

GALAX CITY COUNCIL
MINUTES
January 10, 2005

The Galax City Council convened in the courtroom of the WHS Public Safety Building at 7:30pm on January 10, 2005. The meeting was called to order by the mayor with all councilpersons being present and they are as listed: Robert Lazo, Robert Kirby, Sharon Plichta, C. M. Mitchell, Willie Greene, George Valdez and Helen Kyle.

Councilman Greene prayed the opening prayer, which was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Councilwoman Plichta motioned to accept the minutes of the last meeting as written and to dispense with the reading of said minutes. Councilman Greene offered a second to the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Joan Isom from the American Red Cross was present at tonight's meeting to give an update on the donations to the Tsunami relief efforts. She informed Council that over \$10,000.00 of unsolicited donations has been received by the local Red Cross Chapter. She also advised that 100% of the money given goes directly to the relief effort. She complimented area citizens for being so generous with their donations.

Zack Kyle, zoning administrator, reported that the Planning Commission recommends that a Conditional Use permit be given to the Mission Love Church. This permit would allow the construction of an outbuilding and bring the remainder of the church property into compliance with the zoning ordinance. Council took no action so the permit was approved and the church can go forward with its project.

Following an overview of a VML Transportation Resolution for transportation funding problems, Councilman Greene motioned to adopt said resolution. The motion was seconded by Councilman Kirby and unanimously approved.

The property owners at 134 Kenbrook Drive were present at tonight's meeting to discuss noncompliance with an ordinance related to the number of sheep that can be kept on the property. The owners of the property also own and operate Healing Springs Animal Hospital. Dr. Jenkins, co-owner, addressed Council with information related to sheep farming and boarding Polo ponies.

Mayor Mitchell stated that the owners had requested that the property be rezoned, and it was in September 2004, to allow the veterinary hospital to treat and board large animals for a short period of time but that at no time has sheep farming been discussed.

Mr. Brazzell further discussed the operation of sheep farming and boarding other animals.

Attorney Alan Caudell addressed Council with certain issues that he has pertaining to the Zoning Ordinance. He stated that the issue of police powers could not be in the same status as the zoning requirements.

Mayor Mitchell and City Manager Campbell explained the current ordinance and stated that they were more than willing to work with the property owners and that the matter would be taken under advisement.

Councilman Greene acknowledged that Dr. Jenkins and Mr. Brazzell had done a nice presentation and that it is not the intention of Council to put anybody out of business.

Dr. Cassell addressed the issue and stated that time is crucial because the breeding cycle of the animals begin as early as February but certainly by the end of March.

A large animal owner questioned if more than ten sick or injured animals were being cared for at the hospital would it be possible to treat another sick or injured animal if there were already ten on the property.

Hilda Bower stated that she would like to see the farm preserved and that it adds aesthetic beauty to the entrance of the City as well as maintaining the character of the community.

City Manager Campbell again stated that he will work with Dr. Cassell and Dr. Jenkins.

Mr. Brazzell questioned the specified number of animals per acre. Mr. Campbell again explained the purpose of the Ordinance.

Mayor Mitchell stated that a work group would take the information given and address the issues brought out in this meeting.

Councilman Lazo asked if the City Attorney could look at the issue and come up with a solution.

Linda Laws stated that the farm could not be treated as a residential street.

William Roberts stated that he hoped an agreement could be made so that the business could grow.

Buddy Hill advised that he had enjoyed tonight's discussion and hoped Council would make every effort to come to an agreement in support of the business.

Councilman Greene stated that he wanted the farm to continue to operate and that Council will work on getting the issues settled.

A Fox Run resident asked that Council move in a timely manner in arriving at a mutually agreed solution.

Lloyd Moore who moved here to retire would like to see the business grow and board animals.

Southwest Virginia Outfitters advised that he gets business from the vets' offices. If they are not allowed to continue to operate their business then he would also lose business and probably be forced to relocate.

Mayor Mitchell thanked the group for their time and effort and stated that the work group would address the specific problems as outlined at tonight's meeting.

City Manager Campbell discussed a TEA21 Grant Contract. He advised that this would finish up the grant and the New River Trail Extension project approved by VDOT and that there would be no local monies involved. Councilwoman Plichta motioned to accept the contract as written. Councilman Kirby seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Susie Garner's term on the school board expires in June, 2005. City Manager Campbell was authorized to advertise for applicants who are interested in being appointed to this board.

Chief Clark presented a detailed annual report and recognized all of the police officers for having done an outstanding job this past year. He also recognized those who had demonstrated exceptional valor and professionalism.

Nikki Shank, Director of Finance, stated that the present payroll schedule has some problems and that the schedule needs adjusting. She outlined some options that are available to correct the problems. A discussion ensued.

Edwin Ward, city engineer, discussed the city's aging water and wastewater system and also the EPA Consent Decree.

Justin Barnard, CMOM Technician, discussed the CMOM program. He deals with the sanitary sewer collection systems and works to reduce the number of overflows. One of the main projects will be line replacement on Swanson Street to help alleviate the flooding problems in that area. He also discussed the assets of the GIS program.

Mr. Ward discussed the necessary replacement of the worn belt press at the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He also advised that it is time to have the water reservoirs inspected, to evaluate the conditions of each tank and to address any necessary renovations.

City Engineer Ward discussed the Bedsaul Hollow Landfill Post-Closure.

City Manager Campbell discussed the prospects of a CDBG Application. These monies would be used towards the infrastructure and property donation for an assisted living facility, which would be advantageous to the health care industry.

Mayor Mitchell and City Manager Campbell who both serve on the Regional Industrial Facilities Authority discussed the critical need of having a site available for economic development.

City Manager Campbell advised that the Crossroads Institute and Southwest Regional Enterprise Center project would be completed by the end of February and that the board is in the process of hiring an executive director. The completed project is the result of \$5.7 million dollars of grants and contributions.

Mayor Mitchell stated that this project is the single best hope for economic diversity to our area and he reiterated the challenge of attracting new business.

With no further business to come before Council, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 10:15pm.

Dennis J. Campbell
Clerk

Mayor Mitchell
Mayor