

Minutes of a regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Marion, Virginia held in the Council Chambers of the Municipal Building on February 16, 2016 at 5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor David Helms, Vice-Mayor Dr. Jim Gates, Jim Barker, Larry Carter, Bill Weaver, Avery Cornett, Tricia Spencer and Suzanne Jennings Council Members; Chairman Cameron Wolfe, Bob Ramsey, Dan Surface, Trey White, and Council Representative Jim Barker Members of Planning Commission; Town Manager Bill Rush; Deputy Clerk Mona Barr; Town Attorney Mark Fenyk; Smyth County News Representative Stephanie Porter-Nichols; Purchasing Agent Billy Hamm; Assistant Town Manager/Town Engineer Cecil Hicks; Police Chief Rex Anders; Economic Development Director Ken Heath; Marion Downtown Director Olivia Hall and Deputy Clerk Anita Catron.

ABSENT: None.

INVOCATION/PLEDGE TO THE FLAG: Mr. Heath rendered the invocation. Mayor Helms led the Pledge to the Flag.

VISITORS: Jeff Spickard, Bill Huber, Dr. Douglas Armbrister, Michael Edwards, Ralph Price, Bruce Millsap, Brian Reed, Tony Shazier, Greg Vannoy, Dr. Dana Chamberlain, Kristin Untiedt-Barnett, and Angie Mucha.

MINUTES: Upon motion of Ms. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the minutes of the meeting held February 1, 2016 were approved as written. Messrs Weaver, Barker, Carter, Jennings, Spencer, Cornett and Dr. Gates voted affirmatively.

AGENDA: Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the Agenda was approved as distributed.

PUBLIC PRESENTATION: Angie Mucha from District 3 Public Transit asked Council to consider funds in the Budget for 17/18 for the Public Transit. They have been requested to offer transportation again for the summer loop. Transports include but are not limited to Mt. Rogers Appalachian Trailhead, Hungry Mother State Park, and The Discovery Center. They have added a lake loop to their options at Hungry Mother State Park. Estimated cost would be \$5000 for the budget year 17/18. Mr. Rush suggests for them to run the transit this year and see how the figures come out. They are hoping to obtain QR codes for cell phones which will enable citizens to scan and look at transport times at a glance. Upon motion of Dr. Gates, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Council approved to consider this request in the 2017/2018 budget cycle, if numbers remain the same or improve.

JOINT PUBLIC HEARING WITH PLANNING COMMISSION REGARDING REZONING REQUEST: Mayor Helms turned the public hearing over to Mr. Hicks to review this request. Mr. Hicks presented a rezoning request from Dr. Armbrister and Bill Huber for the property located at 1112, 1114, 1116, 1118 & 1120 Snider Street from (MA) Medical Arts to (R3) Residential for apartments. Their intent is to increase high concentration of housing for residential use. Mr. Hicks included a Site Plan Review for this project, letter of intent from Mr. Huber, and recommendation letter from A. Louise Fincher, Dean of the Emory and Henry School of Health Sciences. He also advised that adjacent properties were notified, there was a sign on site notifying the public, and dual advertisements had already taken place. Mr. Hicks asked Mr. Huber if he had comments.

Mr. Huber stated he intended to renovate the building into eight apartments, with the expectation that the apartments will be ready for occupancy by mid-August this year. The (R3) Residential parking requirement is two spaces per apartment; the site has over 40 parking spaces.

Mayor Helms opened the floor for public comment.

Ralph Price, who lives up the street near the property, spoke that he “Stands Against” this request for rezoning. He voiced his concerns of low income renters, drinking, trash, traffic and loud noises that could develop from college population. He stated that he felt the Town already had plenty of apartments in place. Mr. Price was concerned that if the college did not stay, there would be issues with being able to fill these additional apartments with what the Town already has available.

Mayor Helms inquired if others would like to speak. With no further comment, Mayor Helms closed the Public Portion and turned the meeting to the Planning Commission for comments and a recommendation.

Chairman Wolfe noted that with 5 voting members present, the Planning Commission has a quorum. He opened the floor for comments and questions from members. After discussion, he asked for a motion on the rezoning issue from Planning Commission. Upon motion of Bob Ramsey, seconded by Trey White and a vote of 5 AYES and 0 NOES, Marion Planning Commission recommends to Town Council to rezone the property located at 1112, 1114, 1116, 1118 & 1120 Snider Street from (MA) Medical Arts to (R3) Residential.

RECOMMENDATION FROM PLANNING COMMISSION ON THE REZONING ISSUE: Chairman Wolfe stated the recommendation from Planning Commission to Town Council is for the rezoning of these properties to be changed from (MA) Medical Arts to (R3) Residential. He then turned the floor back to Mayor Helms and requested that Planning Commission members be excused from the meeting.

Mayor Helms thanked Planning Commission members for their assistance with this issue and excused them from meeting.

Mayor Helms opened the floor for Council and Public Comment.

Brian Reed, a former Emory & Henry graduate wished to take the emphasis off housing for the college and emphasized that the Town as a whole needs housing. This housing would be low to moderate income working force and not Section 8.

Mr. Huber added that the older generation who just do not want to be in a house any more or would like to be closer to downtown would also have the option of renting these apartments.

Mayor Helms asked for further comments from Town Council or the public. With no further comment, Mayor Helms closed the Joint Public Hearing and requested a vote from Town Council.

Upon motion of Mr. Barker, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the zoning change request from (MA) Medical Arts to (R3) Residential for the property located at 1112, 1114, 1116, 1118 & 1120 Snider Street, contingent upon closing, was approved.

Mr. Heath noted the Town of Marion is applying for up to \$2.5 million from the Department of Housing and Community Development’s Vibrant Community Initiative (VCI). The Town will be specifically addressing three areas with their submission. 1) The Exit 45 Gateway Corridor, to include façade improvements, streetscapes, and signage, 2) Housing, both affordable rental housing development and scattered site Owner Occupied rehabilitation, and 3) Economic Redevelopment of the vacant Harwood Building. Upon motion of Mr. Carter, seconded by Mrs. Jennings and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES the request to pursue application was accepted.

Mayor Helms gave thanks to Brian Reed and Greg Vannoy for working hand in hand with the Town on this application for VIC.

Mr. Cornett spoke on the Recreation Committee and safety issues to protect children. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, Terry Jennings and Jamie Hall were

appointed to the Recreation Committee. The matter of safety issues to protect children was referred to the Recreation Committee.

Mrs. Jennings gave an update on new ideas to produce revenue for The Lincoln Theatre. Kristen Untiedt-Barnett has 13 fall events scheduled. June 11, 2016 will be the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Golf Tournament for The Lincoln Theatre. March 5, 2016 will be the 1<sup>st</sup> evening of concessions at the Song of the Mountains. There are 4 candidates for the New House Manager.

Mr. Barker would like to thank the Town Crew for the great job during the last snow storm.

MAYOR'S REPORT: May Council Election deadline is March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. Black History Celebration will be held on Saturday, February 20, 2016 at 330 Franklin Street here in Marion. Mayor Helms requests a resolution to present in honor of Black History Month. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Mr. Barker and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, this resolution was approved. A thank you letter from Mr. Rush to Lacy Hugill-Warren for the donation of the ceiling treatments for the Holston Hills Golf Course ballroom was noted. Total donated value of the property is \$3600.00. There will be a meeting February 18, 2016 at 6:30 p.m. at the VFW to organize Memorial Day activities.

#### ACCOUNTS:

Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Ms. Spencer and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES the accounts were approved for payment in the amount of \$997,487.04.

Chief Hamm noted there were 158 combined calls last month. He was pleased to announce that Marion Fire/EMS has been awarded the Virginia Department of Fire Programs VFIRS Hardware Grant. This Grant is a 50/50 grant for the purpose of purchasing a new computer.

Chief Anders also thanked the Town Crew for all their work during the storms. He felt there were not as many accidents due to the great job done keeping roads and streets clean. February 25, 2016 is court date on the 633 Henry Street issue. Preliminary background checks have been done on new officers. Daniel Hamm has resigned as of February 15, 2016. He has accepted a position working for the Smyth County Sheriff's Department.

Mrs. McDonald noted she has scheduled 3-4 Farmers Market meetings at the Henderson School once a month to start this year's plans for the farmers market season. There will be a Farmers Market Kick-off Luncheon on Friday, March 4, 2016 at 12 p.m. at the Wayne C. Henderson School of Appalachian Arts. She is working with a group from Indiana on a Fund Raiser for the Farmers Market. They will be pursuing 10 grants involving the Main Street Program. Marion Downtown has been awarded a Downtown Investment Grant for \$20,000 which will be used for Downtown Revolving Business loans at a 0% interest rate.

Mr. Heath commends Mrs. McDonald on writing the Downtown Investment grant and noted that this is the largest successful grant she has done since taking the Downtown Directors position.

Mr. Hicks noted they are installing a new water meter behind the old hospital for the Emory & Henry School of Health Sciences. He noted the springs tend to have more problems this time of year. They have had to turn the springs off only 1 time this year and two twelve hour shifts were set up to take care of the issue. They plan to start working on the CIRP project in the spring. They are waiting to receive the valves for the zone meter project and hopeful to start Monday February 22, 2016.

Mr. Rush stated the VDH CIRP Water Project application deadline is April. He requests permission to set a Public Hearing March 7<sup>th</sup> regarding proposed bond issues. The prior request missed advertising requirements by 2 days. He requests the VLGMAC Proclamation to be put in record. April 3-9, 2016 is to be designated as

Local Government Education Week. Upon motion of Mrs. Jennings, seconded by Mr. Weaver and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES VLGMAC Proclamation was approved. Mr. Rush received an email regarding the Riverwalk Bridge Update. Work was started this week-end on the bridge; site is secured and roped off to prevent any foot traffic from passing. They will be returning in March to pre-build a bridge at the Reserve Center and install in April. Upon motion of Mr. Weaver, seconded by Dr. Gates and a vote of 7 AYES and 0 NOES, the meeting was adjourned.

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Mayor

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Deputy Clerk