



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
OCTOBER 3, 2024 - 7:00 P.M.
OAK RIDGE TOWN HALL**

MINUTES

Members Present

Jim Kinneman, Mayor
Mike Stone, Mayor Pro Tem
Ann Schneider
Michael Greeson

Staff Present

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

Members Absent

Jim Harton

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Jim Kinneman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

A. Invocation

Austin Goldman offered the invocation.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Mike Stone made a motion to delay discussion of agenda item 9 until the following month due to the absence of Councilman Jim Harton. Councilwoman Ann Schneider seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously (4-0).

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilwoman Ann Schneider made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 5, 2024, regular meeting, and Councilman Michael Greeson seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (4-0).

4. RESOLUTIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

5. REPORT FROM GUILFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

No representative from the Guilford County Sheriff's office was present, but the report for the month of September 2024 was included in the council meeting packet and made available at the back table of the chamber.

6. REPORT FROM OAK RIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Assistant Fire Chief Sam Anders reported ongoing rescue training occurring at the newly constructed fire tower. He stated that the department's assets and personnel were being reported to Guilford County Emergency Management for possible deployment to western sections of the state to assist in disaster relief efforts. He described Fire Prevention Week occurring in October and offered advice on open burning of brush.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- John Browning, 8024 Linville Road, read from a letter distributed by Oak Ridge Methodist Church regarding donation efforts for Hurricane Helene disaster relief.
- Ben Walraven, 5931 Pepper Road, commented on the request to Town Council to record all committee and public meetings, specifically as it pertained to the Special Events Committee of which he has been an active member. He explained that finding volunteers to serve on committees was difficult and that requiring regular recordings of their meetings would discourage their participation. He cautioned that events would have to be managed by Town staff or be canceled if volunteers were unavailable. He pointed out that the Special Events Committee met all requirements necessary to conduct open meetings by publishing its monthly agendas and meeting minutes, and by reporting budget needs and monthly reconciliations of the budget. He noted that the towns of Stokesdale, Summerfield, High Point, and Kernersville do not record their committees' meetings. Walraven added that he thought it would be appropriate for the town to consider donating towards hurricane relief efforts.
- John Jenkins, 6700 Ashton Park Drive, reiterated the sentiments about recording meetings previously expressed by Walraven pointing out that most committees had a council liaison as a sitting member and that the committee's monthly agendas and minutes were openly published. He stated that he would not participate in a committee if it were to be recorded and that he saw no need to compel recordings of committee meetings.

8. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- A. Consideration/Approval of appointment of Clay Flynt as ETJ representative to the Planning & Zoning Board and Ty Lindsay as an alternate to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board**

Councilwoman Ann Schneider made a motion to approve the appointment of Clay Flynt as ETJ representative to the P&Z Board and Ty Lindsay as an alternate to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. Councilman Michael Greeson seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously (4-0).

B. Any other business

Greeson inquired about the possibility of the athletic fields at Heritage Farm Park not being used until early in 2026. Town Manager Bill Bruce replied that the opening of the fields was intended to occur in spring 2025. He stated that a recent outbreak of army worms had caused damage to the fields' turf and that both the contractor and construction administrator were informed immediately of the issue since the fields had not yet been turned over to the Town. He explained that the fields were to be treated that week. Greeson asked Town Attorney Michael Thomas if the contractor was subject to penalties for extending beyond the contracted completion date of the park's construction. Thomas replied that the Town's position on the issue was based on the contract which was still in conformance and advised that further discussion of the matter should occur in a closed session to protect the Town's position.

9. NEW BUSINESS

Consideration / Approval of request to record all committee and public meetings conducted by the Town effective October 7, 2024

Removed from the agenda

10. MONTHLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Finance Officer Sam Anders reported normal financial transactions for September and requested consideration of an addendum to allocate remaining Farmhouse Community Center project expenses from FY2023-24 to FY2024-25 due to the project's incompleteness in FY2023-24.

Mayor Pro Tem Mike Stone made a motion to approve the financial report as presented by the Finance Officer, and Councilman Michael Greeson seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (4-0).

Councilwoman Ann Schneider made a motion to approve the budget amendment as presented by Financial Officer Sam Anders, and Councilman Michael Greeson seconded. The motion passed (3-1) with Mayor Pro Tem Mike Stone voting in opposition.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

Co-Chair John Browning reported that hardware components of the park security system were in place and that the system would soon be operational. He pointed out that recommendations for changes on the Parks & Recreation Facility Fee Schedule were discussed at the Board's last meeting and these recommendations would be presented to Council for consideration at a future meeting. Browning acknowledged the efforts of the Merchants of Oak Ridge, Town Park staff, and Randy Floss in the successful RidgeFest event. He announced that all thermoplastic games were installed, and walkways reopened at Heritage Farm Park. He added that the final Music in the Park event would occur on October 12 and the Halloween Terror Trail conducted by ORYA in partnership with the Town would occur on October 18, 19, 25 and 26.

B. Finance Committee

No report

C. Water Advisory Committee

Kinneman noted that a report from the Water Advisory Committee was previously emailed to council members.

D. Historic Preservation Commission

Chair Debbie Shoenfeld reported that the committee continued the consideration of the COA for the demolition of a contributing structure, the Gardner House, to its next meeting on October 16. She noted that the Historic Oak Ridge book was in its first round of editing and was currently 128 pages long. Greeson asked if the book would be available for sale by Christmas, and Shoenfeld responded that it likely would not.

E. Planning & Zoning Board

Planning Director Sean Taylor reported that the Board had reviewed and discussed the Thoroughfare and Street Plan as presented by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and had responded with recommendations to the MPO. He stated that the Plan should be presented to Council for consideration by December.

F. Mountains-to-Sea-Trail Committee

No report

G. Conservation Easement Committee

No report.

H. Special Events Committee

Co-Chair Ben Walraven reported that Phase One of the Veterans Honor Green project was nearing completion, the second batch of engraved pavers had been received, and a third round of paver orders was pending submission to the engraver. Walraven announced that the grand opening of the Veterans Honor Green

would occur in conjunction with an observance of Veterans Day on November 11. He stated that plans for the upcoming Light Up the Night event were underway, and that installation of the luminaries was scheduled for November 3.

I. Tree Committee

John Browning reported that a forester from the Forestry Service met with the committee to offer training on how to measure large trees using a clinometer. He noted that 12 nominations were submitted to the Treasure Tree program. He announced that the committee was currently looking for a volunteer to fill one seat.

12. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION REPORTS

A. Oak Ridge Military Academy

No report

B. Oak Ridge Elementary School

Town Clerk/Assistant Town Manager Sandra Smith announced that she would appear on the WORE Morning Show at Oak Ridge Elementary School on October 4 to speak about the history of the school.

C. Oak Ridge Youth Association

No report

13. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- John Jenkins, 6700 Ashton Park Drive, suggested that committee chairs poll their members on their opinions regarding the recording of meetings and for Council to consider the results of the polls before rendering a decision on the issue. He added that a public meeting could be conducted in lieu of the poll to give individuals an opportunity to offer their input before a decision is made.

14. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Michael Greeson acknowledged the Oak Ridge Military Academy boys basketball team for winning the Class CAA4SC State Championships in the 2023-24 season. He pointed out that the team was currently in western NC aiding Samaritan's Purse in their hurricane relief efforts. He suggested recognizing the team with a proclamation at the following month's meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Mike Stone acknowledged Oak Ridge Methodist Church and Baptists on a Mission for their contributions to disaster relief efforts in western NC. He asked

for a closed session meeting at next month's Council meeting to speak with the Town's attorney on matters concerning construction at Heritage Farm Park.

Councilwoman Ann Schneider acknowledged the role of the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) for offering resources for disaster relief in western NC. She spoke about her attendance at recent NCLM meetings where she learned about their insurance products, discussed the State legislature's efforts to dissolve extra territorial jurisdictions (ETJ) from municipalities, and reviewed advocacy goals for the League. Schneider stated that a punch list for construction at the Veterans Honor Green was being developed and announced upcoming events sponsored by Hannah's Haven, a nonprofit addiction recovery program for women.

Mayor Jim Kinneman promoted efforts to donate blood in light of the hurricane's impact on the western part of the state. He advised volunteer efforts go through coordinated disaster relief organizations to relieve inundation of volunteers in impacted areas. He asked if the Town could make a donation towards relief efforts. Kinneman added that he would be open to a work session to discuss legislative issues focused on eliminating ETJs. Town Manager Bill Bruce informed Kinneman that the Town participated in the State's Mutual Aid Agreement, which makes the Town's resources available to assist relief efforts upon request. Town Attorney Michael Thomas suggested less risk would be involved if the Town as a municipality coordinated aid with other organizations rather than provide an outlay of cash to disaster relief efforts.

15. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Mike Stone made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 p.m., and Councilwoman Ann Schneider seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

Sandra B. Smith, CMC, NCCMC
Asst. Town Manager/ Town Clerk

Jim A. Kinneman
Mayor