

The Town of Washington

January 7, 2023
Council Special Meeting
Approved Agenda
12:00 p.m.

- CALL TO ORDER Action
Swearing in of the Town Council
- APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA Action
- REPORTS Mayor's Report: Mayor Whited Information
- NEW BUSINESS
 - a) Town Council appointments Action
 - b) Resolution to establish a fund to receive charitable contributions Action
- PUBLIC FORUM Information
- ADJOURNMENT Information

NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
January 9, 2023

The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

January 7, 2023

12:00 p.m.

APPROVED Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Joe Whited opened the meeting at 12:00 p.m. Council members Fred Catlin, Jean Goodine, Patrick O'Connell, Brad Schneider, Gail Swift were present. Town Administrator/Clerk Barbara Batson was also present. Drew Beard was absent.

- MAYOR'S REPORTS:

First, I want to thank Rev. Keeler and Judge Gale for participating in today's ceremony. I hope that we will be able to live up to the expectations of both the prayer we have just heard and the oath we have just taken.

It's worth noting, that Joe Gale is the person who brought me to Washington for first time, well over a decade ago and little did I know then that that window tour of the town on a quiet Fall afternoon was the first step in a long and certainly not a direct path that would lead us to today. But boy am I glad it did.

While the Mayor's report is usually a review of recent events or what has happened since our last meeting, today, I would like to take a little time and talk about what I hope, we together, can accomplish over the next 4 years.

Now, some have said we are entering a time of change for our town and our community. Others have said that it isn't so much a time of change as a renaissance. Well, I have to say friends, I agree with the latter. I believe that this is a period not of change but of renewal. A period in which will see the population of our town increase for the first time in many years, a time when our long-established businesses will continue to grow, and hopefully, with the encouragement of this Council a time in which we will see the opening of new shops and restaurants, and a renewed vibrancy in our community.

So, what can we do together, to encourage this renaissance. First and foremost, we must continue our work to ensure the Town remains on a firm financial footing not just for our time but for the future. We must remain committed to building up our reserves while also working to retire our debt as quickly as possible. At the same time, our effort to re-capitalize our public utilities and put in place plans to ensure their viability over the long term must continue apace. These are the foundations on which all the other things we might hope to accomplish are laid and I believe must be our highest priority.

That said, I also believe there is more we can and must do to encourage this era of renewal. And let me start right here in the building where we are all sitting. As many of you know this Hall has had many lives in our community, serving over the last century and a half as a temple of God, a temple of knowledge, and in more recent years a temple of democracy, democracy in its purest sense.

However, as it passes it's one hundred and sixty fifth year in service to our community, those years are starting to show. So, in our session later today I will be asking my colleagues to create a Town of Washington Trust Account to enable tax deductible contributions to the restoration and preservation of this wonderful center for our community. Though, it is important to note that all donations need not be financial. There is a myriad of other ways you can contribute to the preservation and enhancement of this building and of our town. And I'd like to recognize one of those ways right now.

Many of you will have noticed the new prints hanging on the wall of this chamber. These 19th Century flags were very generously donated by our esteemed former Mayor John Fox Sullivan and his wife Beverly. I'd like to ask for a round of applause to thank John and Beverly for their donation.

And it's not just material contributions. While the initial priority of this trust will be the preservation of Town Hall, it will not be limited to that work, in the long run, funds and in-kind contributions, will allow the Town to build on the work of the Washington Planters, who have taken on the annual task of beautifying our community through the planting of flowers and decorating our streets for the holidays, as well as allowing us to support additional community events.

Speaking of community events, the return of the Town Holiday Party this year and this very ceremony, are I think important steps in our effort to rebuild our sense of community following the pandemic. It is my hope that this Council will be able to support a broader range of community events, spanning all seasons, in the years to come. Events which will bring our neighbors and friends together to celebrate this place we are so lucky to call home.

Now to ensure the renaissance we are experiencing is enduring, we must not only commit to beautifying our town and enhancing our sense of community. We must also make it clear that Washington is, to borrow a phrase, open for business. That we are a town that welcomes and encourages businesses to start here or move here and once they are here, to thrive. To that end, I have invited all the owners of businesses and commercial properties in the town to a round table discussion the first week of February to hear what more we can do to encourage them to open new business, build their current business, or put to use long fallow properties.

While I look forward to hearing from our business community next month. There are actions I think this Council can and should take to ensure our forward momentum. To that end, in the coming months I will propose that we modify the Town's Meals and Lodging tax to grant those who start a new business or expand an existing business in the town a 2-year tax holiday.

While there will be many details to work out, the basic formulation would be this. If a new restaurant or lodging should open in town, they would not be liable for any town taxes for their first 24 months of operation. If one of our existing Inns should add new rooms, any income from those rooms would not be taxed for the first 24 months of use. And finally, should any of our smaller Inn's or those hosting temporary housing for tourists make a significant investment in upgrading a room, then that particular room would not be liable for taxes for a period of 24 months This is an action which will not only reward our current businesses, but I believe also

encourage others who have long considered opening a business in town to move ahead with their plans.

I hope that my colleagues will support me in this initiative.

Further, I will be working with our Town Clerk, our Counsel, our Zoning Administrator and the Chairs of our Planning Commission and Architectural Review Board to ensure that applications for the renovation or expansion of private or commercial properties which do not require changes in zoning or other complex evaluation, are reviewed, amended, and with very rare exceptions approved within 90 days of receipt.

While we won't cut corners, we have a responsibility to all of you to provide both fast and efficient government services.

Now let me conclude my first report to you as your new Mayor with some words from our namesake George Washington. He said "Every post is honorable in which a man can serve his country." I would add not just serve his country but serve his community. And I want to thank you for the great honor of allowing me to serve our community as your mayor.

Thank you and God bless you.

- NEW BUSINESS:

- (a) Resolution honoring Fredric F. Catlin, Mayor of Washington, Virginia.

Mayor Whited thanked Mr. Catlin for his service as Mayor and read into the record the below resolution:

Whereas, Fredric F. Catlin served as the Mayor of the Town of Washington Virginia from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022 with exceptional dedication to the Town and its citizens; and

Whereas, during those 4 years he helped our community navigate the challenges of our nation's first pandemic in over 100 years; and

Whereas, Fredric F. Catlin, prior to his election as Mayor, served as a member of the Town Council from 2014 to 2018 and during that time, working with the Planning Commission, helped to frame a Comprehensive Plan that will guide the Town for years to come.

Whereas, he led the successful effort to keep the United States Post Office in the Town of Washington and ensured that the building's final design fit in seamlessly with the architectural style of Town.

Whereas, during his tenure as Mayor, he shepherded to approval the Town's first planned unit development; ensuring the approval process was open and that all the residents of our town and our broader community were able to give voice to their views and ensure those views received all due consideration; and

Whereas, Fredric F. Catlin has worked tirelessly to make our community more walkable and encouraged residents and visitors alike to take in the history of our Town, leading the way in the creation of the first walking guide to the houses and commercial properties in Town; and

Whereas, he has selflessly served the Town and the Community with no thought for himself but simple devotion to ensuring this very special place was able to adapt to changes while preserving the past which we all hold dear.

Now, therefore be it resolved, that the Town of Washington, Virginia, all of its citizens, its Town Council, and Mayor do hereby acknowledge the noteworthy tenure of Fredrick Catlin and extend their deepest gratitude and appreciation to him for his exemplary service to our community.

Be it further resolved, a copy of this resolution be entered permanently into the minutes of the Town Council and shall be maintained among the permanent records of the Town.

Duly adopted by a roll call vote of the Town Council of Washington, Virginia on the 7th day of January, 2023.

Mayor Whited moved to adopt the resolution honoring Mr. Catlin and Ms. Swift seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Fred Catlin voted "yes"	Ms. Jean Goodine voted "yes"
Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Brad Schneider voted "yes"
Ms. Swift voted "yes"	Mayor Whited voted "yes"
The motion passed 6-0 with Mr. Beard absent	

Mayor Whited presented Mr. Catlin with a ceremonial gavel.

- (b) Establishing a Trust Account: Mayor Whited moved to authorize the treasurer to create a trust account to enable the town to receive tax deductible contributions for, including but not limited to, the restoration and preservation of Town Hall and Ms. Swift seconded and a roll call vote was taken:

Mr. Fred Catlin voted "yes"	Ms. Jean Goodine voted "yes"
Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Brad Schneider voted "yes"
Ms. Swift voted "yes"	Mayor Whited voted "yes"
The motion passed 6-0 with Mr. Beard absent	

ADJOURNMENT: Ms. Swift motioned to adjourn the meeting at 12:17 p.m. and Mr. Catlin seconded and a roll call vote was taken.

Mr. Fred Catlin voted "yes"	Ms. Jean Goodine voted "yes"
Mr. O'Connell voted "yes"	Mr. Brad Schneider voted "yes"
Ms. Swift voted "yes"	Mayor Whited voted "yes"
The motion passed 6-0 with Mr. Beard absent	

THE NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL IS

January 9, 2023.

Barbara Batson, Town Administrator/Clerk

Attachments:

Resolution honoring Fredric F. Catlin, Mayor of Washington, Virginia