20kies are a primary tenant of the Christiansburg Aquatic Center hosting practices 7 days a week primarily in the evening hours and meets 6 – 7 times each year. Mr. Baldwin touched on the economic impact these meets have for the Town of Christiansburg's local hotels and restaurants. He added that Christiansburg grows every year and projections indicate that they will exceed 300 swimmers by 2025.

Mr. Baldwin talked about options for expanding the athletic space and expressed that a standalone structure that would fit on the Aquatic Center grounds would be the best option. He added that this structure would be built at no cost to the taxpayer and be maintenance free for the Town of Christiansburg. Mr. Baldwin asked Town Council to approve a ground lease for a 30-year term and further strengthen their organization's long-term commitment to the Aquatic Center.

Councilman Bishop questioned funds being paid to the Town to lease the property. Mr. Baldwin explained that rent had not been discussed previously but asked Council to look at the volunteer work of the parents and the time involved when meets were held. Councilman Bishop further questioned what would take place once the lease ended. Mr. Baldwin explained the building would remain on Town property. Councilwoman Hicks expressed she would like to see a monetary value with the lease and expressed concern that the program could change from a non-profit. Mayor Barber asked that a public hearing be set at the soonest Council meeting and Mr. Wingfield stated that advertisement would be needed.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Bob Beard, resident of Christiansburg, spoke about inflation and expressed concern about higher taxes in Christiansburg. Mr. Beard commented on the rise of students in the area qualifying for discounted meals at Montgomery County Schools. He asked that Council be mindful of spending and to not fund nonprofits.

Chris Waltz, 1370 Rigby Street, questioned there being no discussion of funds to lease the property at the Aquatic Center. Mr. Waltz commented that it seemed less like a lease and more like the Town was giving the property away for a term of 30 years. Mr. Waltz also encouraged everyone to watch the Town Council budget work session stating Town Council seems eager to spend money. He expressed that he could see higher taxes in the future. Mayor Barber noted that the Town would continue to own the land at the Aquatic Center.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks urged local business owners to participate in the upcoming Central Business meetings and come up with ideas on how to update the gateways of the Town.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Conditional Use Permit request by Roger Woody, registered agent, RWW 36 LLC, property owner, and Denise E. LaCour, Managing Director, Denstock LLC, applicant, to amend a previously approved planned housing development ("The Verge Apartments") from 209 multi-family residential dwelling units to 206 multi-family residential dwelling units and to change the proposed layout on approximately 18.82 acres located at the terminus of Farmview Road, N.E. (all of Tax Parcels 436 – ((A)) – 37, 39, 40, and 41; Parcel IDs 032861, 021679, 021680, and 017576 and a portion of Tax Parcels 436 – ((A)) – 35, 36, and 38, Parcel ID 033701, 021677, and 021678) zoned B-3 General Business. The property is designated as Mixed Use with Buffer (Residential/Business) on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan. The Public Hearing was held on February 27, 2024.

Councilman Bishop made a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit request as recommended by the Planning Commission for a previously approved planned housing development ("The Verge Apartments"), seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

- B. Right-of-Way vacation request by Denstock LLC for the vacation of an unimproved 0.047-acre portion of the eastern most end of Farmview Road, N.E. The Public Hearing was held on February 27, 2024.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the right-of-way vacation request by Denstock LLC, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

C. Code Amendment request by Joe Simmons, applicant, and Jack Martin, registered agent, to amend the Christiansburg Town Code, Chapter 42, Section 42-9 – Lighting and minimum off-street parking (a) Specific requirements by use. The request is to include additional language to the "Retail store or personal service establishment and banks" minimum off-street parking spaces requirement to exclude non-public areas such as stock rooms and storage areas from the overall minimum parking calculation for a building. The Public Hearing was held on February 27, 2024.

Councilwoman Hicks questioned if there was a fee attached to changing a Town Code amendment. Mr. Warren clarified there is a Code amendment fee of \$500 for an individual to bring their own Code amendment through the public hearing process. Mrs. Hicks also questioned if the Town could waive the fee for changing Code amendments. Mr. Wingfield noted that Council could consider Code amendments on their own. Mrs. Hicks noted that she would have liked to see the fee waived.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the Code amendment request by Joe Simmons and Jack Martin to amend the Christiansburg Town Code, Chapter 42, Section 42-9, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

D. Conditional Use Permit request by Rockstep Christiansburg LLC, property owner, to allow a carnival from April 28, 2024 through May 12, 2024 on the property located at 782 New River Road, N.W. (Tax Parcel 435 – ((A)) – 41, Parcel ID 007741) zoned B-3 General Business. The proposed time period includes the set-up and operation of the carnival. 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 February 27, 2024.

Mayor Barber noted a change to one of the amendments posted by the Planning Commission. Mr. Warren explained it was desired by staff to have additional flexibility to meet staffing needs at the time of the carnival. He further noted this would allow the Police Department to meet the 2 staffing needs during the weekday or 4 officers on the weekend, or to match the anticipated demand. Mr. Warren explained the staff provided would be determined by Police Chief Ramsey or Town Manager Wingfield. Mr. Warren explained this information was sent to Cole Show Amusements staff earlier today. A representative from the company stated he had not read the updated amendment as of this evening.

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve the Conditional Use Permit with conditions but not include the amended changes for the carnival, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

Police Chief Chris Ramsey stated there would be another event on the same weekend as the carnival and may need to reach out for extra assistance with staffing.

E. Street closure request by NRV Cares for Hickok Street (from W. Main Street to Commerce Street, N.W.) from 1:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on April 11, 2024 for the Spring Family Fun Festival

Kelly Edmondson, Montgomery County Department of Social Services, thanked the Town's Rescue Squad for great service during an unfortunate tragedy at their building recently, noting the Rescue team was phenomenal. Ms. Edmondson expressed excitement for the festival and noted Christiansburg was the first area to have this event and now other localities were having their own spring events as well.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to approve the street closure request by NRV Cares for the Spring Family Fun Festival, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

F. Hickok Street Drainage Improvements

Mike Kelley, Engineering Director, explained to Council Hickok Street Drainage Improvement bids had been opened February 5, 2024. He explained there were 3 bids for the project, but the lowest bidder was over the Town's budget for the project. Mr. Kelley noted the Town had requested additional funds from the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and that staff should have an answer by April or May of this year. Mr. Kelley requested his staff move forward with the project. Mr. Kelley noted that \$2.4 million in funds was needed for the project to move forward this fiscal year. Finance Director Valerie Tweedie expressed that she was working on providing the funds under the current budget and clarified that Mr. Kelley could not go into a contract without appropriation of funds.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to move forward with the project acknowledging funds from FY 2025 would be required, seconded by Councilman Jenkins. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

G. Standing Town Council Work Sessions date discussion (Hockett and Jenkins)

Councilwoman Hockett suggested a dedicated work session each month to discuss subjects that needed further attention. Councilwoman Hicks expressed concern stating it was hard to plan with Town Council's schedules and that Council was already making big sacrifices to committees and boards. Councilman Wilson stated he would like to see a date set for the work sessions and if there was nothing to discuss the work session could be canceled for that month. Councilwoman Bowman expressed she would like to make the dates work for everyone stating Councilmembers were involved in multiple other things and would need to look at her calendar to commit to meeting dates.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to set a standing Town Council work session, seconded by Councilman Jenkins. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

H. Blacksburg – Christiansburg – Montgomery Tourism office (Hicks and Wilson)

Mayor Barber suggested it was time to sever the partnership with the Tourism office and noted his displeasure with the last year's operations. Mayor Barber explained the Town was not receiving the type of service they desired from the Tourism office.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to give notice to the Blacksburg – Christiansburg – Montgomery Tourism office with an effective date of March 13, 2024 that the Town would no longer fund the Tourism office at the end of the contract, seconded by Councilwoman Hockett. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

I. Use of MLS for sale of an approximately 5-acre property located at the northeastern intersection of Peppers Ferry Road, N.W. and Booker T. Washington Parkway, N.W. (Hicks and Bowman)

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion for Town Council to go through the procurement process and consider listing the sale of the 5-acre property with a commercial broker, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

Councilwoman Hicks explained she felt it was important to consider a commercial real estate agent from out of town and felt the Town needed exposure online. Councilman Wilson expressed he was not against Mrs. Hicks suggestion but felt Council should discuss the appropriate system to use and noted MLS was a broad term. Mr. Wilson clarified that Town staff originally followed the guidance of Town Council and noted for the record that Council was now changing course and staff was following the instruction of Council. Mayor Barber stated the Town had been in negotiation with a company that has shown interest in the sale of property and felt the Town should give that company notice of 30 – 60 days out that the property would be listed. Mayor Barber suggested a closed work session to discuss the sale of the property. Councilwoman Hicks stated that the Town has not made a promise to this company thus far. Councilman Wilson clarified that there has been only one offer made on the one parcel of land and there was still more land available to sell. Town Attorney Broughton clarified with Council that there is a procurement process the Town would need to go through in order to obtain a commercial realtor. Mayor Barber noted that if the Town decided to list on a particular real estate website, then it would not be locked into a particular agent. Mr. Wingfield expressed that if the Town listed the property it would have to be open to agents in town as well, due to procurement laws. Attorney Broughton explained the property

should be listed on the state website so the Town could get potential prospects from bidders all over the state.

J. Discussion of New River Valley Aquatics, Inc. (H20kies) requested lease proposal for a portion of Town property at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center, 595 N. Franklin Street (Tax Parcel 497 – ((A)) – 279; Parcel ID 010896) for tenant use

This agenda item was tabled for further discussion.

IX. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Town Manager Wingfield reported that there was a drawing included in the agenda packet for the ground lease for the Aquatic Center. Mr. Wingfield noted that the drawing showed utility lines tying into the Aquatic Center, but Mr. Wingfield clarified he wanted individual lines. Mr. Wingfield also made clear he had questioned terms and compensation during the discussion of the ground lease as well as what would happen once the lease ended. Mayor Barber reiterated his early suggestion to set a public hearing for the next available Council meeting. Mr. Wingfield noted that he would set the public hearing as early as he could conforming with legal advertisements.
- B. Town Attorney – no report
- C. Other Staff – no report

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Mayor Barber requested a closed work session for Council to look over a contract and discuss the 5-acre property located at the northeastern intersection of Peppers Ferry Road, N.W. and Booker T. Washington Parkway for Wednesday, March 20, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

Councilwoman Hockett made a motion to have the March 20th work session, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

Councilwoman Hicks asked for an update regarding the new banner for the Vietnam War Veteran's Day. Public Works Director Jim Lancianese explained the banner had been ordered and the company would be sending a proof by the end of the week.

Councilwoman Bowman reported she would be meeting with Amanda Hebert, Small Business Solutions Manager and was looking forward to speaking with her and learning more of what she does for the Town.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 8:49 p.m.

Tracy Heinlein
Tracy Heinlein, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber
D. Michael Barber, Mayor