

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
MINUTES OF MARCH 6, 2012 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 MARCH 6, 2012 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; James H. Vanhoozier. ABSENT: Bradford J. Stipes.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Barry D. Helms; Town Clerk Michele M. Stipes; Town Attorney Jim Guynn ; Assistant to the Town Manager Adam Carpenetti; Director/Treasurer Valerie Tweedie; Public Relations Officer Becky Wilburn.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Proposed ordinance amendment to Chapter 30 "Zoning" of the *Christiansburg Town Code* in regards to provisions for residential density allowances in the Residential, Business, and Mixed Use Districts. Mayor Ballengee reported that the Planning Commission is continuing to study this request and does not have a recommendation at this time. The matter will come back before Council once the Planning Commission has a recommendation. There was no one to speak for or against this request.

REGULAR MEETING

MAYOR BALLENGEE called the Regular Meeting of Council to order and asked if there were any additions or corrections to the regular meeting Minutes of February 21, 2012. Councilman Vanhoozer 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, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

II. CITIZEN HEARINGS:

1. Presentation of Strategic Communications Plan by Public Relation Officer Becky Wilburn. A copy was provided to Council at the February 21, 2012 regular Council meeting. Ms. Wilburn introduced the Strategic Communications Plan and provided background into the Public Relations department and the development of the communications plan. Ms. Wilburn explained the five guiding principles she uses to raise community profile: Be proactive, perception is reality, tell your own story, two-way communication and collaboration are priorities, and communication is everyone's job. According to Ms. Wilburn, timeliness and accessibility are important keys to successfully meeting the goals of her department. Ms. Wilburn then explained the information provided in the communications plan, emphasizing the strides made in communications including the internet through the Town's website and Facebook page, informational meetings, surveys, taped council meetings, press releases, and the Emergency Notification System. Ms. Wilburn reviewed the Action Plan provided in the document, which focuses on the next twelve months. She also noted that future considerations for growth of the department's efforts will focus on finding new ways to reach audiences, targeting underserved audiences, and balancing available resources. Councilman Showalter asked if there are currently plans underway for an electronic newsletter. Ms. Wilburn replied that an electronic newsletter is presently listed under the Future Considerations section of the Communications Plan. Councilman Showalter asked for prior notification from the Town in regards to interdepartmental communication on matters that may be of interest to Town Council. Mayor Ballengee expressed his appreciation for Council's decision to include the position held by Ms. Wilburn in the Vision 2020, and relayed the importance of Ms. Wilburn as a Town staff member. Councilman Barber commented on discussions he has had with Police Chief Sisson regarding the importance of Ms. Wilburn to the Police Department, noting that her assistance in relaying information to the community allows police personnel to focus on their law enforcement duties. Mayor Ballengee and Town Council thanked Ms. Wilburn for her dedication to the Town and for her efforts in communicating with them and the community. Mayor Ballengee suggested setting a time to meet with Ms. Wilburn to discuss tips on speaking points and responding to community questions. Town Council set the meeting date for April 3, 2012 at 6:30.
2. Citizens' Comments.

- a. Retired Fire Chief Jimmy Epperly thanked Mayor Ballengee and Council for the opportunity to speak. Mr. Epperly spoke to Council about the pleasure it has been to serve on the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Commission. Mr. Epperly said it is an honor it is for him to serve the community in this capacity and that he hopes to continue to serve on this commission. Mr. Epperly took a moment to thank Adam Carpenetti, Assistant to the Town Manager, for his assistance five years ago in setting up the computers at the Fire Department, and complimented Ms. Sharon Graves, receptionist for the Town, on her kindness to him. Mr. Epperly also thanked Town Manager Helms and Town Council for their service to the Town. Town Council thanked Mr. Epperly for his comments and his continued dedication to the Town.

III. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS:

1. Report by Councilman Barber on the Recreation Advisory Commission's review and recommendation of the age limit of parental supervision at the Recreation Center. The age limit is currently 8-years of age. Councilman Barber reported that this concern was brought to Council's attention several months ago and has been reviewed by the Recreation Advisory Commission and recreation staff. It was the determination of the recreation staff and the Recreation Advisory Commission that there is no need at this time to increase the age limit since there are several surveillance cameras at the facility, and recreation staff does not leave the facility until all children have been picked up. Councilman Barber explained Radford's policy for consideration, which is that children must be picked up from the facility two hours before closing. Councilman Barber recommended giving the newly hired Director of Parks and Recreation time to review any situations involving the recreation center and discussing this matter with him in six months. Councilman Barber said he is not aware of any problems or property damage from unsupervised youth. Councilman Barber stated he believes the age limit is too young, but supports the recommendation of the Recreation Advisory Commission. Councilman Showalter said that a specific incident concerning an eight year old child raised concerns with the age limit. Councilman Showalter, understanding the situation, said he is concerned that the age limit is a tremendous liability to the Town. Councilman Hall agreed, stating that the Town needs to be proactive in this matter. Councilman Hall said he supports the recommendation to give the new Director of Parks and Recreation the opportunity to review the matter, but he urged Council to discuss this matter with the Director in three months rather than six months. Councilman Hall said he expects backlash from parents if the age limit is raised, but that is something he is willing to accept. Councilman Barber said he is not opposed to adopting the policy utilized by Radford and that a letter could be prepared for parents letting them know to pick up their child by 8:00 pm. Council's decision was to meet with the new Director in three months to discuss his review of this matter.
2. Resolution in recognition of the retirement of Mr. Art Price, former Director of Parks and Recreation. Mayor Ballengee reported that the resolution is still in progress as he is waiting on minor information to include in the resolution. However, Mayor Ballengee presented the incomplete resolution for Council's consideration. Councilman Vanhoozier made a motion to adopt the resolution as completed by Mayor Ballengee once the additional information is received. Councilman Barber seconded the motion and Council voted as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.
3. Discussion on setting the first Council work session for the budget. Council discussed with Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie the timeline for the budget process to determine the best time to set budget work sessions. Council set two budget work sessions as follows: March 27, 2012 at 6:00 pm; April 10 at 6:00 pm.
4. Discussion regarding the appointment of a Planning Commission member. Mayor Ballengee reminded Council of the Planning Commission appointment that was pending a background check. The applicant was hesitant to provide his Social Security Number and expressed disapproval with the appointment procedure. Mayor Ballengee reported that the applicant's background check was approved and he asked if Council was prepared to appoint the applicant to fill the existing unexpired term. There are currently nine sitting members. Councilman Barber made a motion to go into a Closed Meeting to discuss this matter under Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment, assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body. Councilman Showalter seconded the motion. Councilman Hall recommended tabling the matter until a full Council is in attendance. Councilman Barber said he is not willing to withdraw his motion, but Councilman Showalter withdrew his second to the motion. Mayor Ballengee called for a second to the motion. Hearing none, the motion died for a lack of a second.

TOWN MANAGER REPORTS:

MONTHLY BILLS – On motion by Councilman Vanhoozier, seconded by Councilman Hall, Council voted to approve the monthly bills to be paid on March 10, 2012, in the amount of \$ 1,622,397.21. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES:

Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

PUBLIC HEARING REQUEST(S) – Town Manager Helms presented the following requests and recommended setting the Public Hearings for April 17, 2012.

1. A rezoning request by Radford & Radford Properties, LLC for property at 325 Falling Branch Road (tax parcel 529 – ((A)) – 25C) from R-2 Two-Family Residential to B-3 General Business.
2. Contingent on the above, Conditional Use Permit request by Radford & Radford Properties, LLC for a multi-family residential Planned Housing Development at 325 Falling Branch Road.
3. Conditional Use Permit request by Cooks Auto Upgrades for an auto upholstery shop in the B-3 General Business District, N. Franklin St.

On motion by Councilman Barber, seconded by Councilman Showalter, Council voted to set the Public Hearings for April 17, 2012 as follows: AYES: Barber, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

TOWN MANAGER HELMS reported that the Town received a request from Christiansburg High School for assistance in video storm drains on the practice fields, which is done by a robot. Town Manager Helms recommended providing the requested assistance and Town Council agreed.

TOWN MANAGER HELMS reported that he notified the State Department of Corrections regarding Town Council's concerns expressed at the February 21, 2012 meeting in regards to the department's consideration of 8 Radford Street as a future parole office. The Department of Corrections responded that they were not aware of the close proximity to school property and will take this into consideration. Several locations in the area are under consideration.

TOWN MANAGER HELMS reported that a citizen has proposed to plant trees near Corning on the Huckleberry Trail; however, it was determined that an easement is needed from Corning. Corning has given an initial agreement to provide the necessary easement and Town Manager Helms asked for Council permission to pursue this matter. The citizen would maintain the trees until they are self sufficient. Council authorized Town Manager Helms to pursue securing an easement from Corning for the purpose of planting the trees along the Huckleberry Trail.

TOWN MANAGER HELMS reported that the Blacksburg Transit monthly report was included in the Council packet.

TOWN MANAGER HELMS informed Council that CPR training through the Take Heart Christiansburg program will be held at 6:00 PM on March 20, 2012, and he asked Council to let Ms. Wilburn know who plans to attend. Councilman Showalter asked for a reminder prior to the event.

TOWN MANAGER HELMS reported that the Waste Water Treatment Plant will soon hold a ribbon cutting for the Energy Recovery Project. He will provide details to Council once they are available.

MAYOR BALLENGEE noted that each Council member should have received an appreciation letter from Virginia Tech concerning the recent ACC swim meet held at the Christiansburg Aquatic Center. The letter expressed appreciation for the facility and the cooperation of the staff at the facility.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to bring before Council the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 P.M.

Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

Richard G. Ballengee, Mayor