

Minutes Spruce Pine Town Council

A meeting of the Town Council was held on August 08, 2016. Present were Mayor Darla Harding and Council Members James Acuff, Larry McKinney, Jackie Rensink and Rocky Buchanan. Staff in attendance included Richard Canipe, Darlene Butler, Dave Lindsey, Phillip Hise, Michael Briggs and Michael Wood. Others attended, including Libby Phillips, Zan Sistare, Ron Cohen 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

Larry McKinney moved to approve the agenda. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Larry McKinney moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of July 11, 2016. Rocky Buchanan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Main Street

- Libby Phillips distributed a Main Street Report for the month of August. Said report is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.
- Libby's inventory of downtown buildings is complete and extensive.

Parks & Rec

- Michael Wood updated the Council on the parks for July. Shelter reservations for both parks totaled 44.
- Park staff was busy with Fourth of July events, YMCA mini-camps, tennis camp, and the BBQ Festival.
- Staff also worked on the regular upkeep of parks and public spaces. Park employees are opening and closing the downtown visitor's center on Saturdays.
- Plans for the Brad Ragan Pool are to stay open this week and next, then on weekends through Labor Day. Swimming lessons and aerobics are done.
- The roofs on the pool facilities may need looked at in next year's budget.
- There are no signs at Riverside for age limitations on the playgrounds or restriction of bicycles and skateboards on walking paths. New signage is needed. Surveillance cameras are ready to be installed.
- Per Mayor Harding, a lot of good feedback about the parks has been heard. She commended the great job done by staff.

Public Works

- Phillip Hise distributed open and closed work orders.
- His crew has finished 2 significant projects; the sewer line downtown, and a two-inch water line on Hawkins Branch.
- Heavy rains necessitated the replacement of the water line on Carters Ridge again. Per Richard, we are hoping that the extension of the trail in that area redirects the creek, and that a new water line can go under it at that time.
- Two areas on Smith Rd. and a large section of Ollis Rd., have been repaved.
- Mayor Harding inquired about the repainting of the lines at the Rogers Street/226 intersection. Phillip will check with Eddie Buchanan.

Police Department

- Captain Michael Briggs updated the Council on the police department.
- He noted that the lack of signs prohibiting bicycles on the walking path at Riverside Park makes control difficult. Signs are needed, especially at the parking lots, and should cite the fines and city ordinance.
- Mayor Harding expressed her appreciation for the police department.

Finance

- Dave Lindsey noted that we got a new backhoe today.
- Bills have gone out with the updated water rates.
- Auditors will be on site tomorrow.
- Property tax bill information is at Southern Software. The overall levy is slightly up.

APPOINTMENTS

Ron Cohen approached the Council about the Carolina Theater property. He is a new property owner in Mitchell County, originally from Chicago. He advised that he has toured the theater and sees it as a wonderful opportunity. He is investigating opportunities for various uses, hoping to use funding from grants or crowd funding services. He is asking about feasibility and does not purport to represent the town. He also mentioned other obstacles in the way of attracting patrons from outside the area. He asked what is up with the train station. He stated that it is a health hazard and is polluting the Toe River. He stated that the lead paint is at 12X the legal limit. The Carolina Theater sign on Upper St. is wasted. He would like to see the advertisement of Main Street events on the sign. The questions would be permission, repairs, electric bill, and who changes the signs. On EBay, letters can be purchased for about \$60.

He is not looking to purchase the building. He thinks the Town should own it. He asked if the Town would agree to own the building. The building is for sale. Per Darla, Main Street has been talking a lot about the theater. The price of the building is around \$175,000. Per Darla, funding is more available to a municipality. The first step is a feasibility study. Mr. Cohen stated that he has had a long career in the entertainment industry, and has building and creative experience. The town has nothing to lose. Phase I would be to buy the building. Richard advised that we would need to consult with Attorney Lloyd Hise first, before deciding on whether to proceed with a feasibility study. Richard will touch bases with Lloyd.

CONSENT AGENDA - none

ACTION AGENDA - none

PUBLIC COMMENT

TOWN ATTORNEY

MAYOR/COUNCIL REQUESTS / COMMENTS

Mayor Harding asked about the handicapped swing requested for Riverside Park. Donations from the Spruce Pine Fire Department and Red Hat Society will be used to purchase the swing.

The Wi-Fi grant application deadline has been extended. Libby Phillips is working on getting prices.

Council member Jackie Rensink asked for clarification on requesting for proposals for a Preliminary Engineering Report for sewer line replacement on Locust Street. Richard advised that the Town must select based on qualifications, not price. Currently, that water line is located above the sewer line. The new sewer line will be alongside the water line. Mayor Harding commended Richard Canipe for his talent in finding funds for water/sewer projects.

TOWN MANAGER

- ✓ Richard Canipe distributed the water/sewer report for July, which is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes.
- ✓ The High Country Council of Governments Banquet will be held on September 9th. RSVP's are due by August 26th.
- ✓ The Town will know by 9/13 if we will receive a grant from NCDOT for handicap accessibility funds for Oak Avenue sidewalks. DOT has identified 13 locations with 19 deficiencies.
- ✓ Riverside Park replacement playground equipment will be delivered tomorrow.
- ✓ Harris Street paving should commence 2 weeks from today.
- ✓ Riverside Park internet and electric is installed, in preparation for security cameras.
- ✓ NCDOT is building a new bridge on Bear Creek Rd., and will relocate our water line for free, in an encasement.
- ✓ The Henredon project bid opening is scheduled for Sept. 03.
- ✓ The ARC grant application has been submitted, with a decision due in 6-7 weeks.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:45 PM by motion of Larry McKinney.

Darlene Butler, Town Clerk

Darla Harding, Mayor

Larry McKinney, Mayor Pro Tem

Rocky Buchanan, Council Member

James Acuff, Council Member

Jackie Rensink, Council Member