

Council Meeting Minutes

February 14, 2023

The Tazewell Town Council in regular session at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers.

Present:

Mayor Michael Hoops

Councilmember Jonathan Hankins

Councilmember Zach Cline

Councilmember Emily Davis

Councilmember David Fox

Councilmember Joe Beasley

Absent:

Councilmember Glenn Catron

Staff present were: Executive Assistant, Robin Brewster; Town Attorney, Brad Pyott; Clerk/Treasurer, Leanne Regon; Police Chief, David Mills; Fire Chief, John Thomas; Zoning & Property Maintenance Official, Chris Hurley; EMS Administrator, Syndee Saleem.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Hoops called the meeting to order with the pledge of allegiance. Invocation by Pastor Nathan Thomas.

Councilmember Fox wished everyone a Happy Valentine's Day.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Brittany Davis came before council to present on Black History Month. She stated that she was going to be speaking on Carline, the ShakeRag Community. She began talking about the rail and trolley transportation. She said that the trolley would travel from Main Street to Tazewell Avenue. Tazewell Avenue was the beginning of the African American community known as ShakeRag. Despite the economic and social hardships ShakeRag represents progress made. She discussed the origin of the name ShakeRag. One story heard is that people would shake a rag to stop the trolley. Another story was that it came from when they would have wash days and the laundry had been hung up to dry. The reference was once a derogatory term because of how they were once treated. The name Carline was adopted by the members of the community. The community underwent many changes through out the years. The building that was once the school, first through sixth grade for the black community is now the Head Start School. Members are trying to bring back being part of the community, young and old. People in the community have tried to change the perspective and show that they want to be part of the community as well.

PROJECT UPDATE

Luke Allison came before Council to discuss the property of 320 Main Street. He stated that he was a 2010 graduate of Tazewell High School and that this project is very personal to him. Tazewell is his home town and he is glad to be here for this project. He stated that he and his partner Jarrod Burton bought the property at 320 Main Street. Jarrod Burton is also a THS graduate. He said that he has moved back to Tazewell with his wife and new baby and his wife will be opening a business here in one of the spaces they have.

Mr. Allison and his team have purchased the property and have a great plan for the property. He stated that the building was built in 1948 and is 23,000 square feet and it three stories and said the building is in great shape. His plan is to redo the facility and have 18 apartments and two commercial spaces there. They want to maintain the historic integrity of the building. They will be addressing parking, brick repair, ground floor ADA apartments, a damaged sewer line, etc. He discussed the floor plan for the building. The ground level would have seven apartments, four one bedroom and three two bedrooms. The second floor, the street level floor, would have two commercial units as well as two -two bedrooms, and two one bedrooms. The third floor will have six one bedroom and two -two bedroom apartments. The community benefits of this project would be an increase to the down town population, increased foot traffic, increase in property value, a thresh hold for additional opportunities. He stated that this is a \$2.8 million dollar project. There will be affordable units and quality products.

Mayor Hoops asked when they plan to start inside. He answered that it was in the pre-development stages now, they have hired an engineer, and an architect and they are working with the Department of Historical Resources. Hopefully they will get to start in two months.

Mr. Allison stated that he had spoke with Manager Day about some of the incentives that the Town offers and he was very pleased to learn about them. He asked if we would consider an incentive for utility hook ups and business license. Councilmember Davis stated that the business license start up fee was a low fee and she asked Clerk/Treasurer Regon what the cost was. It was answered that the start up fee for a new business was \$20.00 and she thinks that there are also business license incentives in place as well. Mayor Hoops asked him to explain what he meant about the utility hook ups. He asked what happened to the hook ups that were already existing. Mr. Allison stated that they may need more hook ups, possibly for each space or at least each floor.

A community member asked if they would be using local contractors. It was answered yes, they would like to keep things as local as possible. It was also asked by a community member if they will be managing the property. It was answered that they will have a management company that will oversee the property. A community member asked if they have a completion date. He said hopefully spring of 2024 but definitely in 2024. He said that he is very excited about this project and very excited to be here.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Councilmember Beasley, seconded by Councilmember Fox to approve the minutes of January 10, 2023. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Motion was made by Councilmember Beasley and seconded by Councilmember Hankins to approve the financial statements for January 2023. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

PLANNING COMMISSION COMMITTEE

Councilmember Davis stated that the Planning Commission met last week and had a presentation from Luke Allison for the project at 320 Main Street. They also discussed a special exception permit for an Air BNB at 145 Philos Street and they have recommend it be passed to the Town Council to set a public hearing. They also discussed the Family Day Homes Code in our code book. It is in the BZA section of the code and it is not the correct place for it. They are recommending it to be sent to Town Council and repealed to place it in a different section in the code book.

SET PUBLIC HEARING TO REPEAL EXISITNG SEC. 23-116 FAMILY DAY HOMES OF ARTICLE VIII OF CHAPTER 23 OF THE TOWN CODE AND ADOPT SEC. 23-100.1 ZONING PERMITS; FAMILY DAY HOMES IN ARTICLE VII OF CHAPTER 23 OF THE TOWN CODE

Zoning & Property Maintenance Official, Chris Hurley stated that a repeal of the Family Day Homes code section is being requested. It would need to be moved from Chapter 23-116 to Chapter 23-100.1. Attorney Pyott stated that the state code had been moved and repealed to the Department of Education. We are trying to change out code to what the state code says. Changing our code, we will still have to have a public hearing. Councilmember Fox asked where, what zone can you have one. Attorney Pyott stated that it can be in any zone but they have to meet Department of Education requirements. He recommends to repeal the code and set a date to end the current code, and set a date for the newly placed code to take effect. The new code and the old code would have the same date. It could be passes as an emergency but it isn't an emergency so setting the dated to coincide should be fine. Motion was made to set a public hearing for March 14th at 7:15pm by Councilmember Fox. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Cline. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

APPROVE DEMOLITION PROCESS OF STRUCTURE AT 2151 FINCASTLE

Zoning & Property Maintenance Official, Chris Hurley stated that 2151 Fincastle Turnpike is the Long John silvers building. He submitted pictures that is in their council packet. He will give the owners a 60 day notice that they can address the issue themselves or demo the building themselves or the Town will do it and invoice them for it. It was asked who owned the building and he answered Lojon Properties. Attorney Pyott asked who the registered agent was. Police Chief Mills stated that it used to be Ray West. Mr. Hurley stated that he thinks that is when they were with Charter Foods. Councilmember Cline asked if there will be any other attempt to contact the owner. Mr. Hurley stated that the Code says they have 30 days to act but we allow 60

days. Motion to approve the demolition process was made by Councilmember Davis. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Fox. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

APPROVE “TWIN COMMUNITY STATUS” RESOLUTION

Mayor Hoops stated that he was contacted by the Clerk of Tazewell, Illinois. They are interested in being a twin community. They would share information of their town and we would share information from our town. Mayor Hoops read the resolution. Motion to approve the resolution was made by Councilmember Hankins. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Fox. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

EMS UPDATE

EMS Administrator Syndee Saleem came before council to give an update on the EMS department. She stated that the budget is looking good at the moment. She gave a report of revenue at \$1,026,058 and expenses at \$966,737. The areas in the budget that they are watching closely is vehicle maintenance and supplies. They are having mechanical issues with their ambulances. At one point on Sunday, they had no ambulances except the newest one. They had five down and out of service. There are transmission issues, fuel system issues, etc. In July we were awarded a grant for a new ambulance but it may be after this upcoming July before we get the truck. It has been delayed in receiving. Councilmember Fox asked how many she had running now. She stated three, but one can only do transports. He then asked why can't we get rid of the oldest when we get a new one. She stated that is what they are trying to do.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Alice Wallwork of 741 Fincastle came before council to discuss the Children's Residential Facility that was discussed at the last meeting. Her husband handed out letters that she had written and mailed to the councilmembers. She stated that she has not received any response to her letters. She is upset and she does not want this to happen to her neighborhood or anyone else's neighborhood. She then read from her January 23rd letter she wrote to Councilmember Davis. Councilmember Davis stated that the proposal that council received was for an R2 zone change. Everyone in zone R2 received a letter notifying them of that change because it was a change to that zone. At the next meeting, Mr. & Mrs. Holloway did an application for their property to be used as a Children's Residential Facility.

Mrs. Wallwork asked why wasn't a need assessment done. She stated that the Virginia Code 15.2-2284 says that an assessment should be done to show how it will be suited for use. Attorney Pyott stated that he is also reading that code and they discussed the discrepancies in what he was reading compared to what she had stated.

Mayor Hoops asked about the letter that she received. He asked if it was to her Tazewell address. Mrs. Wallwork stated no, it was to her Charlottesville address and she only received it five days prior, she thinks we need to be more transparent. Councilmember Davis stated that Mr.

Holloway received a notice that the application has been rejected. Mrs. Wallwork stated that it would have been nice that her and her neighbors received that notice as well.

Ebony Wallace of Hopkins Street came before council to discuss the growing homeless population. She stated that it is hard to find a place to put people. She asked if the Town would be willing to put up some money or work with local motels. She asked could the Town donate some space for this. Mayor Hoops said that her and him should work on this together. She stated that she asked him to two years ago. Mayor Hoops stated that the Town/IEDA doesn't own any property that could be turned into housing. He also stated that we could reach out to motels and ask them but we can't make them do anything. Councilmember Cline asked if she worked for a particular. She stated that she works with North Tazewell Church of Christ, Celebrate Recovery, and Mountain Movers. She is currently looking for housing for people they are trying to help.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilmember Davis asked Zoning & Property Maintenance Official, Chris Hurley about the special exception permit for Philos Street, and asked if they needed to set a public hearing for it, it wasn't on the agenda. He answered yes, we do need to set a public hearing. Motion to set a public hearing for the special exception permit for 145 Philos Street was made by Councilmember Beasley. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Fox. It was stated that we could set this one at 7:00pm on March 14th as well. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

Nathan Thomas spoke up from the audience and stated that there is a community assessment done by Clinch Valley Community Action every year in the spring time. Jennifer Bourne is over this.

Councilmember Fox stated that he has seen the water crew on Carline Avenue working. He would like to see the water and sewer lines replaced in town.

Andre Wallace of 315 Riverside Drive spoke and stated that he also has a house on Carline. There is water that comes off of Fudge Street onto his property. The Town has put a drainage system up the road from this and it would be nice to have something in place that would help with the drainage at his area.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn was made by Councilmember Fox and seconded by Councilmember Cline. On vote, Councilmember Hankins, aye; Councilmember Cline, aye; Councilmember Davis, aye; Councilmember Fox, aye; Councilmember Beasley, aye.

Meeting adjourned at 8:37pm.