

The Rural Retreat Town Council held a regular meeting on March 13, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. in the Rural Retreat Town Hall Council Chambers.

PRESENT RURAL RETREAT TOWN COUNCIL MEMBERS

Vice-Mayor A. Keith Crigger; Ed Schaack; J. Scott Mecimore; Dale Yontz; Jerrell Hall; Peggy Hash

ABSENT

Mayor Timothy Litz

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Michael James, Town Manager; Lori Guynn, Clerk/Treasurer; Scott Mitchell, Police Chief

ADMINISTRATION ABSENT

NONE

OTHERS PRESENT

JoAnn Allen; William Clark; B. Leon Roark; Joyce Roark; Sean Viars; Cheryl Viars; Brian Martin – Mount Rogers Planning District Commission; Theresa McGhee

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Vice-Mayor Crigger called the meeting to order and determined a quorum was present.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Rev. Ed Schaack.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Vice-Mayor Crigger.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Councilmember Yontz, seconded by Councilmember Hall to approve the minutes of the February 28, 2012 regular meeting. The motion passed by a vote of five (5) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Schaack, Yontz; zero (0) against; one abstention: Mecimore due to his absence from the meeting.

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CITIZEN'S TIME

Vice-Mayor Crigger introduced Brian Martin with the Mount Rogers Planning District Commission. Mrs. Guynn apologized for listing Mr. Martin's name incorrectly on the agenda. Mr. Martin then addressed the Council and explained he has been associated with the town through various facets for many years. He continued by explaining the town submitted a planning grant application to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) a decade ago to revitalize the downtown area with little results. Mr. Martin stated he is relaying to the DHCD that the town is now in a new situation primarily due to the change in property ownership and Councilmember's. A letter will be submitted to Richmond asking for consideration. Vice-Mayor Crigger commented he was not serving on the Council at the time but there seemed to be a lot of questions due to misinformed information. Mr. Martin explained public meetings are required and will be held to ensure the community knows what is happening. Mr. James commented he hoped this will give the town the opportunity to have a fresh start and to better address the issues that created challenges previously. He added the letter will show the town is interested in revitalizing the downtown area because the need and desire is still there. Mr. James asked the Council to approve Mr. Martin sending a letter to the DHCD. Councilmember Schaack made a motion to approve sending a letter of interest on behalf of the town to the Department of Housing and Community Development. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Yontz. Councilmember Schaack commented one of the reasons this failed previously was because there was a lack of communication with the citizens. Mr. Martin stated he will do all he can to get the word out but he would also rely on the Council and staff to assist because word of mouth is more powerful than anything. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked Mr. James if this process would involve the planning commission. Mr. James responded they will be involved when the process gets to that point. Councilmember Hash commented she was serving on the planning commission at the time and there had been a lot of hard work put into it and it failed but the public has to understand in order for it to work. Mr. Martin stated small towns are an asset and he explained he had taken Mr. James on a tour of Saltville to see their downtown improvements. There being no further discussion the motion passed by a vote six (6) for: Crigger, Hall, Hash, Mecimore, Schaack, Yontz; zero (0) against Mr. Martin thanked the Council for their time.

JoAnn Allen addressed the Council and stated she loves the Rural Retreat community. She introduced William Clark and Leon and Joyce Roark and explained she and Mr. Clark have been visiting the area for two years and have decided they would like to retire here. Ms. Allen stated she is trying to find property suitable for retirees and she had found a lot on Baumgardner Avenue. She further explained she has been talking with Mr. James and has found a doublewide she would like to purchase but due to restrictions with the lot she will probably not be able to have it. She asked if there was anything she could do to appeal the restrictions in order to place the home on the lot she found. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked Mr. James if he was aware of the lot Ms. Allen was referring to. Mr. James stated the lot is in an R-1 zoning district which the home she is referring to is not allowed in the district. He added they had discussed a modular unit but as they work through the process the request will need to be taken to the planning commission prior to the council's consideration. Mr. James told Ms. Allen he will work with her through the

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process. He added a variance would be required in an R-1 district. Vice-Mayor Crigger explained to Ms. Allen the R-1 district does not allow on frame structures but the R-2 area does. He added the R-1 area allows off frame structures only. He further explained that Mr. James will guide her through the process to go before the planning commission to ask for a variance in an R-1 district. By no means does the town want to prevent anyone from having a home but the zoning guidelines are meant to protect property owners, Vice-Mayor Crigger commented. Vice-Mayor Crigger and Mr. James thanked Ms. Allen for her time.

CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. James read a thank you card from the Rural Retreat Community Center Board of Directors for the town's continued financial support. He also read a thank you card from Brenda Atwell in appreciation of the flowers sent to her during the loss of her husband. Mrs. Atwell serves on the planning commission.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Mitchell explained his monthly activity report for the month of February. He noted the amount of activity was low due to medical leave he had taken. Chief Mitchell informed the Council that he, Fire Chief Dave Evans and Mr. James had discussed testing the community warning system on April 2nd at 6:00 p.m. He noted he and Chief Evans will be contacting the media outlets to inform citizens of the test.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

NONE

NEW BUSINESS

NONE

COMMITTEE REPORTS

HERITAGE DAYS – Chairman Yontz reported he and Mr. James are working on the sponsorship letters for the festival and the main act for Sunday has been secured.

FINANCE & APPROPRIATIONS – Chairman Crigger deferred the committee report to Mr. James.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The following items were discussed and/or acted upon:

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OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT DIVISION IV (WATER PLANT ELECTRICAL IMPROVEMENTS) – Sun Contracting & Developers, LLC has resubmitted the shop drawings to Anderson & Associates. We are anticipating their final approval soon.

OUT-OF-TOWN WATER PROJECT DIVISION V (CHINQUAPIN AVENUE & WEST LEE HIGHWAY) – Wells Construction, Inc. is nearing completion of the project. Town staff is preparing to make the reconnections in the coming weeks. Mr. James complimented the citizens for being patient during construction and noted he had not received any citizen complaints.

IN-TOWN WATER PROJECT – CrossPointe Contractors, Inc. has substantially completed the main water line work. Our pressure and water quality tests have been approved by VDH. They are looking to set meters and complete reconnects throughout the following weeks.

BLEVINS DUPLEX DRAINAGE ISSUE – The sub-contractor is looking to complete this change order soon. Mr. James reported the new pipe has been installed and the grass seed has been sown. Mr. Blevins is pleased with the project, Mr. James added.

TEA-21 PHASE VII SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - This past week VDOT returned the final plans with comments. They still have concerns over the drainage on Evergreen Avenue. Town staff and Anderson & Associates are working with VDOT on ways to allow for sidewalks to be placed on Evergreen Avenue by installing more drainage structure. Mr. James reported he is working with the homeowners to ensure their properties do not flood following construction. Councilmember Mecimore asked Mr. James what will happen with the town's sidewalk projects when the TEA money ends. Mr. James stated he has spoken to Kelly Dunn with Anderson & Associates and they have discussed continuing with the project as long as we continue to receive funding. He explained he would like to see more sidewalks built toward the town hall which would help with downtown improvements. Mr. James also addressed purchasing sidewalk cleaning equipment. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated the Council had previously been asked for ideas for areas to build sidewalks. He encouraged the Council to give Mr. James feedback for areas they would like to see sidewalks.

WYTHE COUNTY/RURAL RETREAT WATER SYSTEM INTERCONNECTION – We are continuing to work with county administration on this project. After meeting with the county administrator, Mr. James stated there have been some recent adjustments to the scope of the project. There will no longer be a pump station on Radio Drive and the plans no longer call for two points of interconnection. One interconnection will be made on Radio Drive which will be a standard master meter because there are issues with the ability to serve Rural Retreat with one interconnection. Mr. James stated his opinion was an agreement for the interconnection was not needed if Wythe County will not be serving Rural Retreat. Vice-Mayor Crigger asked what the reasoning was for the changes. Mr. James responded he was told the lack of funds for not building the pump station. He added only the town's low level areas could be served without a pump station.

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WYTHE COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION / RURAL RETREAT LAKE – Gary Cody has requested to make a presentation to council at our next scheduled meeting regarding Rural Retreat Lake improvement projects. Mr. James explained he told Mr. Cody he could address the Council and ask for feedback or assistance on the proposed improvements.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN – Mr. James explained he is working to establish an Emergency Operations Plan for Rural Retreat. He is currently working with Ikey Davidson, Wythe County Emergency Services Coordinator to resolve operation questions. Mr. James addressed the recent severe weather cells approaching Rural Retreat and explained there were too many questions being asked and a lot of calling around. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated he was onsite last year when Rural Retreat experienced the weather cells passing over and we were told to not worry about it because Wythe County had a plan. He also concurred with Mr. James on developing a plan. Vice-Mayor Crigger stated computer and television access at the firehouse was discussed to monitor weather reports. Mr. James explained Wythe County is concerned with Rural Retreat making a solo decision. He further added Rural Retreat can not make the decision alone to open a shelter because if we do then the town will incur the financial burden of operating it. Councilmember Hash asked who makes the decision to open the school as a shelter. Mr. James responded the Emergency Operations Center when it opens because of the cost to staff and supply the shelter. Vice-Mayor Crigger commented the biggest issue in our area is citizens are seeking shelter for safety until the storm is over. Councilmember Hash explained the American Red Cross has been granted permission to store items and equipment in the upstairs portion of the rescue squad building for emergency purposes. Mr. James stated he will need to meet with Dave Evans, Fire Chief and Jay Hawkins, Rural Retreat Volunteer Emergency Services Director to develop a plan. He also stated Wythe County is looking at a reverse 911 system as an additional avenue to reach citizens.

2012/2013 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET – Mr. James explained he and Mrs. Guynn have reviewed the budgets for the past two years and comparing those with our projections. He stated he will be preparing for a budget presentation at the last meeting of May.

WATER ACCOUNTABILITY – Water accountability increased for January. Mr. James attributed the increase to the water projects which require testing of the new lines. He noted accountability is improving but will be much better upon completion of the projects.

WYTHE COUNTY HISTORICAL SURVEY – Representatives from Hanbury Preservation Consulting will be conducting a public meeting at the town hall on March 20th at 7:00 p.m. Mary Ruffin Hanbury will present the study and provide background information on how the surveys assist communities.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN & SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE REVISIONS – The planning commission met last night to discuss these documents. We hope to provide the commission's recommendations to council in the near future. Mr. James explained the Council will need to readopt the Comprehensive Plan upon updating. He further explained he is revising the Subdivision Ordinance to include the requirements for sidewalks and street lighting. This

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document will also require adoption by the Council. Councilmember Mecimore stated the revision date will need to be added to the Comprehensive Plan.

TREASURER’S REPORT

The bills for March 13, 2012 were read and approved.

TALK OF THE TOWN

Chief Mitchell is to attend the *Talk of the Town* radio program at the WYVE/WXBX radio station on Wednesday morning.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional business for discussion, the meeting was adjourned upon a motion by Councilmember Yontz. The motion as duly seconded and approved unanimously.

Mayor

Clerk