

Galax City Council
Minutes
October 16, 2017

Galax City Council convened in regular session in City Council Chambers on October 16, 2017 at 7:30 pm.

At 7:30 p.m. Mayor Mitchell called the meeting to order with the following Council persons present and they are as listed: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Mayor Mitchell prayed the opening prayer and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilwoman Plichta made the motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on September 11, 2017. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Mayor Mitchell announced this was the date set for a public information session to present ideas and receive comments on possible future VDOT projects. He said Staff was currently working on possible project applications for VDOT grant funded projects. Keith Barker explained that VDOT had changed their funding formula and applications to a 2-year cycle. This year we would apply for Transportation Alternatives (TA), Highway Safety Improvement Projects (HSIP), and Revenue Sharing. He said within each of these project categories were the projects we had done in the past including SRTS, Enhancement Projects, etc. As part of the new requirements, projects must be specifically called out in a capital improvement project for the locality and grant applications must be submitted by November 1. Mr. Barker said the City had prepared a capital improvement draft plan for consideration which included new projects which he would describe, and current projects under funding within the next few years. The projects which applications were being developed for included:

- McArthur Street Sidewalk (Safe Routes to Schools) - (TA) – This would include sidewalk from Swanson St. to Painter Street and from Painter Street to W. Stuart Drive with improvements along W. Stuart Drive in front of the Library. The original thought had been to replace the sidewalk along W. Stuart Drive, however the initial budget review indicated that the typical amount awarded would not be sufficient for that scale of a project. These projects typically require a 20% match and would be for FY19 and FY20. The initial cost estimates were for a total of \$543,000 in FY19 and FY20.
- Downtown Main Street Pedestrian Improvements, (HSIP) – Mr. Barker explained that while we could only ask for a single project, we envision this as a series of projects (3 or more) that would increase sidewalk width, provide additional parking, and remove extra turn lanes in the downtown area. Renderings were shown to Council and visitors. These changes would assist in providing additional parking downtown, help in marketing some vacant properties, and provide an opportunity to include more of S. Main Street in some of our festival events. The initial cost estimate for all three projects would be \$908,400, however Council would need to prioritize the order of projects for submittal. Mr. Barker said these funds were typically 100% grant at this time but may be limited to between \$300,000 - \$400,000 in an application. Mr. Barker described the three sections under consideration that were all on Main Street:

- Oldtown to Calhoun - \$ 364,800
- Washington to Center - \$ 390,200
- Webster to Washington - \$ 153,300
- Bottom Area Phase III, Revenue Sharing – Mr. Barker described this application would be a series of revenue sharing projects for stormwater and roadwork tied to the proposed Bottom Area Phase III. These grants would be a 1:1 match and the match funding will come from DHCD funds, MRPDC grants (engineering and construction), and some of our paving funds. We anticipate projects in FY19 and FY20.

After a discussion among Council and Keith Barker, Mayor Mitchell welcomed any public comments. Barbara Ogle was a citizen who spoke and was concerned regarding Parkwood Drive where there had been flooding issues in the past. She questioned the type of work that may be done in the area with Safe Routes to School that may impact the residential parking. She also represented Randy & Dena Key who own The Primitive Peddler at 201 S. Main Street. The Keys were not present for the meeting. She said Mr. & Mrs. Key were concerned about the proposed renovations to the area of South Main Street area (Oldtown to Calhoun) where their shop was located. They were against plans for renovations which would possibly keep them from parking in front of their business. Ms. Ogle said the Keys have to park their van in front because of loading and unloading furniture and were against the project design preventing them from being able to do so. Ms. Ogle implored Council to reconsider the renovation project on the section of Main Street from (Oldtown to Calhoun). Keith Barker reminded Ms. Ogle that Council agreed a while to create several parking spaces across from The Primitive Peddler which could be used for additional store parking or serve as a loading zone if needed. Mr. Barker said that before designs would be final on any of the Main Street renovations, there would be input from the store owners from downtown. There were others present who were concerned and asked questions about a possible renovation for this section of Main Street. They said the stores in this area of Main Street felt left out when there were festivals because most of the activity was focused on North Main.

With no further comments, Mayor Mitchell asked for a motion to adopt the resolution for Transportation Alternatives, McArthur Street Projects. Councilman Davis made the motion, and Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Mayor Mitchell asked Council to prioritize the Downtown Main Street Pedestrian Improvements applications which would permit the submittal of the applications and authorize the City Manager to sign any necessary paperwork. Councilman Helmick Made the motion to prioritize in the following order: 1st – Washington to Center, 2nd – Webster to Washington, and 3rd – Oldtown to Calhoun. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Mayor Mitchell asked Council for a motion to adopt the Bottom Area Revenue Sharing Resolution which would permit the submittal of the applications and authorize the City Manager to sign any necessary paperwork. Councilwoman Crouse made the motion, Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Keith Barker was pleased to announce that the City of Galax was one of the Governor's selected DHCD Community Development Block Grant awards. He informed Council that our project had

been awarded \$800,000 and once we met certain thresholds, we would be awarded the additional \$600,000 for a total award of \$1,400,000. Mr. Barker said he wanted to thank the Bottom Area Team Members for their contribution and work on the application. They included:

<i>Community Planning Partners</i>	<i>Judy Taylor-Gallimore, Dir. Of Finance</i>
<i>Brenda Marrah, Grants Administrator</i>	<i>Edwin Ward, City Engineer</i>
<i>Terry Atwell, Building Official/Rehab Spec.</i>	<i>Joey Davis, Inspector</i>
<i>Charles Joyce, Public Works Director</i>	<i>Mike Woodel, Asst. Public Works Director</i>
<i>Chief Rick Clark, Galax PD</i>	<i>Officer Silverio Gonzales, Galax PD</i>
<i>Susan Clark, Department of Social Services</i>	<i>Councilwoman Margo Crouse</i>
<i>The Lane Group</i>	

Keith Barker gave an update on a draft policy concerning how to abandon an alley, along with the application form. Mr. Barker said both had been reviewed by our attorney and were sufficient and in compliance with the Code of Virginia. Also included were a series of maps for Council to see showing possible alleys that could be considered. He explained that while this was not all encompassing, it would provide a beginning map for alleys that could be considered. He said Staff would continue to work on the mapping. Councilman Helmick made a motion for this meeting to be the "first reading" of the policy and defer the issue until the November meeting. Councilman Garner seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Keith Barker updated Council on parking ordinance revisions which was held over from the last meeting. He reviewed a draft ordinance with Council that would consider revisions to our current parking ordinance. He explained the ordinance as it was currently written was vague in regards to penalties and how to appeal a ticket, but puts the authority to make changes on the City Manager or his staff. The draft ordinance as presented would still have the City Manager as the authority to make changes, but only after a resolution of support from City Council. It also would call out how to appeal a ticket and allows fines to be increased from the current \$5 per ticket to an amount approved by resolution from Council. We have been considering how to address issues such as the slight moving of cars after tires are marked, long term parking in front of businesses, customer and visitor parking, etc. Mr. Barker presented a preliminary map for consideration that showed how we could revise parking downtown. The map showed areas where we would ask that vehicles be moved off of the block once every 4 hours and other areas that were all day parking. He said this was not a requirement but simple an exercise to show where we tend to see some of the more prevalent issues. Other items that we could be considered included: parking in fire lanes, festival parking (call out times for movement or increased fines), snow routes, etc. Mr. Barker explained if Council would like to proceed with consideration for adoption of the ordinance, a public hearing would need to be conducted in November or December. Councilman Helmick made the motion to proceed with the consideration for adoption by holding a public hearing. Councilwoman seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Keith Barker gave an update for a proposed recycling convenience station. Mr. Barker said that an internal cost estimate had been prepared for the potential recycling convenience station. The costs were to be believed at approximately \$ 9,000 - 10,000 to construct a concrete slab, install fencing, install signage and provide camera coverage. The monthly fee would be \$75 for the dumpster rental. He explained we had applied for a grant through the state for a new recycling

program that may cover a portion of the costs. He said long term we may see some slight reduction in tipping fees at the landfill, however that amount was unknown at this time. In meeting with staff, he said that an area close to the rear gate at Felts Park would work from a size standpoint and provide satisfactory space for a car to pull off and use the station. Another site that had been considered would be beside the Galax Grayson Carroll Animal Shelter in a lot where asphalt millings were stored. He said ideal locations for the proposed plan were limited. Mr. Barker said if Council was satisfied with the costs, we would begin work on the area soon depending on fall activities such as mowing and leaf pickup. He said he would work to shift funds in the budget to cover the construction costs. Councilman Helmick asked Mr. Barker how the proposed recycling system would differ from the private recycling business in Galax (V & M Recycling). Mr. Barker said this business accepts recyclables from the public and was set up to accept a larger variety of recyclable & unsorted materials. Mr. Barker said there had been a few calls from citizens requesting a more convenient drop off location. He cautioned Council that the City doesn't want the proposed site to get "trashed up" as the Recreation Department is considered one of Galax's "jewels." He said if it did become a problem, we would have to look at discontinuing or relocating. Mayor Mitchell asked who would pick up the recyclables. Mr. Barker explained that Grayson County Public Works had agreed to taking care of the pickup of the recyclables and may reach out to V& M as well. Mr. Barker stated that if the recycling idea didn't work out, then the cement slab could possibly be utilized to place a storage building on. Councilwoman Plichta said she didn't want the site to be at the Recreation Department she would rather an alternate site be used. She said didn't see the need for the expense of creating the recycling location downtown when there was currently a business that offers the service in Galax. Mr. Barker said that more information about the recycling project would be brought to the next meeting if Council chose to move forward. Councilwoman Crouse made the motion to continue the recycling topic to the next meeting. Councilman Helmick seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Keith Barker informed Council that the City of Galax had been awarded a \$25,000 grant and \$21,000 loan for a quick response vehicle for the Galax Fire Department. He explained we had applied for this grant in late 2014 but were not awarded funds in 2015 or again in 2016 when awards were announced. Mr. Barker said the GFD used other grant funds to purchase the vehicle a few months ago, however USDA had indicated that they would allow us to reimburse ourselves and we could pay the loan off early using the loan funds they awarded us. City Council was asked to adopt the following resolutions and documents:

- Loan Resolution – Would authorize the borrowing of the \$21,000 loan in order to obtain the \$25,000 grant.
- Resolution of the Governing Body of the City of Galax – Would allow the City Manager or other designee (Mayor) to sign all grant and loan closing documents and paperwork.
- Code of Conduct – A statement which would prohibit the potential conflict of interest.

Mr. Barker stated if Council was willing to adopt these resolutions and documents, we could proceed to submit the procurement documents to USDA for approval. He said once we closed on the loan and grant, we could reimburse the grant fund line item used for the purchase of the vehicle earlier this calendar year. The loan proceeds would be used to make between 2-4 loan payments and then the remaining loan funds would be repaid to close out the loan. Councilman Garner made the motion to accept the loan and grant and approve the resolutions and code of conduct statement. Councilwoman Plichta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Keith Barker explained that City staff had been reviewing the Zoning Ordinance for a few months and had a number of reoccurring problem items that may need addressing in the ordinance. The items of concern included fencing/shrubs near street corners, signage, accessory buildings, home occupations, Airbnb, etc. A document with some of the sections was given to Council for review. Mr. Barker said with Council's consensus, we would like to ask the Planning Commission to begin a review of the Zoning Ordinance with the idea of addressing some of these issues. He explained the Planning Commission must make the first recommendations and conduct a public hearing based on their role in administering the ordinance. Final approval would then reside with City Council. Councilman Garner made the motion to take the problem items to the Planning Commission for review and recommendations including a possible public hearing. Vice Mayor Greene seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

Mayor Mitchell made an announcement regarding the Carroll-Galax-Grayson Regional Landfill's hazardous household waste event scheduled for October 28. Keith Barker explained the event would be held at the regional landfill in Hillsville from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The Carroll-Galax-Grayson Solid Waste Authority (CGGSWA) sponsors the event for collection of household hazardous waste and paper shredding services. Items from Galax, Carroll, and Grayson households only could be dropped off – at no cost, which would then be sorted by staff and the contracted service company. Costs for the contracted services and disposal will be paid by CGGSWA.

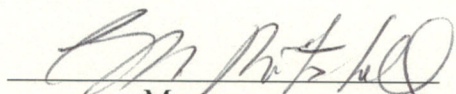
With no further public comments, Mayor Mitchell thanked all visitors who attended the meeting and accepted a motion made by Councilman Garner at 9:21 p.m. to enter into closed session under the following Code of Virginia:

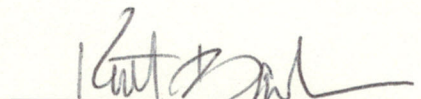
Employment - § 2.2-3711.A.1 of the Code of Virginia - Discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment; assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body.

Councilwoman Plichta seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved by the following votes: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

At 9:45 p.m. Council reconvened in open session. Mayor Mitchell certified that no items other than those allowed under the cited Virginia code section were discussed and no action was taken, with the following affirmation: Mayor Mitchell, Vice Mayor Greene, Councilman Garner, Councilwoman Crouse, Councilwoman Plichta, Councilman Davis, and Councilman Helmick.

ADJOURNMENT at 9:45 p.m.


Mayor


Clerk

