

February 28, 2022

**Working Session – 6:30 PM**

At 6:32 PM Mayor McNinch called the Working Session of the Denton Town Council to order on this date, leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag and thanked everyone for coming and joining online.

**In Attendance:**

Council: Mayor McNinch, Councilman Johnson and Councilwoman Wilson were in attendance in person. Councilman Branson attended part of the meeting virtually. Councilman Lister was absent.

Staff: Mr. Don Mulrine, Town Administrator, Chief George Bacorn, David Renshaw, Phil Clark, Mark Chandler, and Karen Monteith were present.

**Discussion was held on the following items:**

**YMCA – Southern State Property:**

Discussion was held on future use of the Southern States Property.

The Chesapeake YMCA and His Hope Ministries have both inquired and expressed interest in the property.

A meeting is scheduled for March 9 at 6:30 PM to seek public input on what the Community wants to see the property used for.

**Ordinance Review:**

Mr. Mulrine gave a brief synopsis of Ordinances #728 through #732, that will be coming before the Council for consideration at the March Meeting. The Ordinances cover amendments to the Town Code for Critical Areas, Erosion and Sediment Control, and Stormwater Utility and Management.

**Public Works RFP for Software:**

DPW shared the Request for Proposals that has been posted seeking bids to acquire a software to assist public works with the day-to-day planning, work orders, asset management, asset collection, fleet management and street level imagery.

Mr. Mulrine, Mr. Clark, and Mr. Chandler provided information and answered questions.

**Hotel Tax:**

Mr. Mulrine provide historical information regarding Hotel Tax and shared the Caroline County Commissioners recently questioned the tax and why it is not kept by the county.

Discussion was held and Councilman Johnson shared that the County is looking to combine Tourism and Economic Development together and are looking for funding opportunities.

Per State Law, all hotel tax collection is managed at the County level, to be paid to the municipalities for local tourism, the law allows the County to maintain a reasonable administration fee.

**Delmarva Power – Downtown Expansion**

Mr. Mulrine shared he is working with Delmarva Power to replace the ornamental light poles in the downtown area on Market from First St. to 5<sup>th</sup> Ave.

Discussion was held about the estimated replacement cost, benefits of having underground wires verses above ground, grant applications submitted seeking funding to help with the cost.

Mr. Mulrine provided information and updates on expanding fiber in the downtown, working with the Davis Group and Simple Fiber. The Utility Commission is exploring using ARPA Funding to expand the fiber.

**3<sup>rd</sup> St. Basketball Court:**

*Mr. Mulrine provided an update for putting a net on the basketball courts on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to extend above the fence to stop the balls from going out into the streets. The cost estimate is about \$9,300, which staff will add to the budget for future discussion and consideration.*

**33 Denton Plaza Additional ERU Request:**

*Mr. Mulrine and Mr. Renshaw shared information on the request for additional ERU's for Mid-Atlantic Real Estate that will be coming before the Council for consideration.*

*A brief discussion was held on ERU's and how they compare to other areas.*

*Staff will do some research on ERU tables and rates for other jurisdictions and present for a future working session.*

**March 3, Agenda Review:**

*A draft of the March 3, 2022 agenda line up was provided.*

**Miscellaneous:**

*Discussion on the State's new legislation governing Police Accountability Boards, requiring the County to create a board, and the unknown fiscal impact this may have on the County and how it will be handled and affect municipalities.*

*Councilman Johnson shared a list of items received. Councilman Lister would like to request to include: 1) a special working session be scheduled for updating the Town Administrator Position going forward; 2) he would like Staff to start working on the budget with a .05% Tax Reduction in the rate; 3) to hear Police Staffing requirements from the Chief's perspective; 4) talk with the Council to get opinions on having a community Preacher open the meetings with prayer; and 5) he will be announcing that he will be endorsing a candidate for sheriff.*

*Councilman Johnson shared that the County is discussing a rate increase for mosquito spraying.*

*Mayor McNinch shared that she is choosing not to endorse any candidates.*

*Chief Bacorn and Mr. Clark met and identified some narrow streets. They will be starting a movement to change to one-way streets; looking to engage the HOAs and homeowners' cooperation.*

*Councilwoman Wilson shared some issues with Sage Drive being very tight and that there have been a couple of mirrors damaged.*

*Councilman Johnson shared that the Police Department has issued 43 parking violations for cars parked the wrong direction on the road. Parking the wrong way on a road requires a person to drive on the wrong side of the road, the department is enforcing State Laws to prevent accidents.*

*Chief Bacorn mentioned that he is working with a perspective new hire.*

*The cost of living is at about 6.5%-7%.*

*There was discussion on the number of outdoor events being held in Town. Some events are great community policing opportunities, and some are private events for profit. Sometimes there is a cost for dedicating staff services for events and whether there should be fees associated for events. The Town currently requires an event permit form to be submitted, that is reviewed and approved by the Town Administrator and Chief of Police. No fees are currently being charged.*

*Staff will research how other jurisdictions handle events, permits and fees and provide a listing of the past events and upcoming events for future discussion.*

*With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:54 PM.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Karen L. Monteith  
Clerk-Treasurer*