

**Minutes
Spruce Pine Town Council
February 22, 2016 5:30 PM**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on February 22, 2016. Present were Mayor Darla Harding and Council Members Larry McKinney, James Acuff and Rocky Buchanan. Staff in attendance included Richard Canipe, Darlene Butler, Dave Lindsey, and Billy Summerlin. Others attended, including Libby Phillips, Patti Jensen, Ken Waldroup, Betsy Biega, Don Waldroup, John Pendley, Alvaro Garcia, Shelia King, Herman Buchanan, Holt Whitson, Jr., Sandy Blankenbaker, Denise Cook, Jim Phillips, Rita Phillips, Rodney Silvers, Shirley Hise, Jann Godwin, Cheech Stewart, Jarrod Hughes, Jewel Dellinger, Paulette Dellinger, Gregg Henline, Lisa Henline, Anita Blackwell, Beth Byerly, Tim Hollifield, Lee Ellis, Amy Ellis, Kent Dauderman, David Niven, Bruce Pitman, Zan Sistare, Matt Miller, Chris McCurry, Marty McCurry, and David Purtell (Mitchell News-Journal).

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Darla Harding called the regular meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Rocky Buchanan gave the invocation. Larry McKinney led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Rocky Buchanan moved to approve the agenda as presented. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor. Mayor Harding asked those present to state their names and businesses. The mayor introduced the purpose of the meeting as positive open communication with their local government. She thanked all for attending.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Cheech Stewart addressed the Council. She noted that she operates Mitchell County Safeplace, is 1/3 owner of The Dispensary, and half owner of Uptown Funk. She commended the Mayor for coming to every downtown business. She noted that it is the first time a government official invited her personally. She is excited about Spruce Pine and has a lot of good ideas. Arts and music must continue. We need to make it look beautiful. She will retire August of 2017, and will continue to work for Spruce Pine.

Holt Whitson appreciates Main Street and what they do for the town. He stated that downtown will not be like it was in the past and should move toward specialty shops and service-oriented businesses such as handyman services and tutoring. He also would like to see a drug treatment center. Other ideas are an interior decorating service, zip lines, and retirement communities.

Herman Buchanan expressed the need to replace the parking curbs along the railroad track on Locust St. He noted that he is interested in selling the Not Bob's Antiques building.

Jan Godwin stated that she is a full-time realtor, and half owner of Uptown Funk. She expressed concerns that locals will not support the business. She stated that we all need to work on shopping locally. She noted that even though she cannot vote in Spruce Pine elections because she does not live in the city limits, that she and her husband have made a big commitment here. She thanked Libby Phillips of Main Street for visiting the shop. She asked that the Town form a committee of business owners to walk through town and identify matters that need to be addressed. She stated that a telephone pole and guide wire near her business, along with a town trash receptacle, render a parking space unusable. She is concerned that the Rotary Club plans to move the BBQ Festival, and wants a plan in place for getting visitors downtown during the festival.

Alvaro Garcia of El Ranchero Restaurant addressed the Council. He noted that the car shows held twice a month in the summer block the streets. His customers can't pick up orders or park to eat there. His business loses several hundred dollars every car show. Per David Niven of DT's, it does hurt downtown food sales. The small number attending the car shows are not going into the businesses. Mr. Garcia asked that the streets not be closed.

Ken Waldroup of Peoples Furniture asked that as a business owner and property owner in town, he would like to be able to vote in town. Council Member James Acuff noted that although he cannot vote, he is represented by Spruce Pine Main Street and the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce. Ken asked that the street sweeper be used more, especially when the streets have been sanded in the winter. Manager Richard Canipe noted that the streets are swept every Sunday morning that weather allows. They are swept curb to curb.

John Pendley of the Art and Frame Gallery and Pendley Millwork congratulated the Council on the new town hall and police department, and is grateful to have been a part. On Locust Street, he is thankful for the new central park and for the Main Street Office. He stated that there is more work to do to keep improvements going. The Town is still not over the fires downtown. With the move of Toe River Service Station, the town lost an institution and asset to the community. He mentioned that there has been another rock slide at Spruce Pine Motel. The former John Keen building, that Doug Jennings now owns, is an eyesore. All the Bud Phillips property needs to be addressed. He thanked Marty and Chris McCurry for improving the property on the corner of Altapass and Oak Avenue. He stated that grant money needs to be studied for downtown properties. The lot across from Superior Construction needs a blind to improve appearance. He gave a shout out to Darla Harding and Larry McKinney for visiting downtown.

Anita Blackwell advised the Council that she and her husband, Kent Dauderman, are entrepreneurs. They have purchased the former Bama Q building on Highway 226S, and are using it for a gallery and office. She expressed a need to clean up the Grassy Creek corridor. She asked about the possibility of extending water further along Highway 226S. They are interested in building tiny cottages. Richard advised her that grants are tied to job creation.

Luther Stroup addressed the Council about the Kiwanis Fourth of July Parade. The Fourth falls on Monday this year. He requested participation by the Council and business owners, and beseeched them to come out and have fun. He also stated that the Town Council has the power to ban Jake Brakes, a form of noise pollution, and should do so.

Jimmy Phillips advised that the Council needs to try to get the depot. He also stated that the wall next to the Town park needs painted. The wall belongs to Dave Wylie.

Zan Sistare of Spruce Pine Main Street noted that they meet the 1st Thursday of every month, and invited all to attend. Downtown beautification is on-going. They are working on sidewalk plans that will involve the town, NCDOT, and volunteers. Main Street is looking at foot bridge improvements. The Mayland Foundation has purchased Pinebridge. The upcoming bond referendum includes funds that would be used on the Pinebridge coliseum and hotel. Wayfinding signs are done. Everyone involved in Main Street is a volunteer except for Libby Phillips. He thanked the Town staff and Council for their help.

Lisa Henline of Southwest Trading Company thanked the Council for holding a meeting directed at downtown business owners. She noted that a lot of tourists go through their store. Their questions are usually where can they eat and stay. They also are looking for more retail stores.

Patti Jensen mentioned the Chamber Candidates Forum on March 3 at 6:00 PM at the old courthouse in Bakersville. Mayor Harding noted that the Council wants to form relationships with Mitchell County as well.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Darla Harding thanked everyone for attending. She noted that the Council meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. She would like to do a business owner meeting 4 times per year. She set the next business owner meeting for April 25th.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned by motion of Rocky Buchanan at 6:37 PM.

Darlene Butler, Town Clerk

Darla Harding, Mayor

James Acuff, Council Member

Rocky Buchanan, Council Member

Larry McKinney, Council Member