



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 7, 2022 – 7:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL**

MINUTES

Members Present

Ann Schneider, Mayor
Jim Kinneman, Mayor Pro Tem
George McClellan
Martha Pittman
Spencer Sullivan (see agenda item #8)

Staff Present

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ann Schneider called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

A. Invocation/Moment of Silence.

John Jenkins offered the invocation.

B. Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (4-0).

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Councilwoman Martha Pittman moved that the minutes of the February 9, 2022, special meeting and that the minutes of the March 3, 2022, regular meeting be approved, and Councilman George McClellan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (4-0).

4. RESOLUTIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Schneider recognized Nancy Stoudemire, chair of the Tree City Committee and then read an Arbor Day proclamation which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.

The Old North State Detectorists Club made a presentation of items that had been found on two former farm properties in town.

5. REPORT FROM GUILFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Captain J. Swaringen reported that the department was focusing on car break-ins which had been on the rise. He encouraged residents to keep valuables locked up and out of sight. He said that speed enforcement signs had been put up in the area.

6. REPORT FROM OAK RIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Chief Gibson reported that there were 74 calls in March, including a lot of grass-and-woods fires, 4 structure fires and 22 medical-related calls. Gibson said that personnel had received 643 hours of training during the month of February.

7. APPOINTMENT OF COUNCIL MEMBER FOR VACANT SEAT

Town Clerk Sandra Smith said that she would accept nominations of the names of people to fill the vacant Council seat created by Doug Nodine's resignation.

Mayor Ann Schneider nominated Spencer Sullivan to fill the vacant Council seat.

Hearing no other nominations, Smith asked Council to vote on Spencer Sullivan's nomination.

The nomination to appoint Spencer Sullivan to the vacant Council seat created by Doug Nodine's resignation was passed unanimously (4-0).

All council members offered their support and appreciation to Sullivan on his appointment to Council.

8. OATH OF OFFICE FOR NEWLY APPOINTED COUNCIL MEMBER

Spencer Sullivan was sworn into office by Town Clerk Sandra Smith.

9. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Consideration/approval of appointment of Jim Harton to Water Advisory Board

Councilman George McClellan made a motion to approve the appointment of Jim Harton to the Water Advisory Board. Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

B. Update on 2022 Voluntary Annexation process

Town Manager Bill Bruce said that voluntary annexation petitions would be accepted until April 15, 2022. He said that 10 petitions had been received and 25 petitions would be carried over for consideration from last year's process.

C. Veterans Honor Green Donations

Town Clerk Sandra Smith reported that the Special Events Committee had raised \$17,660 for the Veterans Honor Green during the quarter ending March 31, 2022. She said that Council had already matched the maximum amount of \$34,000 for this fiscal year. She recommended that Council authorize moving \$17,660 to the Veterans Memorial Restricted Fund.

Councilman George McClellan made a motion to authorize Financial Officer Sam Anders to transfer \$17,660 in first-quarter donations to the Veterans Honor Green to the restricted fund. Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman seconded the motion, and it was passed (5-0).

10. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion/approval of proposal to provide Wi-Fi coverage to Oak Ridge Town Park

Councilman George McClellan made a motion to approve the proposal from Netcom Cabling, Inc. to provide Wi-Fi coverage in Oak Ridge Town Park for \$16,102. Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman seconded the motion.

Councilwoman Martha Pittman made a substitute motion to include all three phases of the proposal for \$15,352. Councilman George McClellan seconded the motion.

Council discussion:

Pittman said that by not breaking up the installation into smaller pieces it would allow the project to be done all at one time. She said that doing the project this way would provide full coverage and save a little money.

McClellan said that he agreed and said that the technology would be needed by the Oak Ridge Youth Association and food trucks for credit card swipes.

Kinneman said that the reason that the park needed Wi-Fi was because not everyone had an unlimited data plan and that cell towers were specific for certain carriers. He said that there would be dead spots and that the internet service would cost \$75.00 monthly.

Schneider suggested delaying adding Wi-Fi coverage in the park until after the construction of a proposed cell phone tower on Oak Ridge Military Academy's property was installed. She said that she originally thought the project cost would be \$5,000 and now it was \$15,000. Schneider said that the new tower might improve service for surrounding customers. She said that she usually agreed with what the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board recommended, but that the town had so many strategic initiatives going on right now.

Kinneman said that the cellular coverage would improve with more new towers, but that it would not benefit users of devices such as tablets and laptops that rely upon hot spots to connect to the internet.

Pittman said that Wi-Fi equipment in the park would create a base for additional services, such as investing in technology to enable the hearing impaired to better enjoy concerts.

Sullivan recommended that town staff post signs identifying areas of the park where Wi-Fi hotspots would be available.

Kinneman said that the cost did push his tolerance but they did not want to run wire so this project would be completely wireless except for the concession stand.

The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Town Manager Bill Bruce said that there was money in the capital line item so that a budget amendment would not be needed for this project.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vijayam Mohan, a member of the Triad Hindu Temple, located at 7751 Alcorn Road, invited everyone to the temple's food and cultural festival on Saturday, April 9, 2022.

Phyllis Clodfelter, 6707 Brookbank Road, said that she was born and raised in Oak Ridge and wanted to offer her support to the renovation of the Redmon House. She said that she felt like the house could be saved, landscaped and would be a welcoming center as people entered the park. Clodfelter asked Council to consider using the house for a town museum, family reunions, weddings, or birthday parties. She said that it would be expensive to tear the house down and that rebuilding it would save the town's heritage.

12. MONTHLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Finance Officer Sam Anders requested approval for a budget transfer of \$850 from the town's fund balance to the Special Events Committee to purchase additional luminaries for the holiday display at the park. He said that buying the luminaries now would lock in lower pricing.

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to approve a budget transfer of \$850 from the fund balance to the Special Events Committee. Councilman George McClellan seconded the motion, and it was passed (5-0).

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

Councilman Spencer Sullivan made a motion to accept the financial report as presented, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

13. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Conservation Easement Committee

Committee Vice Chair Ron Simpson reported that the Committee had been formed to explore the possibility of conservation of land or structures and to offer grants to property owners to assist with legal fees associated with easements. He announced that an Open House had been scheduled for May 11, from 4-6 p.m. at Town Hall to inform the public about the Conserving Oak Ridge through Easements Initiative.

B. Special Events Committee

Committee Chair Patti Dmuchowski said that the Committee had hosted a wonderful groundbreaking ceremony for the Veterans Honor Green that morning. She said that the Committee had begun selling engraved brick pavers for the Veterans Honor Green. Dmuchowski announced that the Committee would be hosting a Memorial Day Ceremony on May 30, 2022.

C. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

Committee Co-Chair John Garrett reported that the Board had approved requests for a Children's Business Fair and for the Catalyst Church to host an Easter Egg Hunt at the park.

D. Finance Committee

Chair John Jenkins reported that the Finance Committee had met three times and said that the budget looked good.

E. Water Advisory Board

Spencer Sullivan reported that the state regulators had approved the town as a municipal water provider. He said that as a newly elected council member that he would serve on the Board as the council's liaison.

F. Historic Preservation Commission

Commission Vice Chair Caroline Ruch reported that the Commission met on March 16, 2022, and that four Certificates of Appropriateness were approved. She said that they had received two Historic Heritage Grant applications.

G. Planning & Zoning Board

Board Vice Chair Nancy Stoudemire reported that the Board had met on March 24, 2022 and approved a site plan for property located on Oak Ridge Road. She said that the Treasure Trees Committee had plans to mark historic trees on town property as part of efforts to identify more valuable trees in the town.

H. Mountains-to-Sea Trail Committee

Committee Co-Chair Anne Steele reported that the Committee had met on March 22, 2022 via Zoom. She said that the installation was progressing for the Linville Road informational kiosk at the trailhead for the Headwaters Trail.

13. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION REPORTS

A. Oak Ridge Youth Association

Community Director Randy Collins thanked the Town for their support and announced that ORYA baseball season had begun. He reported that some baseball teams were playing as late as 9 p.m. due to increased number of teams this spring. Collins said that in 2020 the Youth Athletics Subcommittee was formed, and he asked Council to re-engage that committee to see if they could offer solutions to the late-night baseball games.

Councilman Kinneman said that the Youth Athletics Subcommittee meets every quarter and invited Collins to their meeting on April 27, 2022 at 10 a.m.

Collins presented baseball t-shirts to Council members.

B. Oak Ridge Military Academy

No report

C. Oak Ridge Elementary School

Town Clerk Smith read the report, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.

14. PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Browning, 8024 Oak Ridge Road, complimented the Special Events Committee for the hard work that they had done for the Veterans Honor Green and the Light up the Night event.

15. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Several Council members thanked residents who expressed interest in replacing Doug Nodine on the Council. They also reiterated their appreciation for Nodine's years of service to Oak Ridge.

16. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:39 p.m., and Councilman George McClellan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).