



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
FEBRUARY 4, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.  
(Held simultaneously in person and electronically via Zoom)**

*This meeting was conducted remotely under N. C. Gen. Stat. § 166A-19.24 by use of simultaneous communication by appearing in person or using the Zoom online platform and in which Town Council members participated by simultaneous communication. Council members were given the choice to meet in person or by remote link due to continuing COVID-19 pandemic concerns. Town Council members who joined by Zoom participated in the entire meeting, unless otherwise noted.*

**MINUTES**

**Members Present**

Ann Schneider, Mayor  
Jim Kinneman, Mayor Pro Tem (via Zoom)  
George McClellan  
Doug Nodine  
Martha Pittman (via Zoom)

**Staff Present**

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

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Ann Schneider called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Schneider asked Town Clerk Sandra Smith to conduct a roll call for Council members and staff.

**A. Invocation/Moment of Silence.**

Frank Kelleher offered the invocation.

**B. Pledge of Allegiance.**

**2. MAYOR'S STATEMENT CONCERNING THE EMERGENCY**

Mayor Schneider read from a prepared statement, explaining that the meeting was being conducted in person with remote participation for those Council members who choose. She said Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman, Councilwoman Martha Pittman and some staff members were attending remotely. She said the public had been invited to join either in person or by viewing the livestream, and instructions had been widely publicized. Schneider said agendas were available in the meeting room and agendas and meeting materials had been posted on the Town website. She said the Town is meeting all statutory requirements while complying with the Governor's Emergency Orders. She stated that all votes would be taken by roll call. She asked that all meeting attendees keep their masks on at all times.

**3. APPROVE AGENDA**

*Councilman George McClellan made a motion to approve the amended agenda after removing item 11.A., and Councilman Doug Nodine seconded. Via a roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

**4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

*Councilman George McClellan made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 7, 2021 regular meeting, the January 11, 2021 and January 21, 2021 special meeting. Mayor Ann Schneider said that the January 21 minutes were not yet complete and offered a friendly amendment to remove the January 21, 2021 meeting minutes, and Councilman McClellan agreed. Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

**5. RESOLUTIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None

**6. REPORT FROM GUILFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**

Lt. Jeremy Fuller from the District 1 office of the Guilford County Sheriff's Office reported that there were 90 calls for service in Oak Ridge in January. Of those, he said five were larcenies, two burglaries of motor vehicles, and seven suspicious activity calls. Fuller said the average response time for January was 11 minutes, 14 seconds. He said the reaction time, which is from the time the officer receives a call until he arrives on the scene, was 8 minutes, 29 seconds. He urged residents to keep their vehicle doors locked and to hide any valuables, saying that two incidents had occurred the previous month at Oak Ridge Town Park. He also encouraged residents to call 911 if they see anything they deem suspicious.

In response to a question from Councilman McClellan, Fuller said the district is down for the past year in all Part 1 crimes, which include crimes such as burglaries, larcenies and assaults.

**7. REPORT FROM OAK RIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT**

Lt. Taylor Eller, who works at Station 51 on Northwest School Road, reported that the department had received 56 calls in January, with 24 being fire- and service-related and 32 calls being medical. He said paid and volunteer department members received 538.5 hours of training in the previous month. With the upcoming beginning of Daylight Savings Time, Eller reminded residents to change the batteries in their fire alarms and smoke detectors at the same time they change their clocks.

**8. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Mayor Schneider stated that the rezoning public hearing was being conducted in person and electronically over Zoom. Materials for the hearing had been posted on the Town website. She said the public had been invited in advance to sign up to

speak or to submit comments by phone or by email. She said the applicant had signed a waiver agreeing to this type of hearing. Schneider said the public comment period would remain open for 24 hours after the end of the hearing, and a special meeting had been called for Monday, February 8, when the Council would vote on the rezoning request. She said the public hearing was meeting all state requirements while adhering to the Governor's Executive Orders.

**REZONING CASE # RZ-21-01:** AG (Agricultural) to CZ-RPD (Conditional Zoning-Rural Preservation District). The properties are located on the south side of Bunch Road, approximately 1,460 feet east of Oak Ridge Road, and adjacent to Oak Ridge Lake subdivision, Canter Cove subdivision and Allred Family Trust subdivision, all being in Oak Ridge Township. The properties are all of Guilford County Tax Parcels 163077 (approximately 45.46 acres) owned by Bonnie Mills Trust, 162726 (approximately 12.5 acres) owned by Albert and Tonia Mills, 162660 (approximately 28.87 acres) owned by Lisa Faye Honeycutt Joyce, and portions of 163062 (approximately 9.1 acres) owned by Lisa Honeycutt Joyce, and 163115 (approximately 1.75 acres) owned by Albert Bradley Mills. They are located in the Greensboro (GW-III) Watershed, Scenic Corridor Overlay Zone.

Planning Director Sean Taylor presented the staff report, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes. He said if the request is approved, the sketch plan would become a part of the rezoning. He read the conditions aloud and said the last condition to allow a 20-foot-wide public trail easement dedicated along the entire eastern and southern perimeters of the subdivision had been offered by the applicant at the Planning & Zoning Board meeting. He read the property description into the record.

Schneider asked if members of the Planning & Zoning Board had voted unanimously in favor of the rezoning, and Taylor said yes.

Schneider stated the rules and opened the public hearing.

*Proponents:*

- Bill Greco of Land Solutions, P.O. Box 347, Oak Ridge, spoke on behalf of the applicants, which he said were all related. He said the staff report cites objectives stated in the Land Use Plan and how the plan meets them. He said he and the design team had been working on the plan for over a year, and that it had gone through several iterations. He said the plan meets and exceeds the requirements of the development ordinance. Greco said the conditions had been arrived at over time, such as the addition of a connection directly to Bunch Road. He said the development included lots smaller than other developments, so they had also agreed to a condition that there would be a maximum of 67 lots. They had also included a condition for the addition of a public trail access easement. He said during their outreach, the design team had heard concerns about three issues: the road connections, the stub streets, and the impact or potential impact to the lake at the Oak Ridge Lake subdivision. He said they understood the concerns and would do their best to ensure there were no issues. He said they had discussed the open space and Rural Preservation District (RPD) zoning, and that they had a choice between it and RS-40 (residential, minimum lot size of 40,000 square feet) zoning. He said the Land Use Plan did not suggest the property be used for anything other than residential, and that it was surrounded by subdivisions and residential zoning. Greco said they had chosen RPD zoning in order to preserve open space and have flexibility in the design. He said the

property could be developed as RS-40 but in working with staff, they thought RPD was best here. Greco said the stream corridors and flood plain had not been included in the open space calculations and they would be dedicated to the Town. He said the property owners and design team asked for Council's support of the rezoning.

*Opponents:*

- Paul Partyka, 6402 Ashton Park Drive, Oak Ridge, said his primary concern was about traffic. He said there were many things he liked about the plan. He asked that information he had supplied, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes, be made available to the Council. He said he understood connections to stub roads, but said he felt his neighborhood of Ashton Park deserves special consideration. He said most drivers from the Ashton Park and Oak Ridge Lake subdivisions travel west on Oak Ridge Road and that a lot of drivers try to avoid the intersection of Bunch Road and Oak Ridge Road by driving through his neighborhood. He said by eliminating the Elizabeth Drive connection, it would eliminate the traffic from 30 houses from using Ashton Park as a cut-through. He said that eliminating both the Chadding Drive and Elizabeth Drive connections would eliminate traffic from 55 houses driving through Ashton Park. He suggested that emergency access be made through connections to Gumwood Road, which would create much less of an impact.

*Rebuttal – proponents:*

- Bill Greco of Land Solutions said perhaps one day someone would tell him how to explain the importance of stub streets. He said the development ordinance and the Thoroughfare Plan both require neighborhood connections through the stub streets, and not including them would have caused the application to be rejected out of hand.

*Rebuttal – opponents:*

- Paul Partyka said he did not oppose connections through stub streets and, in general, thought they were a good idea. Because he rides a bicycle a great deal, he said he was thrilled to have another road to ride on. He said just because the Town has a general provision requiring connections was not always a reason to have them, as there were always extenuating circumstances. He said he was really just proposing getting rid of one of the connections. Partyka said he was just very concerned about traffic.

With no one else requesting to speak, Schneider closed the public hearing.

*Council comments/questions:*

- Councilman McClellan asked if the speed limits in the Ashton Park and Oak Ridge Lakes subdivision were recently lowered. Town Manager Bill Bruce said yes, and Town Clerk Sandra Smith said they were lowered to 25 mph.
- McClellan asked the following questions, and Greco provided the answers:
  - How many public trails would be located on the property: Two – one along the eastern perimeter of the property and another along the southern perimeter.
  - What percentage of land will be left as open space: 60.1 percent, which does not include the property that will be dedicated to the Town.

- Do stub roads tend to always signal that at some point they will connect, either through new development or expansion of the existing development: Yes, that is my impression. If they do not currently connect, there is often a temporary turnaround at the end, although that varies.
- Are the stub roads state maintained: Not yet because DOT requires four houses before state maintenance takes over.
- Once the stubs are extended into the adjoining property, they will be state maintained: Yes.
  
- Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman asked if the stub roads could remain closed while construction is ongoing. Greco said development would begin at Bunch Road and continue north to south. He said the only exception to that is that the community wells would be located near the Elizabeth Drive stub. Kinneman said he would like to try to minimize construction traffic going through the adjoining neighborhoods.
- Kinneman said since a road connection to Gumwood Road was not possible, would the trail connect to Gumwood Road. Greco said yes.
  
- Councilman Nodine said he thought a well-thought-out plan had been submitted, and the developers had done an excellent job in meeting the requirements of the Town.
  
- Councilwoman Pittman asked if the steepness of the slopes on the property prevented a road connection to Gumwood Road, and Greco said yes. Pittman said she thought the three conditions offered enhanced the request, and she was pleased that public trails were being offered.
  
- Mayor Schneider pointed out that, although Partyka's presentation discussed the destinations located to the west of the subdivisions, there are many destinations located to the east.
- She said that stub roads are connected so that traffic within the neighborhoods does not have to go out onto Bunch Road or Oak Ridge Road. She said NCDOT would look at the traffic flow.
- Schneider said the Town has asked the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to consider doing something at the intersection of Bunch Road and Oak Ridge Road, and the project was gradually moving up on MPO's scale for consideration.
- She said she agreed with the type of zoning requested and was impressed with the presentation. She said she liked the amount of open space in the plan and thought RPD zoning was far superior in this case to RS-40 because many more lots would be allowed and many more trees lost.

Schneider announced again that public comments could be submitted for the next 24 hours, and the Council would vote on the rezoning at a special meeting the following Monday.

## **9. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

### **A. Board/Committee appointments/reappointments.**

*Councilman George McClellan moved to approve the appointment of Jim Harton to the Finance Committee and the reappointment of John Garrett to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, and Councilman Doug Nodine seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

**B. Resolution R-2021-01 to Adopt Guilford County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.**

*Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to adopt R-2021-01, and Councilwoman Martha seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

**C. Adopt Ordinances to Change Speed Limit in Linville Oaks subdivision.**

*Councilman George McClellan made a motion to adopt Ordinances O-2021-03, O-2021-04, O-2021-05, and O-2021-06, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

**D. Fee Schedule Adjustment for Shelter Rentals.**

Town Manager Bill Bruce presented for consideration a fee schedule adjustment for shelter rentals in Oak Ridge Town Park, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes. He said shelter fee rentals had not increased since the opening of the park in 2007. The Parks & Recreation Advisory Board supported the modest fee increase as proposed by staff. The increases were to be effective immediately, said Bruce.

- Councilman McClellan expressed hesitancy in raising fees during the COVID-19 pandemic and said he would like to postpone the action until the emergency ends.
- Councilwoman Pittman thanked staff for the analysis, and said that during ordinary times she thought such increases were long overdue. But during the pandemic, she said she thought the Town should encourage citizens to use the park and its shelters as a place where they can gather safely. She said, as one Girl Scout leader told her recently, even the nonprofit rate means a lot of cookies must be sold. She suggested adopting the price increase, but asked that the effective date be delayed until January 1, 2022, and that all fees for nonprofits be waived until January 1. She said such a move would allow time to reach out and encourage community members to meet in the park, and to wait and allow struggling nonprofits additional time while they are unable to do fundraising.

*Councilwoman Martha Pittman made a motion to approve the recommended fee schedule with an effective date of January 1, 2022, and to waive fees for nonprofit organizations until January 1, 2022. Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

**E. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Workshop.**

Bruce announced the annual CIP workshop would be held at a special called meeting of the Town Council on February 10 at 2 p.m. at Town Hall He said the

public was invited to attend the meeting subject to space limitations in Town Hall and that the meeting would be livestreamed on the Town's YouTube channel.

**10. OLD BUSINESS**

**Consideration of Ordinance O-2021-02 Solid Waste Franchise Agreement Ordinance.**

Bruce presented the second reading of the ordinance, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes, and said that Council had adopted the first reading of it at the January monthly meeting. He added that no comments had been received from the public.

*Councilman George McClellan moved to approve Ordinance O-2021-02 Solid Waste Franchise Agreement Ordinance with GFL Environmental Services, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

**11. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Engineering/Design for New Park Property.**

This item was removed from the agenda.

**B. Redmon House renovation.**

Bruce presented a proposal from Hill Studio, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes, for both the preparation of design documents for the Redmon House at 8300 Linville Road and to create an Illustrated Design Guidebook (for detail, see below under Item 11.C.). Bruce noted that he was asking for Council approval of both the design services proposal and formation of a steering committee made of up Parks & Recreation Director Terry Lannon, a Parks & Recreation Advisory Board member, Planning Director Sean Taylor, and a Historic Preservation Commission member.

*Councilman George McClellan motioned to adopt funding for the Redmon House of \$18,500 for engineering services and establishment of the committee. Mayor Ann Schneider asked to make a friendly amendment that the motion be for approval of the proposal. Councilman McClellan agreed to the friendly amendment, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded the motion.*

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman said he would like for the committee to determine all costs for the house. He said he knew that preserving the house had garnered much community support, but if Council had disclosed a price, it may have received a different result. He asked that the subcommittee consider the addition of restrooms, possible enlargement of septic, parking, and landscaping. He also asked that they explore all possible uses if the Council decides to preserve and renovate the Redmon House. Kinneman said he wanted to see a fully fleshed-out plan that includes specifically what the house would be used for. He said he did not want to say, "if we build it, they will come." He said if the cost is \$300,000-\$400,000, the community might not support the expense.

Councilman Nodine said he was confused because the proposal talked about schematics, which are different from working drawings. Bruce said the proposal was just for the first phase, and the \$18,500 cost would be for schematic drawings, which are reviewed by the Town Council, followed by construction drawings suitable to take out for bid. Nodine said he thought the expense would be a complete waste of money. Although he said he would vote against it, he said he felt sure he would be outvoted by other members of the Council.

Councilwoman Pittman said she was glad the next steps were discussed during the Town Council's Strategic Plan Update meeting, but said she also wanted a complete picture before decisions are made. She said she was pleased there would be a steering committee comprised of members of the community and from associated boards.

Nodine said he understood Kinneman and Pittman are willing to spend \$18,500, but he was not sure if the Town should spend any more. He said the proposed expenditure would be nearly 10 percent of the \$200,000 Council had estimated for the renovation.

Mayor Schneider said she was excited and felt that taking on the hard work of finding new uses for the building was at the heart of what the Historic District is all about. She said the Town had an obligation to model what caring for historic structures looks like, and it did not have the liberty of saying it was too expensive or citing other reasons when it was asking property owners and businesses in the Historic District to invest more money than simply doing the minimum. She said she had already received a few calls from citizens saying the building would be great for uses such as kids' birthday parties, Scout meetings, and small club meetings. She said she had been approached by a local builder who said the estimated cost was too high, but the Town would not know until they received firmer numbers, and this was the next step to be taken in the process. Schneider said she was in favor of getting a landscaping firm involved as soon as design plans crystalize so a design for an outdoor gathering space can be developed to complement the indoor space and complete the vision for the project. She said the Town had already appointed a subcommittee that had done preliminary work on potential uses for the property. She said she was confident moving forward and hoped other members of Council would "hang in there until we get the full picture."

Councilman McClellan said historic preservation is not necessarily inexpensive. He said it takes a lot of money to keep up historic houses, and historic property owners expect the Town to do what it asks them to do. He said he supported the project because it is located in the heart of the Town.

*Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed by a 4-1 vote (Nodine voting against).*

**C. Illustrated design guidebook.**

While not necessarily a companion project, Bruce explained that staff had seen an opportunity to work with Hill Studio on both projects at the same time. He said the proposal was to develop a guidebook for implementation of the Town's "village feel" design initiative. If approved, he said the firm would create a 20- to 24-page illustrated guidebook that staff can give to developers to show them what the Town wants. The consultant would also recommend how to incorporate the guidebook's



recommendations into the Town's Development Ordinance. He said this portion of the project would cost \$21,500, and the total of both projects was \$40,000.

*Councilman George McClellan moved to appropriate \$21,500 for the purpose of a design guidebook. Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman seconded the motion. After comments from Council, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

## **11. 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 George McClellan made a motion to approve the financial report as submitted by the Finance Officer, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

## **12. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Aleksandra Gill, 8548 Benbow-Merrill Road, Oak Ridge, spoke in support of preserving the Redmon House. She said she is organizing a small 4-H Club in Oak Ridge and saw the building as an ideal place for groups such as hers to meet. She said it was centrally located and would alleviate any feelings of obligation to purchase food or drinks for groups that meet in local restaurants.
- Caroline Ruch, 8886 Cravenwood Drive, Oak Ridge, spoke as both a resident and vice chair of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on restoring the Redmon House for use by the community. She said it would be a great indoor gathering spot for community activities. Ruch said the Town would be taking a step in modeling what it asks historic property owners in the Historic District to do. Regarding the steering committee to be formed, Ruch said she did not feel the proposed membership had equal representation. She said she thought HPC and the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board should have the same number of members on the committee, since the Redmon House is located on park property and in the Historic District.
- Debbie Shoenfeld, 8501 San Siro Farm Court, Oak Ridge, asked Council to reconsider the number of HPC members on the Redmon House steering committee. She said she thought at least two HPC members should serve. She said she thought the house falls more under the purview of HPC than it does the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. Shoenfeld said the Redmon House is a typical vernacular farmhouse, and once it is gone, the history of it would follow. She said she had a vision for future use of the property, and it would be a shame if Council decides not to protect, restore and make use of it.
- Town Clerk Sandra Smith read comments submitted by Phyllis Anders, 1837 Oak Ridge Road, Oak Ridge, and Courtenay Benbow Harton, 1901 Pepper Road, Oak Ridge, into the record. Both comments, which are hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes, requested Council preserve and restore the Redmon House for community use.

**13. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**A. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**

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

**B. Finance Committee.**

Chairman John Jenkins reported that the committee would begin meeting on March 1 and said the public is invited to attend.

**C. Water Advisory Board.**

No meeting

**D. Historic Preservation Commission.**

Chair Debbie Shoenfeld reported on the Commission's January 27 special called meeting in which it approved a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for lighting at CVS. Other projects of the Commission include the illustrated Design Guidelines for the Historic District, a coffee table book on the Town's historic properties, and the upcoming Historic Heritage Grant informational meeting.

**E. Planning & Zoning Board.**

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

**F. Mountains-to-Sea Trail.**

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

**G. Special Events Committee.**

Chair Patti Dmuchowski reported that the Committee had been working on construction drawings for the proposed veterans memorial and said they hoped to have a groundbreaking ceremony on Memorial Day. She said that the group has already raised about \$8,500 for the project. She said the luminaries had been taken down in the park and the Committee hoped to have more of them in 2021. She said members will soon begin planning the Thanksgiving Parade and Light Up the Night luminary event for 2021.

**13. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION REPORTS**

**A. Oak Ridge Military Academy.**

No report.

**B. Oak Ridge Elementary School.**

Smith read a report from Penny Loschin, school principal, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.

**C. Oak Ridge Youth Association.**

No report.

**14. COUNCIL COMMENTS**

**15. ADJOURNMENT**

*Councilwoman Martha Pittman made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m., and Councilman George McClellan seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).*

