

WORKSHOP MEETING
WALKERTOWN TOWN COUNCIL
THURSDAY – JULY 8, 2021
6:00 P.M. – BOOE HOUSE AT TOWN CENTER PARK

Present: Mayor Davis, Council members Vernon Brown, Wesley Hutchins, Peggy Leight and Marilyn Martin, Town Manager Scott Snow and Town Clerk Rusty Sawyer.

Also in attendance, Mike Bowman from Forsyth County Soil & Water Conservation.

Mayor Davis calls the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and opens with a prayer.

Doc: Any additions to the agenda? *NO*.

Action Items for the July 8th, 2021 Meeting

1. DISCUSSION OF VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT PROGRAM

Doc: We have invited Mike Bowman from Forsyth County Soil & Water Conservation to guide us through the Voluntary Agricultural District program. Thank you for coming Mike.

Mike: The Farmland Preservation Enabling Act was passed statewide in 1985. Forsyth County has 122 farms, 7400 acres, participating in the program.

Doc: Our greatest concern is illegal dumping.

Mike: Not protected or allowed.

Doc: Neighbors complained.

Marilyn: Too many dump trucks.

Mike: Bona fide farms are exempt from zoning requirements.

Peggy: What do you mean?

Mike: If they want to build a building, they don't have to get permits or be inspected.

To be a bona fide farm it must pass 4 requirements.

1. A farm sales tax exemption number issued by the NC Department of Revenue;
2. A copy of a property tax bill showing that the property was assessed using the present use value of the land;
3. A copy of the farmer owner or operator's Schedule F IRS form from the most recent tax year; or
4. A forest management plan.

Mike: Officially you have 2 choices, yes or no.

If you say yes, then you must decide to appoint your own 7 member Advisory Board or use the county's board. The board meets 2 or 3 times a year. You would also have to have staff to inspect farms and do a title search for each farm every year.

Doc: Other costs to the town?

Mike: Maybe for Public Hearings.

Wesley: They are eligible for grants.

Vernon: Neighbors of the farm that made this request have complained about dust and smell. Becoming a VAD farm protects them from frivolous suits.

Marilyn: I still have reservations.

Mike: You could have applicants reviewed by your Planning Board.
Scott: Zoning issues need to be answered. Questions about Agritourism like Wineries and bona fide farms need to be answered by Bo.

2. DISCUSSION OF MEMORIAL REQUEST POLICY

Doc leads the discussion.

Council is in agreement to not allow memorial plantings on town properties.

Scott leads the discussion about the cleanup of the fenced in gravel lot beside town hall.

Scott: There may be "ground fill" funds available. Maybe the COG could help.

Peggy: There needs to be a marked way in & out. Also, some plantings.

Council agrees to have Scott pursue "ground fill" funds.

3. CONTRACT SERVICES UPDATES

Scott leads this discussion.

*Council is in unanimous agreement to have Wesley Hutchins & Peggy Leight schedule a meeting with Scott to review contract services.
(between August 23 & August 27)*

MOTION: TO ADJOURN WORKSHOP MEETING @ 8:09

BY: MARILYN MARTIN

SECOND: VERNON BROWN

VOTE: UNANIMOUS
(BROWN, HUTCHINS, LEIGHT, MARTIN)

Submitted by: Rusty Sawyer
Town Clerk