

The regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 6:00 pm in the Assembly Hall of the Municipal Building.

The following members of the Governing Body were present:

Mayor: Danny Ritchie
Alderman: Dennis Anthony
Alderman: Matt Johnson
Alderman: Rick Cline
Alderman: Terry Yount

Others present:

Town Manager: Sherri Bradshaw
Town Clerk: Sherry Dula
Attorney: Rod Willcox

Alderman Anthony opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

Approval of Minutes: The Council voted unanimously to approve the February minutes by a motion from Alderman Johnson, seconded by Alderman Yount.

Petitions and Communications – Steven Phillips, 102 Page St. was present to approach the Board concerning the ordinance dealing with keeping chickens on your property. Mr. Phillips received a copy of the town ordinance dealing with keeping of chickens because his property doesn't meet the minimum one-acre lot requirement for keeping chickens. Mr. Phillips stated that they have gotten rid of all their chickens since the notice but would like to appeal to the Board that having an entire acre in your ordinance would take out almost everyone in town for being able to have chickens. He stated that he doesn't meet the lot requirement but his chickens were housed in a coop, they were well maintained and were used as a source of food since they were laying hens. He states he knows that some people have taken advantage of the situation and let their chickens run loose in the town but they kept their chickens penned at all times. He would just like to ask that the Board consider a revision to the ordinance since the surrounding towns are not as strict with their code dealing with chickens.

Shawntae Wheeler also of 102 Page St. was present and she would just like to reiterate what Mr. Phillips stated concerning the one-acre lot requirement. She states that no one could comply with that restriction in the town. She stated their lot was fenced in and their kids loved the chickens. They are abiding by all the ordinances and stated that she thinks the town has a lot bigger fish to fry than worrying about the chickens in town. Alderman Johnson asked Ms. Wheeler what she thought the strictest part of our code would be to her? She stated definitely the one-acre lot requirement in order to have chickens.

Roma Christopher, 503 S. Main St. also received a copy of the town ordinance dealing with keeping of chickens because her property does not meet the one-acre lot requirement. She stated that she has had her chickens for 2 years and no one had said anything but they were hidden by the bushes in the backyard. She stated her husband cleared the back of the property and now she guesses people can see them now but she said that she has 3 laying hens and they are contained with a tent over them. She also stated that she provides herself as well as several neighbors with eggs.

Alderman Johnson asked what the process would be for changing the ordinance. Teresa Kinney, Planner stated that it would need to go before the Planning and Zoning Board first and they will probably discuss different options and send them back to the Board. A public hearing would also be required and the whole process could take up to 3 months.

Mayor Ritchie asked that this information be communicated to the Planning and Zoning Board with the result brought back to the Board by the next meeting. Teresa Kinney, Planner states the Planning and Zoning

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Board has a lot on their plate right now and they may not be able to have an answer by the next meeting but possibly for the May meeting.

Attorney Willcox stated the biggest issue he sees is the one-acre lot requirement and he suggests not ticketing anyone until it has been discussed further. Chief Treadway stated that of the seven homes he found with chickens, all of them were contained but one and he has since gotten rid of his chickens. Chief Treadway stated that he doesn't mind ticketing these violations all day long as long as the Board will back him and make them pay. Mayor Ritchie asked if the Board could make a recommendation to not ticket those with chickens until Planning and Zoning has brought back their options on this issue. Alderman Cline made a motion to back off from the ticketing at this time since they are trying to keep up with the ordinance and Alderman Anthony seconded the motion with all members in agreement. Alderman Anthony asked if we were allowed to give the Planning and Zoning Board suggestions? Teresa Kinney said that she would research and bring all options to the Planning and Zoning Board at their next meeting.

Drexel Properties Update – Manager Bradshaw updated the Board on the progress for Drexel Properties. The Golden Leaf application for \$500,000 has been submitted and we have met with the Golden Leaf review committee for their briefing on the project. They wanted details about the EPA Grant, Water/Sewer Infrastructure grant and the rail spur possibilities. If this grant is awarded then it would be the first time clean-up has been awarded as part of a Golden Leaf grant. She stated the meeting was very encouraging and award notification will be in May. She also said the EPA grant application has made it to the scoring stage and final scoring is expected to be in Washington by mid-March. We are hopeful that the EPA grant will also be announced in May.

Code Enforcement – Mayor Ritchie asked about going into closed session for the purpose of talking about the code violations since we would be naming those involved and the Attorney stated that we would only need closed session once the violations turn into legal matters otherwise the initial violations are public record and need to be discussed in open session. The first violation notice was sent to the owner of 211 Mt. View Drive, Mark Smith, for clean-up of the property. This house was heavily damaged in a fire and is in violation of numerous Minimum Housing Standards. Mr. Smith has informed code enforcement that he has received insurance money for the property and is planning to clean up. Mr. Justice, code enforcement officer, has a meeting scheduled with Mr. Smith on Thursday, March 5th to discuss his time line and a written plan of action for the clean-up.

Also, a violation notice was sent to the new owner, Rick Ramsey at 107/109 Mt. View St. The mobile home on this property is in violation of numerous Minimum Housing Standards and the property as a whole contains numerous health and safety hazards that make it a nuisance property. Mr. Justice has since met with Mr. Ramsey and he states that he has a plan of action for this property. Copies of each property violation and the process of action, if the owners fail to comply with their plan of action, is attached as part of the minutes.

Mayor Ritchie brought up discussion dealing with the Jason Ramsey code violations and clean up. Mayor Ritchie states that the father of the business owner is willing to help with his clean-up. Teresa Kinney, Planner stated that she has spoken with Mr. Ramsey's father and told him exactly what steps to follow in this process. She stated that Mr. Ramsey has not submitted a written plan of action but they have definitely made a big difference. Alderman Cline stated that the property does look much better but he is still concerned about cars in the front obstructing the right turn at the red light. Chief Treadway stated that as long as the cars are not in the road there is nothing they can do about them parking in the front of the building.

Teresa Kinney, Planner stated the bottom line on this violation is that they stop using the property for storage of wrecked and abandoned vehicles. She also stated that once he has met full compliance then he is eligible to approach the Board and ask for a waiver of the fines accumulated during this process. Alderman Cline stated that he believes we should be fair to everyone and when they have followed the process and corrected the violations then we should commend them.

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Chief Treadway brought up the issues on Reid St. and people dumping their trash. The police are tired of going through trash trying to find some piece of mail that would identify who is dumping the trash. He stated he would like to gate off Reid St. from N. Main St. Some discussion was made on this issue but no resolve at this time.

Unpaid Taxes/Advertisement – A motion was made by Alderman Anthony, seconded by Alderman Cline to approve the advertisement for all unpaid property taxes on April 4, 2021 and the vote was unanimous.

Departmental Reports – The Council reviewed the financial and tax reports for February, 2021. A copy of each report is attached as part of the minutes. Also, the Council reviewed the 2020 annual report for the Fire Department and Manager Bradshaw made the Council aware that after the fire department had their last inspection, the fire rate went up to 4 and this should be good news for town residents concerning their homeowners insurance rates.

Drexel Police Department – Chief Treadway reviewed the February Police report and stated it was a pretty quiet month. A copy of the report is attached as part of the minutes.

Attorney Report – Nothing to report at this time.

Recreation Department – Manager Bradshaw stated that the R.O. Huffman Center will open back up on Monday, March 8, 2021 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday for Zumba and open gym keeping with the state restriction allowing no more than 25 people in the building at a time.

Planning & Zoning Report – A copy of the Planning Staff Report is attached as part of the minutes. Discussion has already been made concerning Jason Ramsey in the Code Enforcement section.

Miscellaneous –

- Manager Bradshaw made the Council aware that the R.O. Huffman Center has a roof leak on the flat part of the roof but she hasn't found anyone to look at it yet in order to get a quote. Also, the heat pumps on top of the building are both out. The quote to replace one unit is around \$9,000. She suggests that we allocate some of the budgeted monies for the bathroom renovations to help with these repairs.
- Alderman Anthony stated that he had been approached concerning the Corner Café. His contact said that some drug paraphernalia had been found behind the building along with other items of concern. He was asking the police if the restaurant has been following the state guidelines concerning restaurant closings and alcohol serving. Chief Treadway stated that they have only had three incidents involving the restaurant and he hasn't had any calls concerning anything being found behind the building except for one business owner downtown but that owner didn't keep the items he found behind the building or make any calls to the department concerning disturbances at the restaurant. She has been closing on time and recently has not been open as much as before. Chief Treadway said that in their normal procedure, Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) can have an ABC audit done on the restaurant at any time. In this

audit, a certain percentage of all sales must be derived from prepared food sales in an establishment that serves alcohol.

- Budget Workshop will be March 18, 2021 at 10 am. Breakfast will be available at 9:30 am.
- WPCOG Annual Meeting – April 22, 2021. Virtual meeting at 2:00 pm
- ElectriCities Breakfast Meeting – ElectriCities CEO, Mr. Roy Jones, will be presenting certificates to Johnny Rowe and Cory Carpenter at an informal breakfast meeting on April 6th at 9:00 am

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Adjournment – A motion was made by Alderman Yount, seconded by Alderman Johnson to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:29 p.m. and the vote was unanimous.

TOWN CLERK _____

MAYOR _____

ALDERMAN _____

ALDERMAN _____

ALDERMAN _____

ALDERMAN _____