



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 5, 2018 – 7:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL**

MINUTES

Members Present

Spencer Sullivan, Mayor
Jim Kinneman, Mayor Pro Tem
George McClellan
Ann Schneider

Staff Present

Sandra Smith, Town Clerk
Sam Anders, Finance Officer
Michael Thomas, Town Attorney
Bill Bruce, Town Manager
Sean Taylor, Planning Director

Members Absent

Doug Nodine

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Spencer Sullivan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

A. Invocation.

Pastor Roy Carter of Central Baptist Church offered the invocation.

B. Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a **motion** to approve the meeting agenda. **Councilwoman Ann Schneider** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

3. APPROVE MINUTES

Councilwoman Schneider made a **motion** to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2018 meeting. **Councilman George McClellan** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

4. RESOLUTIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

- None

5. REPORT FROM GUILFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

- Sgt. Latoya Howell of the District 1 office of the Guilford County Sheriff's Office reported on the number of Part 1 crimes (which include breakings & enterings and violent acts such as arson, homicide and theft) reported in March. She said officers continue to patrol the park, since there were several breakings & enterings in the parking lot a few months ago.

6. REPORT FROM OAK RIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Chief Steve Simmons reported on the number of calls received in March. He advised residents to beware of open burning. He said they should never start a fire with gas or other accelerant, and reminded them that they can obtain a burn permit at the fire station.

7. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Standing committee appointments/reappointments.

Councilwoman Ann Schneider made a **motion** to reappoint Kristin Kubly to the Historic Preservation Commission. **Councilwoman George McClellan** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

B. Streetscape Vision Plan committee.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman made a **motion** to appoint Gary and Myra Blackburn to the Streetscape Vision Plan committee. **Councilwoman Schneider** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

C. Septic system at Oak Ridge Town Park.

Bruce gave an update on the construction of the new septic system at the park.

D. Spring Litter Sweep.

Bruce announced the annual Spring Litter Sweep will be held April 14-28.

E. Other.

Bruce introduced Sean Taylor, the Town's new planning director.

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. PUBLIC HEARING

REZONING CASE # RZ-18-01: HB and AG to CU-TC-R. The property is located on the west side of NC Highway 68 N, approximately 800 feet south of the intersection with Fogleman Road, in Oak Ridge Township. It is Guilford County Tax Parcels #0162806, 0162815, and 0162821 (part), consisting of approximately 29.45 acres, and is located in the Greensboro (GW-III) Watershed, and Scenic Corridor Overlay

Zone. It is owned by Israel Family Limited Partnership and Larry J. and Kathy R. Mills.

Planning Director Taylor said that the Planning & Zoning Board had made a recommendation to continue the hearing in order to have more time to review the traffic study, which had been sent to the Board a few days before its meeting.

Town Attorney Michael Thomas said he would prefer to have the public hearing readvertised if the continuance is approved, and that Council could simply vote to remove the item from its agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman made a **motion** to remove the item from the agenda. **Councilman McClellan** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

B. Contract to purchase real property.

Mayor Sullivan said the Town had the opportunity to purchase a 58-acre parcel owned by Frank and Claudia Whitaker and located directly behind Town Hall. He said the property was originally part of the Stafford Farm, which also included the Town Hall and park properties. He said he had known the Whitakers for most of the 45 years he has lived in Oak Ridge, and the family had been part of the community for generations. Frank Whitaker, who is a member of the Finance Committee, preferred to see the Town own the property than to sell it to a developer, and he had recently offered the Town the opportunity to purchase it. Sullivan said the Town had negotiated a contract price of \$1.8 million to be paid for over a period of 10 years, and he believed it was in the public interest to do so. He said there would be a due diligence period to investigate any issues with the property, but that the Town had been given a unique opportunity to purchase both a historically significant and valuable property that will benefit the citizens for years to come.

Councilman McClellan made a **motion** to offer to purchase the tract of land currently owned by Frank and Claudia Whitaker, consisting of 58.316 acres, for the price of \$1.8 million, as more fully described and made subject to all terms and conditions contained in the formal document negotiated between the Town and the Whitakers titled "Real Estate Purchase and Sale Agreement," incorporated in this motion by reference, including the terms providing for the payment and owner-financing of the purchase price, and that the Council hereby authorizes the Mayor to make said offer and execute said document on behalf of the Town of Oak Ridge. **Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman** seconded the motion.

Councilman McClellan said he felt this was an excellent opportunity of which the Town should take advantage. He said the purchase would preserve open space and provide flexibility to perhaps expand the park in the future.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman agreed this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to gain access to property located in the town core. He said the property is currently zoned RS-30, and if the Whitakers had instead sold to a developer, there could have many houses built on the property and no rezoning would have been required. Kinneman said the Council will go through a strategic planning session soon to decide if and how additional recreational facilities might be used.

Councilwoman Schneider said she had been a longstanding advocate of historic preservation, and said the purchase would align the Land Use Plan and historic

preservation values. She noted that Oak Ridge has one of only two rural historic districts in the state, and said the property is one of the Historic District's key properties. She said the Town is quickly losing its scenic vistas, and she hoped the Town would maintain the openness of the property as well as the tree line. She said she was pleased to be in a position where, through careful stewardship, the Town could make the purchase easily. She thanked the Whitakers for putting the Town first, something they have done throughout their lifetimes.

Mayor Sullivan said the first goal stated in the Land Use Plan is to balance new residential growth with preservation of environmental, agricultural and historical resources, and the fourth goal talks about the value of open space and tree preservation. He said no other piece of property meets that definition better than this one. The purchase will give the Town about 150 contiguous acres that is all in the Historic District and that reunites the original Stafford farm. He said the only way for the Town to control what happens on a property is to own it. Sullivan said although Councilman Doug Nodine was not at the meeting, he is aware of the situation and Sullivan had received word that Nodine is in favor of the purchase.

Council's vote in favor of the motion was unanimous (4-0).

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Danny Rogers, a candidate for Guilford County Sheriff, introduced himself.
- Rita O. Lewandowski, 5006 Golden Acres Road, said she is in favor of open space, natural areas and trails. If the Town moves forward with the land purchase, Lewandowski asked the Council to consider installing a multiuse trail that could be used by cyclists, hikers and horses.
- Van Tanner, 6605 Ashton Park Drive, noted a loud noise and the smell of natural gas in the area around his neighborhood. He said he saw workers and assumed it was safe, but said it would be comforting to know for sure. Mayor Sullivan asked Town Manager Bruce to follow up. Tanner also asked the Council to consider putting in basketball courts if the Town expands the park.

10. MONTHLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Finance Officer Sam Anders presented the financial report, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.

Councilman McClellan made a **motion** to accept the financial report. **Councilwoman Schneider** seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

11. COMMUNITY UPDATES

A. Board of Adjustment.

No meeting

B. Historic Preservation Commission.

Vice Chair Debbie Shoenfeld said no meeting was held in the past month, but added that committees are working on various projects. The grant subcommittee reviewed four qualified applications at its meeting.

C. Parks & Recreation Commission.

Town Clerk Sandra Smith reported Music in the Park would be held April 14 and Canine Capers on April 28.

D. Finance Committee.

Chair John Jenkins said the committee would ask Finance Officer Anders for a revised draft budget for fiscal year 2018-19 because of the land purchase. Jenkins said the committee supported the purchase. Sullivan said the public hearings for the budget would be held May 3 and June 7.

E. Planning & Zoning Board.

Vice Chair Bobbi Baker said the board had continued the rezoning public hearing until the next meeting.

F. Mountains to Sea Trail Committee.

Rita Lewandowski said the committee had met March 27; Lewandowski and Martha Pittman were elected co-chairs, Bill Royal elected secretary, and Diane Paige elected project manager. The committee discussed several public promotions, and the next meeting will be April 24.

G. Merchants of Oak Ridge.

MOR member Van Tanner said the deadline for the NWHS scholarship had passed and applications were being reviewed. In addition, planning for RidgeFest is ongoing.

12. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Martha Shafer, a resident of Summerfield, introduced herself as a candidate for NC House District 62.
- Mike Stone, 8112 Hunting Cog Road, reminded attendees of the Classic Car Cruise-ins held at Oak Ridge Commons on the third Tuesday of each month.
- Former Mayor Ray Combs, 4550 Peebles Road, congratulated the Town on its support of the Mountains to Sea Trail and for the land purchase that was approved.

13. COUNCIL COMMENTS

14. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman made a **motion** to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m.
Councilwoman Schneider seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (4-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

Sandra B. Smith, NCCMC, CMC
Town Clerk

Spencer Sullivan
Mayor