



**MIDDLEBURG TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR WORK SESSION
Thursday, February 23, 2017**



PRESENT: Mayor Betsy A. Davis
Councilmember J. Kevin Daly
Councilmember Kevin Hazard
Councilmember Peter Leonard-Morgan
Councilmember Trowbridge "Bridge" Littleton
Councilmember Philip Miller

STAFF: Martha Mason Semmes, Town Administrator
Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk
William M. Moore, Town Planner
Cindy C. Pearson, Economic Development Coordinator
Ashley M. Bott, Town Treasurer
A.J. Panebianco, Chief of Police

ABSENT: Vice Mayor Darlene Kirk
Councilmember Mark T. Snyder

The Town Council of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia held their regular monthly work session on Thursday, February 23, 2017 in the Town Hall Council Chambers, located at 10 W. Marshall Street. Mayor Davis called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Council Approval – Request for Funding – Bluemont Concerts

Economic Development Coordinator Pearson reminded Council that Bluemont requested \$12,500 for four concerts this coming summer. She questioned whether the Council wanted to appropriate that amount and, if so, where the money should come from. Ms. Pearson further questioned whether the Council wanted to apply for the other half of the Virginia Commission for the Arts (VCA) grant for them. She reminded Council that they previously discussed the recommendation from EDAC, which was that they not recommend that Bluemont be funded through economic development funds.

Mayor Davis questioned whether they were seeking \$12,500 in total. Economic Development Coordinator Pearson confirmed they were and noted that they wanted the entire amount from the Town, even if there was no grant money available. She reminded Council that, last year, they received \$7,500 from the Town.

Mayor Davis noted that the Town could give them \$2,500, plus the grant; therefore, they would get \$5,000. Economic Development Coordinator Pearson reminded Council that the Town could not guarantee receipt of the VCA grant. She reiterated that Bluemont wanted a guarantee of \$12,500 from the Town.

Councilmember Littleton noted that all of the Bluemont concerts in total only brought two hundred people into the town.

Councilmember Miller opined that this was not a good use of Town funds and suggested that \$12,500 could do a lot of good for a lot of different organizations. He advised that he was all for concerts; however, they must be well planned and be good for both the businesses and attendees. Mr. Miller noted that he was not seeing that here. He reminded Council that \$12,500 equated to half of the Town's Health Center Fund donations.

Vincent Bataoel, Chair of the Economic Development Advisory Committee, noted that it was more than the Town spent on Christmas in Middleburg. Councilmember Miller noted that the Christmas parade brought in fifteen thousand people.

Councilmember Hazard reminded Council that Bluemont requested this amount last year; however, the Council reduced the amount of its donation.

Economic Development Coordinator Pearson advised Council that the Community Center paid Bluemont for the Fourth of July concert last year. In addition, The Hill School paid them for their arts program. She advised that while Bluemont's numbers included four concerts, it did not include the extra money that came from the other organizations.

Councilmember Littleton questioned the reason to make the donation. He noted that in business, businesses wanted to know why they should make a donation.

Economic Development Coordinator Pearson reminded Council that in the past, more people attended the concerts; however, the attendance had gone down.

Councilmember Miller questioned why this was and noted the need for hard data.

Councilmember Hazard advised that when the concerts were held on Madison Street, they were well attended. He noted that when they were moved to the Community Center, which moved them from the center of town, the attendance dropped to half.

Economic Development Coordinator Pearson noted that the concerts used to be held at the Community Center many years ago and advised that they were well attended at that time. She noted that they then moved to Madison Street. Ms. Pearson opined that the performers were not as "grand" as they used to be.

Councilmember Miller suggested the reasons for the reduced attendance were circumstances and a lack of adjusting to the climate.

Economic Development Coordinator Pearson reminded Council that the National Sporting Library and the Community Center now offered concerts. She advised that they also served food and drinks during their events and opined that this resulted in larger crowds.

Chairman Bataoel noted that the National Sporting Library marketed their events. He advised Council that Bluemont had no money earmarked for marketing and outreach.

Councilmember Miller opined that the Town was not getting a return on its investment. He advised that this was difficult to judge; however, he opined that the Town was not getting what it paid for. Mr. Miller suggested that if Bluemont made some changes and developed a good plan, \$12,500 may be great money spent for awesome concerts; however, he did not see that.

Councilmember Littleton questioned how they spent the money. Economic Development Coordinator Pearson noted that the Council had Bluemont's letter and financial statement. She reported that the money was spent on the performers.

Councilmember Hazard noted that, initially, the request was for a low amount; however, once they received a donation, the amount kept increasing. He opined that they performed outreach to the elementary schools. Mr. Hazard suggested the concerts were the tip of the ice burg.

Councilmember Littleton questioned whether they did outreach for Middleburg's schools. Economic Development Coordinator Pearson reported that they had not done so at the Middleburg Charter School for the last few years. She further reported that The Hill School paid Bluemont for what they did at their school. Ms. Pearson advised Council that Bluemont indicated that they used the funds to present programs for a modest fee or at no charge and reminded Council that concert goers were charged a five dollar entry fee. She further reminded them that Bluemont also solicited donations. Ms. Pearson noted that the Town did not have health care facilities, as those were located in the county, which Bluemont went to. She reported that the cost of programs at the schools was subsidized as funding allowed.

Mayor Davis questioned whether Loudoun County and Leesburg made donations to Bluemont. Economic Development Coordinator Pearson confirmed they did. Town Administrator Semmes reported that Leesburg did not give them as much as it used to give.

Councilmember Littleton questioned the Council's priorities for spending \$12,500 and noted that there was no case for making the donation from the standpoint of economic development. He advised that Bluemont did have an arts/entertainment component; however, he questioned whether there was a better use for this money given the economic challenges the Town currently faced. Mr. Littleton reminded Council that the Town was working on a strategy session for economic development. He advised that he has been starting to think that communities must identify what their identities and experiences were and suggested the Town did not just want people to come to walk around. Mr. Littleton questioned whether the Council wanted to sponsor a wine festival and noted that this area was becoming known to wine people. He advised that he was not saying it should; however, he suggested it may want to get some wineries together and offset the cost of a festival for the first time. He questioned whether that would be a better spend of the Town's money.

Mayor Davis reminded Council that at one time, they discussed taking the money to do the Town's own festival, which would allow it to pick the performers. She suggested the use of local talent, such as that offered by the Community Center. Ms. Davis noted the need to offer food. She suggested the Council consider giving Bluemont \$2,500 this year, which along with the VCA grant would total \$5,000, and tell them that the Town would need to see quite some change in order to continue giving them funding.

Economic Development Coordinator Pearson reminded Council that the Town must apply for the VCA grant. She reported that the application was due by April 1; however, she would not hear whether it was awarded until July. Ms. Pearson suggested that even if the Town gave Bluemont the entire \$5,000, it would not be as much as the \$12,500 that was requested.

Mayor Davis advised Council that she felt badly pulling funding from Bluemont completely.

Economic Development Coordinator Pearson noted that one of Bluemont's other problems was rain. She reminded Council that when it rained during a National Sporting Library concert, they simply moved their venue inside. Ms. Pearson advised that when it rained during a Bluemont concert, it moved to another location, which resulted in people being lost. Councilmember Miller suggested that was a Bluemont planning issue. Economic Development Coordinator Pearson noted that they had a rain location; however, it was not convenient. Mayor Davis opined that the fun was being outside.

Councilmember Daly reminded Council that Bluemont offered concerts in other towns; therefore, this was not something that was unique to Middleburg.

Mayor Davis suggested the Town continue to offer them some funding. Councilmember Leonard-Morgan agreed. He advised that when he originally saw the request, his reaction was that this was a lot of money. Mr. Leonard-Morgan agreed with Mayor Davis' point and suggested the Town decelerate its donation slowly.

Councilmember Miller suggested the Council ask them to come up with something to show that they would be innovative this year, possibly a better plan for marketing, a better plan for rain, better performers and food. He further suggested the Council ask Bluemont to show it their plan for this year so it could judge the request from that perspective. Mr. Miller advised that while he felt bad not giving them money, they had not made a case for it. He opined that this was not a good spend of taxpayers' funds.

Councilmember Daly noted that he used to enjoy the concerts when they were performed on Madison Street as the entire town attended. He suggested that times and the event changed because the venue changed. Mr. Daly opined that it was not the same feel as a "Middleburg event" even though it was back on Madison Street.

Councilmember Miller noted that Madison Street was no longer what it was as the shops were not open past 5:00 p.m.

Councilmember Littleton opined that the concerts were not well marketed. He noted that he drove by Madison Street last year and had no idea one was going on until that time. Mr. Littleton advised that there only appeared to be about ten attendees.

Economic Development Coordinator Pearson reported that Mary Ann Redmon was the only one who brought a draw. She advised that there were only a handful of people at the other concerts.

Councilmember Littleton noted that the cost to the Town was approximately \$60/person, which was a lot of money. He suggested that Bluemont be given an opportunity to fix themselves and noted that times have changed. Mr. Littleton advised that he was impressed by the National Sporting Library's concerts. He further advised that he was happy going with \$2,500 and if Bluemont got another \$2,500 from the VCA grant, this would be fine; otherwise, they would only get \$2,500. Mr. Littleton suggested they be told the amount could be nothing next year. He noted the need for Bluemont to prove to the Council that it had fixed its issues. Mr. Littleton suggested that Bluemont had time to plan and fix it so that next year the Council may have a reason to give them more money.

Economic Development Coordinator Pearson noted that Bluemont would simply have to offer as many concerts as it could for that amount.

Councilmember Daly agreed this was a good compromise. He opined that the Town could not guarantee them \$12,500.

Councilmember Miller suggested this needed to go for all organizations that received Town funds. He further suggested the Council should aim to not fund them annually. Mr. Miller opined that the organizations must figure out a way to fund themselves over a number of years.

Mayor Davis questioned whether they could possibly say they could not do the concerts for that amount, especially if Bluemont did not get the grant.

Economic Development Coordinator Pearson opined that they would say they could not do four concerts. She suggested they offer one good one. Ms. Pearson noted that when the MBPA offered a concert, it used a local band that did not charge them. She advised that the MBPA simply gave them a donation.

Mayor Davis questioned whether the Council was comfortable with \$2,500 in funding, with the total amount being \$5,000 if the VCA grant was received. She further questioned whether the Council wanted to suggest that Bluemont only offer one or two concerts.

Councilmember Hazard suggested the Council let Bluemont come back to them. Councilmember Littleton suggested the staff explain the reason, that being that they held four concerts with only two hundred people in attendance. He further suggested that Bluemont offer one or two great concerts that were done and marketed well. Mr. Littleton advised that he would rather have one successful concert than four duds. Mayor Davis and Councilmember Hazard agreed to offer them that option.

Economic Development Coordinator Pearson questioned where the funding would come from and noted that there was a special event support line item in the budget. Town Administrator Semmes suggested this be placed in next year's budget.

Councilmember Daly moved, seconded by Councilmember Hazard, that the Town provide Bluemont funds in the amount of \$2,500, with the possibility of a match of \$2,500 from the Virginia Commission for the Arts.

Councilmember Miller suggested that Bluemont look at reducing the number of concerts offered, in the hope that the Council would see a better return on its investment so it could consider giving them more funding the following year.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Daly, Hazard, Leonard-Morgan, Littleton and Miller

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmembers Kirk and Snyder
(Mayor Davis only votes in the case of a tie)

Council Discussion – Entrance signs related to pedestrian crossings

Mayor Davis reminded Council that she mentioned this idea a couple of months ago. She opined that it would be nice, given the pedestrian crosswalks, to place a sign on each end of town that would contain the message “Welcome to Middleburg - please yield to pedestrians in crosswalks”.

Town Administrator Semmes reported that she spoke with VDOT about the idea of having a separate sign and advised that they referred her to the MUTCD (Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices) for approved signs. She reminded Council that the Town had a hanging sign that read “Relax, you're in the village” for the entrance sign and suggested one be done for this that was like that one.

Mayor Davis suggested the sign hang from the bottom of the entrance sign so it could be the full width of the sign. She advised Council that someone asked her how people were supposed to know these were crosswalks. Ms. Davis opined that if the sign read “yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk”, people would know what they were.

Town Administrator Semmes advised Council that they could install a sign that read “State Law - yield to pedestrians” in the right-of-way.

Mayor Davis suggested that Quail Run Signs design something for the entrance sign.

Town Administrator Semmes advised that her only concern was that when the sign spaces were full of event signs, there would be no room to put such a sign. Economic Development Coordinator Pearson confirmed that twice a year, the Town used all four spaces for event signs. She advised that there would be no room to hang another sign in those instances.

Mayor Davis questioned whether the Town could install a long sign on stakes in front of the entrance sign. Town Administrator Semmes confirmed that VDOT would not permit it.

Councilmember Littleton asked whether the purpose of the crosswalks was something that a lot of people have questioned. He acknowledged that they were just brick, meaning they could be anything. Chief Panebianco reported that he had not had anyone ask if they were crosswalks, although he acknowledged that a lot of people walked away from them. He advised Council that once everything was done this year, he intended to do an educational campaign using printed brochures. Chief Panebianco explained that when someone violated the law by either not stopping for a pedestrian or crossing outside of a crosswalk, an officer would give them a brochure as a friendly reminder of the regulations. He opined that some motorists stopped when they saw a pedestrian; however, some did not.

Councilmember Littleton questioned whether by the nature of their construction, these were crosswalks. Chief Panebianco confirmed they were VDOT crosswalks.

Town Planner Moore reminded Council that the State Code did not require a crosswalk to be marked. He further reminded them that if it was at an intersection, technically it was a crosswalk even if there were no markings.

Mayor Davis opined that if someone was hit while crossing in a crosswalk, they would not be at fault. Chief Panebianco advised that this would depend on the totality of the circumstance. He explained that if the pedestrian jumped out in front of the motorist, the pedestrian would be at fault. Chief Panebianco further explained that if the pedestrian was crossing the street and was hit in the other travel lane, it was the motorist who was supposed to stop. He reminded Council that the State Code required pedestrians to give a car enough room to stop. Chief Panebianco noted that the pedestrian could not take the crosswalk; however, once the pedestrian had the right-of-way, it was theirs.

Mayor Davis opined that it would be okay even if the Town did not install signs. Town Administrator Semmes reported that VDOT indicated the signs were optional.

Councilmember Daly opined that not all crosswalks were equal. He advised that motorists would stop at the center of town, but not in front of the gas station. Mr. Daly suggested the need for the pedestrian to make sure the motorist saw them before they crossed.

Mayor Davis suggested this be left alone and that the Council address it if an issue arose. She noted that the crosswalks were not as well marked before the Route 50 Project.

Councilmember Hazard suggested the need for signage at the edges of town rather than in the center.

Chief Panebianco suggested signs be installed at the entrance to the shopping area (headed east) and just prior to the Exxon. He further suggested that they be a far enough distance from the crosswalk to allow trucks to make turns without hitting the signs.

Councilmember Miller questioned whether there was a sign that said “pedestrian crossing ahead” on VDOT’s approved list. Town Administrator Semmes advised Council that the sign must be located a certain distance from the crosswalk. She further advised that it must say “yield here”.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan noted that in London, motorists must stop for a pedestrian crossing. He further noted that there was a sign on the road alerting motorists of a crosswalk ahead.

Mayor Davis advised that what was allowed was “ugly” unless the Town could talk VDOT into putting a sign in front of the Town’s entrance sign.

Town Administrator Semmes reported that the sign must be twenty to fifty feet in advance of the nearest crosswalk. She further reported that parking must be prohibited in that area.

Chief Panebianco opined that placing a single sign fifty feet in front of a crosswalk on either end of town would identify what crosswalks look like. Councilmember Littleton opined that this would create confusion in the locations where there were no signs.

Mayor Davis reiterated her suggestion that this be placed on the back burner.

Councilmember Miller opined that this was a bigger problem at night as motorists could not see pedestrians in the crosswalks. Councilmember Daly opined that motorists could not even see the crosswalks at night.

Councilmember Littleton questioned where the staff was on fixing the lighting problem. He reminded them that the Council had talked about this for six months. Mr. Littleton noted that the lights currently blinded drivers and did not project onto the sidewalk. He cited the example of the streetlight next to the post office and advised that there was no light on the pedestrians who were standing at that crosswalk. Mr. Littleton noted that drivers could not see the pedestrians even though they were next to the light pole.

Town Administrator Semmes suggested the need to select a different fixture head. She reminded Council that the lantern style head had a black bottom. Ms. Semmes noted that the Town of Purcellville’s fixtures were bell shaped so the sidewalks received all of the light. She advised Council that the LED company did have a frosted fixture and questioned whether they were interested in seeing it. Ms. Semmes opined that a frosted fixture could, however, affect the light level. Councilmember Hazard opined that this would result in less light. Mayor Davis suggested one be installed so the Council could see what it looked like.

Councilmember Miller advised that in looking that the Phillip’s family of light fixtures, all of the lights were modular so they could be changed out and opined that the Town would not have to change the head. He noted that the Town could also change the height of the poles, as well as the hangers. Mr. Miller reiterated that the Town could change only the parts it wanted.

Mayor Davis opined that the reason for the height, which did not allow for the projecting of light, was to accommodate the Christmas signs.

Town Administrator Semmes noted that if the Town had more money, it would have installed more lights.

Councilmember Hazard suggested the staff ask the light company whether it was possible to get more lumens on the ground. He questioned whether this should be done on a case-by-case basis.

Councilmember Littleton opined that motorists were blinded at every pole due to the reflection of the LED panel. He suggested this was not a case of the light being too bright.

Councilmember Miller opined that direction was the other problem and advised that the light was not focused in a universal direction. He noted that some spots were dark and dangerous.

Town Administrator Semmes advised Council that there were different types of fixtures that directed light differently. She reminded them that the Town's fixtures were supposed to direct the light mostly linear; however, at the intersections, it was to be spread across the crosswalk. Ms. Semmes confirmed that none of them would address the dark spot at the bottom of the light.

Councilmember Littleton noted that the Council and staff were not light experts. He suggested the Town Administrator tell the company representative what the problems were, including reflection and dark spaces, and ask them what the right solution would be. Mr. Littleton suggested the Town should ask the company to solve the problem.

Councilmember Miller suggested they also be asked whether it was possible to make any adjustments for the Christmas decorations, and noted the issue of people touching the flags. He further suggested that if the Town revisited the light, it should address every problem.

Councilmember Littleton suggested the Town Administrator ask for the solution and cost so the Council could then choose what it wanted to do.

Councilmember Hazard reminded Council that at least one organization had already purchased new signs to fit the existing poles. He further reminded them that different groups used the poles.

Councilmember Miller noted that he was talking more about the Christmas signs. He further noted that if the flag holders were higher, those groups could use their original flags.

Councilmember Hazard suggested this could be addressed simply by clamping the banner arms to the poles so they could be placed higher. Town Administrator Semmes confirmed the Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor was securing those clamps/arms.

Councilmember Littleton questioned the staff's projected time frame for reaching out to the lighting company to tell them what the issues were. He acknowledged that they would need to send someone to Middleburg to look at them.

Town Planner Moore questioned whether the Council had heard that the Christmas ornaments were still an issue. He personally opined that they worked very well on the poles. Mr. Moore noted that this was an issue that was discussed with the HDRC. He acknowledged that the poles could not accommodate the larger signs, which were put on Madison Street. Mr. Moore opined that the ones that were mounted on Washington Street worked well.

Councilmember Littleton advised that he spoke with The Hill School Alumni who said "they seemed to be okay" even though they were ten feet lower than they were previously. He further advised that the general feedback was that people felt they were okay; however, they were still worried. Mr. Littleton acknowledged their reason for concern and noted that the signs were not totally out of reach.

Town Planner Moore suggested there were no issues with people touching the signs. He opined that the smaller signs looked better on the poles at that scale.

Mayor Davis reminded Council that the poles would contain lights next year that would shine on the signs. She opined that this was also part of the concern.

Councilmember Miller suggested that if the fixtures were adjusted, additional lights may not be needed. Mayor Davis opined that they would still be needed to highlight the signs. Economic Development Coordinator Pearson advised Council that the Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor had already purchased those lights.

Council Discussion – Special Use Permit Application – Middleburg Museum Foundation

Councilmember Littleton recused himself from this agenda item as he had a conflict of interest.

Town Planner Moore reminded Council that during their discussion last month, they started to mix the discussion of the land use application with a discussion of the MOA that the Town was developing with the Middleburg Museum Foundation. He explained that what he needed from the Council was their thoughts/concerns, if any, about the idea of the use of this property as a museum with the addition. Mr. Moore noted the outstanding issue associated with parking. He questioned whether the Council was comfortable acting on the special use permit with a condition that would mirror the Planning Commission’s recommendation, which meant the approval would be subject to the Museum Foundation either securing off-site parking or requesting a fee-in-lieu-of-waiver. Mr. Moore suggested the Council could say “they wanted to know the parking solution before taking action on the special use permit” or they could act on the application with the condition that the Foundation return with a parking solution. He reported that the staff was fine with either. Mr. Moore opined that it was clear that there would be no parking on the site. He reminded Council that, during their last meeting, a member raised the suggestion of possibly waiving the waiver fee. Mr. Moore advised that the Town Attorney was looking into this; however, his initial feeling was that it could not be done as there was no enabling legislation to waive it. He suggested there may be an alternative, such as the Foundation paying the fee, with the Town then making a donation to the Foundation in the same amount. Mr. Moore noted that the waiver fee would have to be placed in the Town’s parking fund.

Mr. Littleton reported that the Foundation would probably not be able to secure off-site parking. He noted that the only options were Akre, Safeway and the Red Fox Inn, none of which wanted to give up their parking. Mr. Littleton opined that the Foundation would seek a waiver and pay the fee. He suggested that if the Council wanted to make a donation out of the General Fund to the museum, it could do so at any time. Mr. Littleton noted the need for the two transactions to be separate so the waiver fee could go into the parking fund as it was supposed to.

Mayor Davis reminded Council that they waived the parking requirements for retail and restaurants on Washington and Madison Streets. She noted that the museum would have a retail component. Ms. Davis explained that the point of waiving the parking for those businesses was to bring people into town to shop or dine. She noted that the Council was also trying to alleviate having offices across the front street, which had started to occur. Ms. Davis questioned whether the museum would be exempt from providing parking due to its retail component.

Town Planner Moore advised Council that the use would be as a museum. He noted that another option would be to exempt museums from providing off-street parking. Mr. Moore advised that this would require an ordinance amendment. He suggested that another option was the tourism zone and advised that museums could qualify under the definition of a “tourism business”, with an incentive being developed to exempt tourism businesses from parking. Mr. Moore noted that

there were a number of ways to handle this. He reminded Council that the parking did not have to be provided until the addition was built and the Foundation wanted occupancy. Mr. Moore suggested that if the Council was inclined to approve the use that they act on the permit with a condition that the parking be addressed.

Councilmember Leonard-Morgan opined that a museum would be a draw to the town and expressed hope that its patrons would also eat and shop in town. He opined that anything the Town could do to make their location in town as easy as possible was a good thing.

Town Planner Moore reminded Council that they were scheduled to hold this public hearing at their upcoming meeting. He suggested they act upon the application conditioned upon the applicant addressing the parking.

Councilmember Littleton returned to the dais.

Council Discussion – Parking Fines

Councilmember Daly reminded Council that what was before them were proposed changes to the parking ordinance and fee schedule. He explained that, basically, the changes stated that if an offender had three offenses, they would be considered to be a repeat offender, which would carry a higher fine. Mr. Daly further explained that if the offender went one year between the time of their third offense and their next one, the fees would start over again.

Councilmember Daly noted that the final page of the packet contained the recommended fines. He suggested that the fines for any safety-related violations be the same. Mr. Daly further suggested that the fine for overtime parking, which was a less onerous offense than safety, should be lower. He recommended that the fines for safety violations start at \$50 and increase to \$75 if not paid within seven days. Mr. Daly further recommended that the fine for repeat offenders for safety violations be \$100.

After considerable discussion, the Council agreed to keep the overtime parking fine at \$30 (initial fine), \$55 (if not paid within seven days), \$100 (repeat offender if paid within seven days) and \$200 (repeat offender if paid after seven days). They further agreed that the fines for repeat offenders, regardless of the offense, should be \$100 (if paid within seven days) and \$200 (if paid after seven days), with the exception of for a handicapped parking violation which would carry a higher fine. The Council further agreed with the other fine recommendations as offered.

Town Clerk North advised Council that this item would be advertised for a public hearing during their March work session.

Council Discussion – Citizen Input/Town Visioning

Councilmember Littleton reminded Council that the idea was to have a group of no more than ten people (representatives from EDAC, MBPA and Town Council) who would get together for an initial half-day gathering to look at economic development. He reported that Myra Gossens, of MPG Advisors, proposed to do an economic scan, which would consist of a quick look at the environment to get an overall impression of what worked in towns. Mr. Littleton advised that this would be coupled with a survey and explained that the idea was to focus the survey on economic and business development. He advised that the idea was to get the pulse of tourists who spent money, including what they did or did not like, and the pulse of businesses to see if they were interested in expanding and, if they were interested in the Middleburg area, what would be important to them. Mr. Littleton reported that the survey would be distributed to the members of the MBPA, individuals on the Economic Development Coordinator's distribution list and

individuals in Congresswoman Comstock's data base. He opined that the survey would be sent to twenty to thirty thousand people that were located within thirty minutes of Middleburg. Mr. Littleton advised that the survey would not consist of more than twenty easy questions and a final question with closing comments.

Councilmember Littleton reported that Ms. Gossens had done many surveys and could help develop this one. He suggested the survey offer two paths, with different questions – one for those who may be interested in opening a business in Middleburg and one for tourists. Mr. Littleton suggested the need to gauge both sides of economic and business development. He further suggested that Survey Monkey be used and noted that the National Sporting Library had a subscription. Mr. Littleton opined that it may need to be upgraded for a month to have full capability.

Economic Development Coordinator Pearson noted that the Town could conduct large Survey Monkey surveys through its contract with Constant Contact.

Councilmember Littleton advised that the goal was to develop the survey and send it out by the end of next week. He suggested that people be given two to three weeks to submit their answers. Mr. Littleton opined that if there was a twenty to thirty percent response, this would be good as this would be thousands of responses. He advised that Ms. Gossens would then do an analysis of what people said, including identifying the common themes, and bring the results to a vision session that would be held on March 27th at the National Sporting Library. Mr. Littleton reported that all of the participants were available that day. He opined that this session would result in three or four slides, which would be presented to the Council during its visioning session on April 7-8. Mr. Littleton advised that the Council would have the full survey responses, as well as the summary, which it could then discuss. He advised that the group would then get together again for a two day session to understand the big picture, get the Council's guidance, and identify actionable items. Mr. Littleton noted that Ms. Gossens would then prepare a final report, at which point, her engagement would be done. He reminded Council that the new economic development person would be on board by the time they had some actionable things to do.

Councilmember Littleton noted that Ms. Gossens had identified this as an "economic development plan"; however, it was not. He advised that it would be a strategic high-to-mid level plan, not like the one that EDAC was working on. Mr. Littleton explained that it would give some structural guidance on where the group should be headed. He reiterated that the three groups (Town, EDAC and MBPA) would work together to formulate a plan around three or four things that everyone agreed needed to be attacked, as well as identify how to attack them.

Councilmember Littleton reported that Ms. Gossens would charge by the hour and advised that her suggested cost was \$16,000. He suggested the need to manage her hours to get the price down. Mr. Littleton opined that her rate was comparable to most facilitators in the Northern Virginia area, although it was a little high. He advised that he would try to get her down a little on the hourly rate.

The Council expressed concern about the proposed cost. After some discussion, they asked that Councilmember Littleton negotiate with Ms. Gossens to reduce her hourly rate to \$300 and cap the number of hours, with the Town handling some of the administrative work. The Council expressed a willingness to go up to \$325/hour if necessary.

Mayor Davis asked that Councilmember Littleton advise the Council of the outcome of his negotiations.

Information Item – FY '17 Utility Budget Amendment

Town Administrator Semmes reminded Council that the Town had to make two payments on the water line project, including one in 2015. She further reminded them that the bid was high. Ms. Semmes reported that in order to save the bid, VDOT scraped up some money; however, the Town had to come up with additional money. She reminded Council that the funding for that project was in last year's budget. Ms. Semmes further reminded them that there were some additions to the scope of work, including valves that were added, fire hydrants that were moved and a line that was straightened. She advised Council that this necessitated a budget amendment so the Town could send its last payment to VDOT. Ms. Semmes advised that it took longer for VDOT to close out the project than anticipated. She reported that the final amount was \$348,917.09.

Mayor Davis noted that the Town saved a lot of money by doing this project as it did, as VDOT paid a lot of what the Town would have had to pay if it had done the project.

Town Administrator Semmes reiterated that the water line prices came in high. She reminded Council that the Town saved money on the east end water line project as the Route 50 contractor did not want another contractor on the job site. Ms. Semmes explained that because the Town got a better price on that, the costs evened out. She reminded Council that the Town borrowed \$1.5 million, with the hope that three projects could be done. Ms. Semmes opined that the amount of available funding would be close based on the estimates of the west end pump station project. She noted that a little more funding may be needed for that project.

Mayor Davis questioned whether the Council was okay moving this to a public hearing. The members agreed they were.

Discussion

Mayor Davis noted that Town Clerk North provided the Council with the information on David Stewart's funeral and advised that it was a beautiful service. She opined that Mr. Stewart was a wonderful person and advised that many people spoke at the service and they all said the same things about his smile and happiness and spoke of how he took challenges as a blessing. Ms. Davis noted that, at the request of Bundles Murdock, she transcribed her comments during the service and advised that the Town Clerk would send them to the Council.

Town Clerk North reminded Council that she sent them an email of the FOIA/COIA/Roberts Rules training that would be held in Leesburg on March 21st. She noted that she planned to attend as she was required by law to attend one such training session per year. Ms. North advised that if any of the members of Council wished to attend, she would be happy to sign them up.

Town Administrator Semmes noted that she provided Council with a summary of the final arrangements for the visioning session.

Councilmember Littleton questioned whether Mr. Chandler would do a survey of the Council. Town Administrator Semmes confirmed he would, followed by a phone interview. She advised that he would compile a report based on those, which he would present to the Council before the retreat or have available as a part of the retreat.

Councilmember Littleton questioned whether the Council would have any homework prior to the visioning session. Town Administrator Semmes reiterated that Mr. Chandler would send them a survey.

Town Administrator Semmes reported that Councilmembers Daly, Leonard-Morgan and Miller indicated that they preferred the top left colors on the sample for the wayfinding sign. She advised Council that the staff put out a sample three-hour parking sign so they could see the style and color. Ms. Semmes noted that the hours needed to be changed to 7:00 a.m-7:00 p.m.

Closed Session – (1) Discussion of plans related to security of a government building,
(2) Property Acquisition and (3) Personnel

Councilmember Daly moved, seconded by Councilmember Miller, that Council go into closed session as allowed under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act Sections 2.2-3711(A)(19),(3) and (1) pertaining to the discussion of plans related to the security of any governmental building or the safety of persons using such building; the acquisition of real property for a public purpose where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body; and 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 the public body. Councilmember Daly further moved, seconded by Councilmember Miller, that these matters be limited to (1) a discussion of plans related to the security of the Town Office or persons using the Town Office, (2) the acquisition of real property for a government use and (3) the performance and/or assignments of Town staff, including the Town Administrator, Town Planner and Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor. Councilmember Daly further moved, seconded by Councilmember Miller, that in addition to the Council, the following individuals be present during the closed session: A. J. Panebianco for the first part and Martha Mason Semmes for the first, second and third parts. Councilmember Daly further moved, seconded by Councilmember Miller, that the Council thereafter reconvene in open session for action as appropriate.

Vote: Yes – Councilmembers Daly, Hazard, Leonard-Morgan, Littleton and Miller

No – N/A

Abstain: N/A

Absent: Councilmembers Kirk and Snyder
(Mayor Davis only votes in the case of a tie)

Mayor Davis asked that Council certify that to the best of each member’s knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting, which each member so did. She reminded those present for the closed session that any discussion that occurred within it should be treated as confidential.

There being no further business, Mayor Davis declared the meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

APPROVED:

Betsy A. Davis, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk