

Town Council/Warren County Board of Supervisors Liaison Committee Meeting Minutes – Thursday October 19th @ 6:00 PM in the County of Warren Board Room

Present from the Town: Lori A. Cockrell, Mayor; H. Bruce Rappaport, Councilmember; Joseph E. Waltz, Town Manager

Present from the County: Vicky L. Cook, Chair-Supervisor (Fork District); Jerome K. Butler, Supervisor (Happy Creek District); Dr. Edwin Daley, County Administrator

Other Present: Zach Henderson, Deputy Clerk of the Board, and Members of the audience including but not limited to councilmembers, supervisors, and Town/County staff.

Call to Order:

Ms. Cook called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Continued Discussion on Liaison Policy Revisions:

Mayor Cockrell stated that in the prior meeting both Town and County would go back and speak with their respective bodies for feedback, and emphasized the small changes made, words added, schedule, agenda item timeframes etc. Ms. Cook agreed and commented on the revision stating the Town Manager and County Administrator will submit an oral or written report to be presented at the other's respective meetings. Ms. Cook then asked about the contents of each report, Mayor Cockrell stated that it would be a general summary or highlights and projects etc. Lastly, Mayor Cockrell commented that the Liaison meetings hosted by the Town are recorded and filmed and asked if the County would be willing to do the same thing. Dr. Daley stated that there will need to be an arrangement with Swagit to have something to be done and put into the policy.

Continued Discussion on Delay of the Mailing of Real Estate and Personal Property Tax Bills:

Mr. B.J Wilson (Director of Finance – Town of Front Royal) stated that after speaking with the Commissioner of Revenue, they were told that the files cannot be given over until the tax rates are set by the Board of Supervisors and discussed the logistics of permanently extending the due date by updating ordinances. Dr. Daley stated that there are two sets of billings, one in Nov/Dec and April/May and for the former, the rates are already set. Furthermore, the County also has to wait for the State to approve its budget and if there are any corrections that need to be made as a result. If the tax bill due date is changed, however, it will still need to be due prior to July first and it was suggested that June 20th would be the most ideal but the Code would have to be changed. Ms. Cook suggested both the Town and County re-look at the code and further discuss changing the due date and other options as needed.

Youth Center Update:

Ms. Jane Meadows (Deputy County Administrator) stated that the asbestos and mold remediation have been completed and are not waiting until after the upcoming election for further demolition of the bathrooms so that they can be remodeled, HVAC can install then new unit, and finally the flooring. The current plan is to have renovations complete and the new tenant (Reaching Out Now - *RON*) to be in by January 1st. Mayor Cockrell stated that the Town has sent the MOA to the County Attorney and includes the Town's involvement and is currently waiting for the County's feedback. Ms. Cook stated that the County's position is that there is no requirement to have a 3-way MOA because of different commitments and obligations from all parties involved. Mayor Cockrell stated that part of it was from the Volunteer Settlement Agreement and the idea is that the Town is funding them as part of a pilot program, and the lease will be for recreational purposes. Ms. Cook questioned that if there is an agreement already in place that states what the facility will be used for,

then why would there need to be a second agreement needed to emphasize it. Mayor Cockrell stated that it was her understanding that everyone would be involved after meeting with *RON*. Secondly, any funds provided by the Town would need to be explicitly stated that they will be used for programs, and not the building itself. Mr. Waltz stated that what is needed is a written response that can be taken back to the Town Attorney and then exchanged with the County Attorney. Ms. Cook stated that the County will make an official response to the MOA. Mr. Rappaport stated that given the number of sponsorships that *RON* has is clear evidence of their confidence and the confidence the community and the people have in them.

Avtex Conservancy Update:

Mayor Cockrell stated that the Town was just looking for an update given the recent site visit and plan developments. Mr. Joe Petty (Director of Economic Development) thanked all those who were involved in the tour where the plan was discussed in depth with what can and cannot be done with the site. There were representatives from the EPA, Parsons, DEQ, which resulted in an application for a comfort letter for development from the EPA. The application is submitted and the EDA is currently awaiting the results, and ARPA funds have been linked to that and subject to change depending on the results of the letter. December 31st is the deadline to obligate the ARPA funds, and June 30th to spend and receive all goods.

Transportation Committee Update:

Ms. Delores Oates (Board of Supervisors – North River District) stated that in the previous meeting the overall transportation issues in the Town and County were discussed and emphasized the study that needs to be done for the Shenandoah Shores road issue and various numbers have to be provided to VDOT, such as the number of potential homes, volumes of traffic, estimations etc. Furthermore, Ms. Oates mentioned the ongoing discussion of potentially offering transportation, such as the trolley, to the Corridor for people who need it and help the broadest amount of people. Mr. Butler commented on the possibility of adding a bike lane down Shenandoah Shores road in between Happy Creek road and Christendom College. Ms. Cook asked for a description of what the study will be like and entail. Ms. Oates stated that the volume of traffic will be evaluated to see if the connector road from Shenandoah Shores to 8th Street should be a 2-lane or a 4-lane road as an alternative route in the event that the railroad is blocking the road, and from there VDOT will provide recommendations. There are many options that could come from said study but the most immediate would be the ability to have some access from 66 in case of emergency, but a study from that angle would have to come from the Federal Government since it is a federal highway. The largest hurdle to all conceptual projects still continues to be funding. The next meeting will take place on Wednesday November 15th. Ms. Cook suggested an action that the Committee create a draft for by-laws that state the overall mission, expectations, scope, and boundaries etc.

Continued Discussion on McKay Springs:

Ms. Cook reiterated the Town's position that they did not wish to sell their portion. Mr. Waltz stated that the Town does not wish to sell their portion to protect the springs and its integrity. Mr. Petty stated that the Town owns 1 parcel, the County owns 1 parcel, and 2 parcels are owned jointly. Mr. Waltz stated that there is an ongoing evaluation of how much land is needed for a footprint to mark the property better and hopes to have a tangible answer by the end of the year.

Discussion on Water Sources Amidst Drought:

Ms. Oates discussed the water study the County had done in the corridor and commented that Frederick Water of water in their quarry and addressed the concerns about the drought and its potential effects, and further commented on potentially having a sub-committee on water. Mayor Cockrell mentioned that discussions have taken place in the past about forming a committee to discuss water, and still thinks it's a good idea to form. Mr. Waltz stated that the Town has 3 water sources that are all surface water and re-emphasized the importance of McKay springs. Ms. Cook suggested this item be revisited at the next Liaison meeting and give the Town and County time to digest the issue and look at all viable issues. Mr. Butler commented that from a holistic perspective, what can and should be done as the County and community grows, because all will be impacted.

Workforce Housing:

Mr. Rappaport discussed workforce housing and emphasized the term, "incentivized developers" and the Federal Loan Income housing tax credit. In Virginia, the program funds 5,500 portable units per year. Furthermore, the Governor has \$16M in tax credits to help rental affordability, and the IRS gives tax credits to developers prior to apartment construction. Ms. Cook recommended that work force housing be on the next Liaison Agenda for further discussion.

Next meeting will take place January 18th 2024 at the Town of Front Royal Council Chambers

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM