

The Rural Retreat Town Council held regular meeting on March 8, 2011, at 7:00 p.m. in the Rural Retreat Town Hall Council Chambers.

PRESENT RURAL RETREAT TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

Mayor Timothy Litz, Vice-Mayor Keith Crigger, Scott Mecimore, Dale Yontz, Jerrell Hall, Peggy Hash

ABSENT

Ed Schaack

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Raymond Matney, Town Manager; Lori Guynn, Clerk/Treasurer; Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

ADMINISTRATION ABSENT

NONE

OTHERS PRESENT

Jim Hall; Chuck Sullins; Wilma Justus

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Mayor Litz called the meeting to order and determined a quorum was present.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Raymond Matney.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Litz.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilmember Mecimore, seconded by Councilmember Yontz to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2011 regular meeting as written. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Mecimore, Yontz; zero (0) against; one (1) absent: Schaack.

CITIZEN'S TIME

NONE

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CORRESPONDENCE

NONE

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell explained his monthly activity report for February. He noted the number of hours worked had decreased due to an illness. Chief Mitchell addressed the three dog complaints on his report which he has referred to Wythe County Animal Control. He added the problems are occurring at night. Mayor Litz asked Chief Mitchell if he still monitoring the crossroads area. Chief Mitchell responded he worked the area for an hour and a half during the day last week but no violations occurred. Due to the gas station closing, Chief Mitchell stated he felt this will reduce the traffic issues. Mayor Litz added the people renting the station have moved to exit 54 due to the high rent at the crossroads facility.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

GAMMONS PROPERTY – Mayor Litz stated the council had received information regarding the purchase of the Gammons lot. Councilmember Mecimore made a motion to sell the Gammons lot. Councilmember Hash seconded the motion. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated he felt the motion should offer the property for sale. Councilmember Mecimore asked if the property must be offered by sealed bid. Mr. Matney responded if offered by sealed bid this would reduce community criticism because all interested parties would have the opportunity to purchase the property. Mr. Matney added he will include in the notice the Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids. Councilmember Yontz stated he didn't want the council to sell the lot and the new owner put something on the lot that will take away from downtown. Mr. Matney commented the council can require the bidder to indicate the use of the property. Mayor Litz inquired about the alleyway next to the property. Mr. Matney responded it will be addressed only if the bidder makes a request. He continued by stating the council will offer the Gammons parcel for sale by sealed bid, request the proposed use of the property be disclosed and reserve the right to accept or reject any or all bids. Mr. Matney added the notice will be advertised at least two to three weeks. The being no further discussion, the motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Mecimore, Yontz; zero (0) against; one (1) absent: Schaack.

NEW BUSINESS

NONE

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE – Chairman Crigger asked the councilmember's to review the audit and management letter and to bring any questions or concerns to the next meeting. Mrs. Guynn asked the councilmember's to return the audit copies upon completing the review for future use.

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TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Town Manager's report is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes. The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

2010 AUDIT – Mr. Matney added to Finance Chairman Crigger's comments on the 2010 fiscal audit by explaining the audit compares the activities from the previous audited year to the current year being audited. This is the financial report card for the town, Mr. Matney stated. If the council wishes, the auditors will be invited to attend a council meeting to further discuss the report.

AERIAL PHOTO – Bob Harrison, owner/operator of Mountain Empire Air Service has submitted a proposal to update aerial photos of the town. Mr. Matney commented this is a great way to show the growth that has occurred in town. In the past, this was done every five years but there was a period of time that no photos were taken. The councilmember's were asked to review the proposal for consideration during unfinished business at the next meeting.

WELLNESS / FITNESS STUDY – The Grounds and Building Committee of the Wythe County Board of Supervisors agreed to recommend this study be accepted by the Board and a committee be appointed to pursue funding possibilities for the facility. This will be presented to the Board at their meeting tonight for consideration. Mayor Litz commented the study offers the Cadillac but the town will not pay for the entire cost. Vice-Mayor Crigger added the facility will be built based on fundability of what is obtained. Mr. Matney addressed the funding possibilities which could include Wythe County Community Hospital, Smyth County Community Hospital, Rural Development, Wythe-Bland Community Foundation, Tobacco Commission, Department of Housing and Community Development and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS APPOINTMENT – As previously reported the Board will meet Tuesday, February 22 at 6:00 p.m. to consider a variance request for a rear yard setback. A public hearing will be held at this time to receive public comments. James (Jay) Rumfelt's appointed term expired November 30, 2010. This will not affect the meeting because members continue to serve until duly qualified or reappointed by the court. The council will need to recommend to the Circuit Court to reappoint Mr. Rumfelt or another individual to serve, however Mr. Rumfelt is in agreement of another term. Vice-Mayor Crigger made a motion to recommend to the Wythe County Circuit Court the reappointment of James Rumfelt to the Board of Zoning Appeals. The motion was second by Councilmember Mecimore and passed by a vote of five (5) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Mecimore, Yontz; zero (0) against; one (1) absent: Schaack.

Vice-Mayor Crigger commented the lot involved in the public hearing is located on the corner of Chinquapin Avenue and Hickory Avenue. Mr. Matney responded yes, he is correct. Vice-Mayor Crigger questioned the direction the house would be facing. Mr. Matney explained the house will front Chinquapin Avenue and the side yard on Hickory Avenue and next to the adjoining property will be sufficient. Due to the angle of the lot, the rear yard at one corner of the house will be 10 ft. from the property line to the west. The developer will be building houses

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on both lots. Mr. Matney added he didn't foresee this being an issue due to the same person owning the lots.

IN-TOWN WATER PROJECT – There have been several weather deterrents on this project. Currently valves and fire hydrants are being replaced on Richmond Avenue and Miller Street. This is causing disruptions in the water services for citizens whom are being notified of the disruption then the work is not being done. Mr. Matney reported he had spoken to the contractor and informed him the work needs to be completed on the day scheduled due to notifying the citizens.

OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT UPDATES – This project is mostly complete and a punch list is being compiled. All services have been connected with the exception of some on Rural Retreat Lake Road. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked Mr. Matney for the set deadline for new connections. Mr. Matney responded the end of April. Vice-Mayor Crigger then asked if the deadline should be extended due to the weather. Mr. Matney replied yes, the council will need to discuss this as the deadline approaches. He also noted all of the water taps for new connections haven't been made so until this is complete the new customers can't be connected to the system.

TEA-21 SIDEWALK PROJECT – The contractor is continuing to work on storm drainage on Catron Street. Mr. Matney noted most of the work being completed can't be seen due to the installation of storm sewer pipe but progress will begin to show when concrete is poured. As previously reported, the contractor was told at the last progress meeting to complete the work on East Railroad Avenue and Catron Street prior to completing East Buck Avenue. Mayor Litz commented there has been a lot of infrastructure being done in these areas instead of sidewalks only.

HOLE IN ROADWAY AT RANDY'S INC – Councilmember Mecimore inquired about the hole along the shoulder of South Main Street in front of the Randy's, Inc. building. Mr. Matney reported the hole is a result of an aging storm sewer drain that collects near the town flat. He has contacted VDOT and was told they will be replacing the storm drain between the main entrance and second entrance to the building.

STALEY SPRING – Discussions over the past few months have included partnering with Wythe and Smyth Counties to develop Staley Spring. The town has completed a preliminary engineering report and an environmental study through a Virginia Department of Health planning grant. A pilot test is ready to be completed and will involve a portable membrane filtration system that will be connected to the spring in an effort to prove to VDH membrane filtration can be used to treat the water. This information will be shared with Wythe and Smyth counties with the estimated cost being \$2,500 per entity for the testing. The design and fundability will be determined and will also be presented to both Counties. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked how much of the water the town will be allowed to keep. Mr. Matney responded 440,000 gallons per day can be drawn until an additional yield analysis is completed. He also addressed the recent studies completed on Phillippi Spring #2 which determined an additional 350,000 gallons per day is available.

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TOWN MANAGER APPLICATIONS – To date 13 applications have been received. The deadline is April 1.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The bills for March 8, 2011 were read and approved.

At this time, Jim Hall commented on the Council accepting bids for the Gammons lot. He asked the Council to not look at the money only but to consider what is being done on the property. Mr. Hall added his daughter is opening a business inside Heritage Hall on April 1. She will be selling school supplies for teachers.

TALK OF THE TOWN

No councilmember was available to attend the *Talk of the Town* radio program at the WYVE/WXBX radio station on Wednesday morning.

ADJOURNMENT

Prior to adjournment, Mr. Matney informed the Council that Patrick Burton, Associate Director of the Joint Industrial Development Authority has resigned his position. His last day will be Friday with a reception to be held at noon. Mr. Matney and Mrs. Guynn will be attending.

There being no additional business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Councilmember Hash and was duly seconded and approved.

Mayor

Clerk