



OCCOQUAN TOWN COUNCIL
Work Session Minutes
Town Hall – 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125
Tuesday, September 15, 2020
7:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Earnie Porta; Vice Mayor Jenn Loges; Councilmembers Krys Bienia, Cindy Fithian, Laurie Holloway and Eliot Perkins

Absent: None

Staff: Kirstyn Jovanovich, Town Manager; Adam Linn, Chief of Police; Jason Forman, Deputy Chief of Police; Katy Nicholson, Town Clerk

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Porta called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. He introduced Town Manager Kirstyn Jovanovich, noting that going forward, Council should communicate with Town staff through her.

2. REGULAR BUSINESS

Mayor Porta requested unanimous consent to adjust the order of the agenda items. No objections.

a. VFW Facility Rental Request: POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony in Mamie Davis Park

Mayor Porta explained that the Town partnered with VFW Post 7916 every year, waiving the facility fee for the VFW's POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony. He added that the VFW usually used River Mill Park, but this year the event would be held in Mamie Davis Park.

Motion to authorize the Town to partner with VFW Post 7916 to allow the use of Mamie Davis Park on September 18, 2020, for the annual POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony.

Moved by Councilmember Perkins; seconded by Councilmember Holloway.

Motion **passed** unanimously by voice vote.

b. Striping Plan

Ms. Jovanovich reported that she had spoken with the Town Engineer for clarification on the planimetric survey, which would be used to determine the striping plan. Mayor Porta noted that this plan would need to be approved by the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) before VDOT developed its paving budget for the next fiscal year.

Motion to authorize the Mayor to execute a contract with Legacy Engineering for a planimetric survey and a signage and pavement restriping plan, for a total of \$3,250.00.

Moved by Councilmember Holloway; seconded by Councilmember Perkins.

Motion **passed** unanimously by voice vote.

Vice Mayor Loges asked whether the striping plan would provide alternatives to the existing striping layout. Mayor Porta responded that the survey was being undertaken in order to implement an alternative striping plan.

c. Discussion: Parking

Mayor Porta asked Councilmember Perkins to speak, as he had worked extensively on the parking issue during the last several years as Chair of the Planning Commission. Councilmember Perkins distributed printed information to Council. He noted that the Town's parking problems would only get worse if the Town did not address the matter. He explained that the Town needed to encourage optimal parking turnover and ensure that business employees did not park in prime spaces. He said the Town could maximize parking inventory using:

- Better signage
- A timed parking strategy
- Utilization of parking enforcement
- Private parking options

Councilmember Perkins noted that Middleburg, a town similar in size to Occoquan, had encountered similar parking issues. He said he had spoken with the Middleburg Police Chief and Town Administrator, who explained the components of Middleburg's parking system:

- Three-hour parking for prime spaces
- Eight-hour parking for non-prime spaces
- Some 20-minute loading zones
- Enforcement in place 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., based on need
- Two to three signs per block
- All-in-one, hand-held enforcement system manufactured by UP Safety

Councilmember Perkins explained that the proposed system would provide real-time data to support enforcement. He noted that enforcement could be conducted based on blocks or space numbers, and the system would account for repeat offenders who already had received warnings. He said the Town would need to focus on education prior to implementation.

Councilmember Holloway asked whether the Town of Middleburg had an officer on duty during the entire enforcement period. Chief Linn responded that Middleburg only provided enforcement when needed. Councilmember Perkins said he thought it would be reasonable to use the system throughout the Historic District for consistency. He added that residents without off-street parking could be issued permits. Councilmember Holloway noted that one building contained several apartments without off-street parking.

Councilmember Holloway disclosed that she was affected by this matter.

Councilmember Fithian noted that the Town would need to make sure not to discriminate against renters, and that permits only should be issued to residents with vehicles. Councilmember Perkins responded that the Town would need to take a closer look at the details of the proposed system, but he wanted Council to consider the overall plan.

Councilmember Perkins said he thought the UP Safety system would be a good option, and that the Middleburg Police Chief had said it was easy to use and effective. Councilmember

Fithian asked how long Middleburg had been using the system. Chief Linn responded four years. He added that Middleburg's enforcement was complaint-driven and based on inventory. He also noted that Middleburg did not have as many residents in its historic district as Occoquan. He said that Middleburg's system had increased parking turnover and encouraged business employees to use the eight-hour spaces. He added that Middleburg did not need to do much enforcement, as most people complied with the system.

Mayor Porta asked what time of year Middleburg had implemented its system. Chief Linn said he would ask about this. Mayor Porta responded that he was concerned about implementing the system during the busy holiday season. Chief Linn noted that the system could be implemented within three to four weeks, but the Town would need to install signage and notify residents and businesses prior to implementation.

Councilmember Holloway asked if Chief Linn would be comfortable being the arbiter of parking tickets. Chief Linn responded that he already handled parking ticket disputes. Mayor Porta asked how the system would be enforced. Chief Linn responded that the system would take time-stamped photos during walk-throughs to determine which cars had not been moved. Councilmember Perkins noted that the goal was compliance and parking turnover, not enforcement.

Councilmember Perkins said he had considered whether to test certain locations prior to implementing the system throughout Town, but he thought it would be difficult to determine how the system worked without full implementation. He said he also had considered paid versus timed parking, but he wanted to implement the most noninvasive solution possible. He added that paid parking potentially could be implemented in the Ebenezer Baptist Church parking lot.

Councilmember Fithian noted that eight-hour parking zones would not give business employees time to walk to and from their cars before and after their eight-hour shifts. Councilmember Perkins responded that he would discuss this issue with the Middleburg Police Chief, but he did not think it had been a problem. Chief Linn noted that the eight-hour time limit was not intended to penalize employees, but to discourage people from leaving their vehicles for multiple days at a time.

Councilmember Holloway suggested that the Town create a Frequently Asked Questions document for residents, employees and visitors. She asked how the Town would handle handicapped spaces. Councilmember Perkins responded that the Town of Middleburg worked with disabled residents on an individual basis, and that he would speak with their Police Chief more about this.

Mayor Porta said he wanted to continue the parking discussion with Ebenezer Baptist Church. Councilmember Perkins responded that he liked the idea of businesses having dedicated parking for their employees, and he thought the Town should reach out to the business community to gauge its interest. Vice Mayor Loges asked whether the church could work with a parking app company directly. Mayor Porta responded that the church did not want to handle the payment system.

Councilmember Fithian asked whether the Town would need to hold a public hearing for the proposed parking plan. Mayor Porta responded that he did not think a public hearing was necessary, but the Town should hold a public meeting.

Ms. Jovanovich said she would like to take some time to review the materials and look more deeply at the cost. Mayor Porta said he wanted to be sure that the Town could pay for the system through its operating budget. Councilmember Perkins noted that the system cost the Town of Middleburg approximately \$5,000.00 per year, and the town had received \$11,000.00 in fines the previous year alone. Mayor Porta noted that if the goal was 100 percent compliance, a paid parking system would better ensure that the Town could cover its costs. Ms. Jovanovich agreed that the Town should not count on ticket revenue if the goal was 100 percent compliance. She noted that the Town also would need to account for staff time. Chief Linn responded that the police walked around Town on weekends anyway.

Councilmember Perkins said he would discuss the matter in more detail with Ms. Jovanovich later. He asked Council to read the materials he had distributed and address any questions to him and Ms. Jovanovich.

d. Discussion: Kayak Ramp

Mayor Porta asked if Council was OK with holding the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Kayak Ramp in the spring of 2021. Council had no objections. Mayor Porta asked Council to send any comments on signage to Ms. Jovanovich.

Councilmember Holloway asked if staff planned to install any racks near the ramp, as people had been leaving kayaks on the ramp. Vice Mayor Loges suggested posting signage indicating that the ramp was for active loading only. Chief Linn responded that the Town would need to decide whether to add an additional handicapped parking space, which would limit the rack space.

Councilmember Fithian said she thought there was space for an additional handicapped space and a kayak ramp. She noted that she would like to add:

- Two benches for Kayak Ramp users to take off/put on shoes
- One trash and one recycling bin
- Signs painted on the base of the Route 123 bridge with messages such as “Occoquan Water Trail” and “Leave No Trace”

Mayor Porta asked whether a regular parking space would be lost by adding another handicapped space in front of the ramp. Chief Linn responded yes. Councilmember Perkins said he was concerned about maintaining enough space for people to unload their kayaks from their vehicles.

Councilmember Fithian asked whether “Stand Up Paddle Board” or “SUP” should be added to the Kayak and Canoe Ramp name. Councilmember Holloway responded that the state parks used the term “Hand Carry Ramp,” and she did not want to add too many words to the name. Mayor Porta said he was comfortable calling it the “Kayak Launch Ramp,” and he thought Stand Up Paddle Board and canoe users would know they could use it. Councilmember Holloway agreed.

Councilmember Holloway noted that handicapped parking spaces required 96” of adjacent clearance. Mayor Porta asked staff to generate a recommendation regarding handicapped

parking and/or kayak racks. Ms. Jovanovich responded that staff would generate additional recommendations for signage, parking and accessories based on Council's discussion.

Mayor Porta requested Council's unanimous consent to add to the agenda an item regarding the purchase of AV equipment. No objections.

Purchase of AV Equipment for Town Hall

Mayor Porta noted that during a previous vote on Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funding allocation, Council had tabled its decision regarding AV equipment. He asked Vice Mayor Loges and Deputy Chief Forman to speak about the options they had researched.

Vice Mayor Loges explained that Council had wanted to ensure that the proposed AV equipment would be eligible for CARES Act funding reimbursement. Deputy Chief Forman noted that staff had reached out to other jurisdictions in Northern Virginia and found out that most of them were using the majority of their CARES Act funding for IT upgrades to improve remote accessibility.

Vice Mayor Loges noted that the one item she had been unsure about regarding CARES Act eligibility was the second monitor for the audience. She explained that this was an important component because it would ensure that the public was able to see any presentations and materials that Council was viewing. Mayor Porta asked if Vice Mayor Loges was confident that the proposed equipment would be eligible for CARES Act funding. Vice Mayor Loges responded yes. Deputy Chief Forman noted that the monitor also could be used to display public health and safety information outside of meetings.

Mayor Porta asked whether Council was ready to vote on the procurement of the proposed AV equipment. Councilmember Perkins noted that this was a timely matter, as the Town likely would need the equipment for some of its upcoming meetings.

Motion to approve the purchase of the audio/visual items in the proposal from Acuity Audio Visual dated September 1, 2020, totaling \$17,652.67, pending approval by the Town Manager.

Moved by Vice Mayor Loges; seconded by Councilmember Holloway.

Motion **passed** unanimously by voice vote.

e. Draft Noise Ordinance and Draft Exhaust System Ordinance

Mayor Porta noted that the Town Attorney had recommended deferring this item until the October meeting. Councilmember Perkins responded that he would like the Town Attorney to be present for the discussion and vote, as he had several questions about the document.

Council agreed to defer the item until the next meeting.

Mayor Porta gave Ms. Jovanovich an opportunity to introduce herself. Ms. Jovanovich said she was happy to be back and that she would be reaching out to meet with councilmembers individually.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Katy Nicholson", written over a horizontal line.

Katy Nicholson
Town Clerk