TOWN OF TRYON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TRYON TOWN HALL – MCCOWN MEETING ROOM
AUGUST 15, 2023 7:00 PM

Present: Mayor J. Alan Peoples Mayor Pro Tem Chrelle Booker

Commissioners: Bill Crowell Absent: Commissioners Crys Armbrust & Bill Ingham

Staff Present: Jim Fatland, Town Manager
Tim Daniels, Planning Director
Greg McCool, Public Works Director
William Morgan, Town Attorney
Susan Bell, Town Clerk
Randall Hodge, Police Chief
Josh Walton, Fire Chief

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Peoples called the meeting to order and asked for a moment of silence. Mayor Pro Tem Booker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Mayor Peoples asked for additions, deletions or corrections. Being none, he entertained a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA ADOPTION

Mayor Peoples asked for additions, deletions or corrections. He added 5m. An Ordinance directing the Housing Inspector to remove or demolish the dwelling herein described as unfit for human habitation T8-I5 (144 Cleveland Road). Being no further additions, he entertained a motion to adopt the consent agenda that included the Board minutes, Financial Report for June and July, tax reports, annual tax settlement, appointment of tax collector for FY23-24, FY23 Budget amendment no. 9, Response to notice of violations sewer system overflows, the grant status report and the Ordinance claiming 144 Cleveland Road is unfit for human habitation. Also included for informational purposes only are the Tourism Board, Harmon Field Board, Planning Board and Parks Committee minutes. Mayor Pro Tem Booker so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

APPOINTMENT(S) TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Town Clerk Bell reported there is an opening on the Historic Preservation Commission. Sally Roden has made application. Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to appoint Sally Roden to the Historic Preservation Commission. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

APPOINTMENT(S) TO PLANNING BOARD

Planning Director reported there is an opening on the Board of Planning and Adjustment. Allan Casavant has made application. Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to appoint Allan Casavant to the Board of Planning and Adjustment. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

APPOINTMENT(S) TO RAIL-TO-TRAIL PLANNING COMMITTEE

Town Clerk Bell reported there is openings on the Rail-to-Trail Planning Committee. Anne Day and Denny Crowe have both made application. Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to appoint both Anne Day and Denny Crowe to the Rail-to-Trail Committee. Mayor Pro Tem Booker so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF TRYON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Town Clerk Bell reported Maria Mason-Freeman has been the Chairman of TTDA for several years. The Tourism Authority elected her to be chairman for 2023-2024 and this board needs to approve. Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to approve Maria Mason-Freeman as Chairman of TTDA for 2023-2024. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSIDERATION OF SALE OF 134 CLEVELAND ROAD

Town Manager Fatland reported this item should be to review/approve consideration of resolution for purchase of 134 Cleveland Road. Dr. Carson had concerns about the advertisement of property for sale. He requested a for sale sign be placed on property the town is trying to sell. Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to reject the offer and to re-advertise after signs were placed on the property. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

ACCEPTANCE OF FEMA GRANT FOR TRYON FIRE DEPARTMENT

Town Manager Fatland reported the Fire Department has been awarded a FEMA Grant in the amount of $252,350.47 and requires a local match of $12,618 or 5%, along with payment to the grant writer ($5074). Fire Chief Walton reported air packs have a timed shelf life and their air pillows were purchased in the early 90's. He has put in to replace air packs along with the cascade system to fill the bottles. They are very blessed that they are receiving both. Most of the time you get one or the other. Manager Fatland's recommendation is to accept the FEMA Grant Award in the amount of $252,350.47 and acknowledge the local match.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to accept the FEMA Grant, approve payment for the grant writer in the amount of $5,047 and to authorize a budget amendment for $270,016, including the local share. Mayor Pro Tem Booker made a motion to accept the grant as stated. The motion carried unanimously.

FY24 BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 1

Town Manager Fatland reported Budget Amendment No. 1 includes transfer to Harmon Field for $68,650 for paving, Tim's grant for EV charging station for $30,000 or so with the match being shared by TDDA, TTDA and the Town. He is also recognizing the Fire Department grant for $270,0016 and the donation of $10,000 from Mayor for Harriet's Garden in the Culture & Recreation Fund. Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adopt Budget Amendment No. 1. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

LGC ON-SITE VISIT FOR UNIT ASSISTANCE AND TOWN OF TRYON RESPONSE

Town Manager Fatland updated the Board on the LGC visit. A couple of weeks ago he, Mayor, Billing Clerk and Town Clerk met with the staff from the LGC. They are pleased with the strides we are making. We do have a small staff when it comes to internal controls. The LGC understands that, but one of the things, a major thing that needs to be addressed is the Town Clerk not only is the Town Clerk, she handles personnel matters, human resources, payroll, accounts payable and there is no backup function here at Town Hall. His recommendation is that we have come to far as an organization without having another person hired for backup. He wasn't sure if we could make it with the current budget, but we have moved two million dollars into the Capital Trust Fund, which is paying five percent interest and looking to see where we can cut money. He doesn't see how we can move forward without cross training. Also, when he decides to move on and you are looking for a new manager, you need the organization to be stable in finance and accounting, to make it so the new manager will be a lot more solid. He doesn't think it is fair to the town board and employees, not to have cross training. We have to go to the LGC to get approval to purchase the two new police cars, because we are on the Unit Assistance watch list. They will ask what strides have you made with internal controls. If we respond that we have hired another person, it will help make our case better. The manager is supposed to go through six hours of training. He has just attended the finance officers conference and received eighteen hours of continuing ed credits. If you approve this, they will count it for his six hours of training. The second thing is to approve hiring an additional person for cross training in accounts payable and payroll. This will take pressure off of the town board. Mayor Pro Tem Booker reported cross training helps. Commissioner Crowell agreed.

Mayor Peoples ask for a motion to support this. Mayor Pro Tem Booker made a motion to approve hours to count for manager's training and to support the new hire for cross training. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Peoples reported the state has changed. We have been through more scrutinization that when we were $1.6 million in the red twenty years ago. The LGC staff are looking at us, when other towns are doing the same or worse and just haven't been caught. Fatland responded it's not fair to Susan or the other employees. Susan has been dedicated to schedule time off between payrolls. This will help with the police car loan for the LGC to see that we are making great strides here.

DOWNTOWN ENTRANCE SIGN "WELCOME TO HISTORIC TRYON AND ARTS DISTRICT"

Town Manager Fatland reported this item was brought up before he came. Planning Director Daniels reported it is the wrought iron sign above Caribass Studio. It's an opportunity to have a "Welcome to Historic Tryon" sign. Even though it is a non-conforming sign, it is a town approved sign and can stay where it is. He put it on the agenda for discussion. Mayor Peoples has always approved of the sign. That area is getting more traffic now, because of the studio, the coffee shop and furniture store. Fatland reported the wording has to represent the entire town. He and Tim discussed "Historic Tryon and Arts District" and who should pay for it. He feels the town should pay for it. He asked if the board would like to see a rendition of the sign. The board responded yes. Fatland will have Tim bring something back to the next meeting.

RESTORATION OF "MORRIS"

Town Manager Fatland reported that he had talked with TACS about Morris. Their response was to take him to a metal shop. What are your thoughts? He asked if there is a budget to fix it. Mayor Peoples responded we need to get it fixed. Mayor Pro Tem Booker suggested checking with Julia Calhoun.

TDDA UPDATE

TDDA Director Newman reported they are working on their membership drive. Membership is open to anyone who cares about Tryon. Highlights: TDDA is restarting the facade grant, which is up to $2,000 matching grant. Also, a mini grant program for beautification up to $500 matching funds for Central Business and General Business Districts. She has forms on their website to apply. Beerfest is going well. She is requesting use of Tryon Depot Plaza for November 4th for Beerfest. Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to approve use of Tryon Depot Plaza for November 4th. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously. Newman reported tickets are going quickly. TTDA has elected a new slate of officers. Kevin Parker has been added as their secretary. Wanda May is the treasurer and Nick is the Vice-President and Ian Griggs as President. August, 4th Friday is the Dog Mayor event. September, 4th Friday is in conjunction with Gardening for Life plant sale from 4-7, non-invasive plants. April 20 will be an antique festival. As well as a chili cook off in conjunction with our first responders on the January, 4th Friday event. They are going to start holding monthly networking meetings on the 22nd. Mr. Fatland has agreed to be the presenter.

MINIMUM HOUSING/PLANNING UPDATE

Planning Director Daniels reported:

1. 144 Cleveland Road you just adopted the ordinance to clear the parcel. He has someone lined up for September 6, weather permitting.
2. 51 Shepherd Street and 161 Peake Street the finding of fact orders have been sent out. He will have the ordinance if needed at the October 17 meeting. The person clearing Cleveland is reserving dates for these two properties.

EV Chargers are installed and should be up and running by the weekend. He will get parking spaces lined off for them. Last week, the part-time staff member started, by driving around the lake and other parts of the town. He will start assisting him with those areas. Mayor Pro Tem Booker asked where were the EV Chargers. Daniels reported at the Depot parking lot.

SET DATE FOR TOWN BOARD STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION SEPTEMBER 15, 2023

Mayor Peoples reported the board will hold a strategic planning session on September 15, 2023 from 8-2. All agreed on the date.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Fatland reported he attended the Lake Lanier Civic Association meeting. Some of the members reported there had been buoys put out in the lake and he was advised to take this to the Planning Board. Daniels advised it will be on the next agenda. Commissioner Crowell felt the town couldn't regulate anything on the lake. Fatland feels it is a step in the right direction to working with the Lake Lanier Association.

COUCIL/MAYOR REPORT

Commissioner Crowell thanked our staff for all the work going on. He thanked the citizens for being here tonight. He thanked Ms. Day for volunteering to be on the Rails-to-Trails planning committee.

Mayor Pro Tem Booker asked about Lockhart Road where it meets School Street, there is no stop sign there. MacDonald Wingo asked her about a time to play on September 10. Fire Chief Walton suggested 2:00 or 4:00, just let them know. She has some questions about Lyle Street, but wanted to talk to the attorney first. Seen several people go up the one-way street at Brock's Cleaners and on McCown Street. She thanked everyone for coming out tonight. She thanked the employees and Mr. Fatland for doing a wonderful job.

Mayor Peoples thanked everyone for coming out tonight. The school is building houses for needy people, could we find out details on them. The town has property to build on. He came to Tryon and he feels he is in Heaven.

CITIZEN COMMENTS & RESPONSES

Allan Casavant addressed the council concerning his property on Depot Street. He has rented the space to a restaurant owner that would like to park their food truck there and sell food out of it until they get the space remodeled. It is a permanent, temporary for six to twelve months. Mayor Pro Tem Booker would like to visit the property before voting on anything. Commissioner Crowell suggested maybe giving them thirty days and vote on it next month. Daniels reported they can park in the Depot parking lot. Mayor Peoples responded we can put the food truck on the 15th, a special meeting, if needed. Daniels reported they can park in the Depot Parking Lot and beside the Fire Department as the ordinance stands now. Mayor Peoples responded they need to come up with a number of days they want to be there and present it to Daniels. Once that time is up, if it needs to be extended, then you go back to Daniels and bring it before us if needed.

Mr. Casavant also addressed council concerning the new parking plan that he wants to do at his new building located at 75 S. Trade Street. In January, he would like to start leasing his public bathrooms at a cost of $750 a month to the Town. He has presented his parking plans to the Planning Board.

Anne Day addressed council concerning the fence on New Market. It is in dire need of repairs. She also thanked the Sanitation department for picking up the trash from where the bears had gotten in it. They picked every bit of it.

Joyce Kimpton addressed council concerning her water bill. She doesn't understand why it is fluctuating.

Coretha Littlejohn asked about the kudzu on Markham & Cleveland Road. It is growing across the road. Mayor Pro Tem Booker responded the tractor couldn't reach that high. Manager Fatland reported the Village of Flat Rock budgets $7,000 each year to kill kudzu on private property. He will discuss at the September 15th meeting.

CLOSED SESSION: POTENTIAL LITIGATION

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to enter into closed session to discuss potential litigation pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5). Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to go out of closed session. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURN

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem Booker so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

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J. Alan Peoples, Mayor

Attest:

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Susan B. Bell, Town Clerk