

CHRISTIANSBURG TOWN COUNCIL
CHRISTIANSBURG, MONTGOMERY CO., VA.
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JANUARY 21, 2014 - 7:30 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, VA, ON JANUARY 21, 2014 AT 7:30 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor D. Michael Barber; Vice-Mayor James W. Vanhoozier; Samuel M. Bishop; R. Cord Hall; Steve Huppert; Henry D. Showalter; Bradford J. Stipes. ABSENT: None.

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Town Manager Barry Helms; Assistant Town Manager Randy Wingfield; Clerk of Council Michele Stipes; Town Attorney Theresa Fontana; Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie; Police Chief Mark Sisson; Director of Engineering and Special Projects Wayne Nelson.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Newly appointed Council member, Samuel M. Bishop, took the Oath of Office administered by Erica Williams, Clerk of Circuit Court.

REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER:

MAYOR BARBER called the regular meeting of Council to order and asked if there were any additions or corrections to the regular meeting minutes of January 7, 2014. Councilman Bishop noted that the date on item #8 under III. Discussions by Mayor and Council members should read 2014. Councilman Hall made a motion to approve the minutes with the date correction, seconded by Councilman Vanhoozier. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

MAYOR BARBER asked if there were any additions or corrections to the special meeting minutes of January 13, 2014. Councilman Hall made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Councilman Stipes. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

II. CITIZEN'S HEARING:

1. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:

- a. Sue Farrar, Director of the Montgomery Museum & Lewis Miller Regional Art Center, to address Council. Mayor Barber reported that this matter would be postponed until further notice at the request of Ms. Farrar because of the adverse weather.
- b. Jerry Conley to address Council regarding traffic at the intersection of Peppers Ferry Road and Quin W. Stuart Boulevard. Mr. Jerry Conley, 46 East Patriot Way, is the Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the Homeowner's Association for The Villas of Peppers Ferry and he addressed Council on behalf of the residents of The Villas and several residents of Stafford Drive concerning their request for a traffic light that would allow the residents to more safely enter onto Route 114. Mr. Conley introduced Kathryn Dowling who serves as President of The Villas Homeowner's Association, and noted that many of the residents who support the request were unable to attend the council meeting because of the adverse weather. Mr. Conley then reported to Council the five greatest considerations that support the request for a traffic light either at Quin Stewart Boulevard or Stafford Drive. First, there is strong community support for a traffic light by the residents of both The Villas and Stafford Drive. Second, the residents have a good relationship with Town Council and they believe Council understands their concerns. Third, Mr. Conley stated that the ages of the residents must be considered as the community has a high proportion of seniors who experience a slower reaction time when pulling out into traffic, and also experience more medical emergencies that require hospital transport. The fourth point was that the difficulty entering onto Route 114 from Quin W. Stuart Boulevard has been exacerbated by the installation of the

traffic light near the movie theater. Because of the new traffic light, at certain times during the day traffic along Route 114 backs up beyond Quin W. Stuart Boulevard forcing drivers to make a right turn onto Route 114 and proceed to a turnaround location close to a mile out of the way. The last consideration was that the residents of the Villas' community have never asked for anything unreasonable from Council and they believe this is a valid, reasonable request. Mr. Conley said he understands that traffic counts have been done along the area, and that the counts in the past have not supported installation of a light, but the residents are respectfully requesting the Town install a traffic light to allow safe exit from their community onto Route 114. Mr. Conley submitted to Council a signed petition in support of the request; which is attached to these minutes.

Council discussed the difficulties residents were having entering onto Route 114 and expressed concern that the situation may worsen with the widening of Route 114. However, Councilman Stipes explained that until a traffic light is warranted according to national standards, the Town cannot place a traffic light due to liability reasons. He also cautioned that traffic incidents can be expected to rise anytime traffic flow is interrupted and that includes interruptions caused by traffic lights. The last VDOT warrant analysis was completed prior to commencement of the current phase of the widening project. Council Stipes promised he would advocate strongly for a traffic signal as soon as one is warranted by national standards. The Route 114 widening project is expected to be completed within the coming months and, with completion, new traffic patterns would be established. Council agreed that would be a logical time to revisit a detailed traffic study that would include Quin W. Stuart Boulevard, Majestic Boulevard, and Stafford Drive, to determine if the area would then qualify for a signal. The traffic study would be done by the VDOT, and if a traffic signal was found to be warranted, funding would be sought. Councilman Showalter recommended the Town notify Mr. Conley once the study begins. Mayor Barber will turn the matter over to the Street Committee once the widening project is completed and all lanes are opened to traffic.

- c. Citizen Comments.
 - a. There were no citizen comments.

III. DISCUSSIONS BY MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEMBERS:

1. COUNCIL ACTION ON:

- a. Resolution in Support of the Industrial Hemp Farming Act. At the request of Councilman Huppert, Council considered an updated resolution supporting the Industrial Hemp Farming Act. The matter was initially brought before Council in 2012 by Jim Politis and was denied by Council at that time. New information regarding the usage of hemp as an industrial product was provided by Mr. Politis and included in the updated resolution. The resolution was provided to Council for review in the agenda packet. Councilman Stipes said he voted to deny the resolution the first time it was presented and he does not believe the changes made to the updated resolution warrant a change in his views concerning this issue, nor does he see the value to Christiansburg in supporting the resolution. Councilman Huppert told Council he expects Virginia will eventually support industrial hemp farming, and he expects Virginia Tech to obtain permission to begin working on research projects using hemp. Councilman Huppert urged Council to consider to potential economic impact hemp farming could have in the New River Valley. Councilman Hall said he concurs with Councilman Stipes, adding that his largest concern is with the potential for the hemp product to be refined and misused as a hallucinogenic. Councilman Hall further added that he has not received information supporting the economic impact hemp farming would have in Christiansburg. Lastly, Councilman Hall said he is concerned with the message that would be sent in approving the resolution when purification of the hemp would be possible. Councilman Vanhoozier said the projected revenue from hemp farming in the area was not a compelling amount. He added that the country is changing its views regarding drug use and he does not want to be a part of that change by supporting hemp farming. Councilman Hall added that the federal government has had opportunities to categorize hemp farming as agricultural, but continues to identify it as a controlled substance governed by the Controlled Substance Act. It was noted that Christiansburg's State representatives have not given support for industrial hemp farming. Councilman Bishop commented that his background in law enforcement leads him to believe that the hemp product could be purified and turned into a hallucinogen; he is unable to accept legalizing the growth of hemp. Councilman Showalter said he is appreciative of the efforts of Mr. Politis in bringing this matter before Council, but he echoed the sentiments of those opposing the resolution. Councilman Showalter spoke to his role in representing the citizens of Christiansburg, stating he does not see any benefit to the Town from hemp farming. Mayor Barber added that the Towns of Blacksburg and Pulaski have become involved with the initiative, which could create a large number of jobs for the region. Councilman Hall made a motion to decline to adopt the resolution, seconded by Councilman Stipes. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall –

Aye; Huppert – Nay; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye. The resolution was not adopted by Council. Councilman Huppert thanked Council for its willingness to revisit this matter.

2. REAPPOINTMENT OF MATTHEW BEASLEY TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION. Mr. Beasley's term expires February 7, 2014. Councilman Hall made a motion to reappoint Matthew Beasley to serve a second term on the Planning Commission, seconded by Councilman Vanhoozier. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None. His term will expire on February 7, 2018.
3. AN ORDINANCE TO ADOPT THE VACO/VML VIRGINIA INVESTMENT POOL TRUST FUND FOR THE PURPOSE OF INVESTING MONIES BELONGING TO OR WITHIN THE TOWN OF CHRISTIANSBURG CONTROL, OTHER THAN SINKING FUNDS, IN CERTAIN AUTHORIZED INVESTMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF VIRGINIA, SECTION 2.2-4501. Finance Director/Treasurer Val Tweedie explained that the Town has an opportunity to invest in securities through a VML/VACo created investment pool that is actively managed. Investment would be long-term and only certain strategic investments would be chosen for the investment pool. Holdings would be for no less than one year, but there would not be a contract obligation to invest for a specific period of time, and the Town would be permitted to withdraw funds, if necessary and without penalty, prior to one-year. Code of Virginia would not prevent the Town from investing in the pool and Ms. Tweedie recommended the Town join the investment pool and designate her as overseer of the account. Lengthy documentation is required to join and is similar in language and in process to the recent PSA Joinder. Councilman Showalter asked about dual trusteeship of the account for accountability purposes in the event Ms. Tweedie is absent from work. Ms. Tweedie explained that the trusteeship is with her position as Finance Director/Treasurer, and not with her individually. The Town could establish that the Town Manager has authority to manage the account in the Finance Director/Treasurer's absence. It was noted that two signatures are required to transfer Town funds. Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the ordinance as presented based on staff recommendation, seconded by Councilman Huppert. Councilman Huppert seconded the amended motion. Council was polled on the motion as follows: Bishop – Aye; Hall – Aye; Huppert – Aye; Showalter – Aye; Stipes – Aye; Vanhoozier – Aye.
4. COUNCILMAN STIPES AND COUNCILMAN VANHOOZIER – STREET COMMITTEE REPORT/RECOMMENDATION ON:
 - a. Plat for Vacation of Boundary Lines Prepared for Starlight MHP, LLC; creating 1 lot; located on Starlight Drive, S.E. Councilman Stipes explained the boundary line vacation request that would create one lot from three. The Street Committee reviewed the request and found it to be in conformance with the subdivision ordinance. Councilman Stipes made a motion to approve the plat as presented, seconded by Councilman Vanhoozier. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.
 - b. Councilman Stipes reported that the Street Committee would provide a recommendation to Council regarding downtown parking concerns at the next regular Council meeting.

IV. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORTS:

1. PUBLIC HEARING REQUEST: Town Manager Helms presented the following requests and recommended setting the Public Hearings as indicated:

February 11, 2014:

- a. Parking fine adjustment.

On motion by Councilman Vanhoozier, seconded by Councilman Hall, Council voted to set the Public Hearing for February 11, 2014. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

March 11, 2014:

- a. Conditional Use Permit request for a dance hall by Holiday Lodge, Inc., 2790 Roanoke Street, B-3 General Business District.
- b. Conditional Use Permit request for a commercial garage by Twin Oak Properties, LLC, 1230 Roanoke Street, B-3 General Business District.

On motion by Councilman Hall, seconded by Councilman Vanhoozier, Council voted to set the Public Hearings for March 11, 2014. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.

2. CHANGE TO WORK SESSION SCHEDULED FOR FEBRUARY 4, 2014. On motion by Councilman Vanhoozier, seconded by Councilman Huppert, the work session scheduled for February 4, 2014 was changed to a special meeting so that Council could take action to approve payment of the monthly bills for February. A new bill payment schedule is set to begin in March to accommodate the new meeting dates of Council. Council voted on the motion as follows: AYES: Bishop, Hall, Huppert, Showalter, Stipes, Vanhoozier. NAYS: None.
3. PROGRESS REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS:
 - The Public Service Authority has requested the Town increase the allowed wastewater volume going to the Slate Branch Pump Station due to an increase in housing development in the Merrimac area. The increased volume fee would be approximately \$102,000 and the PSA is interested in scheduling a plan for payment of the fee. Protocol is that the PSA work with developers to cover the cost of additional water capacity for newly developed areas and Council recommended the PSA work with the developer in the Merrimac situation.
 - A Street Committee meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2014 at 6:30 P.M.
 - Councilman Huppert and Town Manager Helms will be absent from the February 11, 2014 regular Council meeting due to a prior engagement.
 - Councilman Hall thanked Town Manager Helms for his efforts in gathering information on land that could be considered for a farmer's market. Councilman Hall's focus is on the potential to obtain a \$75,000 non-matching federal grant, for development of a farmer's market, if the Town meets the landownership requirement. One of the properties under consideration is a small portion of the old middle school property that is owned by Montgomery County, and another is a lot owned by VDOT. Councilman Showalter recommended placing this matter on the agenda for February 11, 2014 to hear recommendations from Town staff, the school board, and VDOT, further recommending that the Town utilize corporate efforts in developing the farmer's market.
 - Councilman Hall requested that the Town send a letter to the General Assembly in response to the state's proposal to reduce the number of annual training hours required for emergency personnel. Councilman Hall commented that the revenue recovery billing states that a certain number of training hours must be met in order for the Town to bill for services, and the proposed legislature would undermine the program. This matter will be discussed by Council at the February 11, 2014 meeting.
 - Councilman Showalter requested via email that Council hold a work session to discuss Council protocol. Mayor Barber and Town Manager Helms plan to work together to determine the most effective way to meet to discuss this topic.

V. ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business to bring before Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Michele M. Stipes, Clerk of Council

D. Michael Barber, Mayor