

November 4, 2021

Regular Meeting

Mayor McNinch called the Regular Meeting of the Denton Town Council to order at 7:00 PM on this date, leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor McNinch thanked everyone for coming.

Mayor McNinch asked that the record reflect that Councilman Johnson was attending virtually and that all other Councilmembers were present in person.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2021 Regular Meeting and the October 25, 2021 Working Session as presented; seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Public Hearing

No Public Hearings were held.

Petitions, Remonstrance's, and Communication

Proclamation – Municipal Government Works Month

Mayor McNinch read a Proclamation, proclaiming November as Municipal Government Works Month in the State of Maryland.

Proclamation – Family Court Awareness Month

Mayor McNinch read a Proclamation, proclaiming November as Family Court Awareness Month.

Proclamation – National Homeless Youth Awareness Month

Mayor McNinch read a Proclamation, proclaiming November as National Homeless Youth Awareness Month.

Councilwoman Wilson serves on the His Hope Ministries Board along with Karen Monteith. She provided some additional comments pertaining to the services provided by our local Shelter.

Citation – Audrey Clemens

Mayor McNinch issued a Town Council Citation to thank Mrs. Audrey Clemens for her hard work and dedication to the Downtown Denton Main Street Program serving as the DDMS Manager since 2018.

Citation – Harry and Jeri Wyre – Harry's on the Green

Mayor McNinch presented Mr. Harry Wyre with a Town Council Citation thanking Harry and Jeri, owners of Harry's on the Green Restaurant for their contributions to the community for the past 12 years, wishing them the best on their retirement.

Citation - Aliah Raga

Mayor McNinch presented a Town Council Citations recognizing Ms. Aliah Raga for her hard work and dedication that earned her a spot on the USA Gymnastics Senior National Team. Aliah joined the meeting virtually while her Mom accepted the Citation in person on her behalf.

Guest

Mayor McNinch introduced Mr. Grayson Middleton, who was in the audience and invited him to speak.

Mr. Middleton shared that he is with the Governor's Office and serves as the Eastern Shore Outreach Coordinator.

Ordinances and Resolutions

Ordinance 723 - Water Meter Rate Increase

An Ordinance proposing to increase the fees charged for Water Meter Replacements to help offset the cost for purchasing meters from the supplier.

Councilman Lister made a motion to introduce Ordinance #723, seconded by Councilman Branson.

With the steady rise in cost associated with purchasing new water meters, discussion was held pertaining to the need to raise the quarterly meter replacement fee and the fee for water meters for new homes to offset the cost for purchasing new meters. If adopted the Ordinance will raise the quarterly water meter replacement rate for properties connected with a one inch (1”) or less in size meter from \$4.00 to \$10.00 per quarter, and to increase the water meter fees for new connections of one inch (1”) or less from \$350 to \$600. The rate changes would take affect with the January 2022 billing cycle.

Councilman Lister further explained that the Town is losing on the cost for meter replacement and having to use water funds to cover the cost of the meters puts other infrastructure upgrades on hold. He shared that the Town did not address or increase the meter rates when they last raised the usage fees.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch called for a vote on the motion to introduce Ordinance #723.

The motion passed 4-1, with Councilman Johnson voting no.

Ordinance #724 – 2021 Building Code

An Ordinance amending the Town of Denton’s Building Code, Residential Code, and Mechanical Code contained in Chapter 38 of the Denton Town Code with respect to adopting the 2021 Edition of the International Codes.

Councilman Lister made a motion to introduce Ordinance #724, seconded by Councilman Branson.

In discussion, Councilman Lister stated that the Town is adopting the International Codes, with some changes, primarily to where the Town Code currently exceeds the State of Maryland Life Safety Code. The Town is proposing to make some amendments that will still exceed the State Code but will allow for consideration in residential and small commercial rehabilitation projects.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch called for a vote on the motion to introduce Ordinance #724.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Chris Drummond, Town Attorney, noted he sees a few items that may need to be worded a little different and some typos. He will work with Mr. Renshaw to fix before the next meeting.

Ordinance #725 – 2021 Property Maintenance Code

An Ordinance amending the Town of Denton’s Property Maintenance Code contained in Chapter 94 of the Denton Town Code.

Councilman Lister made a motion to introduce Ordinance #725, seconded by Councilman Johnson.

Mr. David Renshaw, Senior Codes Enforcement Officer, provided an overview of the code updates.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch called for a vote on the motion to introduce Ordinance #725.

The motion passed unanimously.

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees

Councilman Johnson gave an update on the recent traffic code improvements in the Sandy Meadows and Fairfield Court neighborhoods.

Mr. Don Mulrine, Town Administrator, shared that the Maryland Board of Public Works has awarded the Town of Denton funds to be used for park improvements.

Mr. Mulrine announced that Ms. Wanda Molock has shared that they will host the 10th Martin Luther King March in Denton in January.

Mayor McNinch is working with Mr. Angel Perez of the YMCA on the Mayors with Mentors Program, and they will be hosting an event at the Visitor Center to meet with kids.

Councilman Lister mentioned that the Caroline County Chamber of Commerce “Mactoberfest” event was awesome.

Unfinished Business

Agenda #1- CCCA Lease – 6 N. 4th Street

Mr. Mulrine provided an overview of the Caroline County Council of Arts request to lease a portion of the 6 N. 4th Street property for additional parking for the Arts Council. As previously discussed at the last meeting, the Town Attorney drafted and provided a lease for consideration.

Councilman Lister made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the lease with Caroline County Council of Arts for 6 N. 4th St., seconded by Councilman Branson. The motion passed with 4 votes. Councilwoman Wilson serves on the CCCA Board and abstained from voting.

New Business

Agenda #1 – Safehouse Security System – Visitor Center

Mr. Mulrine presented a proposal to update the security system at the Visitor Center to match what is currently in use at the Town Office. Estimates for both the updated system and upgraded cameras is included for review.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve the security system update with SafeHouse as presented, seconded by Councilman Johnson. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda #2 – Commerce Road Development

Discussion was held on the future of the development of the Commerce Road, aka the road to nowhere, that would run from the traffic light at Walmart through the JPA Venture, LLC Property and the Brodie Holdings, LLC Property exiting onto MD Route 404 in the Gay Street vicinity. JPA Venture is proposing to move forward.

Councilman Lister made a motion to authorize the Town Attorney to assist in having a right of way drafted for this project, seconded by Councilwoman Wilson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #3 - Tax Differential Letter

The annual Tax Differential Letter to the County was presented for consideration.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve for the Mayor to sign the Tax Differential Letter to the County Commissioners, seconded by Councilman Branson.

In discussion, Municipalities are required to submit a request annually to their County seeking to maintain or amend the Counties tax differential they may provide to municipal property owners. Recognizing that in the end, the County needs to balance their budget, however unfair and not beneficial to do so on the backs of Denton residents. Until there is a legislative change, the Town is at the mercy of the County Commissioners.

Agenda #4 - ARPA

Based on previous discussion, Mr. Mulrine presented a proposal, seeking approval to move forward with designating \$600,000 of the American Rescue Plan Act Funds to be used for Premium Pay, Audio Video/IT Infrastructure, Grit Machine, Biolac Blower, Pump repair and to hire a Grants Administration Consultant.

Councilman Lister made a motion to move forward with allocating \$600,000 for these items as presented, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Staff will continue to work on obtaining cost estimates on the additional infrastructure listed on the preliminary ARPA Budget List.

Agenda #5 - 2022 Town Council Meeting & Holiday Schedule

The 2022 Meeting Schedule and 2022 Holiday Schedule was presented for consideration.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to add Juneteenth as a Holiday, seconded by Councilman Lister, passing unanimously.

Councilman Branson stepped out of the room for a few minutes.

Discussion was held on whether to make any changes to the Election Day being a holiday when the Town election is uncontested and canceled.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to keep Election Day as a Holiday, seconded by Councilman Lister, passing with 4 yes votes. Councilman Branson was out of the room at the time this action was taken.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve the 2022 Denton Town Council Meeting Schedule, seconded by Councilwoman Wilson, passing with 4 votes. Councilman Branson returned to the room just as the vote was taken.

Audio/Video Estimates – Town Council Meeting Room

Discussion was held pertaining some quotes that have been received for upgrading the Town Council meeting video recording systems.

Councilman Johnson shared that he participated in one of the demonstrations and has some more questions before making a recommendation. Staff asked for more time to review multiple options and to set up a time for the Council to test the equipment. No decision was made at this time.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Mulrine and Mr. Phil Clark, Superintendent of Public Works, shared that the street sweeper was sent to have the brakes repaired and the cost ended up being \$7,860.66 and asked for approval to pay for the repair.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve \$7,860.66 for the brake repair, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Mr. Santos Mirabile asked the Council to consider extending the loose-leaf vacuuming service beyond December 17th, as not all leaves fall prior to the end of when the service is provided.

Mayor McNinch asked Staff to take a look to see if the date needs to be extended.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch adjourned the meeting at 8:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen L. Monteith,
Clerk - Treasurer