

**A REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE TOWN COUNCIL  
OF THE TOWN OF LURAY, PAGE COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2014**

The Luray Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, October 14, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Luray Town Council Chambers located at 45 East Main Street, Luray, Virginia at which time there were present the following:

**Presiding:** Mayor Barry Presgraves

**Council Present:** Ronald Vickers  
Jerry Schiro  
Leroy Lancaster  
Joey Sours  
John Meaney

**Council Absent:** Pam Flasch

**Also Present:**

Charlie Hoke, Town Manager  
~~Danielle Babb, Deputy Clerk Treasurer~~  
Ligon Webb, Town Planner  
Liz Lewis, Luray Downtown Initiative  
Fay McConnell, Luray Police Department  
John Robbins, Luray Page County Chamber of Commerce  
Jeff McMillan, Page News and Courier  
Jason Spitler, Town Attorney  
Stephanie Lillard, Page County Economic Development Coordinator  
Heather Sours, Page County United Way  
Ken Beyer, Luray Hawksbill Greenway Foundation  
Herald Heard, Handicap Fishing Ramp Presentation  
Angela and Steven Griffith, Rezoning Request

A quorum being present, Mayor Barry Presgraves declared the Council to be in session for the transaction of business. All present stood for a moment of silence. Councilman Lancaster led everyone in reciting the United States Pledge of Allegiance.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion:** Councilman Schiro motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, motion seconded by Councilman Sours with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney.

**Approved 5-0**

## ***Consent Agenda***

- A) Minutes of Regular Council Meeting – 9-8-14
- B) Accounts payable checks totaling \$229,629.20

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS & PRESENTATIONS**

### **Budget Amendment**

Mayor Presgraves noted that the public hearing this evening for the Budget Amendment has been postponed until a later date.

### **Rezoning Request- 800 Massanutten Avenue**

Town Planner, Ligon Webb, presented information on the public hearing requesting the rezoning of approximately a 16,000 square foot parcel. The request is to rezone the property from an R1 Zoning to a B1 Zoning district with conditions. Mr. Webb explained that the applicant has also submitted a letter of conditions for the parcel. Mr. Webb stated that a good fit for the location would be potential office space. The Planning Commission approved the rezoning request by a 5-0 vote on September 10<sup>th</sup>.

Mayor Presgraves opened the public hearing for citizen comment. With no one present to speak on the issue, the hearing was closed.

**Motion:** Councilman Vickers motioned to approve the Rezoning Request for 800 Massanutten Avenue as presented, motion seconded by Councilman Schiro with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney.

**Approved 5-0**

## **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

### **PLANNING AND ZONING**

Town Planner, Ligon Webb, stated the Planning Commission has been working on significant items that include; 1) preliminary plat review for Luray Meadows, LLC, 2) VDOT Revenue Sharing Application, 3) Laurance Hotel Site Rehabilitation. Mr. Webb stated that People Inc. was awarded low income housing tax credits from the state housing authority. Over the past few years several housing developments have been proposed for this site. Luray Meadows is approximately 30 acres just across from the Page County Fairgrounds on Collins Avenue. Mr. Webb said that he has some concerns about the layout of the development and the proposed infrastructure. He said that the planning commission will be reviewing the plans and should come before the Council in December. Mr. Webb said that members may have noticed a great deal of activity going on at the Laurance Hotel Site and that a zoning permit was issued for a complete rehabilitation of the space. The owner is committed to the renovation and hopes to complete the rehabilitation by May 2015. He noted that the owner has a great track record with historic renovations and feels these improvements are an asset to the community. Mr. Webb also discussed the VDOT Revenue Sharing Application and Resolution. He noted that a copy of the application has been included in Council's packet. The town is submitting the application for an allocation of funds to match the \$165,000 proffered by Valley Health for improvements to the Page Memorial Hospital corridor. If awarded, the matching funds would allow for additional improvements such as enhanced storm water and drainage, installation of curb and gutter, potential sidewalks, road surfacing and widening, and other improvements.

**Motion:** Councilman Lancaster motioned to approve the VDOT Revenue Sharing Resolution as presented, motion seconded by Councilman Sours with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney.

**Approved 5-0**

## **TOWN AFFILIATED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

### **Liz Lewis, Luray Downtown Initiative**

Ms. Liz Lewis discussed and updated members on the Artisans Trail network. She said that the trail is a network of galleries, retailers, and artisans to strengthen local communities and Virginia's craft industry. Ms. Lewis noted that the Market Collective continues to prove successful. LDI has been working with downtown business owners about retail sales, vacancies, upcoming bridge construction, and more. Several events are coming up, which are intended to drive traffic downtown. One of these events is Trick-or-Treat on Main which will be held on October 25<sup>th</sup>. Small Business Saturday is coming up on November 29<sup>th</sup> and LDI was awarded the Neighborhood Champion for this event. Other upcoming events include fundraising efforts for Page One and the LDI Costume Party.

### **Luray Page County Chamber of Commerce**

Director, John Robbins, reviewed the recent Mudtoberfest and reported 270 participants. Mr. Robbins said the event was conducted as a fundraiser and cleared about \$3,500 in profits. He noted that the profits will be split with LDI as the two co-sponsored the event. Mr. Robbins stated that the event looks promising and offers growth potential, so will likely be conducted again next year. Mr. Robbins added that a great deal of community support from high school volunteers, food vendors, sponsorships, and donated prizes contributed to the success of the event. Mr. Robbins advised members that the Annual Chamber Banquet is scheduled for November 6<sup>th</sup> and three "Business of the Year" Awards will be given. Also, one "Volunteer of the Year" Award will be given. For the month of September, the Chamber saw 1,627 visitor walk-ins. This is a five percent increase over last year. The next Business Networking Breakfast will be on October 23<sup>rd</sup> sponsored by Edward Jones Investments regarding estate planning. The next Business After Hours will be held on Thursday, October 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:30. This will also serve as the kick-off for the United Way fundraising campaign. Mr. Robbins noted that recently the website *TripAdvisor* published a press release on the most affordable U.S. destinations for Fall Foliage. The press release ranked Luray as #6 on a nationwide survey. Mr. Robbins also discussed the Artisans Trail process and said that things are moving slowly. Despite this, he said the area has many talented artists and crafters and will prove to be a worthwhile effort. Lastly, Mr. Robbins said that the Chamber of Commerce will also be in attendance at the November 5<sup>th</sup> meeting regarding the Main Street Bridge Rehabilitation.

## **UPDATES AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Luray Triathlon- Heather Sours**

Ms. Heather Sours provided a power point presentation on the 2014 Luray Triathlon. She noted that this was the 9<sup>th</sup> successful year for the event. Ms. Sours provided race statistics and economic impact factors. She explained that two annual events are held; the International Race is held on Saturday and the Sprint Race is held on Sunday. Both events have seen consistent registration and statistics over the years. The Triathlon lends to many economic factors for the community including personal spending, lodging, and meals. Ms. Sours updated members on the future of the Luray Triathlon and said that an announcement will be coming out this week. Currently, David Glover is the owner of the event and is transferring ownership of the event to another company. The new owner

is Ken Racine, owner and founder of Racine MultiSports. Ms. Sours said she feels the new owner will be a great fit for the community and seems to share a common vision with that of Mr. Glover. Ms. Sours expressed that the race is unique in that many volunteers come together to put on a successful event to help the community. Lastly, Ms. Sours announced that the 2015 dates are set for August 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **Page County EDA- Stephanie Lillard**

Ms. Stephanie Lillard, Page County Economic Development Coordinator, updated Council members on recent tourism initiatives and business efforts. She advised that work on the Artisans Trail continues and hopes a name will be selected by November. Ms. Lillard feels that once the naming process is complete it will seem more tangible and hopefully peak more interest. Ms. Lillard spoke about agri-business and recent meetings with local farmers to see how the EDA can help. She noted that other areas have already seen growth in microbreweries and wineries. Ms. Lillard said that she has also been working on business development and business retention efforts. She has recently completed a business marketing media kit and is also conducting business visitations. She hopes the business visitations will be proactive in retaining local companies and understanding current needs. Ms. Lillard also spoke about the local workforce and noted efforts with the Page County Public School system to identify skill sets needed for careers within our community. Ms. Lillard also spoke about the Enterprise Zone designation and said that she is anxiously awaiting a response on the county's application. She also updated members on the Valley Workforce agency and noted that they have found office space at the Lord Fairfax campus in Luray and are now available with consistent office hours. Ms. Lillard announced upcoming events that include the "Fall Connect" event on October 30<sup>th</sup> at Luray Caverns from 5-7pm. She invited Council members to attend and represent the town. Also, on October 27<sup>th</sup> the Small Business Administration will be in town and on November 4<sup>th</sup> the Opportunity Fair will be held.

### **Handicap Fishing Ramp- Ken Beyer, Herald Heard**

Dr. Herald Heard, local dentist, stated that he has been practicing at his office on Bank Street since 2013 and drives past the Greenway daily. He expressed that the Greenway trail is a true gem for the town and the entire community. He said it is gratifying to see many people using the trail and enjoyed attending the Trout Derby. He noted that the Hawksbill Creek is a 'Class A' trout stream and has been in discussions with the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. Dr. Heard noted that his concern is that the creek is only accessible by walking and is completely inaccessible to our handicapped citizens. Upon noticing these concerns, he then mentioned this to Pat O'Brien, Parks and Recreation Director, and was introduced to Mr. Ken Beyer. Dr. Heard said that much excitement ensued about the installation of a handicap fishing pier. But, also a great deal of thought about the design and further planning became apparent. Dr. Heard said that he would like for the Town Council to consider approving this concept as it is town property and stated that many in kind/monetary commitments have been received for the project.

Mr. Ken Beyer, Luray Hawksbill Greenway Foundation, discussed possible fishing locations and designs for the pier. He noted research with regional Game and Inland Fisheries representatives that indicate the best fishing locations and provided a map of such. He added that the map shows four preferable locations and two sites have been chosen for the possible construction of two platforms. Mr. Beyer discussed that fishing platforms are better than piers since they are less exposed to flooding and provide ease of maintenance.

Councilman Lancaster inquired about the original plans and locations. Dr. Heard responded that the original location was highly susceptible to flooding and the design was too cost prohibitive. Town Manager, Charlie Hoke, explained that Mr. Beyer and Dr. Heard are requesting approval of the concept so that they may raise funds and work on the design. Mr. Beyer said that they would explore both design and funding and intend to do so at

zero cost to the town. Dr. Heard concurred that this approval would allow them to then come back to Council with a budget, design, maintenance cost, etc.

**Motion:** Councilman Lancaster motioned to proceed with handicap fishing ramp as discussed, motion seconded by Councilman Vickers with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 5-0**

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Transferring Banking Services**

Town Manager, Charlie Hoke said that Council has recommendations in their packets on transferring banking services from SunTrust Bank to Blue Ridge Bank. This will save the town money operationally and reduce the overall bridge loan interest rate. Mr. Hoke said this will also allow for local services and has been recommended by the treasurer and town staff.

**Motion:** Councilman Schiro motioned to authorize staff to make the appropriate transfers in banking services to Blue Ridge Bank, motion seconded by Councilman Lancaster with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 5-0**

## **TOWN ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

Town Attorney, Jason Spitler, said that he had one major item of business for the evening concerning town elections. This matter has been discussed in recent months, as well as the process for changing the elections from May to November. Mr. Spitler said the main issue is with the cost of the May election, since only town officials are elected. This requires that the town pay several thousand dollars for such election. The special election held for Councilwoman Flasch only saw a voter turnout of about 75 participants. Statewide voter turnout for May elections results in only about 4-14%, whereas November elections result in about 37-70% voter participation in urban areas. Mr. Spitler noted that while there are many pros and cons with each option, certain steps must take place if the Council wishes to make this change. He said Virginia State Legislation has made the process fairly simple for localities. The Council is required to enact an ordinance to change to November rather than May elections. Also, the town charter and code must be adapted and officials must meet with their local legislator to seek the amendment to the town's charter. Mr. Spitler indicated that there is not likely to be any opposition from state legislation since this change has become a trend throughout the Commonwealth. Mr. Spitler reviewed the specific areas of the Town's Charter that will be affected, as well as Section 38 of the Town Code. He added that currently the town elections are held at the Page County Courthouse and this would need to be changed since town residents use multiple voting precincts in November elections. Mr. Spitler advised that it is not required to have a public hearing or public notice on this change. Despite this, he advised that because the change requires the approval of the General Assembly it would be in the town's best interest to conduct both. Mr. Spitler advised that this allows the voters an opportunity to speak on this issue and voice their support of Council's decision.

Councilman Sours asked how this change would affect the current member terms. Mr. Spitler explained that this would effectively extend a members term by six months, if the current members' terms were set to expire in the year of the election. Therefore, rather than the members term expiring on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016 the term would expire January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. Councilman Vickers agreed that it is prudent to hold a public hearing and allow the citizens a chance to express their opinion.

Mr. Spitler suggested that this is a time sensitive issue and that steps must be taken well in advance of the May 2016 cycle. The state code requires that changes be made one year prior to the election. Mr. Spitler suggested

scheduling a public hearing in November or December of 2014. He would like to see Council take this to state legislators in early 2015. Mr. Spitler also added that he has sent out a number of FOIA requests regarding the subject. He noted that Culpepper conducted the same process in November 2013.

**Motion:** Councilman Sours motioned to authorize the town attorney to work with staff and proceed with the necessary steps to change town elections from May to November as presented, motion seconded by Councilman Vickers with the vote as follows: YEA: Council Members Vickers, Schiro, Lancaster, Sours, Meaney. **Approved 5-0**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/ADJOURN**

Mayor Presgraves advised Council members that the closing on Brown's Restaurant (36 West Main Street) was delayed until Friday. He added that there was a problem with the recording of the survey and that this matter will be cleared up tomorrow.

With no further business, Mayor Presgraves adjourned the regular session of the Luray Town Council at approximately 9:00pm.

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Barry Presgraves  
Mayor

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Danielle Babb  
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer