

December 7, 2020

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.

Access to the meeting was made available online using Microsoft Teams, in person public access was limited by request only.

Mayor McNinch thanked those joining the meeting in person and virtually and explained how to use the comments section online.

Mayor McNinch asked for the record to reflect that Councilman Lister was attending the meeting virtually, and that all other Council members were in attendance in person.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 5, 2020 Regular Meeting and the November 16, 2020 Working Session as presented; seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Public Hearing

none

Petitions, Remonstrance's, and Communication

Proclamation – Cindy Towers Retirement

Mayor McNinch read a Proclamation to recognize and congratulate Mrs. Cindy Towers who is retiring from the Caroline County Department of Emergency Services following 36 years of dedicated service.

Denton Home for the Holidays Decorating Contest

The Denton Town Council is hosting a home decorating contest. Councilman Johnson explained the contest rules, how to access nomination and voting forms online. Votes are due by December 22, 2020. The Council will present awards in January to the three winning homes.

Ordinances and Resolutions

None

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees

Mayor McNinch shared a Proclamation received from the Governor of the State of Maryland. The Mid Shore Veterans Association hosted an event to recognize Ms. Kathy Mackel and Mr. JOK Walsh for their assistance with the Veteran Banners posted around town. The Secretary of the Veteran's Affairs, Mr. Owens came to the event and issued the Governor's Proclamation. The Mayor encouraged everyone to visit the Museum of Rural Life to see the amazing Veteran's exhibits.

Mr. Don Mulrine, Town Administrator, announced an amendment to the agenda this evening, that the appointment of a Utility Commission Member has been added for consideration.

Councilman Johnson announced Mrs. Marie Freeman, has helped pull together the 1st Annual Child Loss Remembrance Service at Calvary Baptist Church on December 8th at 7:00PM. This memorial is for parents that have lost a child.

Mayor McNinch thanked Councilman Johnson and Councilman Lister for setting up the large tree downtown, that will soon have lights on it.

Councilman Johnson added that on December 17th, they invite the community to come and decorate the tree during the Third Thursday Event. The tree was donated by Sharon Dennis.

Mayor McNinch also thanked Paula Wright for adding all the greens downtown and for everyone helping to make the Town festive for the holidays.

Councilman Lister mentioned that for the Third Thursday event scheduled for Dec. 17th, that in addition to inviting the community to come decorate the tree, they will also have a Cram-the-Cruiser with food and can goods for the His Hope Ministries as well as collect Toys for Tots.

Mayor McNinch encouraged everyone to come participate in the Third Thursday Event and enjoy the live band.

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

Agenda #1 – 2021 Council Meeting Schedule

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve the 2021 Town Council Meeting Schedule, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #2 – 1105 Market St.- Sale of Property – Bid Award

1105 Market Street was previously deeded to the Town. The Town requested bids to sell the property. One bid of \$21,200 was received from James & Kathleen Brenton.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve the sale, seconded by Councilman Branson.

In discussion, Mr. Don Mulrine, Town Administrator, and Mr. Chris Drummond, the Town Attorney, provided additional information as to the condition of the dwelling which has been condemned, the contract of sale requirements for demolition of the structure, with settlement to occur before the end of the year.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch asked for a vote on the motion to approve the sale of the property to the Brenton's for \$21,200.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda #3 - Legal Review of Town Utility Code

The Denton Utility Commission would like to have a review of the Town's Water and Sewer Codes conducted to address some inconsistencies and update the standards. A proposal from AquaLaw was presented.

During discussion, Councilman Johnson questioned the quote being dated and asked to have a more recent proposal to review.

Mr. Mulrine shared that there is a more recent proposal available and that he would get that to the Council. Mr. Mulrine talked about the cost for the full project is greater than what has been budgeted for this fiscal year. They will have AquaLaw split the project into two phases, with phase one to not exceed the \$7,000 that has been budgeted.

Councilman Lister, currently serving on the Utility Commission as the liaison for the Council, provided additional information on the importance of having the code updated. He explained that Scott Getchell, Chairman of the Utility Commission, obtained the quote to update the Code to prioritize sections of the code to work on this year, not to exceed the \$7,000 budgeted. The remaining cost will be included in the next year's budget.

Councilman Johnson expressed concerns that the information provided is a little different and he would like to have more accurate up to date information.

As discussion continued, Councilman Lister said they could wait until next month to approve. Mr. Mulrine shared that he has an updated quote on his computer that he could go and get.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve \$7,000 for the Utility Commission for having the policies reviewed contingent upon them providing their priority of work and then the estimate not to exceed \$7,000 of work for this phase. Motion was seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #4 - KRM Mortgage Release

Mrs. Monteith presented a Release of Mortgage for a former Business Loan issued to KRM Development Corporation that was paid in full in 2001, seeking approval for the Mayor to sign the release.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve the Mayor to sign the Mortgage Release, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #5 - Personnel Manual Amendments

Mrs. Monteith advised the Council of a conflict between the Employee Personnel Manual and the Town's Short/Long Term Disability/Life Insurance Policy as it applies to Part-time employees and asked the Council for consideration for an amendment to correct policy and provide consistency. The cost to provide the additional benefits is \$50 per month.

Councilman Branson made a motion to discuss, seconded by Councilman Johnson.

Discussion was held regarding benefits.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to amend the policy for Life Insurance to include all employees, seconded by Councilman Branson.

Additional discussion was held to focus more on providing benefits for full-time employees, and to re-evaluate what benefits are being provided for part-time positions during the upcoming budget session.

With no further discussion the Mayor called for a vote on the motion to approve the amendment temporarily and to re-evaluate and discuss benefits for part-time positions next budget session.

The motion passed 4-1 with Councilman Lister opposed.

Agenda #6 - Downtown Denton Main Street - MOU Renewal

Mr. Mulrine shared that the current MOU with Downtown Denton Main Street is attached for review. It expires in February 2021. The Council is requested to review and discuss what changes, if any, they may want to make before the MOU automatically renews. Downtown Denton Main Street is not currently asking for any changes.

Mayor McNinch spoke of the value of the DDMS and the how great Mrs. Clemens is and asked to have the MOU renew at 2 years instead of having to review annually.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to amend Section 1 of the contract and offer beginning in February 2021 a two-year automatic renewal unless either party gives the other written notice, at least sixty days prior to the end of the term, essentially a four-year contract. The motion was seconded by Councilman Branson.

Further discussion, Councilman Lister asked what if the vision of the DDMS in the future changes.

The agreement includes other clauses that would allow for termination and/or amendments. Additional concerns were that there may not be enough funding being provided to continue to accomplish the goal for the Downtown to be successful. A review of the funding and ways to promote the downtown will be further discussed with the next budget cycle.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch asked for a vote on the motion to offer to amend the MOU.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda #7 - Visitor Center Rental Revisions

Revisions to the Visitor Center Rental Facility Use Agreement were discussed. Staff submitted a proposal recommending changes to the fee scale, for Non-profit Users, Private Parties and For-Profit use, looking for ways to reduce Staff time processing refunds, etc. The proposed changes also include COVID-19 restrictions.

Mayor McNinch requested to add another category and offer a reduced rate for Town residents. \$35 for Non-profits, \$50 for Town Residents and/or Town Businesses and \$75 for Non-residents, and to consider having a different rate for weekend use.

Councilman Johnson requested to have the details about COVID-19 restrictions changed to reference State and Local Laws will apply, rather than having to revisit each time COVID restrictions change.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to authorize Staff to amend the agreement as discussed, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #8 - Utility Commission Re-appointment

Councilman Branson made a motion to reappoint Mr. Adam Jones to serve another term on the Denton Utility Commission, seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

Miscellaneous

Mayor McNinch asked if any public comments had been received online and was advised that none were submitted.

Mayor reminded everyone that if they wish to attend a Town meeting in person to be sure to make an appointment through the Town Administrator.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch adjourned the meeting at 8:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen L. Monteith,
Clerk - Treasurer*