

**MINUTES OF THE STRASBURG TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION HELD ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2017 AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE STRASBURG TOWN HALL.**

PRESENT: Mayor Orndorff and Vice Mayor Terndrup and Council Members Bishop, Hall, Le Vine, Maddox, Newman, Plitt, and Vena. Absent:

STAFF PRESENT: Town Manager Spitzer, Economic Development and Marketing Manager Bixler, Planning & Zoning Administrator Pearson, and Clerk of Council Keller.

**Mayor Orndorff** called the Work Session to order and reviewed the agenda.

**Action Items:**

***1. Approval of Minutes, January 3, 2017 Council Work Session***

**The minutes of the January 17, 2017 Council Work Session were approved as presented.**

**Discussion Items:**

***1. Mikula-Harris Presentation***

**ED&M Manager Bixler** said there was \$30,000 in the CDBG grant to be used for branding. She explained what branding would entail. She said thirty-one proposals were received with five firms being interviewed and Mikula-Harris being chosen.

**Council Member Plitt** said part of what was discussed at the committee level was what actually a brand is. A brand is a gut feeling a person gets about a product or destination. As examples she compared the logo of Virginia Tech and UVA. We are trying to come up with a brand that covers not just a logo, but a slogan, an image, colors, or something that makes you think Strasburg.

**ED&M Manager Bixler** introduced **David Mikula** who gave a presentation on how he would be forming Strasburg's brand. **Mr. Mikula** thanked the review team for the work they did in reviewing all the applicants. He gave a PowerPoint presentation on the process of how they will develop the brand of Strasburg. He believes a realistic timeframe would be about five to six months to develop a brand.

**Council Member Le Vine** said it there isn't a clear idea of what Strasburg is. He thinks we will get a distorted view if we only do online surveys (surveys were discussed in the PowerPoint). He asked how information will be gotten and handled in a town that is struggling with its own identity. **Mr. Mikula** said he will try to hear from as many as possible and if a face-to-face meeting is needed, he will do it. **Council Member Le Vine** said many won't come to a meeting either. He added that people might not see our great strength because it has become so natural or ordinary. **Mr. Mikula** said when you add together the surveys, visitors, and his team, he hopes you will get the real picture. **Council Member Le Vine** said he thinks we need to separate ourselves from the surrounding area so that people want to come here.

**Council Member Hall** thinks you might get a better picture of how people feel about the place if you talk to the people who moved here and not those who have always been here. There is a reason people decided to come here as opposed to those who have just always been here and never left.

**Lana Le Vine** asked what the target number is for a sample. **Mr. Mikula** said he would like to get several hundred responses.

**Council Member Vena** asked if there is a brand of any community in the Shenandoah Valley that we might not recognize from the brand. **Mr. Mikula** said this will be reviewed in Phase I.

**Council Member Hall** said the closest thing we had to branding was when **Mr. Bernstein** tried to make us the “Antique Capital of Virginia”. **Mayor Orndorff** said there was a loose brand of the “Crossroads of History, Arts, etc.”

## **2. Deed of Land**

**Mayor Orndorff** said this would be an agreement between the Town of Strasburg and **Linda Williams** for a boundary line adjustment.

**Council Member Newman** said he would recuse himself from a vote on this, but not on the discussion. He said a comment was made by **Council Member Bishop** that the only reason that Lincoln Street was not made one-way was because a council member did not live there. He listed several occasions where he did not think Council Members should have voted, but did.

**Town Manager Spitzer** said a temporary easement was gotten when the town put the waterline through at the top of Crystal Lane. We did a disturbance that went over the temporary easement. There had been discussion between former **Town Manager Rex** and **Mrs. Williams**. **Town Manager Spitzer** said he talked to **Mrs. Williams** and has offered to give her a piece of land that adjoins her property from land we already own. This is a good solution in that we would not be paying any money and it would not affect any future projects.

**Council Member Le Vine** reiterated that this would not impact in any way anything the town would ever want to do, it would not cost any money, it would not be to the town’s best interest to change it back to the original way the land was, it will not make Dickerson any wider, and **Mrs. Williams** is in agreement with this. It was said all these statements are correct.

**Council Member Newman** said the slope is very steep and makes this portion of the land as unusable. This agreement would give her usable property. Originally, the easement had no mention of the 30’ embankment. **Mrs. Williams** thinks this is fair.

A public hearing will be held at the next work session and a vote will be taken at the Council meeting.

**New Business:**

The Council Retreat will be held on the evening of March 2<sup>nd</sup>, all day March 3<sup>rd</sup>, and morning of the March 4<sup>th</sup>. A small activity will be held on Thursday evening, along with a dinner. Friday will be the strategic planning and visioning of the town.

**Council Member Hall** said he votes on everything in town and most things could be considered a conflict because of family and friends he has in town. **Mayor Orndorff** said there might be a “perceived conflict”, but **Town Attorney Miller** and the Commonwealth of Virginia has spelled out what a legal conflict of interest. He doesn’t think anyone has knowingly voted illegally.

**Council Member Le Vine** said it can be legally correct, but the perception can be more important.

Being no further business, the work session adjourned at 7:45 p.m.