

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

April 16, 2024

The Clarksville Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, April 16, 2024. Council members present were Mayor Bruce Woerner, Vice-Mayor Danny Pittard, Rick Buchanan, Pat Charles, Chris Clarke, Robert Dennis, and Alexander Rawles. Staff Members present were Town Manager Jeff Jones, Treasurer Tara Murphy, Public Utilities Director William Leonard, Sergeant Drew Jenkins, and Economic Development Coordinator Tara Tuck.

Call to Order

Mayor Woerner called the Town Council meeting to order and provided the invocation. He asked for a moment of silence in remembrance of Frankie Talley.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the March 19th, 2024 Town Council meeting were approved with no additions, deletions, or corrections with a motion by Council member Dennis, seconded by Council member Buchanan, and approved by all.

Presentation of List of Vendors Paid

The list of vendors paid for March 2024 was presented to Council. Council member Dennis motioned to approve the list of vendors paid for March 2024, seconded by Vice-Mayor Pittard, and approved by all.

Presentation of Financial Statements

The financial statements for March 2024 were presented to Council. Council member Charles motioned to approve the financial statements for March 2024, seconded by Council member Buchanan, and approved by all.

Lakeshore Wilderness Retreat Presentation

Molly Waller and Nick Rich addressed Council about a project they hope to start in Clarksville. Molly stated that the project would be a place of lodging with an animal viewing experience on a 65-acre tract in Finchley near Clarksville. She stated that the idea is to portray that you have traveled somewhere else in the world. She stated that the first animal would be a wolf and the other animals would be small for a North American theme. She stated that the encampments would have floor to ceiling glass in order to view the animals in their habitats. Nick stated that he designs and builds exhibits all over the country and he would design the project with the North American theme for the first phase. He stated that he and Molly have a combined 40 years of experience working with exotic animals' field that hinge on safety. Nick stated that the 300 acres surrounding the land is non-residential and planted pines. He stated that his brother is retired Navy and Fire Chief and he would handle the security and live on the property. Molly stated that by 2025 they would hope to have the African theme part done and with that a VDOT entrance from Hwy 58 and then the Education Center for school programs, 4-H, Scouts, etc. She stated that Phase 3 would be the Asian jungle exhibit and they will have event space for small gatherings at certain times of the day. Molly stated that Phase 4 would be the South America and Phase 5 would be their version of a zoo that would be open year around for the more local community.

Council member Charles stated that she has been hearing questions in the community about what happens if an animal gets out of the enclosures. Molly stated that the several regulatory agencies will inspect the facility to make sure all of the safety layers, protocols and components are in place before the facility could open as well as during the operation. Nick stated that each animal will have a specified type of enclosure as well as the barrier to keep them in such as electric charge or netting depending on the animal. He stated that the property as a whole will be fenced entirely with industry regulated height and thickness of the type of structure. He stated that they have emergency protocols in place for situations such as if an animal were to get out of its enclosure. He stated that Molly has experience with sedating animals in those situations. Nick stated that they plan to talk to all of the emergency services as well as animal control to work with them. Molly stated that all of the animals they will use were born in captivity and are used to being in captivity. Mayor Woerner asked if the 65 acres is enough property for all of the phases of the project. Nick stated that after having a 30' buffer around the outside of the property, each compound would be 2 to 5 acres for the 6 cabins and that would leave 40 acres to complete the final phases. He stated that their plan is to have a small number of animals with large spacious habitats to live in. Council member Clarke questioned the cost per night to stay at the facility. Nick stated that they are looking at \$300 to \$400 per night and that would include the educational and animal ambassador programs. Molly presented each member with a folder of information and stated that their contact information is included if there are more questions.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Presentation of Town Operation Reports

The Town Operations report was presented to Council.

Public Utilities Director William Leonard stated that the contractors continue the work at the Waste Plant on the reactor for the upgrade and at Kinderton Country Club. He stated that the staff continues the development of the new operators and that is going well. He stated that they plan to clean the clarifier at the end of the month. Director Leonard stated that the staff is working with the 120 program and they have completed a lot of the assessments with the lead and copper. Director Leonard stated that the garbage truck will be back in service tomorrow, but the brush truck is down and being worked on. He stated that the crew performed the cemetery cleanup over the last month. He stated that the staff had a couple of sewer line clean outs. Director Leonard stated that with the new employees, the departments have more of the coverage that was needed.

Presentation of the Police Activity Report

The Police Activity Report was presented to Council.

Sergeant Drew Jenkins stated that the department is preparing for the events starting in the next couple of weeks. He stated that the Eggcellent Adventure went well. He stated that he first Cruise In was well attended with 30 to 50 cars. He stated that the Wine Festival went well with no issues. Sergeant Jenkins informed the Council that minor calls are picking up as well as the traffic and speeding. He stated that he will be attending fire arms training as an instructor at the end of May and Officer Dillon will attend more training for Wax. He stated that the Lunch and Learn is planned at the end of April in conjunction with Benchmark Community Bank to educate the public and businesses on scams and fraud that are occurring now. He stated that scams and fraud are rampant now through phone calls, emails, and text messages. He stated that they want to bring awareness of the types of scams and fraud that are occurring to better equip the public and businesses to avoid being caught off guard. He stated that he has been doing coffee with a cop on the first Wednesday of each month.

Economic Development Update

Tara Tuck, the Economic Development Coordinator presented her report. She stated that she applied for a \$20,000 tourism marketing grant and should hear if it was awarded in May. She stated that Virginia Living magazine has a "Best of Virginia" each year and Hite's got best clothing store, Cooper's Landing Inn & Traveler's Tavern got best bed and breakfast, and Clarksville got the best Love sign. She stated that Clarksville will have a 1-page ad in the magazine starting in May until May of 2025. Tara informed the Council that Clarksville won the March Madness LOVEworks sign bracket also. She stated the Town website continues to migrate content. She stated that she has taken over managing the local Facebook page, Buggs Island/Kerr Lake – Clarksville, VA (Official) and the followers can translate to in-kind funds for tourism grants. Tara stated that the committee and the Chamber are working on the design for Clarksville's mural. Ms. Tuck stated that the 2025 Brochure/map update work is underway to update the businesses, and add public parking and shuttle stops. She stated that she is working with Yaks and Tracks to assess the possibility of for rail-biking in the area. Ms. Tuck stated that support letters and a package to Buckingham Branch Railroad for consideration. She stated that she is working with the county on Loyal Brew, a trail app company to form a Wine, Brew, and Whiskey trail with Mecklenburg and Halifax to have a regional trail and a presence on the app. She stated that Historic Downtown Clarksville applied for \$15,000 Main Street/DHCD Community Vitality Grant (CVG) for the Wayfinding Implementation (sign fabrication and installation) and it requires a 50% cash match for a total \$22,500. Ms. Tuck stated that HDC is eligible to apply for a \$60,000 Small Area Revitalization Project (SmARP). She stated that this grant application is due May 3 and the award will be announced between July and October. She stated that several properties/buildings have begun work under the façade improvement grant and received reimbursements. She stated that that she continues to work with the consulting firm on mapping the area and determining the best placement for signage in and around Town and developing parking areas. Ms. Tuck stated that the businesses along Virginia Avenue are participating in a Bubble Up Clarksville as a seasonal beautification project. Ms. Tuck also stated that the staff are inviting businesses to consider making or purchasing a wooden photo op to be colorful, fun and to present a way to get free social media exposure.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Marina Building Update

He stated that the low bidder for the Marina building is J. E. Burton Construction at 1.674 million. He stated that the staff recommends awarding the bid to them and seeing if there are any cost saving measures. Council member Buchanan stated that he looked over the plans and the proposed cost saving measures, and he does not feel the cuts are of any value to the Town. He stated that he recommends awarding the bid as is and motioned to do so. Vice-Mayor Pittard seconded the motion and it was approved by all.

Sewer Plant Improvement Project Update

Town Manager Jones stated that WACO is actively working on the reactor construction tank. He stated that the engineers and WACO are working on some modifications for the splitter box due to its close proximity to the trickling filters and the underground utility lines. He stated that the interim financing is close to being spent and the closing for the permanent financing with Rural Development is set for May 14th. Town Manager Jones stated that J. Harman Saunders replaced the 4" sewer lines on the residential properties in the Kinderton area and completed the point repairs of a sewer line at the KCC area require before the lining can begin. He stated that the contractor completed the excavation and installation of the new Kinderton pump station and will integrate the pump station with the existing sewer mains as well as the back-up pump capabilities. He stated that the lining of the remaining sewer lines is planned for the middle of May.

Update Water Plant Expansion & Distribution System Upgrades

Town Manager Jones stated that Dewberry, the Utilities Committee, Microsoft, and Mecklenburg County continue to work on the engineering and plans for the water plant expansion and the water and sewer line replacement projects that include pump station upgrades and the construction of the water tank farms. He stated that the Lakeside and Boyd's corner pump stations easements have been approved by the Corps of Engineers and received; however, 7Eleven has not returned the easements at this time. He stated that the contractor plans to begin work on the foundation and footers for the elevated tanks. He stated that the contractors are working on the submittals for the ground storage tanks. He stated that Dewberry is waiting for final approval from VDOT and the Corps of Engineers for the design for the Hwy 58 Bridge utilities and the construction will be in the summer of 2024. He stated that the water plant expansion design is in process.

VA Brownfield – Site Assessment & Planning Grant Update

Town Manager Jones stated that the firm has completed the work at the Burlington property and they are waiting on the results.

Planters Warehouse Update

Town Manager Jones stated that the contractor continues to make progress on the construction and estimates completion in August 2024.

Cove Project - Update

Town Manager Jones stated that the team met with the Corps of Engineers. He stated that Dewberry is working on permitting and licensure. He stated that the engineering and design are in process with completion planned for August 2024.

Calendar of Events & Tentative Road Closure Schedule

Town Manager Jones presented a list of the upcoming events and the road closure schedule. He stated that the Community Players have a production of Bright Star planned this month. He stated that the first Lake Life Live is set for May 4th as well as the next Cruise In. He stated that the Big Lake Flea Market is May 11th and the Memorial Day Observance at the memorial is May 27th.

Mural on Chamber of Commerce Building Update

Town Manager Jones stated that Tina Morgan worked to get a better artist for the mural project that is a better fit. He stated that the Chamber building is ready for the art work. He stated that the staff will have to talk to the Council members individually to get approval on the art work planned for the Chamber of Commerce building.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolution – Problem 15 & 58 Intersection

Town Manager Jones stated that the staff has worked with Southside Planning District Commission in the past to apply for Smart Scale funding to make changes to the Hwy 15/58 problem intersection. He stated that the evaluation criteria have changed and each time, the application scored lower due to the location in proximity to economic development near it. He stated that the staff has been made aware of some other alternatives with VDOT such as including the proposed project in their 6-year improvement public hearing. He stated that he cannot attend the hearing, but VDOT stated that the Town can submit a letter and a resolution to support a solution to the problem intersection. He presented the resolution to Council and asked for approval.

Council member Rawles motioned to approve the resolution to VDOT in support for action to address the US 15/58 Intersection safety issue, seconded by Council member Clarke, and approved by all.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Bruce F. Woerner, Mayor

Tara Murphy, Treasurer/Clerk