

The Town of Washington

"THE FIRST WASHINGTON OF ALL"

December 12, 2016

7:00 p.m.

Town Council Meeting

Approved Minutes

- CALL TO ORDER: Mayor John Fox Sullivan called the Town Council meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Council members Mary Ann Kuhn, Katharine Leggett and Gary Aichele were present. Council members Jerry Goebel, Patrick O'Connell and Brad Schneider were absent. Town Attorney John Bennett was present. Town Clerk Laura Dodd was absent for medical reasons.

- MINUTES: October 11, 2016 minutes were not ready due to Ms. Dodd's medical leave.

- REPORTS: Treasury Report: Mayor Sullivan reviewed the attached Bank Summary Report, the Bills-To-Be-Paid list and the Additional Bills to Be Paid List. He discussed that the \$40,516.67 in meals and lodging revenue was "higher than ever in the town" and said he thought that The Inn at Little Washington's being awarded the esteemed two-star Michelin Guide rating for the first time has had a "dramatic" effect on revenue rising.

Ms. Leggett made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and Ms. Kuhn seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

Planning Commission: It was reported that Chairman Fred Caitlin will be heading the review of the Comprehensive Plan.

Architectural Review Board: No report.

- TOWN ATTORNEY: Mr. Bennett had no report.

- OLD BUSINESS: a). Inn at Little Washington Farm Market Review: Joneve Murphy, farmer at The Inn at Little Washington, gave an overview of the first farm market sponsored by The Inn for several months on Sundays and said it had been a great season. She discussed that the inn looked forward to doing another farm market in 2017 starting earlier, in May, and running till the end of October with more farmers and hopefully a cheese vendor. She discussed that there was a mixed bag of customers with a significant number of local folks and vendors from the county. She discussed that the Inn was also going to provide a type of market on Saturday, April 29 during the Virginia Historic Garden Week tour in Rappahannock.

Ms. Leggett discussed that the only complaint she had heard about the market was that it seemed to be high-priced.

Ms. Kuhn and Mr. Aichele discussed that they had received positive feedback from their bed and breakfast guests. Mr. Aichele discussed that although he liked to see people in town and the streets full, some residents had told him it did not seem like a real

farmers' market and that it was not for anyone who lived in town. He discussed that these people felt that the market was just another way for the Inn to bring strangers into town and it made them feel less welcome in their own town. He discussed that as the Town moved forward over the next twenty years and looked at housing and boundary line adjustments, it needed to realize that there was continuing tension over what an authentic piedmont town was and what a very attractive, exciting destination resort was. He discussed both had to be compatible and that he didn't think one could survive without the other but nobody wanted to come to a place like Disneyland. He discussed that no one would be able to live in the county without sources of revenue and meals and lodging taxes and everything else associated with taking money out of visitors' pockets which enriched people who lived and worked in the town and county. He discussed that there was an ongoing tension between what is the town of Washington, who was the town of Washington, and who came into town and when they came into town. He encouraged the Inn to bring in more local vendors with less high end, high priced items.

Ms. Murphy replied that over 65% to 70% of the vendors are from the county.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that he would like to express a counter view. Clearly he said it is too expensive for some people. He said he had heard nothing but positive comments. He said he recognized that not everybody wanted to go to it and agreed there was tension between the town and county. He said he understood where Mr. Aichele is coming from but thought there was a risk of overblowing that perception.

Ms. Murphy said that farmers' markets are always going to be more expensive than grocery stores.

Mr. Aichele made a motion that council show its support by voting for continuation of the market. The mayor seconded and the motion passed 4-0.

b). Election of Vice Mayor: It was tabled by consensus until next month's meeting since only four council members were present.

c). Appointment of Planning Commission Member:
After favorable discussion about town resident and historic preservationist Allan Comp, Mr. Aichele made a motion to approve his nomination and Ms. Kuhn seconded. And the motion passed 4-0.

d). Appointment of an ARB member: After a discussion of town resident and historic preservationist Selma Thomas' credentials, most recently her role in the organization of the exhibit area in the Museum of African American Art in Washington, DC and her work in restoring old homes, Mayor Sullivan made a motion to approve Ms. Thomas and Mr. Aichele seconded it. And the motion passed 4-0.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that both the Planning Commission and the ARB were now full.

- NEW BUSINESS: There was no new business.
- PUBLIC FORUM: Mayor Sullivan opened the Public Forum:

Jay Brown, a property owner in the town, asked whether there were any town lodging establishments currently past due on paying meals and lodging taxes.

Mayor Sullivan discussed that there had been, over time, entities that had fallen behind and he believed everybody was up to date and/or if there were arrears the problem was being worked out.

Mr. Aichele said he had been involved earlier this year with working with an establishment and it is now up to date.

Mr. Bennett discussed he had some general comments about Airbnbs and a short discussion followed of the status of legislation in the General Assembly and the effect should it be passed.

Bed and breakfast owner Phil Irwin discussed that he thought that Airbnbs should have controls and that local governments should be influencing the General Assembly on this subject.

Mr. Bennett said there are more Airbnb rooms in Europe than hotel rooms.

Mr. Caitlin told everyone about an upcoming coffee house the Mountain Laurel Montessori School in Flint Hill was having with music.

Mayor Sullivan closed the Public Forum

- CLOSED SESSION: There was no closed session.
- ADJOURNMENT: At 7:45 p.m., Mayor Sullivan moved to adjourn and Mr. Aichele seconded and the meeting was adjourned.

NEXT SCHEDULED COUNCIL MEETING TO BE HELD ON JANUARY 9, 2017

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Dodd

Attachments:

Treasurer's report

Additional Bills to be Paid

Bills to be Paid

Letter of Interest from Alan Comp

Letter of Interest from Selma Thomas