

**Town of Pilot Mountain
Board of Commissioners Meeting
Monday, June 8, 2020
Regular Meeting 7:00 PM**

Members Present: Mayor Evan Cockerham, Commissioner Donna Kiger, Commissioner Hilda Willis, Commissioner Kim Quinn and Commissioner Scott Needham

Staff Present: Town Manager, Michael Boaz and Town Clerk, Holly Utt via Facebook Live

Call to order 7:00 PM

Mayor Cockerham called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Mayor Cockerham led the pledge of allegiance and held a moment of silence.

Adoption of Agenda

Mr. Boaz stated that the ABC Board has asked that the Board re-appoint Elton Crutchfield through August 2022. Commissioner Quinn made a motion to add discussion of the ABC Board member to the agenda and it was unanimous. Commissioner Quinn made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended and it was unanimous.

Public Hearing on FY 2020-2021 Budget

Mayor Cockerham opened the public hearing for the proposed FY 2020-2021 budget.

No comments from the public.

Mayor Cockerham closed the public hearing.

Public Comment

The following public comments were read by Mr. Boaz:

Chad Motsinger, 211 Stone Drive, Pilot Mountain, NC 27041

Town of Pilot Mountain Board of Commissioners,

While it is imperative that the Commissioners of Pilot Mountain meet to discuss and debate issues regarding the people they represent, it is just as important that their constituents' voices are also heard and taken into consideration when making impactful decisions largely affecting their lives. Because of the hectic times in which we live, a decision regarding the rezoning of property on Golf Course Rd to make way for a large apartment complex is largely unfair to those that the decision will affect.

Due to the coronavirus, it has been proposed that these meetings should be broadcasted via Facebook Live to ensure that all who want to participate can participate. This solution to the problem is largely out-of-touch with the affected constituents, as many of those who are affected are senior citizens. Most in this demographic have very little experience using social media at all, and likely do not have a Facebook account. This alone would hold back a large portion of the affected population from making their voices heard, and would place a dampener on the larger voice of the people.

Another proposal was to push the meeting date back to July 1st. This would also be very unfair to the constituents, as the date falls on the week of Independence Day. Many of the constituents have vacation plans over this week due to the holiday, and a large amount of those affected would be unable to voice their opinions.

Both of these proposed solution already make a largely unfair situation even more one-sided, as the vast majority of those affected have no vote in the election of the commissioners despite the commissioners having jurisdiction over them. Please, level the playing field and accommodate every member of the community, especially those who are affected the most.

Karrie Tilley, 609 Highgrove Drive, Chapel Hill, NC, Golf Course Road, Land Owner

To whom it may concern,

A meeting developed to help our community deepen conversation about housing, offset from the town in a rural neighborhood, should possibly wait until the neighborhood voices can be heard. I don't believe Facebook is acceptable.

Chelsea Wheeler, 135 Heidi Court, Pilot Mountain, NC

I am dumbfounded. As a life-long resident of the Golf Course Road area, I don't understand why the board would pursue conducting a meeting of this extreme importance using a platform that alienates the very target audience they're trying to reach. The closest property owners you seek to involve in this decision do not have Facebook, and do not participate in online services. Furthermore, they nor the rest of the residents (where the demographic is older post retirement age) in close proximity to the proposed commissioner job being responsible to the voters? It's hardly fair to make an everyday life changing decision for people who are unable to vote for you.

The sole beneficiary of pushing this re-zoning forward in these trying times is the developer who stands to profit. I urge you to table this re-zoning to foster a sense of inclusion for the community that is being affected.

Small communities such as ours, are built on years of trust and strong relationships. You should be offering more flexibility or tabling the discussion to a time when we are not being affected by a worldwide pandemic. Let's do the right thing and strive to let all voices be heard in a way that works for the entire audience. Please postpone this rezoning. Thank you for your consideration.

Aric Bullington, 150 Deer Trace Lane, Pilot Mountain, NC

First, I still think the town should make a better effort to keep the citizens informed in a timely manner as to the agenda of these meetings. The agenda for a Monday meeting was not posted until around lunch time on the Friday before. It doesn't have to be the entire agenda packet, but a summary could surely be posted by mid-week before the Monday meeting.

Secondly, I realize that this is not the forum to address the rezoning on Golf Course Road that is on everyone's mind. I do not intend to address that rezoning directly, but from a general ETJ standpoint. While this board may currently have legal authority to hear a matter in the ETJ, I don't feel that it has the moral authority. I don't think this board should be making decisions that GREATLY affect property owners that cannot vote for them and to which this board has no accountability. I asked over a year ago

that you consider a policy that follows Mount Airy's lead and return the zoning power in the ETJ back to the county government. To my knowledge, there has been exactly zero discussion on that. If the county was to approve a rezoning request adjacent to the town limits, the owner is likely going to ask to be voluntarily annexed anyway and you would have control over it at that point. I would submit that this board has a moral obligation to table any requests in the ETJ and move to returning that authority back to the county in an expeditious manner.

Lastly, if you choose to press forward with the rezoning hearing, I would also respectfully advise caution in the rules that have been proposed and/or adopted for the June 29th public hearing. Ground rules may certainly be established for public hearings, but this should respect the First Amendment rights of the citizens and said restrictions should only apply to time, place and manner of the speech but not the content. Both positive and negative comments must be permitted. There are numerous legal precedents that would apply. Thanks.

Consent Agenda

- May 11, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Needham made a motion to approve the consent agenda and it was unanimous.

ABC Board Report

Mr. Boaz stated that sales for the month of May 2020 were \$167,640. This is a 45.7% increase over May 2019 sales of \$115,031.

Unfinished Business

Set Public Hearing for Rezoning Request

Mr. Boaz explained that staff has recommended that the Board adopt the resolution that sets the rules and time and date for the public hearing on the re-zoning of 10 acres on Golf Course Road. The hearing will be scheduled for June 29, 2020 at 6:00 PM. The meeting will be live and in person with social distancing. There will only be one person allowed to speak at a time due to social distancing guidelines. Comments will also be accepted by email. Mr. Boaz addressed the comments regarding postponing the public. He explained that the Board is required to give the applicant due process which includes a public hearing in a timely manner. The applicant has a deadline of July 10th – 15th to submit their information to the state for tax credits. There is not an option to postponing the hearing indefinitely. Mayor Cockerham stated that the original hearing had been scheduled for March and was postponed due to concerns of COVID-19. Discussion ensued about the location to hold the public hearing due to social distancing guidelines regarding social gatherings. Commissioner Needham made a motion to adopt Resolution R2020-10 with the following changes: change meeting place to the Pilot Center, remove voicemail comments and add a PA speaker in the lobby for the meeting, and it was unanimous.

Bullington Lane Discussion

Mr. Boaz explained that the Board had received complaints over large trucks on Bullington Lane. The major concern is the width and the capacity to support two-way traffic. After review by staff, it was recommended to make Bullington Lane one way with traffic flowing from Old Highway 52 bypass to E. Main Street. The first ordinance would make Bullington Lane one-way and the second ordinance would prohibit left turns off of Hamlin Street. Commissioner Kiger made a motion to adopt Ordinances O2020-05 and O2020-06 and it was unanimous.

New Business

FY 2020-2021 Rate Schedule Approval

Mr. Boaz explained that the rate schedule is adopted every year and it contains the new water and sewer rates and also rate changes to the planning and zoning fees with all other fees remaining the same. Commissioner Willis made a motion to approve the 2020-2021 rate schedule and it was unanimous.

FY 2020-2021 Budget Ordinance Approval

Mr. Boaz presented the budget ordinance for FY 2021. This budget projects a 14% loss in sales tax revenue and a 1% loss in property tax revenue. There are no changes to the property tax rate or sanitation fee. There will be an increase to the water/sewer minimum and an increase to the per gallon charge. The budget does not represent any increases to employee compensation, no new staff and no significant changes to capital or operations. Commissioner Needham made a motion to approve the budget ordinance for FY 2020-2021 and it was unanimous.

Animal Ordinance Discussion

Mr. Boaz explained that the Board had received public comments in past meetings about the animal ordinance and keeping chickens inside the city limits. He asked the Board for direction on if and how they want to proceed. Commissioner Needham stated that many municipalities much larger than ours do allow citizens to have chickens. He has done some research and the municipalities do permitting for chickens to make sure citizens are in compliance with the regulation that they have set forth. He stated that with the pandemic people are looking to gardening and doing more activities to self-sustain. Commissioner Kiger asked that they get feed-back from other municipalities that had reported issues with citizens owning chickens, just to see the whole picture. Commissioner Quinn asked who would act as code enforcement for this, due to not having staff to enforce compliance. It was the consensus of the Board to reach out to other municipalities to see what negative effects they have had before the Board gives it consideration.

Administrative Reports

Town Manager's Report

- Mr. Boaz stated that the smoke testing of sewer lines would begin the week of June 15th. This is part of the Asset Inventory and Assessment project. This testing will show any breaks in the lines or unauthorized connections. The smoke is color-less, odor-less and is completely safe.
- Mr. Boaz encouraged customers to continue to pay their utility bill. Even if they whole amount cannot be paid, just pay what you can to avoid a large bill and possible disconnection after the governor's order has expired. At that time, the full bill will be due. If there is anyone that cannot pay their bill in full, call the office and set up a payment plan.
- Planning Board - There are two in Town seats and one out of Town seat that either has expired or will expire in the next few months. Applications are currently being accepted and those are available on the website www.pilotmountainnc.org.
- A special meeting will be held on June 29th prior to the public hearing to discuss final year end budget amendments to the FY 2019-2020 budget.
- He reminded everyone to fill out the census paperwork that has been sent out

Commissioner Kiger asked when the stream bank restoration would begin. Mr. Boaz stated that it has to be completed by November so he is guessing no later than August or September.

Commissioner Kiger asked about the timeline for the local street paving project. Mr. Boaz stated that the funding has been approved and secured. The issues are having the LGC approve the debt and NC DOT give the go ahead on the project. The process has been slowed due to the Covid-19 and

some of the projects are running behind. He hopes to be able to do some of the streets this year but is unsure of the DOT's ability to enter into contracts.

ABC Board Member Discussion

Commissioner Quinn suggested taking applications for the spot on the ABC Board and taking it up at the next meeting.

Mayor and Commissioners Comments

Commissioner Needham: He noted things that had happened so far in 2020. It has been a very scary time both emotionally and financially. But as a person there are two pandemics happening in the country and one of them is under a year old and one is over 400 years old. He has been uplifted by the peaceful protests in our area and the police in our area have participated. There are a lot of things that have been taken for granted. He feels that we are lucky in this area that we have good police officers that treat people with respect and are very supportive. He commended all law enforcement for their service. He stated that it was horrific the way people of color had been treated in certain areas of the country. Racism has mutated over the years and the underlying problems were not taught in school. He encouraged people to keep an open mind and see that other people are hurting. He asked that people be kind, loving and respectful to one another and when they see injustice, be able to speak out against it.

Commissioner Kiger: She agreed with the other Board members. The nation is hurting and she hopes we can heal this divide. She stated with all the negativity she is glad to hear that the town did not have to furlough employees because it is important to keep moving forward. She also mentioned having the police department check on E. Main due to people speeding up and down the street.

Commissioner Quinn: Commented that she supports the Black Lives Matter movement and she was proud of the police departments that had participated in the peaceful protests.

Commissioner Willis: No comment. She acknowledged the comments that had been made and thanked them for those.

Mayor Cockerham: Commended Commissioner Needham for his comments. He stated that it was very encouraging to see the country come together in response to George Floyd's murder. He is glad to see people calling on others to make changes and create a more just society and live in. He is thankful for the community that we live in.

Adjourn or Recess

Commissioner Kiger made a motion to adjourn and it was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted:

Attest:

Holly Utt
Town Clerk

Evan Cockerham
Mayor