

Tryon Town Council Work Session Minutes

February 16, 2021

I. Call to order

Mayor Alan Peoples called to order the work session of the Tryon Commissioners at 6:06pm on February 16, 2021 at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Room.

II. Members present

Commissioners Bill Crowell, Bill Ingham, Crys Armbrust and Mayor Alan Peoples were present for the work session.

III. Open discussion

Town Manager Zach Ollis opened discussion with the Melrose Avenue property, and shared a bid that was received in the office earlier that day on the property. The bid was made for approximately \$147,000 in cash for the property. Commissioner Ingham stated that this was appropriate as the advertisement in the paper suggested cash offers only. Commissioner Crowell agreed and stated that the bid was appropriate at \$147,000 in cash to accept. The commissioners agreed 10 days was appropriate for the bid to become final.

Mr. Ollis notified the board that he had drafted a letter with Mayor Peoples to be sent to the state voicing support of local control over billboards along the major roadways. Mr. Ollis read the letter aloud (see attachment). The board approved the letter and agreed that control for billboards should remain with local communities as they strive to protect natural beauty and unencumbered landscape views. Commissioner Crowell specifically mentioned that the billboard ordinance was updated years ago to protect US 176 and US 108.

Mr. Ollis informed the board of speeding complaints on Freeman Hill and advised that Jodi Morse, Director of Public Works, suggested the implementation of speed bumps or a permanent speed limit sign (without a sign, the road will be considered under the town limit speed, which is 35mph). The board inquired about what speed would be appropriate for that section of road, and Mr. Ollis said that 10 mph was decided to be enforceable, but that the police department needed board approval before placing that sign. The board agreed to a permanent speed limit sign for 10 mph.

Commissioner Armbrust raised concern against speed bumps, which may cause a hazard, and Mr. Ollis reassured the board that the speed bumps would be safe. Mr. Ollis confirmed that the speed limit sign would be placed, and if the community decided on wanting speed bumps, they would need to have general consensus from the entire neighborhood. The commissioners agreed, and moved the item to the consent agenda.

Mr. Ollis updated the board on the ongoing cell tower project happening with Verizon Mobile. The location chosen originally would place the 100-foot tower in view of some houses, so a location change was proposed by Verizon to the pond by the town's water plant. The location by the water plant would need to be slightly larger, say 190-feet, but would be the same height as the other location (considering elevation change). The location by the pond also has some tree cover. Mr. Ollis informed the board that the planning and zoning board would need to approve a slight change to the ordinance so that the size of the tower would be allowed. The board agreed the water plant would be the best location for the cell tower, as it would likely be covered more by trees in this spot. Mayor Peoples agreed and requested that it be explicitly laid out in the contract that if the company leaves, they remove the cell tower at their own expense.

Commissioner Ingham inquired about the lighting at Erskine Bridge and when that project was expected to be completed. Mr. Ollis responded that the crew was supposed to complete a sixth or seventh locate, and that information was needed by Duke Energy before we could proceed. This process is underway and Mr. Ollis will meet with Duke again soon.

Commissioner Crowell stated that he would like to see permanent solar speed radar signs in downtown, as he has noticed many cars that speed coming through the district from Stotts Ford to Side Street Pizza and Pasta. He suggested a sign by Stotts Ford going up the hill, and a sign coming down the hill by Town Plaza.

Mr. Ollis advised that he would check with DOT about putting in the signs and agreed they would be good for downtown. He also mentioned that he would look at getting quotes for the project.

Commissioner Crowell also remarked that the Erskine Bridge project looked very nice, and asked about the permanent removal of the ivy. Mr. Ollis informed the board that he was researching a safe chemical to spray so close to a water source and would also look into finding a mason that could restore the rockwork (as the rockwork has some slight damage).

Commissioner Armbrust proposed that the board instruct Mr. Ollis to draft a resolution concerning the countywide tax reevaluation. He noted the inordinate values in property reevaluations and expressed concern for the tax rate in June. Mr. Ollis noted that the county had made statements to the effect of remaining revenue neutral, and agreed that Tryon citizens would likely appreciate the town drafting a letter to the county sharing these concerns.

Mayor Peoples expressed concern with a resolution, and Commissioner Ingham agreed that the town would be able to express their concern without changing anything if they drafted a letter to the county. Commissioner Armbrust agreed and felt that the letter would be appreciated by the citizens of Tryon.

Mr. Ollis agreed and offered to draft the letter, also noting that the reevaluation had not happened for multiple years, which is why the numbers appeared to need adjustment.

Commissioner Crowell agreed that the values were off because the true property values had not been reevaluated in some time. Mayor Peoples agreed and mentioned that the most recent evaluation rates were likely from 2017. Mayor Peoples also reminded the commissioners that while the county determined the values, the commissioners would set the rates. Commissioner Armbrust agreed and requested to officially direct the town manager to draft a letter to the county at the council meeting.

Commissioner Armbrust expressed his disappointment that the Tryon Historic Preservation Commission has not been active in recent years, and requested that the council appoint Robert Lange to revitalize the board.

Commissioner Armbrust also questioned the status of the wetlands near Erskine Bridge. Commissioner Crowell suggested that the board not interfere with the land and continue to allow it to be privately owned (for tax collection purposes). Mr. Ollis stated that he was working to determine who was involved with the property. Mayor Peoples suggested that it could be used as a potential walking trail and stated his belief that Tryon citizens would donate toward the creation of a boardwalk on the property. Commissioner Crowell disagreed and mentioned that the area was going to be very difficult to maintain in the coming years. Commissioner Ingham suggested that the commissioners table the conversation for a later date, and they agreed. Commissioner Armbrust asked Mr. Ollis to check on the CYP signs by Erskine Bridge and have them removed.

Commissioner Armbrust asked the board to consider adding signs for the birthplace of Nina Simone to the town entry signs. Mr. Ollis noted that he was looking

into updating those signs as well as other signage throughout town to make a more cohesive look, and agreed that the birthplace signs could easily be added. Commissioner Armbrust asked if the town would be able to move the sign closest to SC even closer to the SC line (up the hill further). Mr. Ollis said that he would check to see if there was space for the town to use closer to the line.

IV. Adjournment

Mayor Alan Peoples adjourned the meeting at 6:42pm.

Minutes submitted by: Paige Henderson, Executive Director of TDDA

J. Alan Peoples, Mayor

Attest:

Susan B. Bell, Town Clerk