



Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance led by Wyatt Wilfong

ROLL CALL BY CLERK OF COUNCIL

PRESENT: Mayor Lori A. Cockrell
Vice Mayor Amber F. Veitenthal
Councilwoman Melissa DeDomenico-Payne
Councilman Joshua L. Ingram
Councilman H. Bruce Rappaport
Councilman Glenn E. Wood

ABSENT: Councilman R. Wayne Sealock

OTHERS PRESENT: Clerk of Council Tina L. Presley
Interim Town Manager BJ Wilson
Town Attorney George M. Sonnett, Jr.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Councilman Ingram moved seconded by Councilman Wood that Council approve the Council Meeting minutes of the December 2, 2024, Work Session, December 9, 2024 Regular Meeting, December 16, 2024 Special & Special Closed Meetings, January 9, 2025 Work Session & January 13, 2025 Work Session as presented.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Sealock

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

ADDITION/DELETION OF ITEMS FROM THE AGENDA OR REVISION TO ORDER OF BUSINESS - None

RECOGNITIONS/AWARDS/REPORTS - None

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Special Exception Request from COL Samuel R. Millar VFW Post 1860 for Relief of Existing Parking Requirements at 654-B W 11th Street - Director of Planning Lauren Kopishke gave a brief presentation. She stated that there was a change of use prompting the reclassification and explained how the calculations were made for the number of parking spaces. Council confirmed that the square footage calculation was less than the fixed seating calculation.

The applicant, VFW Commander Jeffrey Cook spoke. He gave a brief history, function and list of numerous community events of the VFW in Front Royal noting its existence since June 1930. He reminded Council that the building was previously a restaurant, but the VFW could not be classified as a restaurant; therefore, the “assembly use” was the closest use to their organization creating the need for more parking under that use. He commended the Planning Department for working with him on finding a use since the Town Code was not specific to organizations like the VFW. He noted that the fixed table calculation would generate a smaller number; however, the tables would not be fixed. He explained that the Warren County Economic Development Authority (WCEDA) denied his request for extra parking. The Front Royal Church of the Nazarene, he advised, agreed to assist with parking on a case-by-case basis for special events provided there were no conflicting church events. He also advised that he had spoken to the current owner of the former VFW property and received permission to use his property for six (6) events per year. He advised that he had been working to find a new home for the VFW since the 2015 fire of their former building. Council confirmed that he had not closed on the property as it was contingent upon Council’s decision tonight. Mr. Cook confirmed that there was an anticipated (40) or less members during the day and it would be open for limited hours in the beginning.



Mayor Cockrell opened the public hearing.

Andrea White, 227 Lee Street, VFW's Realtor, advised that the VFW was not expected to be at this address long term, maybe 2 – 5 years. She handed the Clerk of Council a letter from the Front Royal Church of the Nazarene's Pastor specifying the conditions for additional parking. She noted that the seating was movable not fixed and reminded Council that the building could go back to a restaurant by right.

Mike McCool, 613 N. Commerce Avenue, suggested that the VFW be classified as a restaurant with no parking requirements. He voiced concern over the lack of parking overall in Town.

Pastor Steve Guizar of the Front Royal Church of the Nazarene, 1107 Monroe Avenue, confirmed that he wrote the letter giving the VFW extra parking during special events on a case-by-case basis. He expressed hope for good community partnership through communication.

Mayor Cockrell closed the public hearing.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Rappaport that Council approve the request from COL Samuel R. Millar VFW Post 1860, Commander Jeffrey D. Cook for relief of parking requirements at 654-B W. 11th Street (tax map 20A1-2-3-3 and 4).

Vice Mayor Veitenthal thanked staff for their hard work on this request. She sympathized with the decline of VFW membership, stating that until the Town Code was amended to address parking issues in Town, special exceptions would continue to be needed. Councilman Ingram wished the VFW all the best and recognized their struggle to find a home. Councilman Rappaport was on board with what the VFW presented tonight.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Sealock

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Receive Public Input Pertaining to the Town Vacating a Portion of Kibler Street - Director of Planning Lauren Kopishke gave a brief presentation explaining the process and breakdown involving the Warren County Building Department.

Applicant Carlos Comacho of Apple Contractors, Inc. explained the various issues with the project including the inefficient number of surveys and apologized. He stated that it was not his intention to take advantage of the process. Mayor Cockrell confirmed with Mr. Comacho that the survey pins were removed by someone he hired and voiced her displeasure that they were not placed back in their proper places.

Mayor Cockrell opened the public hearing.

Mike McCool, 613 N. Commerce Avenue, understood that the house was nonconforming, in the flood zone and had sat vacant for two years. He voiced concern that his property would be devalued and placed blame on the Warren County Building Department for not following through on the processes.

Demetry Pikrallidas for Karavas Properties, Commerce Center 629 Commerce Avenue, voiced concern that if the vacation were approved the street width would be decreased not allowing safe access for emergency vehicles. He asked that Council not approve the vacation request.



Douglas Napier, 195 Parkridge Court, lawyer for Mr. Comacho, noted that there was little that could be done to correct the situation from a cost standpoint. He advised that a variance was applied for and was denied. He explained that only nine inches were needed; however, two feet were being requested so that a fence could be installed. He confirmed that a mistake was made by replacing the pins in the wrong place and not obtaining the proper number of surveys.

Mayor Cockrell closed the public hearing.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal understood that Kibler Street would not be impacted upon approval of the vacation request, only creating a bump out. Ms. Kopishke confirmed that if vacated, twenty-eight (28) feet would remain and that eighteen feet was needed for emergency vehicles. Council confirmed that fences were allowed in commercial areas and that the Public Works Department did not have any comments.

Councilman Wood moved seconded by Councilman Rappaport that Council appoint viewers to view the vacation request from the applicant to vacate 180 square feet of Kibler Street that adjoins 219 E. 7th Street and to report in writing any inconvenience to the public that would result from discontinuance of the right-of-way.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal commented that this error was not the fault of the Town's Planning/Zoning Department or the applicant voicing disappointment in the County's process. Councilman Rappaport stated that a variance should have been allowed understanding that mistakes happen. He voiced concern that protocol was not followed. Councilman Wood advised that he moved to "appoint viewers" because there were no comments from the Public Works Department.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Sealock

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 175 Pertaining to Tobacco, Smoke or Vape Shops - Mayor Cockrell stated that she would open the public hearing but asked if Council would consider keeping the public hearing open until the next regular meeting on February 24, 2025. Town Attorney George Sonnett advised that keeping the public hearing open allowed sufficient public notice and for the text in the ordinance to be corrected. Director of Planning Lauren Kopishke gave a brief presentation.

Mayor Cockrell opened the public hearing, since there were no speakers, the public hearing was closed.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Wood that Council keep the public hearing open on adopting an ordinance amendment to Chapter 175 defining and permitting tobacco, smoke or vape shops until the regular meeting of February 24, 2025.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Sealock

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Comprehensive Plan Amendment for the Area between Strasburg Rd and Duck St to Rugby St - Director of Planning Lauren Kopishke gave a brief presentation.

Mayor Cockrell opened the public hearing, since there were no speakers, the public hearing was closed.



The following minutes are a summary of items on the agenda. This meeting may be viewed in its entirety by accessing the video of the same date online via the Town's website at www.frontroyalva.com for a limited time.

Councilman Rappaport moved seconded by Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne that Council, to promote the health, safety, morals, order, convenience, prosperity and general welfare of the inhabitants including the elderly and persons with disabilities, approve a Comprehensive Plan amendment, initiated by the Planning Commission, to amend the area between Strasburg Road and Duck Street to Rugby Road from a future land use designation of Commercial to Neighborhood Residential known as the Riverton Planning District, as presented.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Sealock

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

PUBLIC COMMENTS NOT RELATED TO PUBLIC HEARINGS

Mark Becker, 193 Apple Jack Circle, Linden, VA spoke about his false arrest by the Front Royal Police Department that ended his career.

REPORTS

Town Manager Report – Interim Town Manager BJ Wilson advised that the Yard Waste Collection would cease and resume in April. He thanked staff for their hard work to remove snow and fix water breaks and outages during the most recent snow events.

Town Council Reports

Councilman Ingram thanked Mr. Wilson for his hard being in the position of Interim Town Manager and echoed his sentiments regarding staff during the most recent snow events.

Councilman Wood echoed the sentiments of Council regarding staff and Mr. Wilson and noted that he had received numerous compliments from citizens on the staff during the snow events.

Vice Mayor Veitenthal echoed the sentiments of Council noting that Mr. Wilson was currently “wearing several hats.”

Councilman Rappaport echoed the sentiments of Council regarding staff and Mr. Wilson.

Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne advised citizens to contact the County regarding their concerns over the most recent tax reassessment. She echoed the sentiments of Council regarding staff and Mr. Wilson.

Report of the Mayor – Mayor Cockrell attended the Town Employees Christmas Luncheon; rang the bell for Salvation Army; went Christmas caroling; attended the ribbon cutting for Chester Street Tavern; read to residents at Commonwealth Senior Living at Front Royal; attended the Warren County Recovery Court Ceremony of two graduates; attended the Annual Front Royal Volunteer Fire Departments Awards Banquet. She thanked all the employees for working in extremely cold temperatures. She advised that they were working hard on finding a new Town Manager.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS - None

BUSINESS ITEMS

Final Subdivision Plat for a Major Subdivision [Squirrel Hill Development] Located at 344 W. Main Street – McCarty
Councilman Wood suggested Council consider discussing finishing the sidewalks around the soccer fields for the children to get there safely since the subdivision was installing sidewalks in their development.



The following minutes are a summary of items on the agenda. This meeting may be viewed in its entirety by accessing the video of the same date online via the Town's website at www.frontroyalva.com for a limited time.

Councilman Rappaport had several questions regarding the sidewalks, lighting, sanitary sewer easement and Stormwater Management Plan. Ms. Kopishke advised that all those items would be discussed during the Site Plan Phase, which was the next step. She explained that the Stormwater Management Plan was approved by the County and the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Councilman Ingram moved seconded by Councilwoman DeDomenico-Payne that Council approve the final subdivision plat for a major subdivision [Squirrel Hill Development] submitted by Jay McCarty, Neal McCarty and Dennis McCarty to divide approximately 4.34 acres into (34) lots and (33) dwelling units which is (16) duplexes and one existing single-family dwelling located at 344 W. Main Street as presented.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Sealock

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

CLOSED MEETING

Vice Mayor Veitenthal moved seconded by Councilman Wood that Town Council convene a closed meeting, pursuant to Sections 2.2-3711 and 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia, for the following purpose: 1) pursuant to §2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia, for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body, more specifically, the Town Manager position.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Sealock

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

Councilman Ingram moved seconded by Vice Mayor Veitenthal that Council certify that to the best of each member's knowledge, as recognized by each Council member's affirmative vote, that only such public business matters lawfully exempted from Open Meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the Closed Meeting by Council, and that the vote of each individual member of Council be taken by roll call and recorded and included in the minutes of the meeting of Town Council.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Wood, Veitenthal, Rappaport, Ingram, DeDomenico-Payne

No – N/A

Absent – Councilman Sealock

Abstain – N/A

ROLL CALL

The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:45pm.

Approved by Town Council

Date: 2/24/25