



OCCOQUAN TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes

Town Hall – 314 Mill Street, Occoquan, VA 22125

Tuesday, February 16, 2021

7:00 p.m.

- Present:** Mayor Earnie Porta; Vice Mayor Jenn Loges (remotely); Councilmembers Krys Bienia, Cindy Fithian (remotely), Laurie Holloway, and Eliot Perkins
- Staff:** Kirstyn Jovanovich, Town Manager/Interim Town Clerk; Adam Linn, Chief of Police; Julie Little, Events and Community Development Director; Martin Crim, Town Attorney; Bruce Reese, Town Engineer (remotely)

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Porta called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Due to illness Vice Mayor Loges and Councilmember Fithian participated remotely from their homes in accordance with Town ordinances. The Town Events and Community Development Director and Town Engineer participated remotely.

2. SPECIAL PRESENTATION

a. Applicant Update on The Mill at Occoquan Project Parking.

Kevin Sills, President of Mid-Atlantic Real Estate Investments, Inc., asked to address the Town Council to provide an update on parking related to his proposed The Mill at Occoquan project. He announced that he has entered into purchase contracts for Rockledge and for property on Ellicott Street between Mill and Commerce Streets, each with a corresponding study period and closing expected within 60 days. On the latter property he intends to construct a by-right structure in accordance with the Town Code that will consist of approximately 3,000 square feet of retail space and a 156-car public parking facility. Upon questioning from the Town Council he indicated that he would construct the parking facility before the Mill at Occoquan project so that the workers on the latter would be able to park at the former. He indicated that he has no specific plans for Rockledge at this time, but plans to preserve it, noting that it would be fair to say that he purchased Rockledge to assist in his plans for the space on Ellicott Street with which it shares a boundary.

3. CONSENT AGENDA

a. February 2, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Perkins moved approval of the items on the Consent Agenda. Vice Mayor Loges seconded. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Striping Plan Exhibits Next Steps

The Council reviewed the latest iterations of street striping plans developed by staff and entered into a discussion on the potential advantages and disadvantages of converting Commerce Street between Union and Washington Streets back to two-way traffic. Ms. Jovanovich explained that she has contacted VDOT to see if they could provide an analysis of the likely impact on afternoon commuter traffic of such a change. Council members also discussed the potential

advantages and disadvantages of separating decisions about the striping plan from decisions about traffic direction on Commerce Street. At the conclusion of the discussion Council directed staff to continue to work with VDOT on evaluating the potential impact of converting a portion of Commerce Street to two-way traffic, tentatively agreeing that if such information was not available by the April meeting the Council would likely move forward with a striping plan that did not address two-way traffic on Commerce Street.

b. Timed Parking Program Implementation Staff Update

Ms. Jovanovich updated the Town Council on the implementation of the Town's free, timed-parking program, which is scheduled to go into effect March 1. She displayed examples of the informational signs and the informational card that is being distributed to businesses.

Councilmembers noted that the free, timed parking program is one component of a comprehensive three-part Town parking management initiative that is designed to alleviate the long-standing parking issues in the historic and business districts. The other two components are the construction of a public parking facility and partnering with private property owners to enable app-based paid parking in private lots not fully used. Whereas the free, timed parking component is intended to encourage more efficient use of existing parking, the other two components of the initiative focus on increasing parking inventory.

5. CLOSED SESSION

Councilmember Holloway moved that the Council convene in closed session to discuss as permitted by Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(3) a matter involving disposition of publicly held real property specifically involving the Visitors Center at 201 Mill Street because discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the Town's bargaining session, and as permitted by Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(8), consultation with legal counsel regarding a specific legal matter requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel, relating to the Mill at Occoquan special exception applications. Seconded by Councilmember Perkins. Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

The Council went into closed session at 8:14 p.m.

The Council came out of closed session at 9:20 p.m.

Councilmember Holloway moved to certify that, in the closed session just concluded, nothing was discussed except the matter or matters (1) specifically identified in the motion to convene in closed session and (2) lawfully permitted to be discussed in a closed session under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act as cited in that motion. Seconded by Councilmember Bienia.

Ayes: Vice Mayor Loges, Councilmember Bienia, Councilmember Fithian, Councilmember Holloway and Councilmember Perkins, by roll call vote.

Nays: None.

6. MAYOR REQUEST FOR GUIDANCE

Mayor Porta reported to the Town Council that the Virginia House of Delegates had passed a State Senate bill that moves all municipal elections to November. Council agreed to discuss options if the Governor signs the bill into law.

Mayor Porta also suggested that although live-streaming Town Council meetings may not be practical given staffing and cost considerations, with the recently-installed audiovisual equipment it might be practical to post video of Town Council meetings on the Town web site in the days following a meeting. Mayor Porta noted as well that it may be beneficial in that context to establish a standard of conduct for remote participation. After discussion the Town Council expressed support for the Mayor directing staff to look into the issue further.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.



Kirstyn Jovanovich, Interim Town Clerk