

**MINUTES OF THE STRASBURG TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION HELD ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2023 AT 7 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS OF THE STRASBURG TOWN HALL.**

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Boies, and Council Members Carter, Hooser, Kimmons, Lowder, Monahan, Stover, and Woodson. **Absent:** Vice Mayor Reynolds.

**Call to Order** –*Mayor Brandy Boies*

**Introduction and Recognition of Visitors and Guests:**

**Mayor Boies** recognized **Tim Taylor**, District 6 Board of Supervisor.

**Citizen Comments on non-agenda items:**

**Mayor Boies** announced that former **Council Member Redmon** passed away. A moment of silence was held in his memory.

**Discussion Items/Updates:**

**1.) Project Updates**

- a. **Queen Street Sewer Line Rehab Project:** **Eric Sharrard**, project manager for Thrasher, said he took over the project in 2022 and is trying to move it forward.

This is a sewer line replacement project which is to address inflow and infiltration. Many places have deteriorated pipes that allow infiltration to enter the sewer system. This project is proposed to be funded by USDA. There is a check list of things that need to be done before going to bid. It has progressed to the point now that the funding agent can fund it. The cost is \$1.5 million, and the numbers have not changed since 2022. They tried to get funds through ARPA, but the project did not qualify. They still need to get easements obtained and recorded. One change made was with an alignment adjustment with a retaining wall. He expects to go out to bid in the next few months. They have a nine-month timeframe, but he expects it to go quicker than that.

Maps were shown of the project area.

- b. **115 W. King Street:** **Town Manager Coggsdale** said Dewberry has been tasked with doing a needs assessment study. Once this is complete, the engineer will look to see how the “needs” fit the building. **Town Manager Coggsdale** will try to have a representative from Dewberry come to the December work session.
- c. **Skatepark:** **P&Z Administrator Otis** said this is a follow-up from an email sent to Council. They are looking to break ground in early spring.

**Council Member Lowder** asked if the person who had offered to do the excavation work was still onboard to do this and he is.

A map was shown of the location for the park.

## 2.) Cedar Springs Commercial Update

**P&Z Administrator Otis** met with **Bob Claytor**, owner, to discuss the concerns of both sides - the ad hoc committee and the property owner. He had sent **Mr. Claytor** the concerns that Council had. He felt it was a promising conversation. **Mr. Claytor** wants to retain some of the architectural features of Vesper Hall and have this framed and hung in the convenience store. **Mr. Claytor** would like some takeaways as far as the era for the Pifer House – original design, early 1800's, etc. Would we be amenable for it to be repurposed as a retail space? He is planning to have a structural engineer come in and see if it is suitable for this purpose.

The other issue is that we do not allow tall signs like Burger King has. **Mr. Claytor** would have to get a variance to allow for this. **P&Z Administrator Otis** said he knew this would be an issue. He will get back with **Mr. Claytor** after he meets with the engineer. He needs to show us what he is proposing.

**Council Member Kimmons** responded to the question of the era. He feels it should be preserved to what it is now as it shows the history of the building. All the additions tell the story of the house. **Council Member Monahan** agreed but said we need to go by the proffers. She thinks how these were written is the only legal way to go.

**Council Member Stover** said he is onboard with what **Council Members Kimmons** and **Monahan** are saying. We have been clear, but **Mr. Claytor** seems to be confused by what we are saying.

**Mayor Boies** asked if it is allowed to be functional to be that close to I-81 and **P&Z Administrator Otis** said there is enough setback.

**Mayor Boies** asked if people really use the tall signs. **Council Member Kimmons** said new gas stations, etc. are not building signs that tall. Travelers pay more attention to the blue highway signs.

**Council Member Lowder** said he likes the tall signs when he gets off at interstates.

It was noted that this would be a decision that the BZA would make.

**Council Member Carter** said he would be in favor of using the Pifer House for something. **Council Member Hooser** would not want it to be detrimental to the integrity of the building.

**Council Member Kimmons** said he would like to see the plan.

**Council Member Lowder** said he was in the Edinburg Mill, and he liked how the different eras were shown.

**Council Member Carter** would like it to be used in a respectful way.

**Council Member Kimmons** said there is a Facebook group that looks at derelict houses and the Pifer House is continually on it.

### 3.) Previews of Public Hearings Scheduled for Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Council was reminded there have been changes to the State Code as far as public hearings. At this meeting, staff will be introducing the items that there will be public hearing for at the regular meeting. **Mayor Boies** read the introduction of each.

- Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA2024-0001) requested by the Town Council for the revision of the Unified Development Ordinance Section 6.2 Regulations of a Specific Use, Short-term Rental and Bed and Breakfast Establishments.

**P&Z Administrator Otis** said this basically would repeal the wording of the ordinance.

- Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA2024-0002) requested by the Town Council for the revision of the Unified Development Ordinance Sections 2.5 Public Hearings, 2.8 Completeness Review, 2.14 Public Hearing Process Overview, 2.16 UDO Amendments, 2.20 Special Use Permit to reflect the Code of Virginia requirements for public hearings and the related applications.

**P&Z Administrator Otis** said the purpose of the zoning text amendment is to correct the concern with timing of public hearings and their respective recommendations and actions. Additionally, the language was revised to reflect the requirements of the Code of Virginia. Council had no questions or comments.

- Special Use Permit (SUP2024-0001) requested by Byron Brill, owner, for property identified as 385 East King Street, Tax Map # 025A4 A 057 for a Commercial property-related, mini- or self-storage Use within the Community Commercial District.

**P&Z Administrator Otis** said the Planning Commission recommended approval. **Mr. Brill** is proposing to convert the existing lumber and materials storage building to accommodate commercial self-storage use. Clarification was given on the location.

Public Hearings will be held on these during the November 14 meeting.

#### **Committee of the Whole (listed Areas of Focus will be discussed):**

- *Parks, Recreation, Tourism, Economic Development (Council Member Kimmons, Liaison):*

- **Strasburg Little League Board of Directors request for permission to install an additional field at the Town Park**

**Council Member Kimmons** said this request is for an additional ball field at the Town Park. The Strasburg Little League Board reached out to Staff and requested to be able to put an extra field in. Pictures were shown of where the field would be located.

**Asst. Town Manager Shipe** said **Parks and Rec Manager Varley** and her have been working with the Board. They want to turn one field into a tee-ball field and extend another for coach-pitch field.

**Council Member Lowder** asked if it would just be a new field or bleachers, etc. The Vice President of the League said it would be to cut out the field to give an extra field. The organization has been growing.

**This will be added to the consent agenda for the regular meeting.**

**Council Member Lowder** asked why there is not a concession stand for the fields at the Town Park. It was said there used to be one, but it was removed as it is hard to get people to volunteer in the stand.

**Council Member Hooser** asked if there would be any interest in donated trees for shade and League representatives said they would like to have these.

**Council Member Kimmons** asked what the timeline would be for the renewal of the agreement with Little League. **Town Manager Coggsdale** said we could have meetings on this in March and be ready to go in May.

▪ **4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration/Fireworks**

**Council Member Kimmons** said staff was approached by the person who previously did the fireworks. The town would purchase the equipment and then hire the daughter and son-in-law of the person who previously did this to put off the display.

**Mark Hensell**, who previously put on the show prior to 2023, said he drove through the town to see the show. He saw how people watched the show. The fireworks would be up in the air again, and it would allow us to have the show on the 4<sup>th</sup>. The equipment would be of professional grade. The equipment is on hand now. The contract would be for six years, the town will have the experience, and they will be state certified. This is the top of the line equipment.

**Council Member Monahan** said she understood that **Mr. Hensell** retired. **Mr. Hensell** was not involved in the 2023 show. He said the company he worked for was in Texas and they closed down. Someone else was hired for the 2023 show. They are looking at pricing of \$11,700 for the equipment and lower yearly costs since the town would own the equipment.

**Council Member Kimmons** asked how old the equipment is and it is 10 years old. The equipment is in perfect shape. The equipment would be owned free and clear.

**Council Member Lowder** asked about the hiring. **Mr. Hensell** said they would basically be hired by the company we get the product from. We are asking Strasburg to pay for the state licensing. It is about \$1,000 per person but it is included in the \$11,000.

**Council Member Monahan** said what happens if they decide to walk away. **Mr. Hensell** said his daughter will be doing it.

**Mr. Hensell** explained more of the contract. All we would need from the company is the product.

**Town Manager Coggsdale** said we want something in writing to make sure we always have our show on the 4<sup>th</sup> for the next six years.

**Council is in support of the project. Consensus was to move forward with the contract.**

- **Town Run Plantings**

- ◆ Presentation by Allyson Ponn Thomas, Lord Fairfax SWCD

**Council Member Kimmons** said a group came to staff and himself for riparian work on the Town Run.

**Allyson Ponn Thomas** gave a presentation on this. Preliminary meetings have been held. She spoke of the goal of the project, and said it is referenced in the Master Park Plan. Sample photos were shown. They would hire someone to do a design plan.

Benefits of the riparian plantings were discussed. It will be for conservation and beautification. The plants would be Virginia native plants. The project timeline was shown. A cost estimate was shown with the most expensive plan costing about \$15,000.

Funding options were shown. Next steps were shown.

**Council Member Carter** asked about the \$1,500 design plan. **Ms. Ponn** said this would need to be done for either of the funding options. Once the design plan is back, it can be decided how to proceed with the planting. It only has to be done once.

**Town Manager Coggsdale** explained the funding and how much we would receive in plantings.

**Council Member Carter** asked if it would be the entire run, but it would just be from bridge to bridge, but if it is successful, we can move forward with more on the other side of the road.

**Mayor Boies** said she had concerns with the youth being able to access the “Town Run” and they will be able to. The plantings will be resilient. **Mayor Boies** said having the defined areas is the way to go. **Ms. Ponn** said signage can be incorporated.

**Council Member Monahan** said in repairing just this section, how much runoff will we save. **Ms. Ponn** said it is more than you think. We have the road, parking lot, and roof that flows into it.

**Town Manager Coggsdale** said it could be put on next week’s agenda for discussion and/or vote.

**John Witmore**, land manager at Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute, said they are getting ready to do a project much like this. By planting here, the seeds will flow downstream and spread. Youth can come and see plants and pollinators. He came up with a list of recommended plants for this area.

**Consensus to put on agenda for next week.**

- **Park Bathrooms**

**Council Member Kimmons** said in discussions with staff, we need to come up with a guideline on what we are looking for as far as the restroom at the park so we can get a more concrete idea of the cost.

A picture was shown of the current restroom. Graphics were shown of other bathrooms. We could find out the prices or we could work with the budget and decide what we could get. A project cost is not gotten until a bid is in hand. What is in the budget is an estimate. You can spend on what you want or what you have.

**Council Member Stover** said this was his major problem with last year's budget. He doesn't want to spend anywhere near \$300,000 on a bathroom. He would like to see it cut as much as possible and use local contractors. He would like to shift some of the funding to the pool. Money has to be spent on the pool. He'd like to have a nice bathroom, but just a bathroom.

**Council Member Lowder** likes what they have at 7-Bends State Park. It is accessible and utilitarian and able to handle a large crowd.

**Council Member Hooser** said Woodstock has great bathrooms. They are not single gender bathrooms. The pool should be a priority, but it is different than the bathrooms.

**Council Member Carter** asked if there is a way to bring the bathrooms up to a better state.

**Council Member Monahan** said there had been a discussion on moving the bathroom doors to the front.

**Mayor Boies** said all would agree on saving money. We need to be ADA compliant, and it should be climate controlled; **Council Member Stover** disagreed with the climate controlled aspect.

**Marisa Varley**, Parks and Rec Manager, said looking toward the future, if the Rail Trail goes through, it will go right beside the park so we would want the bathrooms open in the winter.

The end goal is to be most cost efficient but be usable for years to come.

**Council Member Stover** said we need to find ways to fund this through vending machines. The rails to trails will generate traffic and revenue.

**Council Member Hooser** said we need to do this for the citizens. Go to Woodstock and see what a real bathroom looks like. Fund it! "Don't half ass this thing."

**Mayor Boies** said we want quality. Use what we have, if at all possible. Be as vandalism free as possible. Be ADA compliant. We need viewable entrances. We need to know the cost for making it year round facility, and the path needs to be accessible.

**Council Member Woodson** asked if it would be better to move the bathrooms to be more accessible.

**Staff should research how many stalls we need. What do the experts say is needed.**

**BOS Taylor** said we need to plan for the future. We need to look at what is coming.

**Staff will run both routes – renovate or pre-fab.**

**Council Member Comments:**

The Veteran's Day Parade will be held on November 11 at 1 p.m. **Council Member Carter** will be doing the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Civil War marker will be discussed at the next Council meeting with **Drew Gruber**, the executive director of Civil War Trails, "attending" via ZOOM.

**Adjournment:**

**With no other business, the Work Session adjourned at 8:52 p.m.**