

The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

June 16, 2014

7:00 p.m.

Town Council Meeting

Approved Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Sullivan called the Town Council to order at 7:04 p.m. Council members Jerry Goebel, Gary Schwartz, Alice Butler, and Mary Ann Kuhn were present. Council members Daniel Spethmann and Patrick O'Connell were absent. Town Attorney John Bennett and Town Clerk Laura Dodd were present. _

Ms. Peggy Ralph, County Clerk, swore In John Fox Sullivan as Mayor, Jerry Goebel as Treasurer, and Mary Ann Kuhn, Gary Schwartz, and Katharine Leggett as Council members, whose terms start on July 1, 2014.

Mayor Sullivan reported that Dan Spethmann had already been sworn in and that Patrick O'Connell would be sworn in before the end of June.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that this was Ms. Butler's last official meeting as a Council member and that she had been in town and had been on the Council longer than anyone. He discussed that she had seen the town grow, change, and evolve and had spent an extraordinary amount of time doing things in the community, not the least of which was serving on the Town Council, which could be very time consuming, and not necessarily any fun but nonetheless could be very rewarding. He discussed that she had contributed to what the Town was and that the Town was indebted to her. He discussed that he had sat next to her when her first came on to the Council and that although she could sometimes be very quiet she would sometimes make an observation that was right on point and it had been a treat to sit next to her. He discussed that the Town really appreciated her and the entire room applauded.

- MINUTES: February 10, 2014 minutes: Ms. Kuhn made a motion to approve the minutes of February 10, 2014 and Mayor Sullivan seconded and the motion passed 5-0.

- 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.

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

Planning Commission: Chairman Schwartz discussed that the Planning Commission had not met but that there might be a meeting in July or August.

Architectural Review Board: Mayor Sullivan reported that the Town had received the annual report from the ARB and that they had processed 28 applications and that was approximately the same amount as the year before.

Website: Ms. Kuhn reported that she was working with Don Hearl and, hopefully, with Roger Plantadosi of the Rappahannock News to prepare a video of the Nature Trail to post on the Town's website and on Facebook.

- TOWN ATTORNEY: Mr. Bennett had no report.
- PUBLIC HEARING: SUP 14-05-01 White Moose Inn, LLC, Agent for Deborah Winsor, Owner, of the property located at 199 Main Street, desires SUP to use the swelling as a tourist home to be managed by White Moose Inn: Mayor Sullivan discussed that at the request of the White Moose Inn and Ms. Winsor, the Public Hearing on the SUP application was being put off for a month in order for the applicant to prepare and send in specifics of the application and he made a motion to continue the Public Hearing on SUP 14-05-01 White Moose Inn, Agent for Deborah Winsor to the July 14, 2014 Council meeting and Ms. Kuhn seconded and a roll call vote was taken:
Mr. Schwartz voted "yes" Mr. Goebel voted "yes"
Ms. Kuhn voted "yes" Ms. Butler voted "yes"
Mayor Sullivan voted "yes"
And the motion passed 5-0.

- OLD BUSINESS: a). Approval of FY 2014-2015 Budget; Mayor Sullivan discussed that the Council had been working on the budget, which would go into effect on July 1, 2014, since April and that there had been drafts, meetings, and a public hearing last month on it so now after going through that process the Council be considering approval or disapproval.
Mr. Goebel made a motion to approve the FY 2014-2015 Budget and Ms. Kuhn seconded and a roll call vote was taken:
Mr. Schwartz voted "yes" Mr. Goebel voted "yes"
Ms. Kuhn voted "yes" Ms. Butler voted "yes"
Mayor Sullivan voted "yes"
And the motion passed 5-0.

b). Avon Hall Update: Ms. Kuhn discussed that she had asked Mr. John McCarthy for guidance on how to proceed with what the Town should do with Avon Hall and he did a great job. She discussed that he had done a lot of research and had talked to his peers and had come back with a report, attached, of which the Council had received copies. She discussed that the committee was now in the process of following some of Mr. McCarthy's recommendations and she welcomed any additional recommendations from the public as they were trying to engage the public in the discussion. She said that they were now looking at financial information that they needed to know before they could proceed. She discussed that Mr. McCarthy had recommended that the Town engage a facilitator to work the Town through the process and that he had given her names of some be people he recommended.
Mayor Sullivan discussed that it was a priority for the Town to figure out what to do with Avon Hall and they were working to accomplish that this year. He discussed that there had been a fair amount of discussion at prior meetings and what they were trying to do was balance the use of the building with what was good for the Town, the community, and the County and to do something that was financially sensible and that was a challenge. He discussed that Avon Hall was an asset and that the Town was looking for people's impute.

c). Planning Commission Appointment: Mayor Sullivan discussed that Ms. Judy deSarno had expressed interest in being appointed to the Planning Commission and that she had been a resident of Harris Hollow Road for 13 years and had been running a major non-profit for many years but was now retired. He discussed that she had now taken on a leadership position as organizer of the Christmas Parade and that the Town was lucky to have her volunteer for the Planning Commission and that she would be a great addition.

Mr. Goebel nominated Ms. deSarno to the Planning Commission and Mr. Schwartz seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Schwartz voted "yes" Mr. Goebel voted "yes"
Ms. Kuhn voted "yes" Ms. Butler voted "yes"
Mayor Sullivan voted "yes"

And the motion passed 5-0.

- NEW BUSINESS: a). Nature Trail Ceremony on June 27, 2014: Mayor Sullivan discussed that most people knew about the work being done on the Nature Trail and the Avon Hall pond. He discussed that there were a significant number of environmental groups working to make those properties look fabulous and that the Nature Trail had now reached a point where the Town wanted to have a ceremony/celebration to recognize the 30 or 40 people who had put in a lot of time, money, and effort into it and that the ceremony would be held on Friday, June 27th at 10 a.m. He discussed that the Trail would be another place for people to have something to do and to have another place to walk around it in town. He encouraged everyone to come and help recognize all the people who had been doing all the work.

- PUBLIC FORUM: Mayor Sullivan opened the Public Forum: Mayor Sullivan discussed that he had been exposed to some of the views of the public over the last week and that he knew some of the questions and issues that were out there and that he wanted to address some of them. He discussed that he assumed everyone had read the Washington Post article about what was supposed to be going on in town and that there had been much comment about the article. He discussed that he, for one, found it a one dimensional piece that had focused on a particular story line and that understandably some people were insulted by the notion that here was a town that needed to be saved and that someone was going to save it.

He discussed that he understood that there was a lot of anger and frustration on the subject but that he wanted to put some of this in context. He discussed that he did not like the word dying or what have you but he thought it was worth going back 5 or 6 years ago when the wastewater system was put in due to the work that Gene Leggett and the Council had done. He discussed that it was his belief, and what a number of people has said, and the facts suggested it, that the population in town from 2000 to 2010 declined 26% from 183 people to 135 people and had declined 10 or 15 people in the decade before that.

He discussed that it was his view that it was a wonderful town that they had loved and moved into but it had not exactly been on an upward trend and that one of the problems was the lack of a sewer system and that the town had been resting on septic and that problem had been solved, which had resulted in growth, energy, and vitality in the town, which a number of people had encouraged. He discussed that if you went back to that time when there was a declining population there were literally 10 or 12 buildings in town that were empty in a town of approximately 100 buildings. He discussed that he was prepared to name them all but some obvious ones were the Packing Shed building, the

Pullen house, and the Smoot house and that the demographics suggested that a lot of people had not wanted to move into the town. He discussed that he thought what had happened could largely be attributed to the access to sewer and that fact that we had a terrific town. He discussed that people started to move here and that of those 10 or 12 buildings a number of them were bought up by individuals, who he would be happy to name, who decided that they were going to come here and they fixed up and revitalized 3 or 4 buildings, which might not seem like a lot but it was a small town. He discussed that other buildings had been revitalized by existing people who owned buildings like the Ballards but clearly the most significant was Ken Thompson, who came into town about 5 years ago and totally revitalized the Kramer Building and filled it with offices, a restaurant, and now a bar and had totally turned the building around. He discussed that there were others who had decided to buy and fix up buildings and that now they were getting to the elephant in the room and that Jim Abdo had decided to buy the Heritage House and have it continue as a B&B while investing a lot of money in the place. He discussed that he happened to think that this was terrific and was part of moving in the right direction. He discussed that some people didn't like everything that was done including the color.

He discussed that he had gotten to know Mr. Abdo after he had bought the Heritage House and it was clear that he wanted to buy other buildings and had asked what if he wanted to buy the Rapp News building and what would the Town allow him to do if he bought it and would they let him do a bar or a restaurant or this or that. He discussed that he had said to Mr. Abdo that what the Town would allow him to do in a heartbeat would be to get the Red Truck Bakery in here, which he had been trying to do for 3 years through Mr. Thompson. He discussed that Mr. Abdo did get the Red Truck Bakery to agree and that he thought it was going to take place and that it was a terrific move. He discussed that there were significant things that they could talk about that Mr. Abdo was doing and that he understood and that the magnitude of what he was doing was making some people go whoa, whoa and that he got that but that in his experience Mr. Abdo's notions of retail and food additions would be good for the town.

He discussed that he wanted to address one issue head on and that because he had told the newspaper that he has put Mr. Abdo in the same room with Mr. O'Connell that had been perceived as a conspiracy of some sort. He discussed that was as much of a conspiracy as his working with Ken Thompson to try and get the Red Truck Bakery into town, which did not work. He discussed that he believed that it was his job as a mayor, who did have an agenda of growth both for people living here and for businesses, to encourage that growth. He discussed that he did not just talk to Mr. Abdo or Mr. O'Connell but to every single person who might have a potential interest in doing something in town and he thought that was his job and it was not done in secret. He discussed that the Town was dependent on the Inn and everybody said that the Town was too financially dependent on the Inn, which was true, so the alternative to that was to have other businesses and having other people here doing things to give some kind of balance.

He discussed that there were other points he wanted to make before getting into formal questions and that everyone present loved the town, which was a unique and extremely special place and that the job of the Town Council was to approve any exceptions to the Ordinances, which were tight, and that there was also an ARB. He discussed that people had the right to buy and sell property but as far as what was done with the property the Town had pretty tight controls so it was the job of the Council, the ARB, the Planning Commission, and the people in the community particularly people in town, but not necessarily limited to that, to help shape exactly how the town grew and to

strengthen the town in a way that kept the specialty and that was the challenge the Town faced and had always faced.

Ms. Katharine Leggett discussed that some county residents and town residents did not recognize that the Town did have a Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan) and so that when things came before the Town discussions were based to the Comp Plan and were not just random.

Ms. Christine Smith discussed that the Comp Plan posted on the Town's website was the 2006 Comp Plan and asked when it had been updated.

Ms. Dodd discussed that the Comp Plan had been updated in 2012 and that she took entire responsibility for the website not being up to date and that she would make sure that the Comp Plan would be on the website before the end of the week.

At which point Ms. Smith, Ms. Dodd and others all spoke at the same time resulting in Mayor Sullivan discussing that although it was an open conversation people had to keep a certain level of respect.

Ms. Smith discussed that she was a past resident of town and that she liked to look at things independently by researching them on line and she expressed her concerns that information including the current Comp Plan, the Zoning Ordinances, and minutes from July 2013 were not available on line.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that Ms. Smith made a good point.

Mr. Schwartz discussed that the 2006 Comp Plan had been updated by the Planning Commission in 2012 and that the major thread of the update was that the sewer system, including the Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Conveyance System, had come on line, and what legalities had changed since 2006 regarding the system but otherwise there were no many substantive changes to the Comp Plan. He discussed that that did not dismiss that the Comp Plan was not posted but the changes were not substantial to the general nature of the Town.

Ms. Smith discussed that since the Comp Plan showed that it needed to be updated every four years and it was 2014 it looked like the Plan had not been updated and that any information that could be provided would be appreciated.

Ms. Dodd discussed that if Ms. Smith gave her her email address she would email the Comp Plan to her.

Mr. Brad Schneider discussed that there were lots of municipalities that had large IT departments whose websites were not up to date. He discussed that he had worked on the Comp Plan so he could state that there were certain guidelines for new businesses in Town, that there was a water and sewer system, and that there were many things to be considered before people could do certain things on their properties. He discussed that his personal experience was that some towns changed for good and some for not so good and that he thought it was important for the entire community to be active in what was going on and what was being proposed and that they should express their views if they thought something wasn't going to be good for the Town. He discussed that it was important that the community work collectively. He discussed that Mr. Abdo was a developer and that as a developer he was going to push for what he could get and the Town had to keep that in balance and keep the Town similar to the way it was. He discussed that having 8 properties empty and not producing revenue and not producing value for the community should be changed but only in a way conforming the Comp Plan and the Zoning Ordinances.

Ms. Nancy Buntin discussed that the Washington Post article had been badly played and expressed her concerns that Mr. Abdo was an urban person and that urban people looked at country people with skepticism and disdain and never shall the twain meet. She discussed that Mr. Abdo was going to retain ownership of all these properties that he had

bought and asked if they would be rented. She discussed that if he retained control and people came in as renters and then they discovered things were not working they would have no incentive to stay because they had not been pouring all their resources into the property like many people who had bought and moved and lived here who had put all their resources into their properties. She expressed her concerns that Mr. Abdo would not be putting all his financial resources into the building and if his renters did not work out they could just leave. She discussed that she had watched Mr. O'Connell buy up buildings for over 30 years and that had been a shock to her as a longtime resident but he had stayed and stuck with the town through some very hard times, even when he was not well received and that he had poured money into his properties and that you had to give him that. She discussed that Mr. Abdo was putting money in but was he going to get tired or bored and perhaps go somewhere else. She discussed that the town needed someone who was going to stick with the town for the long term growth and that some of the ideas Mr. Abdo had put forth would impinge on the success of others who had put all their resources into their businesses and who have been here or are planning to be here for a good amount of time.

She discussed that the beds were not full all the time, not in winter, not in summer except for weekends and although there was not a 100 % occupancy the town was getting more beds.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that Rappahannock County as a whole and the Town as well had trouble supporting businesses, which everybody knew, and businesses came and went and some were able to stick it out. He discussed that there were those in the Town and in the County that thought, and he was one of them, that if you wanted to live and survive as a business in the County than there had to be a certain amount of Tourism and people coming here and it had to be more than in the past.

He discussed that he thought the Town of Washington was better off with having more retail and more restaurants and more whatever within the appropriate Zoning Ordinance as the Town prescribed and allowed. He discussed that the more the Town had the more likely people were to succeed and that there had to be more to do and that the Town had to be known for more than the Inn at Little Washington and twelve empty buildings. He discussed that if anyone's business, including Mr. Abdo's, didn't succeed then they didn't but no one could make that happen. He discussed that if he was a B&B owner he would probably like to see more places for guests to eat or if he was a store owner he would probably like to see more people coming into town. He discussed that if they were talking about a scale of 5 or 10 more rooms for a B&B or another 50 people showing up that was still not a lot of people.

He discussed that Mr. McCarthy had had a pragmatically discussed with him that if someone came in and fixed up the Packing Shed, which had been empty for who knew how long, and then their business didn't work out then minimally you'd have a fixed up building. He discussed that if you fixed up a building that was uncared for and the business did not succeed that was too bad but at least the infrastructure had been revitalized.

Mr. Gary Aichele discussed that he and his wife had moved into town about a year ago and owned the Gay Street Inn and that he wanted to add to Ms. Buntin's point. He discussed that he and his wife had cashed out their retirement funds to make a bet that running a B&B in Little Washington would be more rewarding and in the long run as economically sound as staying with the stock market. He discussed that to a point it was true that some of us had sunk their life savings into the Town of Little Washington with the hope it would eventually pay off.

He discussed that they had at least three phone calls from perspective guests, who subscribed to the Post and that they had all said something like they wanted to come soon before whoever ruined the Town of Washington. He discussed that he wanted the Town to have the opportunity to reassure readers of the Washington Post that this was still Little Washington with no traffic jams or lights and that it still had the character they wanted to come to. He discussed that it was his observation that it was part of the bigger conversation that there were people who came here who had very special and strong memories of what the Town was and what they loved about it and the Town needed to remember that they were stewards and custodians.

He discussed that since they had moved here they had heard conversations that were somewhat paradoxical as on the one hand there was no place for regular people to live and that the Town of Washington's residences turned out to be pretty pricey and in terms of creating an organic town with children, dogs, and residents of all kinds it was a pretty rough deal because it was not just needing weekenders or once a month visitors and they needed a live and work in the Town model.

He discussed that the thought someone should ask Mr. Abdo if he had any ideas for Avon Hall. He discussed that he realized change was inevitable but his question was what would the Town look like in ten years and that he appreciated that the Town was working diligently to make the town a vibrant place.

Ms. Sara Walton discussed that she had been a reporter for over 10 years and that she felt that dissenters had given the Post reporter too much credit and that the reporter did not live here and that he liked controversy and people should take the story with a grain of salt.

Mr. Bill Walton discussed that he was a full time resident of the County and had worked with equity financing and had financed major developments throughout North America. He discussed that he had met Mr. Abdo once and that unfortunately developers talked like Mr. Abdo had done in the Washington Post. He discussed that there was a report in the Rappahannock News that Mr. Abdo had bought 8-10 properties but he said that there was an ARB and a Planning Commission and a terrific town Council and that there were checks and balances to keep Mr. Abdo from doing something that did not fit the character of the town. He discussed that Mr. Abdo had invested several million dollars into the town and was not about to walk away from it.

Ms. Molly Miller discussed that the reporter did not live here and that more and more newspapers were going online, and that newspaper had to have more and more interesting stories, which they achieved by adding sensationalism and controversy. She discussed that as a student of journalism she was learning that was what reporters had to do.

Mr. Schwartz discussed that he and his wife had sold the Heritage House to Mr. Abdo two years ago and he had come to know him reasonably well and he had to say that you could not always believe everything you read in the paper and that years ago when he got elected the newspaper had said Schwartz elected Attorney resigns, however the Attorney had not resigned. He discussed that the Post article had said that the Heritage House was failing but he had not thought that it was failing and that also given the price the article had said he had been given than Mr. Abdo owned him a big stack of money. He discussed that there was a lot of misinformation and that the Town was still in control with the Town Council, the ARB, the Planning Commission, the Zoning Ordinance, the Comp Plan, the Historic District Ordinance, and the Historic District Ordinance Guidelines. He discussed that the Town also shared Mr. McCarthy with the County as the Town's Zoning Administrator so he was distraught that people were saying that things were out of control in Town and that there were no controls in place when the John McCarthy kept the County and certainly the Town in check. He discussed that for 5+ years on the Town

Council and for 10 + years on the Planning Commission he had seen one SUP come before the Council on the White Moose Inn and 2 applications for the ARB, one for the White Moose Inn, and one revamp for the Rapp News building. He discussed that he was a neighbor of the White Moose Inn and you could say he was Mr. Abdo's best friend or his worst nightmare. He discussed that the White Moose Inn had been made to correct some wastewater easement infringements and that the ARB had made them correct several issues including lighting, decking, and replacing a chimney that had been removed. He discussed that he did not think people could say Mr. Abdo was running free with no controls.

Ms. Caroline Anstey, of Main Street, discussed that everyone could agree that the tone of the Washington Post article was unfortunate. She discussed that she had been a BBC journalist and that some of the things that had been reported had been taken out of context and those things happened but the impression that Mr. Abdo had given was unfortunate. She discussed that she felt a lot of this had to do with the sale of property and that if it had been 11 people buying 11 properties she didn't think that any one of us would be concerned because they would think it was a good thing that these properties were being bought up and being restored. She discussed that everyone was troubled by the idea of an overarching vision of which there wasn't much detail but paradoxically she felt that the fact that Mr. Abdo had bought so many properties made people concerned that it made it easier for him to walk away compared to someone who had invested their life savings into their property, which was a paradox because she thought that might not necessarily be the case but it troubled everyone. She discussed that people were troubled again by the disparity of what people were told was the vision and the actual facts that people knew. She discussed that people knew that there was a B&B, a bakery, a restaurant coming in, and a store but that was only 4 or 5 properties and Mr. Abdo had bought 11. She discussed that she was not one to prejudge and that she respected that when people bought properties that they had rights with them and she did think that the Town's checks and balances were good but there was a credibility gap between what was heard about the 11 properties and what was actually known about what was to happen. She discussed that she believed that more information should be shared and that Mr. Abdo should talk about what was going to happen going forward and that she was of the belief that some of the development was good and that if it was 11 individuals that the Town would be celebrating. She discussed that people were scared of the "D" word, the developer word, and that that made it easy for him to come in and easy for him to leave. She discussed that the gap needed to be breached with more information about what was in store for the 11 properties and how many would be B&Bs, how many would be retail but also Mr. Abdo need to be heard from himself. She discussed that most property owners did not have a responsibility to tell what they were to do but when you own 11 properties it kind of changed the stakes and the more Mr. Abdo could tell the more it would calm people's disquiet and that as long as there was disquiet there would be rumors. She discussed that she used to think RappNet was the greatest thing but could no longer read it because of the bitterness and vindictiveness.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that he agreed with her fundamental point that if it had been 11 people it would not have been a big deal but because it was one person and his friends it was a big deal.

Mr. Judd Swift complimented Ms. Anstey on her comments and discussed that he thought it was a matter of transparency and scale. He discussed that Mr. Piantadosi and the Rappahannock News would be hosting a public forum on Thursday night at the Theatre and that might be the time for Mr. Abdo to put out a positive message on growth and what his plans were. He discussed that he agreed that the rhetoric was out of control

and needed to stop and it was unpleasant and unseemly and that he had moved to town to get away from that and people did not want to hear those types of personal attacks.

He also discussed that his wife, Gail Swift, was unable to attend but she wanted him let the Mayor know that she appreciated everything that he had done and that she had worked hard on the County's Tourism Committee and now those ideas were coming out and that everybody agreed that tourism was going to be good for the town by creating jobs and bringing in tourism dollars.

Ms. Diane MacPherson discussed that she disagreed with the Mayor that the town had a hard time keeping business and businesses and that she thought that the problem in the ten years that she and her husband had owned the Foster Harris House where businesses had come and gone was that those businesses did not have any skin in the game while she felt that she and her husband had all their skin in the game and she was thankful that Union Bank helped them do it. She discussed that if people came into town and were motivated and had what people wanted then anyone could succeed and that there was plenty of opportunity here. She discussed that she felt that businesses would not work here if people did not depend on it for their livelihood. She discussed that her fear was that the town would become a ghost town when the guests and owner left after the weekend and the people who actually lived here would be left all alone especially in February and March.

She discussed that she and town resident Christa Weeks wanted to get the issue of speeding in town on the July agenda.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that the issue of speeding would be on the agenda. He discussed that he agreed that there was a difference between people who lived here and had a stake in the town and people who didn't live here and it was a valid point. He discussed that the Red Truck Bakery was exactly the type of business that the Town wanted and it was going to be here because of Mr. Abdo.

Mr. Walton discussed that agreed with the notion that someone buying 11 properties was fundamentally different from someone buying one. He discussed he was retired now but he had experience with all sizes of businesses and the highest failure rate was by family owned undercapitalized businesses because you needed enough capital to get you through the hard times. He discussed that people like Mr. Abdo, who could be channeled to do what the Town wanted, had a bigger chance for success because they had the resources.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that Mr. Abdo would be at the public forum on Thursday at the Theatre and perhaps the Town might wish to invite him to a Town Council meeting to discuss his plans.

Mr. Swift discussed that he had heard a lot about people wanting to have people stay during the week and on weekends and that he was still hoping to render some opinions on Avon Hall and its use as an upscale conference center and that he hoped to hear from someone.

Mr. Schwarz discussed that he agreed with Ms. MacPherson's worries about the Town becoming a ghost town during the winter and summer and that a few years ago he had figured out that there were 71 residents in houses and B&Bs, that there were 100 structures, and that 26 properties were in mixed use like the Ballards, Wine Loves Chocolate, and the Inn, there were several structures in village services like the County buildings, and about 6 structures in rural residential. He discussed that right now there was reasonable balance between residential and commercial and unless there was a lot of rezoning the Town was in good shape.

He discussed that he had had many conversations with Mr. Abdo and he didn't think Mr. Abdo's direction was opposite the Comp Plan or what the Zoning would allow for

and that he was not sure how many of the 11 properties Mr. Abdo was said to own were in Town and how were actually in the County but the Town Council on behalf of the citizens would work with Mr. Abdo with the Ordinances and guidelines and that he thought there would be an improvement and that he would commend Mr. Abdo. He discussed that everyone should be present when the Town was working on the Comp Plan or revising the ordinances because that was the time to voice their opinions on whether or not to make changes.

Mr. Ray Gooch discussed that north side of town past Middle St. on Gay St. was mainly residential once you got past the Inn but on the South side of Middle Street on Gay St. he was only one of two residential properties and if you looked at Main St. there was less than 8 residential properties. He discussed that he did not include B&Bs even if people lived there as they were commercial properties. He discussed that people needed to understand that if it took a village then it took residents to make that village and there weren't many left and that there would be even less if residential properties kept being converted to commercial use.

Mayor Sullivan asked when the last residential property had been converted to commercial.

Ms. Leggett discussed that the current Rappahannock News building on Jett St. had gone back in forth from residential to commercial over last 100 years and was now commercial.

Mr. Aichele discussed that the issue was complicated and that his B&B could have gone back to being a residential property but he did not believe that the Inn's properties could because of the amount of money invested in them. He discussed he did not know how to balance keeping businesses and employees verses keeping residents.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that people made fun of the fact that only about 30 people voted in the Town election and he agreed that the Town needed more people regardless if people managed a B&B and lived there.

Mr. Gooch discussed that the Town had an SUP application coming up at the July meeting that had been a fully occupied home that was to be converted to a commercial use and that the Council needed to look at that and there was compelling language in the Comp. Plan that dealt with the issue.

Ms. Michelle Schwarz discussed that she and her husband Gary had sold their "failing" B&B, as reported in the Post, to Mr. Abdo, which had been hard to swallow but she did realize that what Mr. Abdo was trying to do was to bring in businesses into empty buildings. She discussed that she found the venom and personal attacks on RappNet unsettling. She discussed that it had been on RappNet that maybe the County could get in on some of the action in the Town and she discussed that the County did receive some of the Sales taxes collected in Town.

Mayor Sullivan closed the Public Forum at 8:30 p.m.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that he hoped he spoke for his fellow Council members in saying that despite any conflict it was a delight to have people present and talking about what was going on in Town and that he hoped everyone felt like they had benefited from the conversation.

- CLOSED SESSION:
- ADJOURNMENT: At 8:35 p.m. Mr. Schwartz made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Goebel seconded and the motion passed 5-0 and the meeting was adjourned.

NEXT SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON AUGUST 11, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Dodd
Town Clerk

Attachments:

Treasurer's report
Additional Bills to be Paid
Bills to be Paid
Report on Avon Hall from John McCarthy
Approved FY 2014-2015 Budget