



6:30pm – Interview for Planning Commission

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION

Monday, August 3, 2015 @ 7:00pm

Front Royal Administration Building

1. CLOSED MEETING – Interview for Planning Commission

Motion to Go Into Closed Meeting

Councilman Connolly moved, seconded by Councilman Funk that Council convene and go into Closed Meeting for the purpose of assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of a public body, pursuant to Section 2.2 3711. A. 1. of the Code of Virginia.

Vote: Yes – Connolly, Egger, Funk, Hrbek and Tharpe

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – Tewalt

(Mayor Darr did not vote as there was no tie to require his vote)

Motion to Certify Closed Meeting at its Conclusion

Councilman Connolly moved, seconded by ===== 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 Action 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 – Connolly, Darr, Egger, Funk, Hrbek and Tharpe

No – N/A

Abstain – N/A

Absent – Tewalt

(BY ROLL CALL)

2. Continued Discussion VA Clean Cities (VCC) Donation of Electric Vehicle (EV) DC Fast Charger - Director of Energy Services

Summary: Staff had been evaluating EV chargers for possible use in the Gazebo area when we became aware of a program offered through Virginia Clean Cities (VCC) to offer localities an EV charger at no cost. In partnership with ChargeUp, VCC is pursuing host sites in Virginia for the installation of EV chargers to address transportation needs for the exponential growth in electric vehicles. They have recently installed chargers in Staunton, New Kent County and Williamsburg totaling 21 systems deployed since the program started. Staff discussed details of the program at the July 6 work session.

Staff Evaluation: Staff is currently gathering additional information from VCC to answer the questions/concerns from the July 6th work session. Additional details will be provided at the work session.

Staff Recommendations: There is a growing demand for fast and convenient charging infrastructure near retail and cultural destinations for electric vehicles. The VCC charger deployment program will allow the Town of Front Royal to offer this service to our citizens and visitors while visiting the Downtown area with minimal cost to the Town. Staff recommends pursuing this opportunity.

Council Discussion:

IN response to Council questions, Mr. Waltz noted that focus is to fill the gap between northern Virginia and the next stop over

will attract individuals

Councilman Hrbek noted that it appeared to be an intrinsic and monetary value to the community; yes, per Mr. Waltz

have not been to visit Jack Evans at this point

some do only a fast charge and some only do an AC charge or a DC charge

users go online to locate stops to to charge their vehicles

Councilman Egger asked if we can speak with other localities and see what their maintenance fees are. Mr. Waltz stated that some have turned their stations over to private companies

He hopes to obtain a better handle on the program until he has more information on the situation.

Councilman Hrbek suggested that the Town should not be afraid to take some risk to grow outside of the box. Mr. Waltz noted that the Town should be on the cutting edge for the community and our incoming tourists.

3. Budget Amendment for VDOT Grant on Commerce Avenue Pedestrian Improvements

– *Director of Energy Services*

Summary: The Town of Front Royal has received an administrative project agreement for pedestrian access improvements along Commerce Avenue. This project will include installation of countdown timer pedestrian signal heads, ADA curb ramps and retrofitting sidewalks and crosswalks at various intersections.

Staff Evaluation: Staff is requesting a budget amendment to allow purchase of materials and equipment to complete all pedestrian access improvements along Commerce Avenue.

Budget/Funding: The project is partially funded through the VDOT Transportation Alternative project with local funds to match. The following are project costs:

Project Costs:

Engineering \$ 5,000.00

Construction \$159,414.00

Total \$164,414.00

Funding:

VDOT \$127,531.00
Front Royal \$ 36,883.00

Requesting a Budget Amendment:

9401-7025 (VDOT crosswalks) \$ 127,531.00
9401-3410209 (VDOT reimbursement) \$ 127,531.00

Staff Recommendations: Staff recommends a budget amendment to the Energy Services department to proceed with project.

Council Discussion:

In response to Council questions, Mr. Waltz noted that it would take care of the three remaining sites on Commerce Avenue for pedestrian crossings. He added that the budget amendment allows the Town to proceed with the project with the crossings similar to those at Main Street.

4. Economic Committee Recommendations – *Town Manager*

The Economic Committee provided fifteen recommendations to Town Council on May 26, 2015. Council is requested to discuss these recommendations as well as initiatives already undertaken by the Town.

Staff Evaluation: The following summarizes efforts already undertaken or planned by the Town associated with the recommendations from the Economic Committee:

1. **Volunteer Committee for oversight of SBDC during the Town commitment** - The Town has been working with interested parties to develop the seminars required by the contract with SBDC

Mayor Darr noted that he would like to keep this item at the top of the Town's list of matters to watch over. He stated that guidance should be received as to whether the Town should be continuing with the second year of the contract. He stated that he would not like the Town to have another \$10,000 towards the SBDC if the program is not positive for the Town and meeting the needs of the Town.

2. **Hire a Champion for Front Royal (with a budget) - Town has previously advertised for a Community Development Manager position;** currently evaluating options with NSVRC or readvertising

Councilman Hrbek suggested calling it a Community Re-Development Manager, noting that it sends a better message. Councilman Egger noted that such a name may have a negative connotation. Mr. Burke suggested that the Town determine what the business community may desire from the position and craft a title at a later time.

3. **Ongoing Town Beautification** - Town has initiated a study of South Street to develop enhancement options. Initiated discussion with NSVRC to develop Entrance Corridor options

Councilman Hrbek suggested the Town address the Criser Road area near the trail. Mr. Burke noted that they could address the area of the community as the trail was expanded.

4. **Improve signage for Front Royal with emphasis on public parking locations** -

Town Council adopted new sign standard to include international parking symbol which have begun installation in the Downtown area.

5. **Increased tourism activity implementation & coordination** - Town has undertaken partnerships to sponsor events to increase tourism including Taste of the Town, Gazebo Flicks, Celebrate the River, and First Night Front Royal. Town is taking lead on continuing Drive Tourism initiative

6. **EDA/Avtex Development** - Town has worked with the EDA to rezone the site and to approve the site plan for development for IT Federal on Lot 6. Town working with EDA to construct entrance road and working with EDA and County towards extension of Main Street through the site

7. **Finalize overhead Downtown lighting and installation** - Council has approved a contract with a structural engineer to design the remaining connections. Once we have design, we will work with property owners to obtain connection easements

Mayor Darr asked that the project be completed before the Christmas season. Mr. Burke stated that the buildings have been identified and the permits can be prioritized and the installations can be clustered to expedite the project.

8. **Town Building Inspector in coordination with County** - Town has discussed establishing a Building Inspection program. Town is working with County to establish a joint online permitting website to enhance customer satisfaction with the permitting process

9. **Main Street Program Funding** - Virginia Main Street applications are due in November. Town will develop an application. Town can also establish a Tourism Committee that will mimic the subcommittees recommended to be established if the Main Street designation were approved

10. **Obtain Facade Grants** - Jeremy Camp is working with the NSVRC to pursue CDBG grant funding to establish a Facade Enhancement program

11. **Consumer/Business counseling (SBDC)** - Town conducts regular Business Forums to identify issues and opportunities to improve the business climate in Town. Town continues to work with SBDC

12. **Explore parking concern and expansions (lots, garages, etc.)** - Town will continue to evaluate parking needs and opportunities to improve customer/visitor parking opportunities. Town has implemented changes to the signage (Item 4) and is investigating opportunities to “connect” Jackson Street to Main Street

13. **Sidewalks and easements for outdoor commercial use (tables with umbrellas, etc.)** - Town has worked with some businesses to license use of public Right-of-Way while maintaining sufficient pedestrian access

14. **More Town sponsored events in conjunction with civic organizations** - See Item 5

15. **Establish Town Brand; expand profession, positive staff mindset** - Town has worked with local businesses to develop the “Rediscover Front Royal” brand and offers the “Clock” logo to businesses to establish continuity in advertising. Staff meet regularly at “Supervisor Forums” to stress customer service and offer training to improve customer satisfaction.

Staff Recommendations: Staff will continue to pursue completion of the goals identified by the Economic Committee. Staff will also work with local interested individuals and groups to advance tourism and business development.

Council Discussion: (notes under various items above also)

Mr. Burke and Mayor Darr thanked the Economic Committee who dedicated so much time and effort into these recommendations to the Town Council and Staff. Councilman Funk recommended that Staff keep track when the Mayor’s Economic Committee’s objectives are met.

Councilman Hrbek noted Mr. Burke stated Mr. Burke should be in touch with the Warren Heritage Society regarding the Half Marathon. Mr. Burke noted that he certainly would do so. Mayor Darr asked that we continue to meet with FRIBA and the Chamber of Commerce to foster the ongoing relationship with the Town of Front Royal.

5. Town Scholarship – *Town Manager*

Summary: The FY 2015-2016 Budget adopted by Town Council includes \$1,000 to establish a Town scholarship to assist young adults in Front Royal to continue their education after high school. Council is requested to discuss the details and requirements to establish the Front Royal Scholarship program.

Staff Evaluation: The scholarship can be either a single \$1,000 award to a resident or two \$500 awards for a resident at Warren County High School and at Skyline High School. Council should also confirm that they desire the recipient(s) to be residents in the Town limits. Council should also confirm that the scholarship(s) be available to post high school education at an accredited university, community college, or trade school. Council should also confirm the submission date and any specific criteria that should be included in an application. A draft application form is included for review

Staff Recommendations: Staff recommends Town Council develop their desired criteria to establish the Town of Front Royal Scholarship program.

Council Discussion:

Council discussed how to divide the scholarships among the high schools and whether to include home school school children and private schools as well. Council also suggested placing it on the Town’s website and making certain that the proper chain was accessed through each schools guidance counselor.

6. Delinquent Tax List – *Councilman Hrbek*

Councilman Hrbek asked about any legal mechanism the Town may have for requiring individuals to pay their delinquent taxes, as these individuals are a detriment to the community. Councilman

Funk noted that should individuals be ahead of the Town on the list, then the Town may not receive anything from the sale of any property. Councilman Hrbek asked the Town's legal staff to look into the tools available to address this area of concern.

7. Council Discussion/Goals

Councilman Hrbek asked about the area around the LFK school. Mr. Burke noted that he and Greg Drescher discussed the matter and they will be in touch with the Town.

Councilman Hrbek noted that a master list that would be helpful to know a project implementation list regarding trails, the parkway, the bridge, etc.

Vice Mayor Tharpe noted that there was some confusion on who sets the opening times of railroad crossings. He stated that the Town Staff did an excellent job with regard to the response to the calls relating to the recent Shenandoah Shores Road road closure.

Mr. Burke noted that the week before the closure and we were given the notification that the roads would be closed. He stated that the meeting included the Town, County, the Fire & Rescue contacts and even the school personnel in order to fully advise those in the community. He stated that Norfolk Southern reached out during this closure, which is is not typical – as the Town normally does not receive notice that a closure is being enforced.

Mr. Burke stated that the crossing is their right of way and the Town is their say. Mr. Sonnet noted that it was under Federal Regulations that allows the railroad to do such closures.

Vice Mayor Tharpe stated that more notice to the community would be beneficial and he was unsure to help assist in proper notification. Mr. Burke noted that he could speak with his railroad contacts and stress the need to provide better notification to the community and Council expressed their agreement. Councilman Funk stated that he would not want to send too strong of a word to the railroad. He suggested contacting Congressman Goodlatte's office regarding the railroad issue.

Present: Mayor Darr, Vice Mayor Tharpe, Councilman Connolly, Councilman Egger, Councilman Funk, Councilman Hrbek, Finance Director Breeden, Town Attorney Napier, Clerk of Council Berry, Chief of Police Shiflett, Planning & Zoning Director Camp, Energy Service Director Waltz, IT Director Jones, members of the media and members of the public.

Absent: Councilman Tewalt