



OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
APRIL 1, 2021 – 7:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Members Present

Ann Schneider, Mayor
Jim Kinneman, Mayor Pro Tem
George McClellan
Doug Nodine
Martha Pittman

Staff Present

Bill Bruce, Town Manager
Sandra Smith, Town Clerk
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.

A. Invocation/Moment of Silence.

Pastor Andy Cook of The Summit Church 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 available for those who choose. She said that Town Planner Sean Taylor was absent due to conflict with tonight's meeting. She said that Council members, staff and other public speakers would all wear masks throughout the meeting. Mayor Schneider 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 asked that all meeting attendees keep their masks on at all times. Mayor Schneider asked Council members to speak up at any time if they could not hear what was being said so that adjustments could be made as soon as possible.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Councilman Jim Kinneman made a motion to approve the agenda, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. Via a roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Councilman George McClellan moved that the March 4, 2021 regular meeting, and the March 29, 2021 special meetings minutes be approved, and Councilman Doug Nodine seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

5. RESOLUTIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Schneider read a proclamation recognizing Arbor Day, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes. She thanked the following members of the Tree Committee for their service to the Town of Oak Ridge: Nancy Stoudemire, Mickey Acock, Jim Foreman and Roy Nydorf.

6. REPORT FROM GUILFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Master Corporal C.K. Moon of the District 1 office of the Guilford County Sheriff's Office reported 141 calls for service in Oak Ridge in March. Of those, he said two were residential burglaries, 32 alarm calls, three domestic incidents, one weapons offense, two fraud incidents, two missing person reports, one motor vehicle theft, one noise violation, two accidents, 19 suspicious activity calls, four larcenies, two trespassing reports, and 12 traffic-related incidents. He said that 12 arrests and/or warrants were sworn out for cases made during the month of March. Moon said that the busiest days for service calls were on Tuesdays followed by Mondays. He said that the busiest time for service was in the evenings around 8:30 p.m. Moon said that the Sheriff's Department continues to remain proactive with providing surveillance to the Oak Ridge Town Park due to the increase of vehicle break-ins during the daytime hours. He urged residents to keep their vehicle doors locked and to remove or hide any valuables. Moon said that patrol deputies continue to monitor school zones in the early morning and afternoon hours to ensure that traffic is continuing to flow and to address speed violations. Moon said that the most significant incident that occurred during the month of March was a burglary of a residence on NC 68, but detectives made an arrest and some stolen property was recovered. He encouraged residents to keep yard equipment secured and to keep a record of equipment serial numbers in the event of theft. Moon said that the Sheriff's Department offers resident checks to citizens who are going out of town by calling the District 1 Office at (336) 641-2300.

Councilman McClellan asked Corporal Moon if the two missing people were found, and Moon replied that he did not have any further information on those cases.

Councilman McClellan asked Corporal Moon what the average response time was, and Moon replied that he did not have that specific information, but did say that one patrol officer was assigned to this zone at all times.

Mayor Schneider asked Town Clerk Sandra Smith if the live stream of the meeting was working correctly, and Smith replied that it was not. Smith said that she had instructions and would continue to work on it.

7. REPORT FROM OAK RIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Lt. Hampton Staunton reported that the department had received 82 calls in March, which included two building fires, four grass and wood fires, 21 service calls, 33 medical calls, and seven wrecks. He said paid and volunteer department members received 1,038 hours of training in the previous month. The safety message for the month was for residents to replace faded house numbers on their mailboxes so that houses could be located quickly in event of emergency.

8. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Consideration/Approval of Conservation Easement Committee Appointments.

Councilman George McClellan moved to approve the appointments of Debbie Shoenfeld, Ron Simpson, Stephanie Ferrell and Miles Foy as members of the Conservation Easement Committee, and Councilman Kinneman seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

B. Consideration/Approval of O-2021-07 – O-2021-10 to change the speed limit on Apple Grove Road, Carignan Court, Malbec Court and Nebbiolo Court to 25 mph.

Town Manager Bill Bruce reported that the Arbor Run HOA had requested that the NCDOT lower the speed limit to 25 mph in their subdivision. He said that the majority of Arbor Run subdivision was located in the Town of Stokesdale, but that the Apple Grove portion of the subdivision was located in Oak Ridge. Bruce said that Council was being asked to approve the ordinances concurring with this request.

Councilwoman Martha Pittman made a motion to approve O-2021-07 – O-2021-10 to change the speed limit on Apple Grove Road, Carignan Court, Malbec Court and Nebbiolo Court to 25 mph, and Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman seconded. Via roll-call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

C. Construction administration contract with Davis Martin Powell for Pepper Road side path and Linville Road trailhead parking lot.

Town Manager Bill Bruce requested Council's approval for a proposal from Davis Martin Powell engineers to assist the Town with the bidding, procurement, construction administration, and resident project representation services for the Pepper Road and Haw River Road side path project and the Linville Road trailhead parking lot. He said that David Martin Powell had been a trusted partner with the Town for several big engineering projects and had worked with the same project manager for 5 years.

Councilman George McClellan made a motion to approve the proposal from Davis Martin Powell for \$31,810, and Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded. Via roll call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Town Clerk Sandra Smith told Council members that the live stream of the meeting was now working on the Town's YouTube channel.

9. NEW BUSINESS

A. Consideration/Approval of Resolution R-2021-03 to hold a public hearing to close 800 feet at the end of Linville Ridge Drive.

Town Manager Bill Bruce told Council that applicants Bernard and Anna Walraven had requested to close part of Linville Ridge Road in the Linville Ridge subdivision and to reconstruct the cul-de-sac. He said that Linville Ridge Road was currently an unmaintained public right-of way. Bruce said that the applicants and the Linville Ridge HOA currently own all of the properties surrounding the existing cul-de-sac. He said that the proposed new cul-de-sac would still provide access to the HOA common area. Bruce requested that Council approve the Resolution of Intent which should not be considered as a direct recommendation for the closure of the right of way, but a recommendation to proceed to a public hearing for the road closure at a Planning & Zoning Board and then a public hearing at the next Town Council meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to approve the Resolution of Intent R-2021-03 to hold a public hearing on the road closure. Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded the motion.

Council discussion:

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman asked if the Linville Ridge HOA needed to agree to the proposed road closure, and Bruce replied it was his understanding that the HOA is aware of the request and would be notified by the Town regarding the public hearing. Kinneman said that his personal property abuts to the HOA property. He said that he did not believe there was any conflict but wanted to disclose the information.

Via roll call vote, the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman asked when Council would hold the public hearing on this request, and Bruce replied that the Planning & Zoning Board would hold a public hearing at its May meeting, and Town Council would hold a public hearing at its June meeting.

B. Recommendation from Parks & Recreation Advisory Board on naming of Whitaker property.

John Garrett, Parks & Recreation Advisory Board co-chair, explained the process the Board took to seek citizen input on naming the Whitaker property. Garrett said that the Board received over 200 name suggestions, and from there the Board narrowed the list down to its top three choices. He said that Heritage Farm Park was the first choice, followed by Oak Ridge Veterans Park and Oak Ridge Community Park ranking second and third.

Council discussion:

Councilman Kinneman said that he was impressed with the name suggestions.

Councilwoman Pittman said that she was impressed by the Board's outreach and the way that the Board worked together in reaching a consensus.

Mayor Schneider thanked the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board for the orderly process they used in soliciting names from the community. She said that Council would vote on the new park property name at the May meeting.

10. MONTHLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Finance Officer Sam Anders handed each Council member an updated report, which included the tax revenue, and then presented the financial report, which is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of the minutes.

Anders requested that a budget amendment be approved for the CARES Act distribution of funds. He said that the budget amendment would increase expenses for the extra COVID-19 related expenses over and above normal operations through the end of the current year. Anders said that the CARES Act money had been received and would increase parks and recreation expenditures by \$7,500, IT capital by \$7,000, furnishings by \$2,200, communications by \$300, dues and subscriptions by \$1,000. He said that the offset would be to decrease the fund balance by \$18,000 and that the Cares Act would cover \$17,000 of that amount.

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to approve the budget amendment for \$18,000 as presented by the Finance Officer, and Councilman George McClellan seconded the motion. Via a roll call vote, it was passed unanimously (5-0).

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

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

12. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

Co-Chair John Browning reported that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board met for their regular meeting on March 18, 2021 and again on March 30, 2021 for a special called meeting. He said the majority of those meetings were dedicated to reviewing the Whitaker property name suggestions. Browning said that the Board also approved its support for the PARTF Grant for the Whitaker property. Browning announced that the 2021 Music in the Park Series had been publicized and that only prepackaged food would be sold at the first couple of events. He said that the first event is scheduled for Saturday, April 10, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

B. Water Advisory Board.

No report

C. Historic Preservation Commission.

Chair Debbie Shoenfeld reported on the Commission's March regular meeting in which it approved a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for a new residence on Linville Road and two new residences in the Willow Oaks subdivision on Billet Road. 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 reviewing Historic Heritage Grant applications.

D. Planning & Zoning Board.

No meeting

E. Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

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

F. Conservation Easement Committee.

No meeting

G. Special Events Committee.

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

H. Finance Committee.

Town Manager Bill Bruce announced that the Finance Committee would meet on April 5, 2021, and that another meeting was scheduled for April 19, 2021. Bruce said that the proposed budget would be presented to Town Council at its May meeting, with a Public Hearing planned for June.

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

Councilman McClellan said that Mayor Schneider and he traveled to Raleigh the previous day to meet with state legislators. He said that \$1.1 million dollars for water was reallocated to the Towns of Summerfield, Stokesdale and Oak Ridge, with a deadline of having the money spent by June 30, 2022. McClellan said that COVID-19 had slowed things down and, as a result, Schneider and he requested an extension for another 6-12 months to spend the money. He said the extra time would allow additional time to work on the water system and fire suppression for the fire department.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman encouraged residents to continue to wear face coverings, to practice social distancing, and to avoid large crowds. He said that COVID-19 cases were increasing and urged citizens to get their vaccine when they could. Kinneman said that a blood drive would be held at Oak Ridge United Methodist Church on April 12 and encouraged everyone to donate if they were able.

Councilwoman Pittman thanked the Tree Committee for their work that ensures that the Town remains committed to being able to continue as a Tree City USA.

Mayor Schneider apologized for holding the meeting during the week of Passover and specifically on Maundy Thursday. She said that going forward, Council would try to not meet during the week of Easter. She thanked Councilman McClellan for organizing the visit to Raleigh, and said that she thought that their meetings were very productive.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Councilman George McClellan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:03 p.m. and Councilman Jim Kinneman seconded the motion. Via a roll call vote, it was passed unanimously (5-0).

