

MINUTES FOR BOARD OF ALDERMEN MEETING

MARCH 9, 2021

6:00 PM

The following elected officials were present: Mayor Coleman, Alderman Cearley, Alderman Huggins, Alderman Milton, Alderwoman Morrow, and Alderman Withers.

The following staff members were present: Maria Stroupe, Town Manager; Nolan Groce, Development Services Director; Shannon Whittle, Town Clerk; Robert Walls, Police Chief; Jonathan Newton, Finance Director; Earl Withers, III, Fire Chief; Bill Trudnak, Public Works Director; Brandon Whitener, Recreation Director; Doug Huffman, Electric Director; and Tom Hunn, Town Attorney.

Mayor Coleman called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Mayor Coleman opened with the Invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Alderman Milton requested to have a discussion concerning litter added to the agenda, to be addressed as Item 8G under New Business. Alderman Cearley motioned to approve the agenda with addition, seconded by Alderwoman Morrow, and carried unanimously.

Alderwoman Morrow motioned to approve the minutes from the February 9th Regular Meeting as well as the ones from the February 23rd Work Session. This motion was seconded by Alderman Milton and carried unanimously.

Recognition of Citizens:

At 6:04, the Mayor opened up the floor for the Recognition of Citizens. At this time, Johnny Denton presented the Public Works Department with a framed copy of the annual Public Works artwork and commended them on all of the excellent services they provide for the Town and its citizens. After this, Curtis Wilson requested to pray over the meeting.

Consent Agenda:

Item 5A: Uncollectable Accounts.

For authorization are uncollectable accounts from the months of August 2020- November 2020. These accounts have been notified of their outstanding status in writing that, if not paid within the notified timeframe, they will be forwarded to the NC Debt Setoff Program. This debt would be taken from any State Income Tax Refund they are due until the debt is satisfied. The total amount to be submitted is \$31, 539.65. The individual account listing that generates this amount is considered by State statute to be confidential information and, therefore, is not public record. Alderman Cearley motioned to authorize the uncollectable accounts totaling \$31, 539.65 to be submitted to the NC Debt Setoff Program. This motion was seconded by Alderwoman Morrow and was carried unanimously.

Public Hearings:

Item 6A: No Parking Schedule

At 6:08 pm, Alderman Withers motioned to enter into a Public Hearing, seconded by Alderman Cearley, and carried unanimously. At the February 9th Board of Aldermen Meeting, staff was directed to meet and make a recommendation on a minimum street width that would automatically qualify as “No Parking”. Following a staff meeting and discussion with the Board of Aldermen during the February 23rd Work Session, the following text amendment is proposed to §72.17 Stopping, Standing, or Parking Prohibited in Specified Places:

- On streets 18 feet or less in width. For this purpose, street includes entire right-of-way.
- Within intersection sight triangle
- In front of a fire hydrant
- Within five feet of trash cart

Attached is the proposed text amendment (see Exhibit 6A), along with a listing of Town streets that would fall under this amendment. At this time, there were no comments from the public and, at 6:12 pm, Alderwoman Morrow motioned to exit the Public Hearing. This motion was seconded by Alderman Withers and carried unanimously. Alderman Milton motioned to approve the text amendments to §72.17 Stopping, Standing, or Parking Prohibited in Specified Places as presented, seconded by Alderman Cearley, and carried unanimously.

Item 6B: TrueHomes Annexation Petition

At 6:15 pm, Alderman Withers motioned to enter into a Public Hearing, seconded by Alderman Huggins, and carried unanimously. As part of the Conditional Zoning project off of Dallas Stanley Highway, Shaun Gasparini with TrueHomes, in conjunction with the property owner, submitted an annexation petition for two pieces of unannexed contiguous property. The pieces are located on Gaston County Parcel #216369 and 301158, being 0.17 acres and 0.16 acres, respectively. During the December 8, 2020 Board of Aldermen Meeting, staff was directed to investigate the sufficiency of this request. The request was deemed sufficient and, at the February 9, 2021 Board of Aldermen meeting, a public hearing was set to hear the annexation request. See Exhibit 6B for pertinent information. At this time, there no comments from the public and, at 6:19 pm, Alderman Milton motioned to leave the Public Hearing, seconded by Alderwoman Morrow, and carried unanimously. At this time, Alderman Huggins motioned to approve the TrueHomes annexation request as presented, seconded by Alderman Milton, and carried unanimously.

Old Business:

There was no Old Business scheduled for this meeting.

New Business:

Item 8A: Credit/Debit Card Payment Service Charge

Since adding the option for customers to make payments using credit or debit cards, the Town has absorbed all service charges incurred from the card companies and has not passed along this

charge to the customer. As card usage has continued to increase, the service charge fees paid by the Town have also continued to increase. Based on the fees incurred for the first seven months of the current fiscal year, the Town is on track to pay over \$100,000 in service charge fees. This is no longer fiscally sustainable. The average cost per transaction to the Town since July 1, 2020 is \$2.12 per transaction. Staff is proposing that a service charge of \$2.00 be added to each credit/debit transaction in order to offset the fees being charged to the Town. When applied to the history of transactions since July 2020, a \$2.00 service charge would offset approximately 90% of the fees charged to the Town by the card companies. Since there has previously been no fee charged, staff also recommends implementing this fee after advertising the addition of a fee for at least two months, in order to allow time to inform customers. In addition to taking credit/debit card payments, the Town also continues to accept cash, check, and money order payments so that customers have a variety of methods to pay their bills without incurring a service charge. The Board discussed the matter and it was determined that a flat \$2.50 service rate would be preferable to cover the significant costs incurred by the Town, as well as account for coming rate increases as time passes. Alderman Huggins motioned to approve a service charge of \$2.50 per credit/debit payment transaction and to implement this change effective June 1, 2021. Alderman Withers seconded this and the motion carried unanimously.

Item 8B: Economic Development Funding Budget Amendment

In FY2013, the Economic Development Fund was established and a formula approved to contribute monies from the Electric Fund to the Economic Development Fund in a consistent manner. Attached are the funding calculations (see Exhibit 8B), based on the approved audit for FY2020. Alderman Withers motioned to approve the budget amendment as presented, seconded by Alderman Cearley, and carried unanimously.

Item 8C: Routszong Annexation Petition

An annexation petition was submitted by Rosemanry Routszong, Trustee of Marilyn S. Finger Irrevocable Trust, on January 31, 2020 to annex Gaston County Parcel #169122 and #170287. This petition was updated October 8, 2020 following a subdivision to include Parcel #303651. During their February 13, 2020 meeting, the Planning Board unanimously recommended R-5 zoning to be applied to Parcel #169122 and #170287 upon annexation into the Town limits with the consistency statement provided. During their October 15, 2020 meeting, the Planning Board unanimously recommended R-5 zoning be applied to Parcel #303651 upon annexation into the Town limits with the consistency statement provided. Please see Exhibit 8C for consistency statements, annexation map, and the application that has been deemed sufficient. The next step would be to set a public hearing for the annexation of these parcels. Alderman Cearley motioned to set a Public Hearing for April 13, 2021 to decide the annexation petition, as presented, seconded by Alderman Huggins, and carried unanimously.

Item 8D: Rhyne Annexation Petition

An annexation petition was submitted by Helen Rhyne, on October 2, 2020 to annex Gaston County Parcel #169184. This considered a satellite (non-contiguous) annexation. During their October 15, 2020 meeting, the Planning Board unanimously recommended R-5 zoning be

applied to Parcel #169184 upon annexation into the Town limits with the consistency statement provided. Please see Exhibit 8D for consistency statement, annexation map, and the application that has been deemed sufficient. The next step would be to set a public hearing for the annexation of this parcel. Alderman Milton motioned to set a public hearing for April 13, 2021 to decide the annexation petition, as presented, seconded by Alderman Cearley, and carried unanimously.

Item 8E: Summey Annexation and Rezoning

A rezoning application was received October 2, 2020 from William and Carole Summey for their property, further known as Gaston County Parcel #170286. The request is to rezone the property from R-10 Single Family Residential to R-5 Single Family Residential. Abutting property to the West is requesting rezoning from R-10 to R-5, and to the East, annexation to R-5. The Planning Board unanimously recommended approval of the rezoning petition during their October 15, 2020 meeting with the attached consistency statement (see Exhibit 8E). As previously discussed, the goal of staff has been to keep the rezoning requests at the same pace as annexations. To do this, the Board would conduct a public hearing on the same date set for the annexations. Alderwoman Morrow motioned to set a public hearing for rezoning that coincided with the annexation public hearing (April 13, 2021), as presented. This was seconded by Alderman Cearley and carried unanimously.

Item 8F: Wilson Rezoning Petition

A rezoning application was received October 2, 2020 from Elizabeth Wilson, Trustee of Ralph E. Summey Land Holdings, LLC, for the property further known as Gaston County Parcel #301017. The request is to rezone the property from R-10, Single Family Residential to R-5 Single Family Residential. The Planning Board unanimously recommended approval of the rezoning petition during their October 15, 2020 meeting with the attached consistency statement. Please see Exhibit 8f for said statement and other pertinent information. The next step would be to set a public hearing for the rezoning. Alderman Huggins motioned to set a public hearing for April 13, 2021 to decide the rezoning petition, as presented, seconded by Alderwoman Morrow, and carried unanimously.

Item 8G: Alderman Milton's Addition to the Agenda Regarding Littering

Alderman Milton wanted to discuss the ongoing problem of littering in the Town and stated that the problem only seems to have gotten worse. He would like to discuss the possibility of increasing fines, as well as starting a campaign to keep Dallas clean. Chief Walls suggested promoting the State's "Litterbug" program and Mayor Coleman requested that everyone try to come up with other good ideas. Alderman Milton also informed everyone that he will be serving on the COVID-19 Advisory Board for the Gaston County Health Department.

Manager's Report:

Ms. Stroupe informed the Board that Caromont and Atrium have deemed all municipal workers as eligible to receive a vaccine and has reserved doses for those who wish to receive it on March 10th and March 11th. Employees must register beforehand. She also let everyone know that tree

trimming crews would begin cutting down and removing the diseased ash tree in the court square tomorrow. Alderman Huggins also wanted everyone to know the 7/11 would be opening on Friday at 11:30 am.

Alderman Cearley motioned to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Alderwoman Morrow, and carried unanimously. (7:09 pm)

Rick Coleman, Mayor

Shannon Whittle, Town Clerk