MINUTES OF THE STRASBURG TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION HELD ON MONDAY, DECEMBER 16th, 2019, at 7 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE STRASBURG TOWN HALL.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Orndorff, Vice Mayor Terndrup and Council Members Bishop, Cherrix, Massoud, Nicholson, Plitt, Reynolds and Vena.

STAFF PRESENT: Town Manager Pearson, Planning and Zoning Administrator Pambid, Director of Finance Fletcher, and Clerk of Council Keller.

Citizen comments on non-agenda items:

Action Item:

1.) Approval of Minutes
The minutes of the December 2nd, 2019 work session were approved as presented with one grammatical correction and Council Member Massoud asking that his statement said during the meeting that he accepted what Mr. Pearson said about the caverns during the discussion on Summit Crossing.

Presentations:
James Kelly, representing Robinson, Farmer, and Cox, gave a presentation on the FY2019 audit. Questions were asked by the Council on certain items, with most of the questions dealing with water and sewer funds.
Mr. Kelly said both the auditing firm and town staff are working hard to see if the town can become accredited for their audit.

Discussion Items:

1. Sign Ordinance Amendments
Description: Amendments to multiple provisions of UDO Section 4.19 (Sign Ordinance). Key changes include the following: remove content-based regulations per U.S. Supreme Court case Reed vs. Gilbert (2016); improve clarity; remove duplicates and obsolete language; amend historic signage regulations, including allowing administrative approval under certain circumstances; allow electronic message boards for certain uses such as drive-through restaurants.

It was noted that the staff report had been reviewed during the public hearing held at the last meeting. P&Z Administrator Pambid said work has been done to try to make the ordinance more “business friendly”. The amendments were sent out in “red line”. Much assistance was given by the Berkley Group.

Vice Mayor Terndrup said this has been on the Ordinance Committee agenda for about 10 years. The members of this Council have spent at least two full meetings on this topic. With signs, a priority is to get people where they want to go. The sign ordinance is trying to find a balance in how much control the government should have on the signs. The Supreme Court case gave regulations on content.

Council Member Massoud said he is glad the political signage portion has been removed. He then questioned a neighbor who has some questionable signage on Queen Street. He asked how this was handled in this. Town Manager Pearson said he doesn’t want to discuss this particular signage in a public setting. Content cannot be regulated. Council Member Bishop said there are sizes that must be adhered to, and Town Manager Pearson said aesthetics cannot be looked at. Council Member Cherrix asked how this can be enforced. You cannot ask people to take down
a sign due to content, but other reasons could cause the sign to be taken down. The appeals process was discussed, as well as exempt and non-exempt signs were discussed.

Electronic signs were questioned. The scrolling was talked about and how this is enforced. Billboard signs were also discussed, and it was noted that the billboard signs on Route 11 are permitted through VDOT.

Update Item:

1. Streetscape and Gateway Trail Projects
Town Manager Pearson said the streetscape is primarily complete except for the crosswalks; the contractor is waiting on the weather to put these down. The Gateway Trail has run into a snag. There is an existing storm water drain problem just outside of the scope of the project and we are working with VDOT on this, and it is proving to be difficult. They are trying to find a paver to work on the paving before the asphalt plants close.

Old and unfinished business:
- Second Amendment Emails
Mayor Orndorff said the emails have all been collected and are part of the packet, if people want to see these.

Council Member Cherrix asked if we could discuss going paperless. Mayor Orndorff said this has been discussed previously, and it was voted down. This could be discussed during the budget process or at a Finance and Personnel Committee meeting.
Council Member Bishop would like to have a discussion on reducing the number on Council.
Mayor Orndorff said this, too, had previously been discussed and voted down.

Vice Mayor Terndrup read a letter from Carlos who has asked for the legalization of cannabis.
Town Manager Pearson said he is not sure if the state would even allow us to do this. This will be referred to Town Attorney Miller and Chief Sager.

New Business:

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.