



**OAK RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JUNE 29, 2023 - 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

Staff Present

Bill Bruce, Town Manager
Sandra Smith, Asst. Town Mgr./Town Clerk
Sean Taylor, Planning Director
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. She pointed out that the meeting intended for the month of July had been rescheduled to June 29 to avoid conflict with the July 4 holiday.

A. Invocation.

John Jenkins, Chair of the Finance Committee, offered the invocation.

B. Pledge of Allegiance.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to approve the agenda, and Councilman George McClellan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Councilman McClellan made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 1, 2023, Regular Meeting, June 8, 2023 Special Meeting, June 15, 2023 Special Meeting, and June 15, 2023 Closed Session. Councilwoman Martha Pittman seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (5-0).

4. RESOLUTIONS, PROCLAMATIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Schneider recognized Chair of Finance Committee John Jenkins with a Certificate of Appreciation for his 21 years of service to the Town. She announced that Jenkins was responsible for the establishment of the committee of citizens

whose objective was to review and recommend the Town's annual budget, and he had served as the chair of this committee since its inception in 2002.

5. REPORT FROM GUILFORD COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

None

6. REPORT FROM OAK RIDGE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Assistant Chief Sam Anders did not have data on training hours and service calls to report as the month had not yet ended. He noted that Guilford County Protocol Tests had been updated and successfully completed by all applicable employees and volunteers with a 100 percent passing rate. He explained that the protocol tests were the guiding medical documents for Emergency Medical Technicians. He reported that all board members and corporate officers had been re-elected at the annual meeting. Anders commented on the dangers of handling felled wires and lines during the storm season.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman asked about the status of the fire training tower. Anders answered that due to rising costs of products and service, the bidding process had been re-opened. He explained that all permits necessary for construction to begin had been issued apart from the permit needed for driveway connection by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT).

7. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Budget Amendment for FY2023-24 to allocate County grant funds

Town Manager Bill Bruce explained that the Guilford County FY2023-24 budget included a \$140,000 appropriation for security cameras at the Town Park and for the construction of the inclusive playground at Heritage Farm Park (HFP). He recommended that the additional \$140,000 be applied to the line item for grants and to expenditures in capital outlay in the already adopted FY2023-24 Town budget. He suggested the allocation of \$70,000 towards security cameras at parking lots and \$70,000 towards the inclusive playground. He stressed an urgency to allocate the funds as design on the playground at Heritage Farm Park had already begun. Bruce pointed out that the contract's details were pending.

Councilman McClellan moved to approve the Budget Amendment for FY2023-24 to allocate the County grant funds as presented. Councilman Spencer Sullivan seconded the motion.

Councilman Kinneman asked if the wording in the request to allocate \$70,000 to security cameras could be broadened to apply to security measures at the park in general to allow flexibility in the expenditure. Bruce responded that contract details were not yet available regarding how the grant would be appropriated, but that Council had the ability to reallocate funds at a later time if flexibility is built into the contract.

The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

B. Consideration/Approval of unsealing closed session minutes

- July 7, 2022
- August 4, 2022
- February 22, 2023

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman made a motion to unseal closed session minutes of the July 7, 2022, August 4, 2022, and February 22, 2023, meetings. Councilwoman Pittman seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously (5-0).

C. Project Updates

- Heritage Farm Park

Bruce reported that after a slight delay due to weather conditions, Bar Construction was fully engaged in construction at Heritage Farm Park. He explained that vegetation had been cleared to prepare for grading, and that the work on the multipurpose fields at the furthest site from Scoggins Road would begin first with the aim to complete the drainage, grading, and seeding of the fields by the end of the summer. He stressed the need to pay heed to the active construction site for safety reasons.

- NC 68 / NC 150 Construction Project

Bruce reported that NCDOT had received three competitive bids on the intersection project and that the contract would be awarded shortly, with the project remaining on schedule to begin in March 2024. He noted that some activity had already begun and that the two-year project had an anticipated completion in March 2026.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

9. NEW BUSINESS

Consideration/Approval of sale of alcohol at future Music in the Park events

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Co-Chair John Garrett explained that the Board had lengthy discussions about Music in the Park, which included feedback from citizens. He noted that this year's program provided a mixture of contemporary pop and traditional music. Attendance at each of the two recent pop music events was over 1,000 people, while attendance at the traditional/bluegrass music events had been 75 to 100 people on average. The Parks & Recreation Board unanimously agreed to recommend to Council to continue the sale of alcohol at the pop Music in the Park events which would be held at the amphitheater due to capacity, and to host the smaller traditional music events at the future Farmhouse Community Center to provide a more intimate setting without alcohol service.

Councilman Sullivan made a motion to approve the sale of alcohol at future Music in the Park events at the amphitheater. Councilman McClellan seconded the motion.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman suggested the need for flexibility in not committing to or requiring the sale of alcohol at all the Music in the Park events to be held at the amphitheater. He thought it important to leave open the opportunity to not sell alcohol at an event for whatever reason deemed applicable.

Mayor Schneider pointed out that the decision to sell alcohol at any of the Music in the Park events would be made by the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board. Councilman McClellan emphasized the same point. Councilwoman Pittman expressed that no problem had yet been encountered due to serving alcohol at the past two events. She stressed that the events were held early in the evening, they were well managed, well-regulated, and that law enforcement had been in place to help assert control. Councilman McClellan noted his observation of law enforcement at the events he had attended. Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman concurred that it would be required to have law enforcement present at an event where alcohol was served.

Mayor Schneider acknowledged her gratitude to Deputy Town Clerk Ashley Royal for her leadership in managing Music in the Park events, to Parks & Recreation Board member Randy Collins for organizing sponsorships, and to longtime Parks & Recreation Board member Phyllis Anders for her support and willingness to carry forward with the traditional Music in the Park events. She pointed out that bands with an established following and regional reach have drawn larger crowds to Music in the Park events, and that hosting the smaller traditional bands at the Farmhouse Community Center would be an attractive future use of the Farmhouse. Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman questioned the sufficiency of the Farmhouse's limited restroom facilities to support a crowd of 75 to 100 people and suggested the necessity to augment the need with portable toilets if necessary. Councilman McClellan voiced his support of Music in the Park events and the use of the Farmhouse. He attributed the origination of Music in the Park to Anders' efforts.

The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

10. MONTHLY FINANCIAL UPDATE

Mayor Schneider noted that due to the meeting having been rescheduled prior to the month's end, the financial update would not be complete.

Finance Officer Sam Anders reported that the financials would be completed and distributed through email by July 5 or July 6 due to banks being closed for the national Independence Day holiday. He added that the budget adjustments as specified in the prior month's meeting would also be finalized. He noted that the audit of interim procedures was being conducted, and it appeared to be going well. Anders stated that an inventory of assets would be taken at Town Hall and at the Town Park the following day. He mentioned that the Town's Property & Casualty Insurance had been renewed and the Town's capital projects had been reviewed.

Anders presented an Oak Ridge Horse Show denim jacket from the 1980s which had been donated to the Town by Ted Wright, noting its significance to the Town's history.

11. COMMITTEE REPORTS

A. Historic Preservation Commission.

Member Denise Sacks reported that two Certificates of Appropriateness (COA) were approved at the commission's last meeting on June 21. The first COA approved the development of a single-family residence on Williard Road, and the second COA approved the hardscape, lighting, and connecting pathways of the Town's Park Entrance Master Site Plan. She added that profiles in the Oak Ridge Historic Book were being reviewed.

B. Planning & Zoning Board.

Planning & Zoning Director Sean Taylor reported that the hardscape, lighting, and connecting pathways of the Town's Park Entrance Master Site Plan were approved, as was the site plan for the Confident Kids Pediatric Dentistry office to be located behind Starbucks by Quiet Place.

C. Mountains-to-Sea Trail Committee.

Did not meet in June

D. Conservation Easement Committee.

Did not meet in June

E. Special Events Committee.

Committee member Courtenay Harton reported that \$5,500 in donations had been made to the Veterans Honor Green in June. She acknowledged Thad and Bobbie Lowrey for their \$5,000 donation. She stated that \$216,815.24 had been raised to date for Veterans Honor Green, and that the total included future matching donations from the Town. She stressed that outreach efforts continued to help meet the \$250,000 goal by July 31. Harton described the upcoming July 4 Kids' Bike Parade activities and acknowledged the work done to decorate the Welcome to Oak Ridge signs by herself and Gigi Williams. She concluded with noting plans being made for Heritage Day on September 30, the 200th Anniversary of the Charles Benbow house on October 15, Light up the Night on December 2 and the 25th Anniversary of the Town on January 24, 2024.

F. Tree Committee.

No report.

G. Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Co-Chair John Garrett reported that the Board approved the Town's Park Entrance Master Plan at its last meeting on June 15. He mentioned that positive feedback was received from the Music in the Park sponsors Maureena Shepherd of Allen Tate Realty, Oak Ridge Commons, Domino's Oak Ridge, Tire Max, and Phoenix Edge. He

announced that grilled sausage had been added to the park's concession menu. Garrett noted that Ridgefest was scheduled for September 7-9 with Oak Ridge Youth Association night falling on the 7th, Barefoot Modern performing on the 8th and beach music scheduled on the 9th ending with a fireworks display (rain date scheduled for October 14 at the last Music in the Park event). Mayor Schneider added that the next Music in the Park event would be July 8 and would feature The Ghosts of Liberty and Barefoot Modern.

H. Finance Committee.

Did not meet in June

I. Water Advisory Committee.

Chair Jim Harton noted that the committee met on June 28. He reported that the Town, the water department, and Envirolink were continuing to work with the developer of the Honeycutt Wells Development to bring the first water customers online for billing. He said that the committee reviewed Wooten Company's engineering plans for the elevated water tower along with the 12-inch water line designed to run from the water tower to Linville Road and to the fire department. He mentioned that the 25-year timeline chronicling the Town's efforts to develop a municipal water system was finalized and ready to be uploaded onto the website. Harton elaborated on the committee's review of the first draft of the interlocal agreement with Winston-Salem/Forsyth County. In their review, several areas which needed additional clarification were identified and forwarded to Town Manager Bruce and Town Attorney Michael Thomas for additional study. The committee's recommendation was to enlist further review by Envirolink and outside water expert Tom Roberts before compiling a response to Winston Salem.

12. COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION REPORTS

A. Oak Ridge Youth Association.

No report

B. Oak Ridge Military Academy.

No report

C. Oak Ridge Elementary School.

No report

13. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Jim Harton, 5901 Pepper Road, announced his intent to run for Town Council in the fall of 2023. He described his participation in Oak Ridge affairs as follows: member of the Finance Committee for the past three years, Chair of the Water Committee for the past year, Board member of the Oak Ridge

Fire Department, and Board Member and Treasurer of Preservation Oak Ridge since 2017. He added that his wife's involvement as a member of the Historic Preservation Commission, Mountains-to-Sea Trail Committee, and Special Events Committee have given him additional exposure to the Town's affairs. He voiced his support for the Heritage Farm Park project, and in particular, the Veterans Honor Green project. He concluded that his level of involvement in Town affairs makes him a strong candidate for Town Council.

- Phyllis Anders, 1837 Oak Ridge Road, thanked the Mayor and Council for the opportunity to continue offering smaller, local bands the opportunity to perform at the Farmhouse Community Center, noting that this would help to highlight the many possible uses of the Farmhouse. She expressed gratitude for the Council's support of Music in the Park over the past 14 years.

14. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Councilman Sullivan reflected on the meaning of the upcoming Independence Day Holiday and lamented the atmosphere of division in the country. He encouraged all to pull together by remembering where we came from. He offered his congratulations to and support of Harton for his intent to run for Council. Sullivan announced his intent not to seek re-election, having served almost 10 years on Council, half of which were as mayor.

Councilwoman Pittman expressed gratitude for the faith entrusted to her by the residents of Oak Ridge and noted that much still remained to be accomplished in protecting the unique rural character of the Town while preparing for its future. She announced her intent to run for re-election and re-affirmed her commitment to responsive, informed, and experienced leadership.

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman expressed appreciation to Councilman Sullivan for his years of service on Council and wished the individuals who had announced their intent to run for Council good luck. He emphasized the need for donation of blood platelets.

Councilman McClellan reiterated his intent to run for re-election and expressed his appreciation to Councilman Sullivan for his service on Council. He elaborated on the year of big projects including Heritage Farm Park and the municipal water system. He pointed out the growth in jobs in the area and their positive impact on the Town, and emphasized the need to prepare rather than wait to react to what would come next.

Mayor Schneider expressed her gratitude to Councilman Sullivan and offered her congratulations to Harton, noting the courage and commitment it takes to run for a public office. She announced the upcoming Council Hours on Thursday, July 27, from 8:30 to 10:00 a.m. which will be held in person and via Zoom.

15. CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman made a motion to go into closed session to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(6). Councilman McClellan seconded, and the motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Mayor Pro Tem Jim Kinneman made a motion to return to open session at 8:03 p.m., and Councilman Spencer Sullivan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Councilwoman Martha Pittman made a motion to increase Town Manager Bill Bruce's annual salary to \$112,000 in recognition of a job well done, and Councilman George McClellan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

16. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tem Kinneman moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 p.m., and Councilman McClellan seconded. The motion was passed unanimously (5-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

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

Ann K. Schneider
Mayor