

The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

October 6, 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 Gary Schwartz, Patrick O'Connell, Dan Spethmann, Mary Ann Kuhn, and Katharine Leggett were present. Treasurer Jerry Goebel was absent. Town Attorney John Bennett and Town Clerk Laura Dodd were present. _
- MINUTES: July 14, 2014: Ms. Kuhn made a motion to approve the July 14, 2014 minutes and Mr. O'Connell seconded and the motion passed 6-0. .
- REPORTS: Treasury Report: Mayor Sullivan reviewed the attached Bank Summary Report and asked the Council to review the Bills-To-Be Paid List, and the Additional Bills to Be Paid List. He discussed that the Virginia Resource Administration bill of \$88,745.31 reflected the Town's biannual sewer loan payment.
Mr. Schwartz discussed that the connection fees income listed under wastewater reflected the last commercial user payments of assessed connection fees and that the last residential user payments had been finished last year.
Ms. Leggett made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report and Mr. Schwartz seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

Planning Commission: Chairman Schwartz reported that there had been no meeting and that the Council needed someone to come forward with a letter of interest in being appointed to the Planning Commission.

Architectural Review Board: Mayor Sullivan reported that the ARB had not received any applications and that there would be no meeting this month.

Website: Ms. Kuhn had no report

Mayor Sullivan discussed that there would be the annual trick or treating in the town on Friday, October 31st to be followed by a bonfire down towards Avon Hall led by Hunt Harris. He discussed that the Artists Tour would also be held that weekend. He discussed that a magazine called Edible DC had just come out with a large piece on Rappahannock County and the Town of Washington focusing on the explosion of a wide array of restaurants and food and people producing food and wine in the county and that it was a very favorable piece.

He discussed that there had been a Board of Supervisors (BOS) meeting that afternoon that he and Council members Spethmann, Schwartz, and Kuhn had attended and that during the public forum there had been a long discussion on whether the Town should lose or have its Charter taken away and be taken over by the County and that various

views had been expressed on the subject. He discussed that after that session the BOS had taken the issue up and the basic point had been that for the Town's Charter to be revoked and for the Town to be taken over by the County it required that the Town's residents had to wish and vote for it and that the Council had to vote for it before the BOS would vote on it. He discussed that if the Town asked for it then it would require lengthy discussions regarding what the County would be responsible for. He discussed that the general opinion, including that of Washington's Supervisor Byrant Lee, was that the Town was well managed and run and if it wasn't broken why fix it. He discussed that the BOS had decided that there was no reason to spend time discussing the issue unless the Town indicated it wanted to be taken over by the County.

Mr. Schwartz discussed that Supervisor Frazier and Chairman Welch had supported tabling the discussion and that John McCarthy had discussed that it was not worth pursuing at that time.

Mr. Spethmann discussed that in general revoking a town's charter was usually based on solving financial difficulties or on malfeasance, which were not issues for the Town of Washington. He discussed that as well as the Town residents, the Council, and the BOS having to vote for the Charter being revoked the State legislature would also have vote. He discussed that the Town's debt could not be transferred.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that the County could take on the Town's debt if it chose to but there would be issues that would have to be resolved.

- TOWN ATTORNEY: Mr. Bennett had no report.

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- OLD BUSINESS: a). RappFlow Avon Hall Presentation: Mayor Sullivan discussed that over the last two years there had been two projects being done simultaneously on the Avon Hall property, one by the Old Rag Master Naturalists who had been working on the Nature Trail and that project had just been designated the best Master Naturalist project in the state of Virginia. He discussed that volunteer hours had been spent on the Trail and gardens for the good and positive benefit of the Town and County and it was really nice to have it voted the best project around the state by their colleagues.

He discussed that RappFlow was working on the Avon Hall pond project and once again it was volunteer time being spent on something that was good for the community.

Ms. Bev Hunter gave the Council a status report on the pond project, attached, and discussed that further information was available on the RappFlow web site. She discussed that the good news was that no geese had been observed around the pond since mid-August and they were excited about that. She discussed that the original assumption had been that if they got rid of the geese then they would get rid of the pollution and that had been validated as the E.coli levels had dropped dramatically from 5000 colonies down to 2 colonies. She discussed the various tasks that RappFlow had said they would accomplish, including planting native grasses in the buffer area, erecting an exclusion fence to keep geese out, monitoring water quality, and planting a scrub buffer and native wildflowers and they had been done. She discussed that the providing of educational matter such as a brochure and plant lists had been done. She discussed that a sign was being worked on and that providing educational events and data gathering on water quality, plants, and animals was ongoing. She discussed that a fish survey had been done along with the Virginia Department of Inland Fisheries, who had indicated that they would be willing to stock the pond in an ecological friendly manner if the Town agreed to it.

Mr. Marc Malik discussed they were planning on placing four signs describing the project around the pond, similar in design to the Civil War signs that were in town and he

showed a model of a sign to the Council. He discussed that they still needed to get approval of the signs from the Town and that the high school trade class would be making the sign stands.

Mr. Spethmann asked if it would be possible to include signage with bar codes so more information about the project could be uploaded on a smart phone.

Mr. Sam Quinn, Sunnyside Farms conservation manger, discussed that a QR code could be placed on the signs and that overall the projecting was looking great. He discussed that the type of seeds that had been planted grew very slowly and it would take a year or so to see results and that they had enough seeds to reseed if necessary.

Mr. Spethmann asked if aquatic plants had been planted.

Mr. Quinn discussed that the first focus had been on getting the buffer planted but some aquatic plants would be going in.

Ms. Hunter discussed that all of the different species of plants that had been planted were listed on the web site.

After a short discussion Mayor Sullivan discussed that the goal was to work with community volunteers to make a good part of the land on the Avon Hall property better environmentally and to accomplish the goals of RappFlow and to take land that was basically uncared for and overtime to give people something else to do. He discussed that the Nature Trail and Pond projects were great educational tools and that basically all the projects had been financed by grants from a number of agencies except for a small amount of funds from the Town. He discussed what was truly remarkable was the number of volunteers, perhaps as many as forty or fifty, between the two groups who had been working on the projects and it was a real testament to volunteerism in the county.

He discussed that there were some trees that needed to be removed around and the Town might have to pay someone to do the work.

b). Speeding on Main Street: Mayor Sullivan discussed that VDOT had done a study of speeding along Main Street and had changed some of the signage coming into town from Fodderstack but a s pedestrian sign still needed to go in. He discussed that the Sheriff's office had been giving out tickets ad warning. He discussed that the signage had just gone up so the impact of the new signs was unclear but he thought that the people living along Main Street were still concerned and the Town would have to keep working on it. He reported that the Town had received an email from the Swifts saying that there were still problems.

Fred Catlin asked if speeding along Mt. Salem Avenue had been looked at since he felt there were speeding problems there as well.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that VDOT had not looked Mt. Salem Avenue but there were issues at all the entrances to town and that perhaps the Sheriff's office, which had been very cooperative, could look at it.

Ms. Christa Weeks discussed that the VDOT study had showed that 15% of the people driving were speeding and that where the 25 mile per hour signs were did not seem to make sense. She discussed that there needed to be a speed sign somewhere from Middle Street going out towards Fodderstack. She discussed that the stop sign on Wheeler at Main Street was missing.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that VDOT had been asked to replace it. He discussed that the Town would continue to work on the speeding issues.

c). SUP Guidelines resolution: Mayor Sullivan discussed that Mr. Bennett and Mr. McCarthy had been working on guidelines as to what the Town expected from people when they made a Special Use Permit application.

Mr. Bennett discussed that he had circulated a draft resolution and he was waiting from comments from Council so the resolution could be in a form ready for consideration at the next Council meeting.

Ms. Kuhn gave some comments to Mr. Bennett basically regarding grammar.

- NEW BUSINESS: a). Authorization of a Public Hearing on the consideration and review of an extension and possible modifications of conditions of Special Use Permit SU #12-07-01 the Inn at the Ridge, DBA the White Moose Inn, to allow the residential manager to reside at the Pullen House: Mayor Sullivan discussed that a year ago the White Moose Inn had applied to operate a hotel with six rooms with off site management and the Council had agreed to off site management at the Pullen house with the condition to review the off site management in one year to see if there were any problems. He discussed that the Council needed to authorize a Public Hearing for November for the review.

Mr. Schwartz made a motion to authorize and advertise a Public Hearing at the November Council meeting to review the Special Use Permit SU#12-07-01 for off site management at the Pullen house for the White Moose Inn and Ms. Kuhn seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Schwartz voted “yes”	Mayor Sullivan voted “yes”
Mr. O’Connell voted “yes”	Ms. Leggett voted “yes”
Ms. Kuhn voted “yes”	Mr. Spethmann voted “yes”

And the motion passed 6-0.

- b). Water Treatment Plant Repair Proposal: Mayor Sullivan discussed that the Town had received a proposal from Mr. Griffis to do a modest repair at the water treatment plant.

After a short discussion Mr. Schwartz asked Ms. Dodd to check into licensing and insurance and Mr. Spethmann made a motion to authorize up to \$843.07 for repairs at the pump house and Ms. Leggett seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Schwartz voted “yes”	Mayor Sullivan voted “yes”
Mr. O’Connell voted “yes”	Ms. Leggett voted “yes”
Ms. Kuhn voted “yes”	Mr. Spethmann voted “yes”

And the motion passed 6-0.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that the Council might wish to consider raising the amount he was authorized to spend up to \$1000 sometime in the future.

- PUBLIC FORUM: Mayor Sullivan opened the Public Forum:

Mr. Spethmann discussed that both the Master Naturalists and RappFlow had done the Town a great service and that he felt that the Town should find some way to recognize their wonderful volunteerism.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that both groups were looking for more volunteers and he encouraged people to get involved.

Ms. Leggett suggested the possibility of giving a recognition plaque.

Mayor Sullivan discussed the possibility of a party or an event.

Mr. Peter Kramer expressed his concerns about the conditions of the Avon Hall structures especially Rose Cottage and that something needed to be done to keep them from falling apart. He suggested that a committee be formed to oversee the property and to find money for their care. He also spoke in favor of moving the Town boundary on Warren Avenue out to Route 211 to protect the entrance into town.

Mr. Spethmann agreed with Mr. Kramer regarding the Avon Hall property and discussed a grant proposal that had not been accepted that would have pulled that corner into an overall stewardship of Avon Hall project. He discussed that there was a chance to reapply in January.

Mr. Kramer discussed that seeking grants made sense but there was something about getting people together to keep the house from deteriorating.

Mr. Spethmann discussed that he had been speaking about acquiring the corner and that there was a group that was meeting and discussing what was going to happen to Avon Hall.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that there were ongoing discussions about what was a good use for it.

Mr. Kramer discussed that regardless of what the use was there were things that needed to be done now to keep them from deteriorating particularly at Rose Cottage with the chimney and the porch.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that the Avon Hall building itself was in good shape had been looked at by several experts.

Mr. Spethmann discussed that a contractor had looked at both buildings and the Council had acted on the most critical recommendations.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that the Town would look again at Rose Cottage.

Mr. Catlin asked about how to get the information on why the grant Mr. Spethmann had spoken about had been declined.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that Mr. Spethmann might have that information.

Mayor Sullivan closed the Public Forum.

- CLOSED SESSION:

- ADJOURNMENT: At 8:10 p.m. Mayor Sullivan made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Schwartz seconded and the motion passed 6-0 and the meeting was adjourned.

NEXT SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON NOVEMBER 10, 2014

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Dodd
Town Clerk

Attachments:
Treasurer's report
Additional Bills to be Paid
Bills to be Paid
RappFlow Avon Hall Status Report
Griffis Water Treatment Plant Proposal

