

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 1, 2011 AT 7:30 P.M.

A REGULAR MEETING OF THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA. WAS HELD AT THE CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN HALL, 100 EAST MAIN STREET, CHRISTIANSBURG, VA, ON NOVEMBER 1, 2011 AT 7:30 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Richard G. Ballengee; Vice-Mayor D. Michael Barber; R. Cord Hall, Steve Huppert, D. Henry Showalter; Bradford J. Stipes, James H. Vanhoozier.

ADMINISTRATION: PRESENT: Town Manager Barry D. Helms; Town Clerk Michele M. Stipes; Town Attorney Jim Guynn; Assistant to the Town Manager Adam Carpenetti; Engineering Director Wayne Nelson; Planning Director Randy Wingfield; Finance Director/Treasurer Valerie Tweedie; Aquatics Director Terry Caldwell; Police Chief Mark Sisson.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

REGULAR MEETING

MAYOR BALLENGEE called the Regular Meeting of Council to order and asked if there were any additions or corrections to the Minutes of October 18, 2011. Councilman Hall made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Councilman Barber. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

CITIZEN HEARINGS:

1. BLACKSBURG TRANSIT UPDATE. Ms. Becky Martin provided Council with the October 2011 report for Blacksburg Transit. This report provided ridership totals for the Explorer route, which indicated an increase in ridership each month since March 2011, as compared to 2010 totals. The ridership has doubled in the last year on the Go Anywhere route, which began making courtesy stops in June 2011, and accommodates groups including high school tutoring and senior services at the Recreation Center. Detailed information on these services were provided to Council in an information packet. Ms. Martin reported that Go Anywhere route adds approximately fifty new riders each month. Councilman Huppert suggested implementing a tracking method to count the number of individual people riding the bus each day, not just the number of trips made each day. Councilman Hall agreed, noting that individual ridership numbers are important information. Ms. Martin said she will take this request to Blacksburg Transit working group for advice on how to implement such a system that will provide the desired information. A survey was considered as a possible method of tracking individual riders. Councilman Huppert asked how many times the transit system supported events at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center. Ms. Martin did not have that information available on hand, but will email the information to Council and will continue to provide this information in each update. Ms. Martin provided a few comments made by users of the bus system to indicate the importance of the service to those who use it. Ms. Martin explained a new route that is planned to begin November 15, 2011. This new route will run from Warm Hearth to Lewis-Gale Hospital on Tuesdays from 7:30 a.m. to 4:17 p.m., and connects to the Two Town Trolley throughout the day. The Go Anywhere bus will make a connection to this route at the hospital. Ms. Martin then reviewed the Holiday bus service planned to begin on November 26, 2011. Monthly bus passes are being sold at various points in Town and are selling at a steady pace. Ms. Martin reported that the Blacksburg Transit working group will meet next month to discuss Council's suggestions and requests, and to discuss the operating and capital budget for the coming year. Ms. Martin closed the update by reviewing future plans that include a transit center to be located at the New River Valley mall, and the development of mini-hubs. The Mayor and Town Council thanked Ms. Martin for the detailed update.
2. PRESENTATION BY MS. TERRY CALDWELL, AQUATICS DIRECTOR, OF CHRISTIANSBURG AQUATIC CENTER AWARDS. Ms. Caldwell was pleased to announce that two awards have recently been accepted by the Christiansburg Aquatic Center. Aquatics International Magazine selected the Christiansburg Aquatic Center as one of thirteen "Best in Class" facilities for their "Best of Aquatics" awards. And, Virginia Recreation and Park Society (VRPS) named the Christiansburg Aquatic Center the "Best New Facility" for population under 25,000. Ms. Caldwell said she was honored to accept a plaque from the VRPS on behalf of the Town and the plaque will be displayed in the foyer of the Aquatic Center. Ms. Caldwell brought to Council numerous magazines with articles pertaining to the Christiansburg Aquatic Center, and she read a few of the comments printed in the magazines complimenting the facility. Ms. Caldwell thanked Town Council for its continued support of the Aquatic Center.

3. MR. JEREMY WILLIAMS, AQUATIC ADVISORY BOARD, RECOMMENDATION ON CHRISTIANSBURG AQUATIC CENTER FEES FOR DRY/DAILY PASSES. Mr. Jeremy Williams, Chairman of the Aquatic Advisory Board, reported that the Aquatic Advisory Board has met numerous times to discuss the daily admission rate and dry-pass fee for the Aquatic Center at the direction of Town Council. After thoroughly studying the two issues, Mr. Williams reported that the Board is recommending that no changes be made to either fee at this time. The dry-pass fee, which has been of some concern, was imposed to reduce the likelihood of loitering by individuals not interested in swimming. Councilman Stipes said he doesn't agree with the recommendation on the dry-pass fee, but does value the Aquatic Advisory Board and supports its recommendation. Councilman Huppert commented that he hasn't received any negative comments about the dry-pass fee, which is two dollars.
4. Ms. Beth Lohman to present the NRVBA Liaison to the Bike Recycle Project. Mr. Jerry Ford, Jr. , on behalf of Ms. Lohman who is ill, and along with Whitney Johnson of Virginia Tech, presented a proposal for The Bike Kitchen, a program that provides refurbished bikes to low income individuals and families. The bikes will be received through donations and fundraisers, and will be distributed to those who qualify as a means of transportation to work, school, healthcare providers, grocery stores. The project relies on volunteers and Virginia Tech has given a full-time position to assist in the start up of the project. Mr. Ford explained that there has been a need for this type of program in Montgomery County since 2009. For twenty dollars, recipients will receive a refurbished bike, a helmet, head and tail lights, and a lock. Recipients will receive reduced rates for maintenance and repairs. Eligibility is based on income and state assistance. Mr. Ford explained that the New River Valley Bicycle Association (NRVBA) has partnered with the Virginia Tech Center for Student Engagement and Community Partnerships (CSECP) and Americorps Vista in developing this project using similar projects around the country as models. Ms. Whitney Johnson of CSECP provided a broad overview of the Virginia Tech program and explained the community partnerships with Americorps VISTA program and NRVBA. Ms. Johnson offered to answer any questions of Council. Mr. Ford then reviewed the importance of location, reporting that the organization is currently interested in the Town owned property located directly behind and beside the Christiansburg Recreation Center. Mr. Ford proposed this location because of its proximity to the Huckleberry Trail, the Christiansburg High School, and to community service buildings. Mr. Ford said he has spoken with Mr. Art Price regarding the possible use of the storage bays behind the Recreation Center and he is hoping for Council's support in utilizing those bays. A donation center and a volunteer center are needed. Mr. Ford stated that this project will provide community opportunities for volunteering and skill building, as well as youth service opportunities. In closing, Mr. Ford, explained how this program could change the lives of the disadvantaged in Christiansburg by providing the independence that comes with having a means of transportation. Councilman Hall asked if Mr. Ford had discussed this matter with the Town Manager. Town Manager Helms replied that he was aware of the program, but wanted Council to hear the presentation before he met with Mr. Ford. Councilman Hall noted that the storage bays mentioned are not heated and he asked about future renovations to the bays. Mr. Ford said contractors in the community have expressed a willingness to assist and donate time and materials to upgrade the facility. Town Manager Helms noted that the bays are available for use if there are no objections by Council. Councilman Stipes said he fully supports the proposed, but stressed the importance of ensuring insurance liability first. Councilman Vanhoozier agreed and recommended that it be stipulated that if the Town has a need for the storage bays in the future, they will be available for Town use. Councilman Showalter asked for periodic updates on the progress of project. Mr. Ford noted that NRVBA requires periodic updates since monetary donations are involved, and he will forward these updates to Council as they are submitted to NRVBA. Attorney Guynn said he will work with NRVBA to draft a partnership agreement to be presented to Council for approval. It was the consensus of Council to proceed in drafting a partnership agreement.
5. PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION ON:
 - a. A Conditional Use Permit request by Jim and Linda Salyers for a bed and breakfast inn at 115 Lester Street (tax parcel 527 – ((A)) – 169) in the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District. The Public Hearing was held at the October 18, 2011 Town Council meeting. Planning Commission Chairman Craig Moore read the Planning Commission's Resolution recommending Town Council issue the Conditional Use Permit with seven (7) conditions. A copy of the Conditional Use Permit and seven conditions is attached herewith. Planning Commission vote was 7 Ayes; 0 Nays; 1 Abstention.
 - b. American Electric Power's Falling Branch – Merrimac 138 kV Transmission Line Project. Planning Commission Chairman Craig Moore read the Planning Commission's Resolution recommending Town Council support the AEP Falling Branch-Merrimac 138 kv Transmission Line Project. A copy of the Resolution is attached herewith. The Planning Commission vote was 8 Ayes; 0 Nays. Councilman Hall asked if the route recommended affects the least number of residents, which Mr. Moore confirmed was true. Councilman Huppert asked if there was any opposition to this recommendation at the Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Moore stated there was no voiced opposition.
6. CITIZENS' COMMENTS.

- a. No citizen's comments

III. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

1. TOWN COUNCIL ACTION ON:

- a. A Conditional Use Permit request by Jim and Linda Salyers for a bed and breakfast inn at 115 Lester Street (tax parcel 527 – ((A)) – 169) in the R-3 Multi-Family Residential District. Attorney Guynn pointed out a typographical error in the tax map number printed on the Conditional Use Permit. The error was noted and will be corrected on the CUP. Councilman Hall made a motion to issue the CUP with the correct tax map number, seconded by Councilman Hall. Town Clerk Stipes polled Council on the motion as follows: Barber – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.
- b. American Electric Power's Falling Branch – Merrimac 138 kV Transmission Line Project. Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation to support the AEP transmission line project as requested, seconded by Councilman Hall. Town Clerk Stipes polled Council on the motion as follows: Barber – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.

2. Consideration of appointment of a Planning Commission member. Mayor Ballengee reported that the Town has received the resignation of Kevin Conner from the Planning Commission. Mayor Ballengee asked Town Council how it wished to proceed in filling the vacancy. Council expressed the desire to fill the position by advertising with a deadline in early January.

TOWN MANAGER REPORTS:

MONTHLY BILLS – On motion by Councilman Barber, seconded by Councilman Stipes, Council voted to approve the monthly bills to be paid on November 10, 2011, in the amount of \$1,563,211.94. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

Resolution to Commonwealth Transportation Board. Town Manager Helms presented to Council a Resolution to the Commonwealth Transportation Board, in accordance with construction allocation procedures, requesting the Commonwealth Transportation Board to continue the project for the improvement of the following streets in Christiansburg, Virginia: Main Street, Franklin Street, and Courthouse Square. A copy of the Resolution is attached herewith. The Resolution will become a part of the application packet. Councilman Barber made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Councilman Stipes. Town Clerk Stipes polled Council on the motion as follows: Barber – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.

MR. Adam Carpenetti PROVIDED AN update on Chrisman Mill Crossing. Council has discussed this Norfolk and Southern Crossing numerous times in the past in response to complaints about train whistles. Mr. Carpenetti gave a brief background of the matter, which included the grandfathering of standards prior to 1996. In 2005, when Chrisman Mill Road was redesigned, establishing a quiet zone through this crossing was considered. When working with Norfolk and Southern to determine if a quiet zone was an option, the road was found to not qualify for a quiet zone because of the road design and other factors. It was also found that regardless of the number of safety measures that could be put into place, the road would still not qualify as a whistle free zone because of the sharp curve in the road. Councilman Hall asked how much money would be needed to obtain additional right-of-way to resurface the road. Mr. Carpenetti said that during the discussion that option didn't seem feasible and wasn't estimated. According to Councilman Stipes, the horizontal alignment of the road is the issue, and to realign the road would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Town Manager Helms said long double gates were considered but were eliminated because of the potential for possible entrapment of vehicles. Mr. Carpenetti noted that Norfolk and Southern will not install four quadrant gates because of the alignment of the road. Councilman Showalter asked Town Manager Helms to document these findings and present them to the two gentlemen who have brought this matter to Council in the past. Mayor Ballengee, referring to Council meeting Minutes in 2006, stated that this matter, and these findings, were discussed several years ago by Council, and that there is nothing the Town can do about the train whistle noise in this particular area. Councilman Stipes said he wrote to one of the gentlemen last year explaining the limitations with this particular railroad crossing. Councilman Showalter thanked Mr. Carpenetti and Mr. Helms for the report.

Councilman Showalter asked about a previous discussion by Council regarding health coverage costs. Councilman Showalter asked if the insurance company had been contacted about incorporating more Family Plans for employees, and if so, what affect it had on insurance rates. Town Manager Helms said the Town did look into this option, but he is unable to recall the

exact reason the Town declined to offer this option. Town Manager Helms said he would get that information and provide it to Council.

COUNCILMAN STIPES reported that the Route 114 widening project will be going to advertisement this month, and the Town can expect to receive federal funding. Councilman Stipes recommended the Street Committee meet to revisit transportation priorities and bring recommendations to Council.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to bring before Council the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

Richard G. Ballengee, Mayor