



Town of Beaufort, NC

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Town of Beaufort Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting 6:00 PM Monday, December 14, 2020 - Zoom Meeting - COVID-19 Pandemic Minutes

Call to Order

John Day, Town Manager, read a statement providing instruction to those wishing to speak during the Public Comment period and Public Hearing.

Roll Call

Mayor Newton conducted roll call and declared a quorum present.

Present: Commissioner Ann Carter, Commissioner Sharon Harker, Commissioner Marianna Hollinshed, Commissioner John Hagle

Commissioner McDonald was experiencing technical issues and unable to access the meeting.

Agenda Approval

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mayor Newton conducted a roll call vote and the motion passed 4-0.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

Calendar

Mayor Newton said that in addition to the normally scheduled meetings, the Beaufort Farmers Market will have a holiday market on Saturday, Dec. 19 at 4:30 p.m. on the Courthouse grounds.

Public Comment

No public comments

Manager Report

John Day, Town Manager, provided the Manager's Report. Mr. Day reminded the Board that Randolph Johnson Park is now open. In addition, Mr. Day said that the raised crosswalk across Carteret Avenue is complete and open.

Mr. Day then discussed the ongoing renovations at Town Hall. He said that the renovations are coming along well and provided pictures of the progress. He explained that there will be three service counters, with the middle counter being ADA accessible. He said that he hopes to have the project completed soon with hopes of opening it to the public in January.

Items of Consent

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to approve the Items of Consent as presented. Mayor Newton conducted a roll call vote and the motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

1. Draft Minutes for the Oct. 26 Work Session (open and closed sessions), Nov. 4 Special Meeting, and Nov. 9, 2020 Regular Meeting
2. FY 21 Budget Amendment #4
3. Capital Project Street Rehabilitation and Pedestrian Improvement Budget Amendment #1
4. FY 21 Budget Amendment #5

Public Hearing

Kate Allen, Town Planner, presented the background information for the requested rezoning. She told the Board that legal advertisements were run in the Carteret News Times Dec. 2 and Dec. 9, notice letters were mailed Dec. 1, and a sign was posted on the subject property on Dec. 3. She explained that the applicant is requesting a rezoning from B-1 General Business to TCA Townhomes, Condominiums and Apartments. She further explained that the request is inconsistent with the CAMA Future Land Use Map and, if approved, would require an amendment from the Industrial classification to Mixed Use. She said that the request was reviewed at the October Planning Board meeting where the Planning Board recommended approval and provided a consistency statement which is included in the Board packet. Ms. Allen then reminded the Board that given remote meetings requirements, staff was asking that the Board conduct the public hearing and set the date for final consideration (following required 24-hour public comment period after public hearing). She added that she would be happy to answer any questions the Board may have.

Mayor Newton asked the Board for any questions regarding the request. Commissioner Carter said that the property looks small and asked if it included the house next door. Ms. Allen said that there is one house on the subject property that will be demolished. There were no other questions.

Mayor Newton asked for a motion to open the public hearing. *Commissioner Hagle made a motion to open the public hearing. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).*

Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

Mayor Newton asked John Day if anyone signed up to speak during the public hearing. Mr. Day said that no one signed up to speak. Mayor Newton then asked for a motion to close the public hearing. *Commissioner Hollinshed made a motion to close the public hearing. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).*

Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

Mayor Newton asked John Day when he would like to schedule the time and date of final consideration. Mr. Day said that there is a work session scheduled for December 21, 2020. Mayor Newton asked the Board if it would like to proceed on that date. The Board agreed. Ms. Allen asked to confirm for the record that the meeting on Dec. 21 would be at 4:00 p.m. Mayor Newton confirmed.

1. Case No. 20-11 – Request to Rezone 1205 Lennoxville Road

Kate Allen, Town Planner, presented the background information for the requested rezoning. She told the Board that legal advertisements were run in the Carteret News Times Dec. 2 and Dec. 9, notice letters were mailed Dec. 1, and a sign was posted on the subject property on Dec. 3. She explained that the applicant is requesting a rezoning from B-1 General Business to TCA Townhomes, Condominiums and Apartments. She further explained that the request is inconsistent with the CAMA Future Land Use Map and, if approved, would require an amendment from the Industrial classification to Mixed Use. She said that the request was reviewed at the October Planning Board meeting where the Planning Board recommended approval and provided a consistency statement which is included in the Board packet. Ms. Allen then reminded the Board that given remote meetings requirements, staff was asking that the Board conduct the public hearing and set the date for final consideration (following required 24-hour public comment period after public hearing). She added that she would be happy to answer any questions the Board may have.

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Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

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Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

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Items for Discussion and Consideration

1. Turner Street Traffic Calming

John Day, Town Manager, reminded the Board of previous discussions at the last work session in response to a request received regarding Turner Street traffic calming device – specifically a raised crosswalk – on the 200 block of Turner Street. Mr. Day then asked Greg Meshaw, Public Services Director/Town Engineer, to share his recommendations with the Board.

Mr. Meshaw said that the Town is planning Turner Street pedestrian improvements in the 100 block, to put a raised crosswalk in the proximity of the historical site, where there is already an at grade crossing, staff recommends putting another raised crosswalk a little bit of a distance from the one the Town is already planning to construct. In other words, he said, he would recommend placing it at the Broad Street intersection.

Mayor Newton asked if it would be on the north side of south side of Broad Street. Mr. Meshaw explained that he has not looked at it in detail at this point, but his initial thoughts are probably on the north side as that's where people are coming from the bridge to get downtown. Commissioner Hagle pointed out that the north side could be challenging because of the driveway to the courthouse. Commissioner Hagle added that he has no preference either

way, but if it is going on the north side, it needs to be looked at very closely. Commissioner Carter and Commissioner Hollinshed agreed. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Carter said that she is not sure that it is an appropriate place for a crosswalk. Mayor Newton said that the problem is that people are coming through the stop light at a high rate of speed and do not slow down until they reach the 100 block of Turner Street. Commissioner Carter agreed and said that traffic calming is needed, but not necessarily a crosswalk. Mayor Newton explained that he has quite a few concerns about safety at the Broad Street and Turner Street cross-section during the farmer's market. Commissioner Hagle agreed and said that it might be better to put it in the 200 block a little closer to the corner, noting that it is a very busy intersection.

Mr. Day told the Board that it could make this a bigger and more effective project by looking at those blocks to see if there would be an appropriate place for bump-outs which serve as a traffic calming device which might void some of the other issues. He said that staff could take a look and see if it would be effective, or to see if there are other options for the Board to choose from.

Commissioner Hagle asked if the calming devices on Campen Road are portable and if they could be placed there temporarily to see how it would work. Mr. Day explained that they do make portable traffic calming devices, but the ones on Campen Road are asphalt speed tables which are designed to slow traffic before it reaches the crosswalk. Mr. Meshaw said that the Town could purchase "cushioned" ones. He explained that they could be configured in such a way that fire trucks could go through without having to slow down.

Mayor Newton asked if the Board would like to have town staff take a look at the area and provide recommendations.

Commissioner Carter agreed.

Commissioner Harker said that she would like to see some options. She said that she agreed with Commissioner Hagle's concerns about placement on the north side of Broad Street. She further added that Turner Street is a gateway to the Town and an unsightly speed bump might not be the best option in that area. She said that a speedbump with a pedestrian pathway like the one in front of Moonrakers could be more appealing in that area. Commissioner Harker also voiced concerns about pinch points that could result from bump-outs and the danger it could pose to bicyclists.

Commissioner Hollinshed said that it is important to remember the caution light on Turner, but that additional calming measures should be considered.

Commissioner Hagle said that the south side would be better and said it would be nice to place something temporary to see how much of a difference it could make. He said that he was concerned about the potential hazards associated with bump-outs in that area given the heavy traffic flow. Commissioner Carter agreed.

2. Ann Street United Methodist Church Christmas Eve Services Event Application

Mayor Newton asked Mr. Day if he would like to speak on the matter. Mr. Day confirmed as Rachel Johnson, Parks and Events Coordinator/Public Information Officer/Deputy Clerk was assisting Commissioner McDonald with technical issues.

Mr. Day told the Board that the Ann Street United Methodist Church requested to hold two Christmas Eve services at Grayden Paul Park at 3:00 and 5:00 p.m. He said that the park is traditionally only available on a first come, first served basis, but the church requested the use of electricity for sound amplification. Therefore, it must be treated like an event with an event application. He added that the proposed service size is limited to 50 people

in order to comply with COVID-19 protocols. He added that religious and other first amendment activities are exempt from the mass gathering limitations in the governor's executive order.

Mayor Newton asked the Board for any questions.

Commissioner Carter said that she understood that they could have more than 50, but was concerned about encouraging any kind of gathering.

Commissioner Harker agreed. She added that she felt the church would be as careful as possible to make sure that proper protocols were followed. She pointed out that there is a cost associated with using electricity and asked if there was any money left in the event fund. Mr. Day said that there is not really an event fund this year because there was no paid parking. He said that the standard event fee is \$50 for electricity.

Commissioner Hollinshed echoed similar concerns about the mass gathering. She said that she had grave concerns about proceeding with the event, especially since there is an alternate site that the church could use (church parking lot).

Commissioner Hagle agreed with the previous comments. He said that his church has been holding parking lot services for a month. He said that the church could use their large parking lot. He explained that he would rather remain consistent with the Town's stance on mass gatherings.

Mayor Newton asked Mr. Day to confirm that the church could still meet at the park without approval, it just would not be able to utilize the electricity for sound amplification. Mr. Day confirmed.

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to deny the event application. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

Mayor/Commission Comments

Commissioner Carter said that she would like for Town Hall to be reopened at the start of the year. She said that the Town could limit the number of members of the public allowed in at a time if necessary. She voiced concerns about the level of service being provided to the community. She said that staff has the ability to socially distance and added that the Town has the fogger that was purchased with CARES Act funds.

Commissioner Harker wished everyone a happy and safe holiday. She said that there is history being made with the vaccine which will hopefully be available to anyone who wants to take it. She added that even after one gets the vaccine, they should still follow the 3Ws. Commissioner Harker then said that she is happy to see Randolph Johnson Park open, and even better to see people playing on the equipment. She congratulated the Parks and Recreation staff and thanked staff for all of their hard work throughout the process.

Commissioner Hollinshed said that she agreed with Commissioner Carter about the reopening of Town Hall. She said that she would like to see a written plan that outlines procedures for reopening. She said that she wants to keep Town employees safe but believes there is a way to accomplish both. She suggested potentially having employees in Town Hall on a rotating basis. She then wished everyone a happy and safe holiday.

Commissioner Hagle reminded everyone to be very cautious when driving and noted that at 35 mph, you are traveling 51 feet per second. He also wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mayor Newton congratulated the Holland Shepherd Group for collecting 365 donated bicycles for Toys for Tots. He said that last year he was impressed when they collected 185 bikes. He said that 365 donated bikes this year was incredible and reflects the generosity of the people of Carteret County. Mayor Newton then spoke about the economic news in the county. He said that unfortunately, the fact that sales tax revenues are up masks the economic disparity in the county. He said that there are people struggling right now, especially with hunger, and urged the community to be generous and help those in need.

Closed Session

1. Attorney – Client Privilege/Personnel Matter

Mayor Newton asked for a motion to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11.

Commissioner Harker made a motion to go into closed session. The motion passed unanimously (4-0).

Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

Adjourn

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle

Mayor

Deputy Clerk