

SPECIAL CALLED BOARD MEETING
Town of Sylva Board of Commissioners
July 27, 2020

The Town of Sylva Board of Commissioners held a special called meeting on July 27, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. hosted in the Board Room of Municipal Hall, 83 Allen Street, Sylva, N.C. and held electronically by Zoom meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to complete the July 23, 2020 agenda due to the meeting being interrupted by racial acts.

PRESENT: Lynda Sossamon, Mayor
Barbara Hamilton, Vice-Mayor
Mary Gelbaugh, Commissioner
Ben Guiney, Commissioner
Greg McPherson, Commissioner
David Nestler, Commissioner

Michael Morgan, Interim Town Manager
Amanda Murajda, Town Clerk
Eric Ridenour, Town Attorney

ABSENT:

Mayor Sossamon called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT: Lynn Bryant (Finance Officer), Chris Hatton (Police Chief) and Jake Scott (Public Works Director).

VISITORS: Frank Kracher (WLOS), Holly Kays (SMN), Lilly Knoepp (BPR) and Dave Russell (Sylva Herald).

AGENDA: *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

CONSENT AGENDA: *Commissioner McPherson made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

MAYOR'S REPORT: None.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT: Commissioner Gelbaugh spoke to reinforce positivity and celebrate that businesses were open and offered encouragement for those sick to get well. Commissioner Nestler addressed the last meeting and the interruptions that occurred and reminded everyone to continue shopping at Harold's Supermarket. Commissioner Guiney gave his update on COVID-19 and reminded everyone to continue wearing their masks. Commissioner McPherson requested a discussion of the Main Street Director position be added to the next agenda. Commissioner Hamilton commented that there had been a wreck in front of her property on Yellowbird Branch in the detour zone. She also asked for the Town to investigate why temporary signs put up by Harold's Supermarket were taken down. She requested the Fire Department give a report at the next meeting.

MANAGERS REPORT: Interim Manager Mike Morgan reported the following:

- Thanked the board for inviting him to be the Interim Town Manager
- Thanked Chris Hatton and Jake Scott for working with NCDOT on the Yellowbird Branch detour and adding additional signage
- The speed limit on E. Hometown Place has been reduced and NCDOT has notified Morgan that they are hoping to complete construction on that road quickly.
- The Town received the engineering report for the Allen Street slide. Morgan will review the report and report back.

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT: Jake Scott reported that work was beginning on the bottom of the Allen Street slide to help with current drainage. The Public Works department will begin laying brick at the new Evalina Street crosswalk.

POLICE DEPARTMENT: Chris Hatton reported that the department had been busy working on Yellowbird Branch traffic safety and also on crosswalk safety.

PLANNING BOARD REPORT: The July meeting was cancelled because of the virus.

TWSA REPORT: No meeting to report.

NEW BUSINESS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD APPOINTMENT: Interim Manager Morgan reported that Luther Jones wished to be reappointed to the Historic Preservation Board. *Commissioner Ben Guiney made a motion to reappoint Luther Jones to the Historic Preservation Board. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

RESOLUTION REQUESTING JACKSON COUNTY REMOVE CONFEDERATE MONUMENT FROM

THE MUNICIPAL LIMITS OF SYLVA: Interim Manager Morgan read the resolution requesting Jackson County remove the Confederate monument from the city limits of Sylva. Mayor Sossamon asked for public comment on the issue.

Speakers:

- a. JB Bost spoke to remove the monument.
- b. Kelly Brown spoke to remove the monument.
- c. Lianna Costantino spoke to remove the monument.
- d. Frank Huguelet spoke to keep the monument in its current location.
- e. Chad Jones spoke to keep the monument in its current location.
- f. Destri Leger spoke to remove the monument.
- g. Tracy Mann spoke to remove the monument.
- h. Nathan Mann spoke to remove the monument.
- i. Carrie McBane spoke about the monument.
- j. Fleming Sanders spoke to remove the monument.
- k. Suzanne Saucier spoke to remove the monument.

Commissioner Gelbaugh thanked everyone for their comments and noted that she doesn't give the monument the kind of power others do. She added that faith and fear cannot occupy same space and she relies on faith and hopes that an agreement can be reached and that racism is not welcomed in Sylva. Commissioner Nestler clarified that the resolution is to move the monument, not tear it down. He encouraged the board to pass the resolution to relocate it. Commissioner Hamilton expressed that she felt deeply about the monument and does not want to rush to a conclusion about the monument. She commented that until hate is removed from hearts nothing will change. Commissioner McPherson thanked everyone for their comments. He noted that he was speaking on behalf of constituents and would like to see a new project in the space that the monument occupies. Commissioner Guiney commented that he understood the monument but keeping it was in conflict with where Sylva needed to be focused. He would like to relocate the monument. Mayor Sossamon commented that she would like people to remove racism from their hearts and love one another.

Commissioner Nestler made a motion to approve the resolution requesting Jackson County remove the statute from the city limits of Sylva. The motion carried with a 3-2 vote. Voting in the affirmative were Commissioners Guiney, McPherson and Nestler. Voting against the resolution were Commissioners Gelbaugh and Hamilton.

DISCUSSION OF OUTDOOR RESTAURANT SEATING IN THE B-1 ZONING DISTRICT:

Interim Town Manager Morgan presented to the board temporary changes to provide the best service available to restaurant businesses. The proposed temporary ordinance amendment would allow temporary permits to extend outdoor seating for restaurants in the B-1 Main Street Zoning District. It shall expire 30 days after restaurant capacity restrictions were released by the NC Governor. The Town would have an agreement with NCDOT to allow this. Commissioner Nestler made a motion to approve this temporary ordinance amendment and allow the Interim Town Manger to execute any necessary actions to have this ordinance amendment in place. *The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

ADJOURNMENT: *Commissioner Guiney made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:17 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Lynda Sossamon
Mayor

Amanda W. Murajda
Town Clerk

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