

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 23, 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 APRIL 23, 2024, AT 7:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor Tanya Hockett (Via Phone); 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; Finance Director Valerie Tweedie; Director of Parks and Recreation Brad Epperley; Director of Public Works Jim Lanciañese; Assistant Director of Public Works, Streets Travis Moles; Director of Aquatics Terry Caldwell; Police Chief Chris Ramsey; Public Relations Director Christina Bolt (Edney)

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barber noted that Councilwoman Hockett would be attending the meeting via telephone due to traveling.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to allow Councilwoman Hockett into the meeting via telephone, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Jenkins.

Mayor Barber recognized that April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and thanked the Christiansburg Police Department for spreading the word and raising awareness throughout the community.

II. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

Councilman Jenkins made a motion to separate the bill list item from the consent agenda due to the community support for the Montgomery Museum of Art & History, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

III. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- A. Aquatics property ground lease agreement with NRVA, Inc. (H₂Okies) (To be rescheduled to May 14, 2024 – see Consent Agenda)
- B. Conditional Use Permit request by Howard M. Thornton, Jr. and Gayle W. Thornton, property owners, and PCKK Partners, LLC, applicant, to allow for a contractor equipment storage yard in the B-3 General Business District on property located at 520 and 540 Depot Street, N.E. (Tax Parcel 497 – ((A)) – 40; Parcel ID 007903) consisting of approximately 2.409 acres. The property is designated as Downtown/Mixed Use on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

Patrick Feucht, contract purchaser of the property in question and owner of Baseline Solar, one of the businesses that would use the properties, came before Council to answer any questions, or concerns they may have for the request. He explained that smaller equipment would be used at the properties and placed on an asphalt pad on the property when not in use.

Mayor Barber noted that Planning Commission had met and recommended approval for this request with a 6-0 vote.

With no further public comments the public hearing closed.

- C. Rezoning request by Johnny C. Martin, Jr. and Amelia F. Martin, property owners and applicants, to rezone property located at 3345 Roanoke Street (all of approximately 1.595-acre Tax Parcel 502 – ((9)) – 6; Parcel ID 007453) and property located at 3301 Roanoke Street (an approximate 5.955 acre 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.

Mayor Barber recognized a written citizen comment from a previous Town Council meeting by Steve Knowles, a property owner next to 3345 Roanoke Street, and noted that Mr. Knowles had no issues with the request and felt this was a clean business.

Steve Semones, Balzer & Associates, clarified that item D. was related to this rezoning request as well and would like to speak to both items. Mr. Semones explained that the business at 3345 Roanoke Street was currently an operating business, and the owner would like to expand into an additional 20,000 square foot building. He further explained that approximately 18,000 square feet would be used as garage space for equipment storage and about 1,600 for office space. Mr. Semones noted there was a

proposal for a screened fence, a parking area, and an on-site dumpster that would be privately maintained. He added that per Town code a sidewalk would be added, and the shared driveway would not be used by the property owner, explaining there would only be one entrance in and out of the property.

With no further public comments the public hearing closed.

- D. 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) 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 (all of approximately 1.595-acre Tax Parcel 502 – ((9)) – 6; Parcel ID 007453 and an approximately 5.955-acre portion of Tax Parcel 502 – ((9)) - 5C; Parcel ID 090517). The property is designated as Residential on the Future Land Use Map of the 2013 Christiansburg Comprehensive Plan.

With no further public comments the public hearing closed.

- E. 2024 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Annual Action Plan

Andrew Warren addressed Council and explained this annual action plan outlined proposed activities for the upcoming program year. He noted that traditionally the funds have been invested in infrastructure projects in the low to moderate area of the Park District and this year the grant would be added to current funds of the Town to install sidewalk on Main Street. Mr. Warren added that they would work with a potential non-profit to start a home repair program as well. He explained that currently they were in the middle of the 30-day review period which would end on May 15th. He further clarified that this would come back for a vote by Council on May 14th. Mr. Warren noted that the Town received a little over \$130,000 in funds last year.

With no further public comments the public hearing closed.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approval of Minutes of April 9, 2024 and April 17, 2024
- B. Monthly Bill List
- C. Resolution recognizing the month of May 2024 as GBS and CIDP Awareness Month
- D. Resolution recognizing the month of May 2024 as National Building Safety Month
- E. Resolution recognizing the month of May 2024 as National Water Safety Month
- F. Resolution recognizing the month of May 2024 as Mental Health Awareness Month

- G. Resolution recognizing May 6 – 12, 2024 as National Nurses Week
- H. Cancel Public Hearing for Aquatics property ground lease agreement with NRVA, Inc. (H₂Okies) for April 23, 2024 and set Public Hearing for May 14, 2024

Councilwoman Hicks made a motion to approve consent agenda item A. and items C. through H., seconded by Councilman Jenkins. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

Mayor Barber noted the monthly bill list included an item for \$10,000 in grant funding for the Montgomery County Museum that had been approved by Council in January 2024.

Councilwoman Hicks expressed she would vote against the bill list approval since she disagreed with the Town using resources to support the museum.

Councilman Bishop made a motion to approve item B. under the consent agenda, seconded by Councilman Wilson. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Nay; Hicks – Nay; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Abstain; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

V. INTRODUCTIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- A. Police Chief Chris Ramsey to present on Police Department Programs and Operations

Police Chief Ramsey thanked Council and the community for their continued support of the Police Department. Chief Ramsey showed a job recruitment video to Council and added that the Police Department had been provided a sufficient training budget that has aided in the department serving the community well.

Chief Ramsey spoke about the different roles within the Police Department and the services provided to the community. He recognized several of the specialized units at the Police Department such as the School Resource Officers (SRO), the Emergency Response Team, and the K-9 Units Team. Chief Ramsey spoke about community events and outreach programs such as awareness for Child Abuse Prevention and the After Prom Party for Christiansburg High School. He further noted that the Police Department participated in many community events such as Sleep in Heavenly Peace, the Special Olympics, and Supplies for Seniors as well as providing security for parades and downtown events. Chief Ramsey spoke about the Citizens' Police Academies and how the program educates young individuals and parents in the community concerning what the Department does.

Chief Ramsey noted there were several project updates to note including the completed building renovations in front of the Police Department. Chief Ramsey also reported an upgraded police training room and conference room in the Police Department building. He talked about the department's body camera program that launched in 2015 and the upgrade to Axon Body 4 that would provide better memory and audio. Chief Ramsey

mentioned the use of drones and how valuable they can be for security at public events and aiding in search and rescue.

Chief Ramsey touched on the multiple upcoming retirements in the Police Department and how important recruiting was at this time. He recognized the Public Relations Department for their recruiting efforts in increased social media presence and promotional materials as well as the Human Resources Department for their involvement in job fairs and advertising.

Chief Ramsey thanked Council for the revision to the Police Department's grooming policy and allowing beards and ballcaps within the department and noted the impact on morale. Chief Ramsey explained the department was due for State Reaccreditation in June 2024 and would begin the process to become nationally accredited with the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).

Councilman Bishop questioned why shoplifting numbers had tripled in 2023. Chief Ramsey explained that there are organized groups passing through Christiansburg periodically committing shoplifting crimes. He noted that stores are purchasing better video footage with facial recognition in order to catch the shoplifters, which in turn has tripled recognition of shoplifting.

Councilman Wilson and Councilwoman Bowman thanked the Police Department for all they do for the community.

VI. CITIZEN COMMENTS

Chris Waltz, 1370 Rigby Street, addressed Council concerning the purchase agreement for the parcels of lots downtown behind the Montgomery Museum. Mr. Waltz expressed that according to the 2022 deed in the description of parcel 2, Plat Book 2, Page 176 the Town currently owns the parcel and referenced the Christiansburg Crab Creek Disposal Plant. He added that the easement for the museum for 20 parking spaces for 2 parcels was filed March 7th after a closed meeting when it was relayed to him that the Town would only purchase the property if it was unencumbered with no easements. Mr. Waltz commented the Town did not understand what they were buying, and he felt Council was wasting the taxpayer's money.

Joyce Radford, 510 Ellett Road, addressed Council concerning the license plate readers the Police Department would like to have installed. Ms. Radford noted that she supports law enforcement and thanked the Police Department for making this a safe community. She noted that although she supports the Police Department, she does not support license plate readers without restrictions. She added there are currently no restrictions on how data is stored, how long it is stored, or who sees it. Ms. Radford further questioned if the potential license plate data is shared with state and federal government. Ms. Radford expressed she felt these readers collect too much personal information and that this type of monitoring violates citizens privacy.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

No committee reports.

VIII. DISCUSSION AND ACTION BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL

- A. Kiwanis Club of Christiansburg to request two possible street closure configurations for the 2024 Wilderness Trail Festival on September 21, 2024 from 5:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. due to anticipated downtown construction with the Hickok Street Drainage Project: (1) Main Street (between Dunkley Street, N.W. and Pepper Street), Franklin Street (between First Street and Commerce Street, N.W.), Hickok Street (between Commerce Street, N.W. and First Street), and Marvin Jarels Circle, N.E. (in its entirety); and (2) Main Street (between approximately 39 W. Main Street to Montague Street); Marvin Jarels Circle, N.E. (in its entirety); Pepper Street (between Hill Street, N.E. and the Montgomery County Courthouse Pepper Street, S.E. parking lot exit). The event would be 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Ernie Wade, Kiwanis Board of Directors, explained that the Wilderness Trail Festival was an annual event for the Town and due to construction at Hickok Street the street closures will be different this year. Assistant Town Manager Andrew Warren noted that during the construction on Hickok Street it would affect W. Main Street in this area. Mr. Warren explained that Council was being asked to approve both closures and the decision would be made closer to when the event will take place. He added that the second option also includes the closure of Roanoke Street from Main Street to First Street (as shown on the map provided to Council). Councilwoman Hicks expressed that while she appreciates the Kiwanis Club and their efforts, she would abstain from the vote due to her business being on E. Main Street. Mrs. Hicks also expressed she would like to have a conversation with Council concerning policy, so it would not affect her business in the future. Councilman Jenkins noted that he supports the event downtown and the Museum is located in the event area. He further noted that the event affects more than three businesses, but he would abstain from the vote as well due to the event organizer's relationship to his Board of Directors. Councilwoman Bowman urged Council to protect downtown businesses and asked if there was a guarantee that business owners would not lose business because of the event. Mr. Wade clarified that he continuously visits the businesses before an event and discusses concerns or questions. He noted the previous owner of Angle's would use their back exit to deliver and it worked well. Mr. Wade expressed that the goal was to make businesses downtown happy and encouraged businesses to stay open during these types of events.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to approve the request for street closure for the 2024 Wilderness Trail Festival, seconded by Councilman Bishop. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks- Abstain; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Abstain; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

- B. Resolution to Approve Budget Amendment #9 for FY 2023-24 (Wilson and Hockett)

Town Manager Wingfield explained to Council that the Public Works Department felt they could not ensure the work at the Christiansburg Huckleberry Park before the end of the

fiscal year. Mr. Wingfield noted that if the work was contracted out it would cost more than having it completed by Public Works.

Councilman Wilson made a motion to withdraw item B. from the agenda, seconded by Councilwoman Hicks. Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

C. Resolution to Approve Budget Appropriation #9 for FY 2023-24 (Wilson and Hockett)

Item removed (see above).

IX. STAFF REPORTS

- A. Town Manager Wingfield reported the New River Valley MPO will have a public hearing on the U.S. Route 460 Bike Pedestrian Study on April 25th from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the New River Community College Uptown Christiansburg site. Mr. Wingfield reminded Council of the budget work session on Tuesday, April 30th at 6:30 p.m. He added that Spring Clean Up was continuing through April 26th and the Leaf Giveaway Event would take place on May 10th and 11th. Mr. Wingfield also added that the next Rockin Main Event would be on May 11, 2024 from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.
- B. Town Attorney – no report.
- C. Other Staff – no report.

X. COUNCIL REPORTS

Councilwoman Hicks expressed that after reviewing the information concerning the downtown parking lot purchases, she wanted to verify that all is in order before moving forward. Mrs. Hicks stated the property did not have a clean title and there was no information concerning parking spaces and their size, etc. She questioned how the Town and County collect taxes on the drive-thru area on the parcel. Mrs. Hicks suggested Council have further discussion before making a final decision.

Councilwoman Bowman agreed with Mrs. Hicks concerning the purchase of the downtown parcels.

Mayor Barber reminded Council of the upcoming budget work session and asked that any questions be sent to Finance Director Tweedie by the end of day Friday, the 26th.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Closed Meeting:

- 1. Councilman Wilson made a motion to enter into a Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia § 2.2-3711(A)(8), for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision

of legal advice by such counsel. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter. The Closed Meeting is being held for discussion of legal matters in regard to a waterline break on Overland Drive, S.W. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Absent; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

2. Request for a Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia § 2.2-3711(A)(8), for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter. The Closed Meeting is being held for provision of legal advice regarding policies of the Town's Aquatic Center and Parks and Recreation Department. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

Motion Approved

Councilwoman Hicks expressed that Council would be discussing a public policy and felt the topic should not be in a closed session.

3. Reconvene in Open Meeting
4. Certification

Councilman Wilson made a motion to certify that the Town Council of the Town of Christiansburg meeting in Closed Meeting, to the best of each member's knowledge, discussed only the matters lawfully exempt from open meeting requirements by Virginia Law and only such matters as are identified in the Resolution to enter into Closed Meeting. Councilman Bishop seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: Bishop – Aye; Bowman – Aye; Hicks – Aye; Hockett – Aye; Jenkins – Aye; Wilson – Aye.

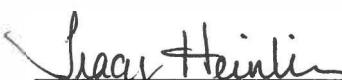
Motion Approved

5. Council action on the matters

No immediate action.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to bring before Council, Mayor Barber adjourned the meeting at 9:58 p.m.


Tracy Heinlein, Clerk of Council


D. Michael Barber, Mayor