

**MINUTES
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING
HOOD ROOM, MATTHEWS TOWN HALL
NOVEMBER 23, 2015 - 7:00 PM**

PRESENT: Mayor James Taylor; Mayor Pro Tem Kress Query; Commissioners George Fossett, John Higdon, Chris Melton, Jeff Miller and John Ross; Town Attorney Charles Buckley; Town Manager Hazen Blodgett; Town Clerk Lori Canapinno

ALSO PRESENT: Communications Director Jen Thompson; Finance Director Chris Tucker; Police Captain David Dufresne

REGULAR MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

INVOCATION

Mayor Taylor asked the audience to reflect on current world events and requested a moment of silence.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Taylor led the audience in the pledge.

Mayor Taylor introduced Matthews Playhouse Artistic Director June Bayliss and the cast of Scrooge. Ms. Bayliss explained this is the Playhouse's 20th anniversary season and Scrooge is the final show of this season. It runs through December 20th. She expressed thanks to the Town of Matthews for the tourism grants and daily support it gives the Playhouse. Cast members sang their thanks as well. Mayor Taylor said he can't imagine Matthews without the Playhouse and encouraged the audience to attend the outstanding shows it produces.

ITEMS TO BE ADDED TO THE AGENDA

None

PRESENTATION OF DONATION TO POLICE DEPARTMENT FROM POLO CLUB RESIDENTS

Polo Club at Matthews Gene Triplett presented Police Captain David Dufresne with funds raised from Polo Club residents to purchase body cameras for Matthews police officers. He explained that the residents think this is very important and they donated generously. The initial fundraising goal of was surpassed and the final amount totaled \$3,200.40.

Captain Dufresne thanked Mr. Triplett and the Polo Club community for their generosity and the great relationship that exists between it and the police department. Mayor Taylor thanked the residents on behalf of the entire town, saying they're a tremendous example for the people of Matthews.

PROCLAMATION FOR NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Mayor Taylor presented the proclamation to Jessie Jacobs. Mr. Jacobs spoke about the proud history of native tribes and thanked the Board for their attention to this important issue.

UPDATE ON 2008 MECKLENBURG COUNTY PARK & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation Director Jim Garges and Deputy Director Michael Kirschman gave an update on the county's 2008 Park and Recreation Master Plan. Mr. Garges noted the process has been citizen-driven and significant progress has been made. Planning for the future is very important so significant investments are being made in aspects like land acquisition and projects in underserved areas. Some projects have to be completed in phases due to their size. The goal is to have a recreation amenity within a quarter mile of every county resident. There are \$130 million worth of park projects under construction now and over \$20 million worth of contracts for land acquisition ready to go. The department is looking at many areas in the county and seeks to preserve the web of natural resources when possible. There was some discussion of neighborhood parks, which are generally between two and ten acres.

There are known gaps in the plan. Outdoor pools and spray grounds are of particular importance as every child should know how to swim. The recommendation for recreation centers is to move to a regional multigenerational model. The goal is to have four full service centers in the north, south, east and west areas of the county and to expand the existing centers. There is also a plan to expand Memorial Stadium for pro soccer. Greenways remain another top priority with the goal of building over 60 miles in the next ten years and increasing the current total by 268 miles over the next thirty years. The department is also working on a dirtway program of natural surface trails. Revenue needs to be recovered, maybe by increasing participation. If 1/3 of all households registered for a Park & Rec program that would take care of the problem. The department needs to increase its efforts on marketing.

Mr. Miller discussed greenway trails and travel along the Trade Street/Fullwood Road area. Mr. Higdon said the plan is truly outstanding. Mayor Taylor said all good plans and projects take time and said he'd prefer to see projects in town take time to be done correctly rather than get a half-done end result.

Mr. Garges asked for a letter of endorsement for the plan to be sent to Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners. By consensus the Board agreed to send the letter of support.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

REPORT FROM BOARD

Red Brick Partnership Co-Chairs Rob Jacik and John Urban presented a review of this group, which started as an offshoot of the Economic Development Advisory Committee. The group was officially formed in February 2015 with financial support from the Town and some private funders. The group has been working on many different things, with the First Thursday series of events being the most prominent as well as branding and marketing items

like signage, artwork, coasters and pole banners. Members have also talked to leasing agents, property managers and business owners regarding properties for downtown. It's great for business owners to get that feedback that businesses are working together

Activity on social media and the website is growing and activities are bringing people downtown to spend time and money in local businesses as well as raise awareness for local nonprofit organizations that are part of the First Thursday events. The activities will continue year-round and the group does plan to bring back the very successful trolley rides for major events in the future. The Partnership will continue talking to potential partners and look for ways to collaborate. Mr. Urban noted that it's important to reach critical mass. Downtown includes the Marketplace, Griffin Square and North End and the group is still working through that expansion process.

This year's funding - through Town funding and private sponsors - totaled about \$31,000. All businesses, services and residents in downtown is included as a downtown partner for free. The group is also working on different methods of funding, such as additional levels of partnership which associated benefits.

Mr. Miller said he was surprised to hear that he group has been official for only nine months. He said he's proud of what has been accomplished and of how lively the town is with these events. There is a whole new attitude with great vitality and new businesses. Mayor Taylor agreed, saying First Thursday has really taken off and engaged a lot of people. This and other activities like Food Truck Friday and the concert and movie series have expanded the demographic pull of visitors to town. It's nice to have a little something for everyone. He commended the group for their work.

CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Approve Minutes of the November 9, 2015 Meeting**
- B. Reappoint Members to the Economic Development Advisory Committee**
- C. Approve Technology Reimbursement to Commissioner Miller in the Amount of \$1,514.04**
- D. Approve Tax Refunds**
- E. Approve Budget Ordinance Amendments to:**
 - 1) Recognize Donation Received from Residents of the Polo Club for the Purchase of Body Cameras in the Amount of \$3,200.40**
 - 2) Recognize Donation Received from Matthews Chamber for the Purchase of Body Cameras in the Amount of \$2,700**
 - 3) Recognize Shared Proceeds Received through DEA Taskforce in the Amount of \$3,944.85**
 - 4) Recognize Shared Proceeds Received through DEA Taskforce in the Amount of \$28,798.64**

Motion by Mr. Query to approve consent agenda items A through E4. The motion was seconded by Mr. Higdon and unanimously approved.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

OSCAR DRIVE – ADOPT RESOLUTION CALLING FOR ASSESSMENT ROLL AND PUBLIC HEARING

Town Attorney Charles Buckley explained this is part of the ongoing process. The cost is \$44,000, to be distributed evenly and assessed to the properties on Oscar Drive. This includes the total cost of about \$89,000 minus the funds from the bond. Once this resolution is adopted the public hearing will be set for December 14, 2015, at which point the property owners have the opportunity for comment.

Motion by Mr. Melton to adopt the resolution. The motion was seconded by Mr. Miller and unanimously approved.

RECEIVE UPDATE ON PLANNING CONFERENCE TO-DO LIST

Town Manager Hazen Blodgett reviewed the list. There was some discussion of the interactive road project map, which is being worked on by the newly-hired GIS planner. The new town website is underway with a planned completion date of early 2016.

NEW BUSINESS

RECEIVE PRESENTATION ON FY 2014-15 AUDIT – BRIAN LACKEY

Auditor Brian Lackey reviewed the results of the fiscal year 2014-15 audit, for which the town was issued an unmodified opinion – the best that can be issued. The Town's overall net position decreased by \$1,536,695 to \$254,615,735, which is a 0.604% decrease attributed to depreciation of assets over increase in assets. The fund balance available for the General Fund was \$5,882,292, or 30.87%, of the total General Fund expenditures and transfers to other funds for the fiscal year. The Towns' total debt increased by \$3,223,429 during the current fiscal year and the Town increased fund balance of the Tourism Fund by \$362,591 to \$696,609.

Motion by Mr. Miller to accept the report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Query and unanimously approved.

RECEIVE MONTHLY BUDGET REPORT

Finance Director Chris Tucker noted there is not much to report this early in the fiscal year, particularly as sales and use tax and unrestricted intergovernmental revenues come in arrears. Mayor Taylor requested that future reports include comparative annual figures and Mr. Tucker agreed to add those in.

APPROVE RESOLUTION FOR E-BID PROCESS

Mr. Buckley reviewed the Board's options. This resolution should be adopted if the Board wishes to use electronic means as the sole method of advertising. Otherwise, the Board can state which method it uses on a case by case basis. Mr. Higdon said he was not in favor of restricting methods. Discussion ensued, with Mr. Buckley clarifying that state statute dictates certain aspects.

By consensus the Board took no action on the resolution and will state which advertising method(s) will be used on a case by case basis.

DISCUSS REGULATION OF 400 FOOT COMMUNICATION TOWER THROUGH ZONING

Mr. Buckley explained that the Town has received notice that the state intends to build a 400+ foot tower for law enforcement communications on Department of Transportation (DOT) property off Highway 74. They sent an Attorney General opinion that says state construction is not subject to local building code regulations. This is in fact noted by statute but zoning codes are different. There is no court case on this, so the question to the Board is this: should the Town allow this tower be constructed or does the Board wish to challenge it by stating the local

zoning regulations apply? They would have to rezone the site to I-2 and also apply for a text amendment regarding proximal distance of towers.

Mayor Taylor noted the Board has received a lot of input about shorter towers in the past and he thinks there would be a lot of concern about this one. He suggested the Town respond to the DOT to say it objects to their interpretation and to make them follow zoning regulations. Discussion ensued. Mayor Taylor noted the site is very close to Union County so DOT may try to just move it down the road. Mr. Miller asked if this would create litigation that would cost Matthews taxpayers money. Mr. Buckley explained that it is possible, if they go through the rezoning process and the Board doesn't approve it. He noted they would have to rezone from B-H to I-2 and get a text amendment to allow two towers at a closer distance than what is currently allowed.

Motion by Mr. Fossett to send a letter to the DOT objecting to their interpretation and advising they need to follow local zoning regulations, including going through the rezoning and text amendment process as necessary. The motion was seconded by Mr. Melton and unanimously approved.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Taylor reported on recent and upcoming special events, including the second annual Pawsitively Mathews, the opening of Charles Buckley Way and Hometown Holiday and First Thursday events. He also commended solid waste service provider Republic Services for quickly resolving a minor situation and going above and beyond what is in the contract. They give great service to the Town of Matthews.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Mr. Buckley thanked the Board for the recognition of his work for the town by naming a street after him. He is humbled and appreciates that that people will be able to use and enjoy Charles Buckley Way.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Blodgett discussed the Town's branding and questioned if it was time to think about making changes. Matthews has a very family friendly vibe but it might be time to try to appeal specifically to younger people. There's an economic development project searching for a home and it was mentioned that the perception of Matthews is that's not very millennial-friendly. He asked if there was any interest in working on that aspect of the Town's image.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Melton said it's necessary to explore all avenues to make the town relevant to all people. Mayor Taylor said he's fine with making Matthews more unique and having more of a statement. But he also wants to follow through with the phases of the overall branding project that was decided on several years ago. Some items had been postponed but it's time to revisit those decisions. Mr. Higdon said millennials are already attracted to Matthews and he's not in favor of another study. Mayor Taylor noted Matthews has been known as a great place to raise a family, but sometimes the town struggles to attract companies who have certain demographic employees. He said the different special events attract a lot of people but they're people who don't necessarily live in Matthews. Mr. Fossett noted there are a lot of apartments in town and it's generally not older folks who are living in them. Mr. Melton said the town is already doing a lot of things correctly but needs to be sure that events are being marketed to the right people. Mr. Ross said he believed the town is doing just fine but agreed that advertising in different ways would be good.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mr. Miller to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ross and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Canapinno
Town Clerk