

**TOWN OF TRYON
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
TRYON TOWN HALL – MCCOWN MEETING ROOM
APRIL 16, 2024 7:00 PM**

Present: Mayor J. Alan Peoples

Mayor Pro Tem Chrelle Booker

Commissioners Present: Bill Crowell, Crys Armbrust

Staff Present: Jim Fatland, Town Manager Susan Bell, Town Clerk
Tim Daniels, Planning Director Scott Holt, Interim Police Chief
Josh Walton, Fire Chief Greg McCool, Public Works Director
William Morgan, Town Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Peoples called the meeting to order. He asked for a moment of silence remembering those who are not feeling well. Mayor Pro Tem Booker led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ADOPTION

Mayor Peoples asked if there were any additions, deletions or corrections. None being heard, he entertained a motion to adopt the agenda. Commissioner Armbrust so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA ADOPTION

Mayor Peoples wanted to make everyone aware of the Proclamation proclaiming April as Child Abuse and Neglect month. He entertained a motion to adopt the consent agenda which includes the Tax Reports, Financial Reports for February and March, Grant Status Report and for information only the Tourism Board minutes and Harmon Field Board minutes. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: TEXT AMENDMENT-ORDINANCE TO PROHIBIT SIGNAGE ON THE CORNER OF TRADE STREET AND PACOLET STREET

Mayor Peoples opened the public hearing. Planning Director Daniels reported at the last Planning Board meeting he presented an ordinance to change the prohibited signs. Signs in front of "Morris" were allowed within 10 feet of Morris. Every time he goes up there, he receives comments, so he drafted an ordinance for them to change it to: Signs placed on or within 25 feet of Morris the Horse structure at the corner of Trade St. and Pacolet St. will be prohibited. That would essentially take us all the way to the curb, so we would not allow signage. The Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend it to you. Commissioner Armbrust replied since he owns that land via Nina Simone, he is quite happy with no signage there. Brett Lowry responded the only sign he has seen there is the Bingo sign. Is that the kind of sign you are trying to prohibit. Commissioner Armbrust replied there are many signs there. Commissioner Crowell responded they keep creeping up. Daniels reported that sign may not fall within

the 25 feet. Mr. Lowry replied your concern is that the area looks junky. Mayor Peoples closed the public hearing.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adopt the text amendment as presented by Zoning and Planning Board. Commissioner Armbrust so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: TEXT AMENDMENT-ORDINANCE TO ALLOW ELECTRONIC "OPEN" SIGNS IN ALL BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Mayor Peoples opened the public hearing. Planning Director Daniels reported also at the last Planning Board meeting under Section 4.9.6 it states Electronically displayed messages are prohibited. More or less everyone downtown has an electronic message sign. The Planning Board understands it is a practical thing to have in the window. He presented a text amendment to change Section 4.9.6 to read: Signs displaying blinking, flashing, or intermittent lights, animation and moving parts or electronically displayed messages. Electronic non-neon signs displaying only the word "Open" are permitted. "Open" signs shall not exceed a height or width of more than 22 inches. One "Open" sign is allowed per business. Planning Board voted unanimously to recommend it with the change of allowing one "Open" sign per business.

Ashley Menetre asked for clarification, because most of our windows, when driving by are hard to see into. The neon sign helps people driving by to see that we are open. Daniels responded this ordinance allows for the signs. She thought they were taking it away. Mayor Peoples closed the public hearing.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adopt the amendment as presented. Commissioner Armbrust so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

UPDATE ON AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

Manager Fatland reported he has good news. He and Susan received the draft financial statements last night. This will be on the next agenda. The reports are due by October 31. At the State Treasurer's meeting that he attended in November, it was reported that only 17% of the cities have been done and 8% of the counties have been done. Part of the problem is the compliance issues. A lot of the CPA's have got out of the public sector audits. So, there are not enough auditors. When the Town went out to bid, we only received one. This company took on several new clients at the same time. He and Susan have been pressing to get it done. The good news is that every fund was within their budget this year.

Mayor Peoples reported there is three towns in this county that has to have an audit, the county has to have an audit, the school system has to have an audit. They have been told there is just not enough auditors in the state to audit everybody. Fatland reported the audit presentation will be next month and he will also present the FY25 budget. The Town has a loan to apply for and the state treasurer has told him when the audit is done, just get them the application.

TRYON DEPOT PRESENTATION

Andy Millard gave a presentation of the Tryon Depot. He made this arrangement about 14 years ago with the Town. He explained the previous owners, how he become the current renter and renovations that he has made. He sub-leases the building out and he rents the Community Room. On January 1, 2031, his lease will expire. The Depot will return to the Town of Tryon. He appreciates the opportunity to give this report.

Commissioner Armbrust reported the Depot received the N.C. Economic Development Award in 2011. Mr. Millard responded it was a great partnership, between public and private. A citizen asked what the appraised value is. Mr. Millard responded he hasn't had it appraised, but he has a figure in his head. Mayor Peoples thanked Mr. Millard. He knows that it cost him around \$300,000 to do the renovation. He figured it would cost us to do this was around \$320,000 back then.

HARMON FIELD PROPOSED FY24-25 ANNUAL BUDGET

Manager Fatland reported Brad Gordon is the new superintendent at Harmon Field. The Harmon Field Board approved the budget at their last meeting. The capital improvements that have been done are due to the support of this board and the county. He was told last year, by Marche Pittman, that he couldn't do a tax increase. After talking with him, it was decided to split the cost of the paving at Harmon Field. Another project that is being worked on is the renovation of the open-air gym office space. It is being turned into a photo lab, kitchen, storage room and adding a screened in porch, with financial support from the Polk County Community Foundation (\$25,000), Town of Tryon, Harmon Field Board and the Rotary Club of Tryon. The Gathering Community group does basketball classes at the open-air gym. The new canopy for food concession-outside dining is funded by the Town of Tryon. The playground area has been mulched this year. The equestrian people raised \$19,000 to put into their facility at Harmon Field.

Brad Gordon reported with the help of the Town, County and his Board, they have mulched the playground area with engineered mulch, repaired the Gazebos, completed a playground inspection (haven't received all the details as of yet), but it wasn't as bad as they expected. They planted trees in the Dog Park that were donated. They have trimmed the trees and shrubs. He, along with the PC Appearance Commission and Greg Miner have been working on the bamboo over the last several months. Have re-graveled the parking areas, repaired the broken boards on the bridges, purchased a new refrigerator, purchased new grills. They are pressure washing the barns, sidewalks, picnic sheds, boardwalk, bridge (along with volunteers they have stained the bridge). Had to buy 20 tons of dirt to repair the baseball fields. Both fields can play up to 12U now. The soccer nets, basketball nets and ball diamond plates and bases were replaced by the Spartanburg YMCA. He thanked Atticus and Brad for their help with this. They have a timer on the tennis courts. Working on other timers. The biggest thing for him and Greg is the bathrooms. They get swept, toilets cleaned, refilled toilet paper, clean sink and soap every day. He thanked Mr. Fatland and his board for the tax increase this year.

Manager Fatland reported Brad was hired out there in September. The tax rate has been the same for the past 15 years. The employees get raises and cost of supplies go up. There are people from everywhere that use Harmon Field. Today, they had four buses from Henderson County (Muddy Sneakers) out there. Commissioner Armbrust expressed his gratitude to staff and Mr. Fatland for bringing it back to the gem that it is for them. Mr. Fatland reported we need to continue to keep it up. Brad has recently hired Kenneth Arrowood who has 30 plus years working with Burrell's Fuels. Now you have two individuals that understand maintenance working out there.

He has taken the budget and broken it down by operations and capital. Over the years, the Township used to pay for the O&M. Now it pays for 60%. The rent is used to help with O&M. He agrees that he would not take his grandkids into the bathrooms. He wants the township to pay for O&M and everything else should pay for capital improvements. They want to replace the deck on the back of the cabin, install timers on the soccer lights with grant money. He will not do any additional items if the tax

increase is not approved. He doesn't understand how you can keep up the facility without increasing taxes. The HFBS has held three public input sessions. They are looking at Pickle Ball courts, moving the Dog Park and building community gardens. He also would like the school building turned into a community center and adding an inclusive playground. Staff would like the Board's support.

Commissioner Crowell responded the township people need to speak out about the tax increase to help out. Mayor Peoples reported he had donated a handicap swing. He and Harriet donated a commercial grade dishwasher to the cabin, because they do not charge him to rent the cabin, because he is working with our youth. The county needs to know that people are opening their purses to help out.

Mr. Fatland responded the idea of not having the time to do repairs is not acceptable. They are moving forward to keep the park looking good.

David Wallen asked about Ziglar Park. Manager Fatland reported the town has a Parks Committee that looks over the parks. Is there anything that you would like to see done. Mr. Wallen responded that he just doesn't want us to put all of our money in Harmon Field and neglect our other parks. Mr. Fatland responded we are making great strides with the parks.

Mayor Peoples replied that he had gotten some land donated to the town to add to Woodland Park. He made a donation of \$10,000 in honor of his wife, who has dementia, to Woodland Park. His point is to get things done, sometimes you have to write a check to make it possible. He doesn't mind raising taxes, but if you expect services, sooner or later you have to pay for it.

APPOINTMENT TO PLANNING BOARD

Town Clerk Bell reported that an application has been received from Patrick Sprouls for the Planning and Zoning Board. The board has one opening inside the town limits. Commissioner Armbrust made a motion to appoint Patrick Sprouls. The motion carried unanimously.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

Planning Director Daniels reported the Tryon Historic Preservation committee, Ellen Rickenbach, Dean Trakas, David Wallen and Gail Awan approved the presented guidelines that you have at their last meeting, just in time for May Historic Month. Last week at the Planning Board meeting, the guidelines were given their blessing by the Planning Board.

Ms. Rickenbach thanked Mr. Morgan for his help with the guidelines. The town created the Historic Preservation Commission years ago. The new members of the commission are working well together. They are trying to keep it very simple. Their mission is to be educational. Their guidelines are very simple. After discussion with the state office in Asheville, their guidelines are federal guidelines. They want property owners to come to them, instead of the commission trying to make people change their property to make their property a historical landmark. The only staff is the Planning Director. This is the reason for starting slow. The state of North Carolina has been updating their survey of Polk County. Within the next year this should be more practical to accomplish. Non-controversial properties. She would like to talk to the Nina Simone property owners. The downtown district designation will have to be updated. This will require your approval. They looked around at other towns to see about their historical preservation. They chose Raleigh, because they have an overlay district. They want to emphasize to people that they don't want to be an enforcement group. They want to be a resource.

Mayor Peoples asked if Planning Director Daniels and Attorney Morgan had seen it and was satisfied with it. Both had looked over it and was satisfied. He entertained a motion to adopt the guidelines for the Historical Preservation Commission. Commissioner Armbrust so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

DOWNTOWN/TDDA UPDATE

Planning Director Daniels reported April is a big month. April's Fools Fest was a big success. The town was a buzz all day. They had 20 participants in the parade. Congratulations to the winner of the Outhouse Race, Keith. Thanks to the Trashion show participants for showing up. On top of all that, one dog got adopted. Thanks to Doug Arbogast for emceeding the parade and Rich Nelson for providing the music, Sophie the Dog Mayor and her security team for making an appearance. Special thanks to Al Switzer and Lourdes for putting this all together. We are ready for next year.

Next weekend we have the Air Stream Rally with around 23 campers coming into Tryon. There will be a campfire on McCown Street 7-8:30. On Saturday, there will be an open house for people to view inside the campers. Next Friday is the 4th Friday event. The theme is Community Caretakers. The groups will include the Foothills Regional Commission who will have information about their services. The Tryon Historical Preservation Commission will be there also to let people know about their newly adopted guidelines and how the designations can benefit everyone. A representative from the state will be there also. Conserving Carolina will be there to discuss parks and trails and to give updates on the Saluda Grade Trail. TDDA will have a table setup discussing the events rolling out, along with t-shirts and stickers. Habitat for Humanity, the Child History Museum, Lanier Library and the Kudzu Warriors will be there also. TDDA will have gift cards.

The Main Street tax credit work shop will be Wednesday, April 24th at the Tryon Theater. He thanked Gail and Scott Lane for the use of the theater. They will be discussing investing in historical property and maintaining a property's historic character using federal tax credits. Spots are still open and there are links to the website. The cost is \$25.

ANIMAL CONTROL ORDINANCE UPDATE

Planning Director Daniels reported per a previous meeting, Patti Lovelace, County Animal Control Officer requested Tryon to update our ordinance to match theirs. This will help bolster their enforcement efforts. He met with her to get more specifics and now has put together this revised version. These are specifics to Tryon. The Animal Control Resolution that we have with the county needs to be updated also. It is currently very old. The leash law needs to cover the entire town.

Section 12 reads: Restraint of animals. Every person owning or having possession, charge, care, custody or control of any animal shall keep such animal exclusively upon the owner's premises. However, such animal may be off such premises if it is under the control of a person competent to handle and control the animal and restrained by a chain, leash, harness, bridle or other means of physical control.

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adopt the resolution as presented. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously. Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adopt the Animal Control Ordinance. Commissioner Crowell so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

SOCIAL DISTRICT LABELING DOWNTOWN

Planning Director Daniels reported when Lourdes attended the Main Street Conference she received info regarding the regulation update for Social Districts. Tryon needs to make some modifications. One is the Social District Boundary signage. Some towns have weather proof and slip proof stickers on the sidewalks. He presented samples to the board. The cost of each sticker is \$11 and we need a minimum of six. He can order these or have a mock up ready for the next meeting and he could bring different samples if needed. They will work with and educate businesses to make sure they are in compliance and understand.

MINIMUM HOUSING/PLANNING BOARD UPDATE

Planning Director Daniels reported:

1. Peake Street-they are getting the proof of no insurance together and the burn permit from the Fire Department-waiting on these items to get finished up
2. Shepherd Street-paperwork keeps getting bounced back to him. He has found out recently that the county never received the money for the bid. He is working with the billing clerk on this. If this falls back to the town we can get to work immediately on it.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Town Manager Fatland reported:

1. The Town Board approved a new committee, in which we are getting ready to have first meeting. We are going to discuss public bathrooms. Looking at sites and cost. Will bring back to you.
2. Streetlights-In front of Stott's Ford-going to decide on style and bring back to you.
3. Main Street meeting on April 24, he has agreed to open up the conference.
4. Next meeting-financials for FY23 and budget for FY25

COUNCIL/MAYOR REPORT

Commissioner Armbrust thanked the staff and the citizens for being here tonight.

Commissioner Crowell thanked the staff. Harmon Field is looking better. He thanked the group for all they are doing. He thanked the citizens for being here tonight.

Mayor Pro Tem Booker thanked the citizens for being here. She had a conversation earlier about people attending the meetings. It is good to see you all. She thanked employees and staff. The presentations tonight were outstanding. Take care of yourselves and each other and everybody will be alright.

Mayor Peoples reported he has four drawings of the backside of the buildings on Trade Street and how they could look. Taxes (MSD) could be levied against business owners and the money by law has to go toward fixing up something either on that street or sidewalk or on the building or back of it. He paid for part of the drawings and the town paid for part of them. He will hang around with the drawings if anyone has any questions.

CITIZEN COMMENTS & RESPONSES

Mayor Peoples asked that citizens to state your name and address when you speak.

Joyce Kimpton, Whitney Avenue, been there over 40 years. She would like for the town to go for a landmark or historic designation for the little brick building on Maple Street. It has been there since the 1920's. It was the Fire Department and the Police Department with the jail behind it. It is an important piece of Tryon. She doesn't want to see it torn down or pushed aside. There is too much of this town that has been updated and erased, because people don't realize what the history of this town really is. Planning Director Daniels responded to her with good news. This is one that they have already talked about. Ms. Rickenbach invited her to their meeting May 1st at 4:00 if you would like to propose it.

Anne Day, Whitney Avenue, has talked to Greg about the sidewalk on Whitney. It has really gotten bad. Commissioner Crowell asked if it could be taken out. Ms. Day reported people are using the sidewalk constantly.

Mayor Peoples recognized Ashley Menetre for her involvement with the Fitzgerald Event Center that is coming soon to Tryon.

ADJOURN

Mayor Peoples entertained a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Armbrust so moved. The motion carried unanimously.

J. Alan Peoples, Mayor

Attest:

Susan B. Bell, Town Clerk