

**Minutes
Spruce Pine Town Council
Monday, May 23, 2022**

A meeting of the Town Council was held on May 23, 2022. Present were Mayor Darla Harding and Council Members James Acuff, Rocky Buchanan, Larry McKinney and Jackie Rensink. Staff in attendance included Darlene Butler, Shelley Buchanan, Billy Summerlin and Crystal Young. Others attended, including Chad Donahoo, Walton Shepherd, Kelly Georgeou, Lori McIntyre, Jim Phillips and Jesse Phillips.

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 as presented. James Acuff seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Larry McKinney moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of May 9th, 2022. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.

Rocky Buchanan moved to approve the minutes of the public hearing of May 9th, 2022. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion, which carried with all present in favor.

APPOINTMENTS

Walton Shepherd, owner of L&L Furniture, approached the Council for approval to have a special event downtown in June. He began by saying he is new to the community and very happy to be here. He commended the Council and Town employees for the amazing job they do. The event will be held Wednesday, June 22nd on upper street. It will be called L&L Furniture Presents Downtown Worship and is scheduled from 5:30-8:45 PM. Mr. Shepherd is in the process of securing insurance for the event as well as DOT approval. There will be inflatables, face painting, food trucks, live music, and several guest speakers from the community. Chief Summerlin has agreed to help with security and traffic control during the event. They plan to close the road from Crystal Street to Walnut Avenue. It was the consensus of the Council to give their blessing for this event. They then thanked Mr. Shepherd for his hard work on this event and as the owner of a business in town.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Crystal Young presented the proposed 2022-2023 budget. Said proposed budget is incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. She advised the county has not yet set their new property tax rate. She asked the Council for clarification on the proposed increase for the position of Police Chief. This will be decided by the next Council meeting. It was the consensus of the Council to issue a purchase order for the purchase of a new truck for the Parks and Recreation Department. She also clarified that the property purchased in town by AMY Wellness is not automatically tax exempt. This status has to be applied for.

ACTION AGENDA

Darlene Butler shared the Planning and Zoning Board's recommendation on the adoption of amendments to the plan components of the 2009 Town of Spruce Pine Land Use Plan. Said amendments are incorporated by reference and attached to these minutes. She explained to the Council that the amended plan will meet the state requirements. HCCOG will complete the new Land Use Plan next year. A public hearing has been advertised to be held on June 13th, 2022.

Mayor Darla Harding recused herself from the discussion of the Phillips/ Yancey Timber Resources rezoning request due to conflict of interest and turned the floor over to Mayor Pro Tem Larry McKinney. Town Attorney Chad Donahoo explained to the Council the criteria which they should base their decision upon as reflected in N.C.G.S. 160D-605 (b). Larry asked if there was any further discussion on the matter. Jackie Rensink read aloud a letter received by the town clerk from Brynne and Janie Duncan in opposition of the rezoning request. Council member Rocky Buchanan moved to reject the rezoning request due to concerns raised by adjoining property owners. Jackie Rensink seconded the motion. The Council voted 3-1 to reject the proposed rezoning request. Council member James Acuff voted against the motion.

PUBLIC COMMENT- none

TOWN MANAGER

- ✓ Darlene addressed the skatepark situation. She updated the Council on where we are in the process. Legal counsel is working on a Memorandum of Understanding. There continues to be uncertainty about the location of the skatepark due to flood plain issues. Darlene mentioned to Kelly Georgeou that she and Crystal met with Mitchell County DOI and Emergency Management and was informed because of the flood plain the surface of the skatepark may have to be raised seven feet. A survey will be needed to confirm. Darlene also mentioned the possibility of the back tennis court at Brad Ragan Park as a potential location.
- ✓ Tentative Pool schedule is Wednesday thru Saturday open 11:00 am – 5:00 pm. Swimming lessons to be held on Tuesday mornings. And pool rentals as requested on Friday or Saturday evenings. Admission will be \$5.00 and swim lessons will be \$40.00 for a session of four classes. The pool can be reserved for 1-2 hours for \$100 per hour. Jackie Rensink asked if water aerobics would be offered. Darlene said it will not be offered this year due to staffing issues.
- ✓ Libby and Darlene will be attending the first class in Boone for the Rural Community Capacity Building grant.
- ✓ The Transportation Improvement Program did not fund either of the projects for Spruce Pine, which were Highway 19E to Mullin Hill and Highway 226S to BRP.
- ✓ Darlene reminded the Council of the stakeholders meeting with Main Street to be held on June 2nd. This is intended to be a positive brainstorming meeting.
- ✓ Paving of Locust Street is set to begin mid-June.

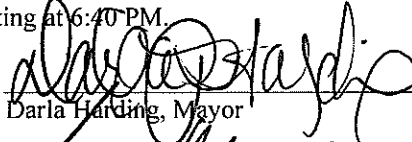
MAYOR/COUNCIL REQUESTS / COMMENTS

- ✓ Mayor Harding mentioned the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes event coming up.
- ✓ Billy Summerlin gave an update on his most recent trash pickup day.


ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Harding moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 PM.

Shelley Buchanan, Town Clerk



Darla Harding, Mayor



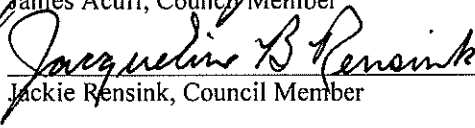
Larry McKinney, Mayor Pro Tem



Rocky Buchanan, Council Member



James Acuff, Council Member



Jackie Rensink, Council Member