

September 4, 2014

Regular Meeting

Mayor Porter called the regular meeting of the Denton Town Council to order at 7:05 PM on this date leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor Porter asked that the record reflect that all Council members were present.

Councilwoman Lightner made a motion to approve the minutes of the August 7, 2014 regular meeting as presented, seconded by Councilman Branson. The motion passing with 4 voting yes -Mayor Porter abstained from voting due to having been absent for the August meeting.

Public Hearing

Ordinance #661 – Election Code Amendment

Mayor Porter opened a public hearing at 7:07 PM to receive public comments on Ordinance #661 – An Ordinance of the Town of Denton to amend the provisions contained in Chapter 10 of the Denton Town Code with respect to Elections.

Mayor Porter asked for comments from the State: there were none

Mayor Porter asked for comments from the County: there were none

Mayor Porter asked for comments from the Council: there were none

Mayor Porter asked for comments from the Public –there were none

With no further comments, Mayor Porter closed this public hearing at 7:08 PM.

Ordinance #662 – Traffic Code Amendment

Mayor Porter opened a public hearing at 7:08 PM to receive public comments on Ordinance #662 – An Ordinance of the Town of Denton to amend the provisions contained in Chapter 120 of the Denton Town Code with respect to Vehicles and Traffic.

Mayor Porter asked for comments from the State: there were none

Mayor Porter asked for comments from the County: there were none

Mayor Porter asked for comments from the Council: there were none

Mayor Porter asked for comments from the Public –there were none

With no further comments, Mayor Porter closed this public hearing at 7:09 PM.

Petitions, Remonstrance's and Communication

Sharon Wright – Speeding Vehicle Letter

Ms. Sharon Wright, a Market St. resident, had requested to address the Council regarding issues of speeding in her neighborhood.

Ms. Wright was not in attendance.

Mayor Porter asked the Police Dept. to make contact with Ms. Wright to inquire about the issues.

Library Appreciation Letter

Councilwoman McNinch shared an email received from Mrs. Debby Bennett, the Executive Director of the Caroline County Library, thanking the Denton Police Dept. for all their professional and supportive assistance to the Library.

FEMA Maps

The Town has received the updated FEMA maps for the Town. Councilman Clendaniel asked staff to place the maps on the website. Staff will put a link on the website.

Ordinances and Resolutions

Ordinance #661 – Election Code Amendment

An Ordinance of the Town of Denton to amend the provisions contained in Chapter 10 of the Denton Town Code with respect to Elections.

Councilwoman McNinch made a motion to discuss Ordinance #661, seconded by Councilman Branson.

Discussion was held pertaining to the amendments to absentee ballot request procedures and an inquiry about early voting.

Mr. Drummond, Town Attorney, provided guidance on the pending changes which only apply to the Town Code. The current Town Charter does not include a provision to allow for early voting. The Council asked to have the Town Charter explored for possible updates pertaining to early voting.

With no further discussion, there was no action taken on the motion on the floor. Motion died.

Councilwoman Lightner made a motion to adopt Ordinance #661, seconded by Councilman Branson. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinance #662 – Traffic Code Amendment

An Ordinance of the Town of Denton to amend the provisions contained in Chapter 120 of the Denton Town Code with respect to Vehicles and Traffic.

Councilman Clendaniel made a motion to adopt Ordinance #662, seconded by Councilwoman McNinch.

Discussion was held regarding the effect of the amendments, more specifically on right-of-ways.

Mr. Drummond clarified that the amendments of this Ordinance only pertains to obstructions of vehicle and traffic obstacles. Privately owned structures on-land are addressed in other areas of the code.

With no further discussion, Mayor Porter called for a vote on the motion to adopt Ordinance #662. The motion passed unanimously.

Reports of Officers, Board and Committees

None

Unfinished Business

Agenda #1- Town Hall Renovations – HVAC System

Mr. Mulrine, Town Administrator, provided an update on the Town Hall HVAC Systems. He has been working with the Maryland Energy Grant Program and presented proposals for 2 HVAC Systems. The MD Energy Grant will cover \$12,315 for replacing the worst unit in the building. He recommended using funds left over from the construction project to install a Mitsubishi Unit in the large conference room, with a cost of \$8,678. He added that the bids received were compared to those previously received for the Culinary School. Mr. Mulrine and Mr. Batchelor reviewed the bids and recommended awarding to Shorely Comfortable Air, LLC.

Councilwoman Lightner made a motion to approve as presented by the Town Administrator, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #2 – Town Hall Renovations – Sound System

Mr. Mulrine presented proposals and answered questions for purchasing and installing two digital sound systems in the New Town Hall, one for each conference room. Mr. Mulrine asked for approval to award to Absolute Security.

Councilwoman Lightner made a motion to approve the sound system as presented, seconded by Councilwoman McNinch, passing 4-1, with Councilman Clendaniel voting against.

Councilwoman McNinch mentioned that she had a Resident complain to her about having bullet proof glass and bullet proof walls in the new building and asked Mr. Mulrine to explain for the record.

Mr. Mulrine explained that as part CALEA standards and Homeland Security bullet proofing is recommended to protect the safety and security of employees in government buildings. Mr. Mulrine mentioned that they did not do the full building, however, the lobby also has security cameras. He reaffirmed that it's all about the safety and security of the staff.

New Business

Agenda #1 - Caroline County Economic Development Corporation Strategic Plan

Ms. Angela Visintainer, Director of CCEDC, and her Assistant, Mrs. Rachel Barry came before the Town Council to present a Strategic Plan that would benefit the Town of Denton. Using economic analysis research provided by the Sage Policy Group, the CCEDE established a group of Business Leaders to review the report, plan and work on implementing a Strategic Plan.

Ms. Visintainer provided highlights of the analysis report and gave a summary of the plan draft. Sharing the essential elements of the plan which include the advantages of the creation of an enterprise zone within the Town of Denton; the establishment of an indoor/outdoor multi-use sports facility; a review and revision of the Denton Industrial Park covenants and a tax incentive for downtown development. Ms. Visintainer asked for the Council's support in moving forward.

Councilman Clendaniel made a motion to send a letter of support and authorize the Mayor to sign it. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman McNinch, passing unanimously.

Ms. Visintainer mentioned that she will come back next month to present the CCEDC Annual Report.

Agenda #2 – Tree Committee

Mr. Mulrine mentioned that a number of trees in Town are diseased, dying and or all already dead. Mr. JOK Walsh has asked for the Town to consider reestablishing a Tree Committee to track the failing trees and make recommendations for replacement trees, and offered to serve on the committee.

Mr. Mulrine recommended appointing Mike Copper, of Denton Public Works, Scott Getchell, the former Director of Public Works, to join Mr. Walsh on the committee.

Councilwoman Lightner made a motion to reactivate the Towns Tree Committee and to appoint Mr. Walsh, Mike Copper and Scott Getchell. The motion was seconded by Councilman Clendaniel, passing unanimously.

Agenda #3 – Industrial Park Pump Station Upgrade

Mr. Mulrine provided information on the need to upgrade the Industrial Park Pump Station, seeking approval to move forward with the project, as was included in the budget. The proposals provided include the Denton Public Works staff facilitating the upgrade, with the assistance of Nickle Electric. The cost of the new control panel, including programming, plant HMI setup, as well as alarm reconfiguration is \$50,913.

The new generator, with auto transfer switch, proposal is \$32,337. The cost for Nickle Electric to perform all installations and local wiring of control panel and generator is \$7,946.

Councilwoman McNinch made a motion to approve the upgrade of the Industrial Park Pump Station as presented, seconded by Councilman Clendaniel, passing unanimously.

Agenda #4 – Health Benefits Open Enrollment

The State of Maryland Health Benefits Open Enrollment for Town Employees and Council Members begins October 15, 2014 for the Plan Year January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015.

Informational only, no action was taken.

Agenda #5 – Homestead Tax Credit Cap

This item was placed on the agenda for discussion to see if the Council wanted to make any changes to the Homestead Tax Credit Percentage for July 1, 2015. The Homestead Tax Credit is available to all owner occupied residential properties in which the real estate tax on a qualifying property cannot increase by more than 5% each year, no matter how much the assessment changes. The tax credit cap has remained the same since July 1, 2008 when the Council decreased the percentage from 10% to 5%.

Councilman Clendaniel made a motion to keep the Homestead Tax Credit Cap the same, seconded by Councilwoman Lightner, passing unanimously.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Ellery Adams, of the Calvary Baptist Church, took a few minutes to address the Council. Mr. Adams said that in addressing the Church's concerns about fees associated with the expansion, Town staff met with him and discussed the Town's limitations. Staff was able to offer suggestions for changes to the project plans that will prove helpful by reducing cost. Mr. Adams thanked Don Mulrine and Tom Batchelor for working with him and temporarily issuing a building permit.

Mr. Mulrine mentioned that the next Caroline County Association of Municipalities Dinner Meeting is being hosted by the Caroline County Commissioners. It is scheduled for September 22, 2014, to be held at the Chesapeake Culinary School.

Councilman Branson took a moment to personally thank Don and Tom for their help in the Calvary Baptist Church situation.

Councilwoman Lightner expressed appreciation for staff taking customer service to the high rise with gold standards.

Mayor Porter asked what the status was on the research on chickens.

Mr. Batchelor has not had time to work on it yet.

Mr. Mulrine announced that the Police Dept. new energy hot water heater has been installed and that the elevator for the New Town Hall is under construction.

With no further discussion, Councilwoman Lightner made a motion to close the meeting at 8:35 PM, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Monteith,
Clerk - Treasurer