

TYRONE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

October 19, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Eric Dial, Mayor

Gloria Furr, Mayor Pro Tem, Post 4

Linda Howard, Post 1

Melissa Hill, Post 2

Billy Campbell, Post 3

Brandon Perkins, Town Manager

Dee Baker, Town Clerk

Dennis Davenport, Town Attorney

Council Member Howard was absent

Also present:

Sandy Beach, Finance / HR Manager

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Dial explained to the large attending body that the applicant for number 5 had just withdrawn his item. He invited everyone to stay.

II. INVOCATION

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS: *Comments are limited to three (3) minutes. Please state your name & address. Comments that require a response may not be answered during this time. The Council or staff may respond at a later date.*

Ms. Jessica Whelan congratulated the Town on hosting a wonderful Founders Day Festival and gave a shout-out to Ms. Lynda Owens, Ms. Kristie McClenney Public Works, the Police Department, staff, Council, and all volunteers for a job well done.

Mr. Jerry Simpson who lives on Trickum Creek spoke regarding the withdrawn extended-stay item. He stated that he came from East Point and that Tyrone had low crime with the occasional theft in Shamrock Industrial Park. He added that it was in the best interest of the Town to not allow that type of business in the future. Extended-stay hotels were not known for their upkeep and clientele, we do not need that in our Town.

Ms. Linda Conley who lives on Brennan Drive shared that she understood that the item had been withdrawn, however, she wished to share. She stated that regarding the word association game, when extended-stay motel was mentioned many words came to mind, low-end clientele, crime, drugs, prostitution, and gunshots. We do not need this type of business at our shopping center or in front of a neighborhood with homes listed up to \$600,000. She reminded everyone of the gun range item years ago proposed next to the former Partners Pizza at the Publix Shopping Center. She added that it was a bad idea and added that she guessed that the developers did not live near an extended-stay hotel. Her research found an article regarding a small Arizona town.

The real estate professional stated that an extended-stay hotel would negatively affect home values. The article also included a former DEA Agent who shared, those hotels were favored by criminals because they felt comfortable there and they were close to the freeway. She also shared that according to a 2021 Forbes article, another concern was security deposits and payments.

She stated that 70% of guests use cash, checks, or money orders as a form of payment, which meant theft on the premises. She assumed that guests paid in cash because of the types of jobs their clientele worked and also may have bad credit. Tyrone had one of the highest median incomes in Georgia, why would we want that type of business in our Town? Her main concerns were decreasing property values and an increase in crime. She mentioned the local panhandling families and stated that “if you build it, they will come” rang true. Why would property owners want that, we all enjoy our safe environment thanks to our police department. She stated that we do not want this in our town, and to say no to the project.

Terry Noble who lives on Brunswick Dr. spoke regarding his opposition to the extended stay hotel. He stated that he was presently enrolled in the Town’s Tyrone 101 course, it was an eye-opening experience and encouraged everyone to enroll in the next course. He shared that he and his wife moved to Tyrone for the schools and the quality of life, if approved it would be an attack on the quality of life, we do not want this.

Mr. Gregory Porter who lives on Green Branch Dr. spoke regarding the extended stay hotel. He shared that he was there on the shoulders of his neighbors and the entire Town. He reminded everyone that he had spoken at the last meeting and that he was the Retired Police Chief of Clayton County. He stated that he tried to discourage his board at that time to not approve that type of business there. That type of business spelled, catastrophic. It spelled catastrophic for the safety and for insurance ratings. He informed Council that they had the authority to create ordinances that would not allow that type of business. The developers think that we are playing games, he had been in Tyrone for 20 years and was not going anywhere, but he would come out of retirement if need be.

Adrienne Brown who lives on Keswick Manor Drive spoke regarding the extended stay hotel. She understood that the item was no longer on the agenda but wished for something to be put in place so the item could not be heard in the future. She shared that she was not one for hyperbole but felt it necessary. She mentioned an article that was read at the September 21st meeting regarding an interview with former Gwinnett County Solicitor General Brian Whiteside. She stated that he said extended-stay hotels were the devil’s triangle. It was said due to the violent crimes, death, sex trafficking, rape, and prostitution. She added that they were all in Tyrone for a good quality of life, to maintain property values, and for a safe environment for children and our neighbors.

Roselyn Jackson-Eatman who lives on Keswick Manor Drive shared that she was the individual that referenced the article at the September meeting. She wished to follow up Ms. Conley’s comments. She researched a New York Times article regarding cash payments. The title of the article was “When no landlord will rent to you, where do you go”? She stated that the article mentioned what happens when residents could not pay their rent, and trash piled up in front of the facility when evictions occurred.

She also shared another article that was released by a law firm regarding the risk when dealing with retail and hospitality businesses. Among the risks were, smoking, cooking, and an increased number of individuals per room. That could increase the likelihood of rape, murder, and other activities that would add risk and use more Town resources. She appealed to Council on behalf of herself, her son, her husband, and her community, that an extended-stay hotel would not be a viable option and would not support any positive gain for the Town.

V. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made to approve the agenda with the removal of item number 5.

Motion made by Council Member Campbell, Seconded by Council Member Hill.
Voting Yea: Council Member Furr.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA: *All matters listed under this item are considered to be routine by the Town Council and will be enacted by one motion. There will not be separate discussion of these items. If discussion is desired, that item will be removed from the consent agenda and will be considered separately.*

1. Approval of the October 5, 2023 meeting minutes.

A motion was made to approve the consent agenda.

Motion made by Council Member Furr, Seconded by Council Member Hill.
Voting Yea: Council Member Campbell.

VII. PRESENTATIONS

2. Employee Service Recognitions: David Moretz (10 years) and Lt. Philip Nelson (15 years). - **Brandon Perkins, Town Manager**

Mr. Perkins recognized Public Works Maintenance Tech II David Moretz for his 10 years of service to the Town, and Lt. Phillip Nelson for his 15 years of service. He shared that Mr. Moretz was a hard worker and a great part of the Public Works team, he was proud to honor him. He then shared that he had hired Lt. Nelson and that he brought a lot to the department. He added that Lt. Nelson was the training officer and was also in charge of the patrolling officers, he brought a lot of energy and always delivered. He thanked both men for their service.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

IX. OLD BUSINESS

X. NEW BUSINESS

3. Consideration to approve the plans and start land acquisition for the 2023 Miscellaneous Cross Drain Replacements Project No: PW-2023-06. - **Scott Langford, Town Engineer / Public Works Director**

Mr. Langford shared that the project was to replace drainage culvert infrastructure in the Town's rights-of-way and easements. The project consisted of replacing 2 culverts on Anthony Drive, 2 on Brooks Drive, 1 on Castle Lake Drive, 1 on Handley Park, 1 on Julie Road, 2 on Laurelwood Road, 1 on Ridge Road, 1 on Strandhill Road, 1 catch basin on Farr Road at Taylor Ridge, and 1 on an easement in Pendleton subdivision. He added that staff recommended approval of the project and then to move into the land acquisition phase with Legal Counsel upon Council's approval of the plans.

Council Member Campbell asked if the project would go out for bid. Mr. Langford stated that yes, after approval, then staff would begin the land acquisition.

A motion was made to approve the plans for the 2023 Miscellaneous Cross Drain Replacements Project number PW-2023-06 and to start land acquisition.

Motion made by Council Member Campbell, Seconded by Council Member Hill.
Voting Yea: Council Member Furr.

4. Consideration to approve the purchase of a new server for Police/Court Departments which includes the associated installation and migration of current data, **April Spradlin, Clerk of Court and Randy Mundy, Police Chief**

Ms. Spradlin shared that she and Chief Mundy were coming to Council because they had approved up to \$41,000 for the purpose of the Municipal Court to purchase document scanning software and the search database for court records. It was determined that their current software could perform the same function. She added that since then, the Police Department has been in need of a new server for the storage of body camera data and other required data. Ms. Spradlin stated that if Council approved, the funding could be transferred to the Police Department for their immediate need. She added that the packet was submitted last week which did not include a quote for the server. Two days ago, Chief Mundy acquired a state contract quote of \$15,069.40 for a new server which did not include the migration of data. Staff was still waiting on the data migration quote. She emphasized that Chief Mundy was only allowed to spend up to \$41,000 for the process.

A motion was made to approve the transfer of \$41,000 from the Court budget to the Police budget for the purchase of a new server and to include the migration of data.

Motion made by Council Member Campbell, Seconded by Council Member Hill.
Voting Yea: Council Member Furr.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS: *The second public comment period is for any issue. Comments are limited to three (3) minutes. Please state your name & address. Comments that require a response may not be answered during this time. The Council or staff may respond at a later date.*

Mr. Percy Jenkins who lives on Carriage Oaks Drive spoke regarding the withdrawn extended-stay hotel item. He shared that in the official Georgia Code, Section 7-1-1000 (29) stated that "Residential property" was defined as improved real property used or occupied, or intended to be used or occupied, as the primary residence of a natural person. Such a term did not include rental property or second homes.

A natural person can have only one primary residence. He added that extended-stay hotels usually became primary residences for homeless folks. He added that at the last meeting for that item, the developer stated that people could stay as long as they wished.

Mr. Jenkins stated that the Town could not place a residential property on that particular property according to the Southampton Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions, section 6.9 (e). He stated that a certificate of appropriateness should not be given. Mayor Dial asked Mr. Jenkins if he was speaking on behalf of the Southampton Home Owner's Association board. Mr. Jenkins stated that he was.

Ms. Tallulakie Cosby who lives on Wynfield Drive wished to echo Mr. Jenkins regarding the covenants. She also referred to Section 6.9 (e). She added that based on data that she obtained from 2022 from the city of Norcross. Of the 9 extended-stay hotels, 84% of the occupants considered the facility their primary residence. She added that she had been in Tyrone for 5 years and they moved there for the schools and safety. She added that coming from a neighboring county, she personally knew the impact of an extended-stay hotel. She shared her research from the Department of Justice. Extended-stay hotels were hubs for sex trafficking, prostitution, drug manufacturing, and sales. She was concerned for her 11-year-old daughter, it was unsafe. She added that there was recently a lawsuit in Chamblee from the survivors of an extended-stay hotel. The staff knew that sex trafficking was occurring but allowed it. She opposed one being built in Tyrone.

Ms. Ann Wittenberg who lives just outside town limits on Lincoln Road near Southampton shared that she also knew firsthand how dangerous the extended-stay hotels were. She stayed in one in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. She was afraid to sleep there but had no choice, nothing was available. Checking out she almost stepped on a needle. Why would anyone want an extended-stay or any hotel to come to Tyrone?

XII. STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Baker shared that early voting was going on through Friday, November 3rd at 945 Senoia Road including two Saturdays, and the hours were 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. She added to check My Voter Page for your polling place on Election Day, November 7th.

XIII. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Campbell stated that this year's Founders Day was a success and the fireworks were great. He added that it was also well attended. He thanked Ms. Lynda Owens and Ms. McClenney for their work.

Council Member Hill thanked the large attending body for coming out.

Mayor Dial informed everyone that Fayetteville and Peachtree City were getting extended-stay hotels, one being located at Kedron. He suggested stopping by their city halls for more information.

Mayor Dial shared that he appreciated everyone for coming out. He thanked all staff for participating in the Founders Day celebration, it was outstanding.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made to approve the Executive Session minutes from October 5, 2023.

Motion made by Council Member Campbell, Seconded by Council Member Hill.

Voting Yea: Council Member Furr

XV. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made to adjourn.

Motion made by Council Member Furr.

Voting Yea: Council Member Hill, Council Member Campbell

The meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

By: _____
Eric Dial, Mayor

Attest: _____
Dee Baker, Town Clerk