

The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

January 13, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Town Council Meeting

Approved Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Sullivan called the Town Council to order at 7:00 p.m. Council members Jerry Goebel, Gary Schwartz, Dan Spethmann, Patrick O'Connell, and Mary Ann Kuhn were present. Council member Alice Butler was absent. Town Attorney John Bennett and Town Clerk Laura Dodd were present. _

- MINUTES: September 16, 2013 minutes: Ms. Kuhn made a motion to approve the minutes of September 16, 2014 and Mr. O'Connell seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

- REPORTS: Treasury Report: Mr. Goebel reviewed the attached Bank Summary Report, the Bills-To-Be Paid List, and the Additional Bills to Be Paid List.

Mayor Sullivan made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report and Mr. Spethmann seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

Planning Commission: Chairman Schwartz had no report.

Architectural Review Board: Mayor Sullivan reported that at the last ARB meeting the committee had reviewed and approved an ARB application from Charlie Thompson to repair fire damage on his property on Warren Avenue, an application from the Trinity Church for new lights for the parking lot, and an application for a new sign at the Washington School Apartments.

Website: No report.

- TOWN ATTORNEY: Mr. Bennett had no report.

- OLD BUSINESS: a). Avon Hall Painting: Mayor Sullivan discussed that Peter Kreyling had given the Town an assessment of Avon Hall and had indicated that the roof should be touched up in several places and painted. He discussed that although Mr. Kreyling was not pushing the exterior painting as something that needed to be done immediately, several Council members were concerned about the visual appearance. He discussed that the Town had received three quotes from Mark's Painting, one for painting the roof, one for painting the front, and one for painting the entire exterior. He discussed that he had received from Alan Comp, an expert on old buildings, a caution that the Town should be making repairs in a historically correct manner and it should make sure to use the right paint and primer.

Ms. Kuhn discussed that she thought that the Town should get three separate bids on the painting.

Mr. O'Connell discussed that the long term solution of what was going to be done to Avon Hall should be part of the painting discussion because if it was going to be put on the market and sold the Town needed to consider how much money it was spending on the building. He discussed that once the scrapping started he felt that a lot of wood siding would be found to need replacing for a first rate job and it would be costly. He discussed that he felt that painting the roof was a no brainer. He discussed that he never understood the Council's reluctance in putting the property up for sale and that he had been led to believe that the property was for sale but not openly and perhaps that was in order to choose a compatible buyer. He discussed that there was a certain lack of clarity of whether Avon Hall was going to be sold or not.

Mr. Spethmann discussed that painting the roof, the front, and the entire building were three separate issues and agreed with Mr. O'Connell that painting the roof was a no brainer. He discussed that it made sense to know what the scope of work was that the Town was getting into, including the extent of deterioration. He discussed that the Town needed to know what was the best way to monetize Avon Hall and did it make sense to put painting the front of what the Town was going to do with the property. He discussed that it made sense to have an assessment done of what was historically correct as Mr. Comp had suggested.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that he felt that there was certainly a lack of clarity of what the Town wanted Avon Hall to be but he felt that there had been a number of discussions about that and he thought it was valuable to shape the usage of the building while the Town owned it and had control over it and to influence the usage in a way that the Town Council thought would be good and productive for the Town. He discussed that there had always been the alternative that it could be sold to a private party, who could turn it into a home or B&B or restaurant or whatever but a number of Council members had thought that it made sense for the Town to determine the best use of the building and to try and influence that. He discussed that he did not feel it would be horrible if someone bought it and turned it into a home but he thought it would be good if a use could be figured out that would bring people to town which would be good for tourism and good for the general economic vitality. He discussed that he thought that the Town should focus on making that happen and that at the last meeting the Council had asked Mr. Spethmann and Ms. Kuhn to head up that process. He discussed that his own instinct was that if the Town just said OK let's sell it then given what was happening in Town specifically and given what was happening in the real estate market generally the value of the property was increasing not decreasing, notwithstanding the fact that something needed to be done with the property itself.

He discussed that he recalled that when he first started on the Council he had wondered why the Town didn't just sell it and get it off its hands and that Gene Leggett had discussed that the market was down and it was not the time to sell. He discussed that he felt that there was no need to rush yet but there would be a point where something would have to be done and the Town needed to focus on it.

Mr. O'Connell discussed that the best and highest use, as people liked to say, would be the one where enough money could be budgeted to fix it up properly. He discussed that the Town already owned Town Hall, which was not being put to the highest and best use by being used as an office and a once a month meeting place, so having an additional piece of property was a lot for a town this small to try to find a use for and to pour money into it. He discussed that any seller can influence the buyer and to make sure the buyer has the capability to do a proper renovation but he thought it was expecting a lot for a

town this size to sit on it and maintain it. He discussed that anyone buying it would have to spend more renovating it than they had in purchasing it.

Mayor Sullivan asked Mr. O'Connell how he would like to see the building used.

Mr. O'Connell discussed that the Town would need to set a price on the property in order for a potential buyer to determine what the whole project would cost and, as he saw it, for almost any use it would basically have to be gutted, including all walls, plumbing, and wiring and what essentially would be left would be a shell and some columns and a beautifully sited lot so that would be key in determining the costs. He discussed what entity could earn back the money, aside from a private individual and said that there would be very few. He discussed that he felt that the Town would be best served finding an entity that would do the best restoration job possible and bring it up to its glory days or beyond.

Mr. Spethmann asked if Mr. O'Connell saw it as having a potential commercial use or as a private residence.

Mr. O'Connell discussed that it was his experience that anyone willing to spend several million dollars for a residence would prefer to have control of the land around them and they would also be able to buy a large tract outside of town with mountain vistas or something like that so it would be a peculiar individual who would determine they could put that kind of money into a house such as this and think they would one day get it back because they wouldn't. He discussed a rare commercial entity would be a more likely buyer.

Mr. Spethmann asked if Mr. O'Connell thought that there was any potential for a long term lease.

Mr. O'Connell said yes and Mayor Sullivan said that had been discussed in the past.

Mr. Spethmann discussed that the categories were that the Town could dispose of the property with controls, retain the property in order to retain control, or find what is the rare entity that is complementary to the County and the Town and who would help build the Town up.

Mr. O'Connell discussed that by long term lease he meant something like a 95 year lease.

Mr. Spethmann discussed that a 50 to 95 year lease would give the lessee a chance to appreciate all of their improvements and it would be tax efficient.

Mr. O'Connell discussed that several schools had expressed an interest including a culinary school, which could use access to the Inn as a training ground but again without knowing any specifics such as price and acreage, they lost the ability to lay out a budget. He discussed that the property did have value to an entity like the culinary school as it photographed well and could be branded and could attract people to pay tuition or enrollment.

Mr. Spethmann discussed that the beauty of an education facility was that it became multi-functional so it could be suited to culinary schools or perhaps a corporate retreat. He discussed that if it could be determined what the baseline economics looked like the property could be packaged and the right parties could be engaged. He discussed that he and Ms. Kohn hoped to come back with information so that the Council could have an organized conversation. He asked if the building should be painted or not.

Mr. O'Connell discussed that although he would like to see it looking better he felt it was a mistake to paint it until it was determined if the siding was in good shape. He discussed that the first thing he would do if he owned it would be to put on new siding and a new roof.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that Mr. O'Connell had suggested a terrific use with the culinary school and that for him a terrific use was one that attracted a number of people

that would add to the vitality of the town, help the commercial business in town, and arguably the reason they would come would be a natural fit with Rappahannock, and it would have to be something that was financially viable. He discussed that they needed to agree on the type of criteria of what they wanted to see, such as food, or something else. He discussed that once they had some criteria in place of what they liked then it could be marketed. He discussed that he felt that they could come up with some alternative uses for a given price.

Mr. O'Connell discussed that the number of acres needed to be known.

Mr. Spethmann discussed that he felt that the property could be carved up to generate multiple revenues if buyer/lessee were assured that the surrounding acreage would be compatible and they wouldn't have to pay for it or maintain it.

Mr. O'Connell discussed that there were advantages to both the lessee and the leaser as it would reduce costs for lessee and would give income to the Town, which would remain in control of the property. He discussed that someone had been interested in a butler's school and there would be an advantage with the proximity to the Inn and Avon hall could be run as a training house. He discussed that this person had not been able to come up with a business plan without a price and the numbers of acres.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that it was a priority for the Town to move forward in deciding on what to do with Avon Hall this year.

Mr. Spethmann discussed that everyone was ready to move forward in an ultimate disposition in getting the most value for the property for the Town.

Mr. O'Connell discussed that Avon Hall's liability and white elephant status must be acknowledged and a lot of emotional control must be given up if this was going to reach a conclusion or it would continue to slowly take up resources. He discussed that what would be appealing to a potential buyer would be by offering an irresistible price based on what had to be put into it and that the Town had a lot of benefit in just seeing it restored to being a grand entry point into the town.

Ms. Jean Goodine spoke in favor of painting Avon Hall and recommended Mark's Painting. She also discussed that the quote included replacing the rotten wood. She also recommended that Rose Cottage be included in the Avon Hall discussion.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that Rose Cottage would be included in the discussion of Avon Hall.

Mr. Gary Aichele discussed that Avon Hall had been used as a public space and was considered a town park. He discussed that the lease idea should be considered as getting someone in and restoring it would happen much faster and the Town would still retain control. He discussed that he appreciated the discussion and that there appeared to be some traction in the Town moving towards a solution.

Mr. Schwartz discussed that he understood the need to monetize but he didn't understand the problem of coming up with one or two options as to acreage.

Mr. Spethmann discussed that he and Ms. Kuhn would be bringing together information and ideas that had been brought up in the past at different times and presenting them to Council perhaps at a work session.

Mr. Bennett brought up the necessity of the Town requiring the correct paint and he raised the question of putting the painting out to bid, although it was not required for a town the size of Washington.

Mr. Goebel discussed that the Town had put out to bid the Town Hall painting and that the Mark's Painting had been awarded the job.

After some further discussion Mr. O'Connell made a motion to approve the Mark's Painting proposal to paint the Avon Hall roof for a not to exceed figure of \$7,800

conditional on Town approval of the type and color of the paint and Mr. Spethmann seconded.

After some further discussion Mr. O'Connell amended his motion to approve the Mark's Painting proposal to paint the Avon Hall roof for a not to exceed figure of \$7,800 conditional on the type and color of the paint and the schedule for deposits and payments be approved by the Town through the Mayor and Mr. Spethmann seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Schwartz voted "yes"	Mayor Sullivan voted "yes"
Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"	Mr. Goebel voted "yes"
Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Spethmann voted "yes"

And the motion passed 6-0.

The Council tabled by consensus Mark's Painting proposals to paint the exterior of Avon Hall until Mr. Spethmann and Ms. Kuhn clarified the condition of the wood siding and the scope of the work in context of the larger vision of the use of the use of the property.

- NEW BUSINESS: a). Repairs to the Water Plant and Wastewater Plant Generators Update: Mr. Sullivan discussed that the generators at both the Water Treatment Plant and the Wastewater Treatment Plant were in the process of being repaired.

After a short discussion, Mr. Schwartz discussed that the Town was at significant risk with the Wastewater Treatment Plant generator needing repair and he agreed to work with Mr. Goebel in following up with the contractor regarding the delay in getting the repairs completed.

- b). Clarifying Restaurant Definition: Mr. Bennett discussed that the Council had asked him to prepare a definition of a restaurant in the Meals and Lodging Tax Ordinance to match the County's.

After a short discussion, Mr. O'Connell made a motion to accept the definition of a restaurant as presented by Mr. Bennett, attached, as part of the proposed Meals and Lodging Tax Ordinance revision and Mr. Spethmann seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Schwartz voted "yes"	Mayor Sullivan voted "yes"
Ms. Kuhn voted "yes"	Mr. Goebel voted "yes"
Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Spethmann voted "yes"

And the motion passed 6-0.

The Council agreed by consensus to hold off authorizing a public hearing on the draft Meals and Lodging Tax Ordinance until further clarifications regarding complying with State statues were presented by Mr. Bennett.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that there was going to be a bonfire on Friday, January 17th. He also discussed that there would be a Town Election on May 6th and that anyone who wished to run needed to get the appropriate forms into the Voter Registrar by March 4th. He also announced that he was running again for Mayor.

- PUBLIC FORUM: Mayor Sullivan opened the Public Forum:

Ms. Nancy Buntin discussed that the discussion that evening had been a good one and encouraged the Council to continue the lively discussions.

Mr. Phil Irwin spoke in favor of the Town looking at the future of Avon Hall with public use in mind and that would be what the Carrigan's would have wanted.

Mayor Sullivan closed the Public Forum.

- CLOSED SESSION:

ADJOURNMENT: At 8:50 p.m. Mr. Schwartz made a motion to adjourn and Mayor Sullivan seconded and the motion passed 6-0 and the meeting was adjourned.

THE TOWN COUNCIL CONTINUED TO JANUARY 13, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Dodd
Town Clerk

Attachments:

Treasurer's report
Additional Bills to be Paid
Bills to be Paid
Mark's Painting Proposal
Definition of Restaurant from Mr. Bennett