Regular Council Meeting
July 20, 2020
7:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Elkton Town Council was held on July 20, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., at the Elkton Area Community Center with Mayor Joshua J. Gooden presiding.

Present: Mayor Joshua J. Gooden, Vice-Mayor Randell Snow, Council Member Margaretta Isom, Council Member Heidi Zander, Council Member Louis Heidel, Council Member Jay Dean, and Council Member Steve America.

Also Present: Town Manager Greg Lunsford, Town Attorney Nathan H. Miller, Chief of Police Dave Harris, Public Works Director Troy Shifflett, Project Director Gaither Hurt, Recreation Director Diane Johnson, Community Development Director Delores Hammer, Deputy Town Treasurer Donna Gooden, and Deputy Clerk of Council Kim Shifflett.

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

Mayor Gooden called the meeting to order and the Deputy Clerk was asked to call roll. Council Member Dean gave the Invocation. All present were asked to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Town Manager Greg Lunsford mentioned that it was nice to see familiar faces and staff back at meetings. He announced there would be no vote on renaming Stonewall Riverside Park. The council decided it was a very important issue and wanted time to discuss the matter in more detail.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Wayne Printz, 336 W. Washington, addressed the Mayor, Town Council, Town Manager, Town Attorney and Staff as follows:

"Mr. Mayor, the town is in transition and you are our chief spokesman. You are also the chief executive officer of our town according to the Charter. You should not be intimidated or hide away in difficult times. The town is in dire need of you and strong leadership. The absence of leadership, if given the opportunity to out influences, to take over our town. You are ultimately responsible for the safety, security and leadership of our community. We need you. This is the first time in many months the public has been able to speak to the council except for a public hearing on borrowed money, the $1.5 million for the Jennings House. Regarding the protest in the park, this was particularly obnoxious considering the town sanctioned a national organization to protest in our Stonewall Memorial Park which was not our graduates to completely upend our entire community. For the citizens to speak, all that needed to be done at the community center was to push a button and they could have said something electronically, the citizen was not allowed but the protesters were. The decision about the protest sincerely upset and scared our citizens to the point of leaving town to stay with families elsewhere and our businesses closed early.

Also, allowing the protestors of Stonewall Memorial Park was extremely irresponsible, because the layout was perfect for a potential ambush. This situation also risked our entire police department; while listening to slurs about them and creating a hostile state of reckless disregard for our citizens. There was terrible communication, poor research, and poor separation on exactly who was going to speak and the rules of the program. The citizens had to wait to speak, but this group got special treatment. Our community suffered intensely. The Mayor, Council member Louis Heidel, Ms. Zander supported the program but was nowhere in sight. Some of the council did not show up to the demonstration where one person said the cops were not our friends, they were no good and other unacceptable slurs. I guess it was alright to have our people's lives in danger, but not our so called leaders which made sure to stay away to protect themselves. As importantly, there were no restrictions or directives regarding COVID-19 for this protest; that fact adding to the danger. Thanks to our Chief Harris, Sgt. Campbell, police department, and all the police from different localities and our local enforcement friends monitoring the situation or there could have been total chaos. I am sincerely thankful for Chief Harris not allowing the march

thru the town. I understand there was some other people that was going to march with him that represent the town. Now, we have another intense issue regarding our heritage and our history and what is important to our town's people. Changing the name of Riverside Park. Again, Mr. Mayor did not speak for our citizens. The issue first went to the Planning Commission, for what reason no one seems to know. The sign has already been taken down by someone. The formal comment is that it was stolen."

Troy Eppard, 112 Kittywake Court, addressed the council on the issue of changing the name of Stonewall Riverside Park.

"It is my understanding that it's not just this park. There are other discussions about streets and other parks that I guess are not openly being discussed right now to change their names. I would say to you a couple of things. I hold in my hand a piece of history, if I could walk you back to October 20, 1958. I compel each and every single one of you to take a look at this article as a piece of our history. It demonstrates what made Elkton. Not you, not I, not anyone on this council, but these folks made our town. We have a history of a civil war battle that was just up at Island Ford. I don't know if any of you are familiar with that, but those of you that know me, know that I am an intense history fanatic. I collect every piece of history I can. I own a piece of history that is a registry of men from this Valley that died just up at Island Ford. To change the names of the heritage they built for us is a slap in their face. I don't think any of us that is sitting in here today would slap a veteran in his face. To change a name from a district that was built by men of character, courage and who built our community and fought and died for this very town that we sit in today; I think is a great disgrace. I offer you to see the pieces I have so that you could see the names on that registry today have ancestry far deep and wide that is still in this community. I don't feel like the vast majority of the citizens in this town are inclined to bend the need of the new factious movement in this Country; to erase history. History is what built this town. I stand here today to say, I feel like I speak for the majority of this town when I say to change a name just because of where it's at or what it addresses is ridiculous. I think it's an insult to our town. Thank you."

CONSENT AGENDA

Council Member Dean moved, seconded by Council Member Isom, and carried to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.

YEAS: M. Isom, H. Zander, L. Heidel, R. Snow, J. Day, and S. America

NAYS: None

VOTE: (6 – 0 voice vote) Motion carried

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Lunsford stated he was pleased to see the building re-open today. There were about thirty residents in the facility. The center would be open from 8A-1P for the next two weeks. An evaluation of the COVID-19 situation would take place and hopefully hours of the center would be extended. Samantha Brown would start as the EACC Administrator on July 27, 2020.

TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Town Attorney Miller continued to work on the real estate closing which should take place in the near future.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Harris read his report as presented in the packet. He mentioned the department was busy. The new firearms had arrived and he was working to schedule with an instructor. He noted that officers were now required to provide additional information for every traffic stop such as ethnicity, age, gender, warnings or summons issued information. He noted the change was part of

law enforcement reform. He thanked everyone in the community for their support of the Police Department.

PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Shifflett reported that the electrical crew had installed new poles and power lines for the construction trailer at the wastewater treatment plant. He noted that Trumbo Electric would perform the wiring upon receipt of the proper permits. Commonwealth Excavating started to install the fencing. They had issues getting documentation for materials made in the USA, which was required under the USDA loan agreement. The department completed 114 work orders. No parking signs were installed on Terrace Avenue due to cars parking on the sidewalk. The cross walk sign for Terrace Avenue had arrived. The triangle cross walk and signs had been installed. The trash truck would be sold by sealed bid on July 29, 2020.

SPECIAL PROJECTS DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mr. Hurt reported the contractors were framing the new addition onto the Jennings House. The drywall would be finished this week and painting would take place on Friday or Monday. VDOT funding contacted the Town about the application for the next sidewalk project which included the top of Terrace Avenue; along Route 340 to the Little League Field; and to the Jr. Order entrance. He noted many other Towns were unable to continue with any projects due to COVID-19. The Town could receive $387,209 toward the project.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mrs. Hammer stated the report was provided in the packet. The Cemetery would not be mowed this week due to the lack of rain. The Cemetery Commission met and made several recommendations which would be shared at the August 3rd meeting. BBWL, LLC submitted a preliminary plat at the Planning Commission meeting on July 7, 2020. If approved, the matter would be brought before Council at the next meeting. The new subdivision would be called Eagle Ridge and include forty-one single family homes and 12 duplexes. She noted the commission elected the following officers: Dan Talbot, Chairman; Joey Merica, Vice-Chairman; and Dorenda Flick, Secretary.

RECREATION DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Johnson reported that all park and recreation venues, as well as restrooms were open. The shelters were available to rent.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Deputy Treasurer Gooden read the report as presented in the packet.

COMMITTEES

Finance (R.Snow)

Vice-Mayor Snow reported their committee meeting was scheduled for July 28, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. which was open to the public. He reviewed previous audits regarding meals tax and the cigarette tax. In the 2018 audit, the amount was $73,000, in 2019 - $63,000, and in 2020 - $59,000. Meals tax had increased since 2018 and was currently at almost $89,000. He requested Chief Harris periodically inspect stores that sold cigarettes to ensure they purchased the proper labels and put them on the cigarettes packs.

Water, Sewer & Electric (J.Dean)

Council Member Dean reported that poles were being replaced at the wastewater treatment plant and wiring done at the job site trailer. The project was moving along.

Economic & Community Development and Cemetery (S. America)

Council Member America commented about the renaming of Stonewall Riverside Park. He received phone calls and emails all weekend. He was 100% against it. He noted that the political climate in a lot of small towns and big governments caused a lack of leadership because they caved into all the demands from organizations with a political agenda. As far as Merck, he wished they would just worry about the medicine and stay out of politics.

Personnel (L.Heidel)

Council Member Heidel stated the next meeting would be July 27, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Streets & Sidewalks (H.Zander)

Council Member Zander thanked the Public Works Department for the crosswalks. The next committee meeting would be July 27, 2020.

Public Health, Safety & Ordinances and Planning Commission (M.Isom)

Council member Isom reported the Planning Commission met on July 7. BBWL would be submitting new paperwork. The committee discussed a lot line vacation & revision that would be talked about later under new business. The name change of Stonewall Riverside Park was brought up at the meeting. She was not sure why it was brought up there. It was not the proper procedure because the Council did not have the opportunity to discuss the facts first. She noted that was one of the reasons the matter was taken off the agenda; most of the Council did not have all the information. She would like to have something in writing from Merck regarding the request. She also received a lot of phone calls and visits over the weekend, and appreciated the input. She felt the same way regarding the protest. She was proud of Town citizens for standing up and saying, "We love our Town and we want our Town to work together and everyone get along." She was proud of everything the police department did that week and how they handled the situation. She noted the Town had a very caring staff that did a wonderful job for the Town. She appreciated everyone that was helping Elkton move forward and making Elkton a good place to live. She briefly discussed the online version of the revised Charter and new ordinances.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Personnel Committee: Protocol

Council Member America requested to table the matter and discuss it in closed session at a future meeting.

Campsites

Vice-Mayor Snow reported that the Recreation Commission visited both sites during their meeting. The consensus was to limit sites to tents at Riverside Park which would eliminate a lot of heavy traffic. He noted that by the landfill, some infrastructure work would take place such as water lines and electrical, but no sewer. He asked that a dump station be considered near the sewer plant. He noted the Commission would prepare a plan for both sites before any work started. Council Member Isom requested Council be allowed to vote on plans for each campsite.

Set $50 Fee per brick at the 9/11 Memorial

Council Member Dean moved, seconded by Council Member Heidel, and carried to approve the recommendation for individuals or companies to purchase bricks to be engraved by Hartman Memorial at the 9/11 Memorial. A $50 fee per brick which includes engraving. Bricks may only be purchased for First Responders.

YEAS: M. Isom, H. Zander, L. Heidel, R. Snow, J. Day, and S. America

NAYS: None

VOTE: (6 – 0 voice vote) Motion carried

NEW BUSINESS

Lot Line Vacation and Revision at 309 E. Prospect Avenue, Elkton VA

Council Member Isom moved, seconded by Vice-Mayor Snow, and carried to approve the request from Ellen M. Mowbray and Betty M. Davis, Power of Attorney for Anna S. Meadows, for a lot line revision and vacation of lot lines for property located at 309 W. Prospect Avenue; tax map no. 131 B4 (4) L 13, 14, 15, 16 BB on a plat prepared by Randall K. Newman dated June 7, 2020, Job No. R131 B4-4-BB-13-16 with the following condition: Existing accessory building be allowed to remain no more than 5 years unless both lots, new lot 13 containing 0.627 +/- acres and new lot 16 containing 0.269 +/- acres, were owned by the same party. Under this condition, the 5 year period begins upon transfer of the residue of new lot 16 containing 0.269 +/- acres to another party.

YEAS: M. Isom, H. Zander, L. Heidel, R. Snow, J. Day, and S. America

NAYS: None

VOTE: (6 – 0 voice vote) Motion carried

Purchase New UV Lights and Sleeve Kit for $5,437.32

Council Member Dean moved, seconded by Vice-Mayor Snow, and carried to approve the purchase of new UV Lights and Sleeve Kit for $5,437.32

YEAS: M. Isom, H. Zander, L. Heidel, R. Snow, J. Day, and S. America

NAYS: None

VOTE: (6 – 0 voice vote) Motion carried

Shoe Reimbursement Policy

Council Member Heidel moved, seconded by Council Member Dean, and carried to approve the recommended stipend for Police Officers and Public Works employees. An annual stipend up to $80.00 for shoe reimbursement for Police Officers and Public Works employees. If footwear cost less than $80.00, the employee would be reimbursed for the purchase amount. Part time employees would only receive the stipend every two years.

YEAS: M. Isom, H. Zander, L. Heidel, R. Snow, J. Day, and S. America

NAYS: None

VOTE: (6 – 0 voice vote) Motion carried

MAYOR'S BUSINESS

Mayor Gooden stated that over the last two years he had been approached a dozen or more times about Veteran banners being displayed throughout Town. He hoped within the next month or two, the Town would start taking orders for the banners. He noted it would be a revenue neutral project and have a positive impact on the community.

Rockingham County had small business grants available from $5-$10,000. The deadline was Friday, July 24, 2020.

Mayor Gooden announced the Town was fortunate to have so many talented residents in the community. The Elkton Downtown Revitalization Corporation was funding some mural projects in Town. He noted the "Blue Ridge Bears" had been painted on the side of the Appalachian Trail Outfitter building thanks to Chris Michael, an art teacher at East Rockingham High School, and three of his recent graduates. They started refurbishing the 7-Up murals on the building beside the theater. He would bring more information to Council on the Appalachian Mural Trail. He requested Chief Harris review structures in Town for unsafe conditions. Ole 33 Beer & Burger should open this week.

Mr. Lunsford announced the Town was awarded almost $150,000 from the Cares Act.

Council Member Dean heard an ad on KCY that highlighted businesses in the Town of Shenandoah and would like to do something similar for Elkton.

Meeting Adjourned

Council Member Dean moved, seconded by Council Member Isom, and carried to adjourn the meeting.

YEAS: M. Isom, H. Zander, L. Heidel, R. Snow, J. Day, and S. America

NAYS: None

VOTE: (6 – 0 voice vote) Motion carried

Mayor: Joshua J. Gooden

Recorder: Denise R. Monger, Clerk