

November 2, 2023

Regular Meeting

Mayor McNinch called the Regular Meeting of the Denton Town Council to order at 6:00 PM on this date, leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Invocation was given by Christian Jensen, Chaplain to the Maryland General Assembly.

Mayor McNinch thanked everyone for coming and asked that the record reflect that all Councilmembers were present. Mr. Chris Drummond, Town Attorney was participating virtually.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 5, 2023 Regular Meeting, the October 10, 2023 Executive Session to Discuss Personnel, the October 10, 2023 Joint Working Session with the Planning Commission for the Comprehensive Plan, and the October 23, 2023 Working Session as presented. Councilman Taylor seconded the motion, passing unanimously.

Public Hearing

Ordinance #749- Building Code Local Amendments

Mayor McNinch opened a Public Hearing at 6:04 PM to receive public comments on Ordinance #749 - An Ordinance to amend the Town of Denton Building Code provisions contained in Chapter 38 of the Denton Town Code with respect to sprinklers in building construction.

Mayor McNinch asked for comments from the State: there were none.

Mayor McNinch asked for comments from the County: there were none.

Mayor McNinch asked for comments from Council Members – there were none.

Mayor McNinch asked for comments from the public: none were received.

With no further comments, Mayor McNinch closed the public hearing at 6:05 PM.

Petitions, Remonstrance's, and Communication

Proclamation - Municipal Government Works Month

Mayor McNinch read a Proclamation of the Denton Town Council recognizing November 2023 as Municipal Government Works Month.

Citation – Jeff Jackson Retirement

Councilman Johnson read and presented a Denton Town Council Citation to Jeffrey A. Jackson, recognizing him for 30 years of dedicated service in law enforcement. Officer Jackson was a part of the Denton Police Department from February 1989 till February 1997, he then transferred to the Greensboro Police Department and is in the process of retiring from the Federalsburg Police Department.

Cub Scout Pack 265 Observing Meeting

Mayor McNinch turned the meeting over to the Cub Scouts from Pack 265 of Denton. Each Scout asked questions of the Councilmembers about their roles, how long they have served, do they like their jobs, and what do they do for the Town.

The Scouts stayed and observed the remainder of the Council meeting, while Mayor McNinch resumed as the chair.

Ordinances and Resolutions

Ordinance #749 – Building Code Local Amendments

An Ordinance to amend the Town of Denton Building Code provisions contained in Chapter 38 of the Denton Town Code with respect to sprinklers in building construction.

Mr. David Renshaw, Senior Code Enforcement Officer, provided a summary of the Ordinance which will amend the sprinkler requirements for mini-storage type of units.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to adopt Ordinance #749, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Ordinance #750 – Zoning Code Amendment

An Ordinance of the Town of Denton to amend the Denton Town Code Zoning Ordinance and the provisions contained in Chapter 128 of the Denton Town code with respect to Multifamily Housing and Apartments.

Councilman Lister made a motion to introduce Ordinance #750, seconded by Councilman Taylor.

Discussion was held in which Mr. Renshaw provided an overview of the amendments to the Code for future construction to address some recent issues.

Councilman Johnson questioned exemptions as written in Section D, and shared concerns that a Homeowners Association and/or Condominium Association may overrule the Town Code.

Mr. Chris Drummond, Town Attorney, and Mr. Renshaw will review a little more and tweak if necessary.

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

The motion passed unanimously.

Unfinished Business

Agenda #1- 9 N. 4th Street Project Bid Approval

Mr. Scott Getchell, Town Administrator, provided an update on the bid received and requested to defer any action on this item again this month while he continues to work with the Bidder and the Engineer on how to reduce the scope of the project to fall in line with the budgeted funds available.

No action was taken on this item.

New Business

Agenda #1 – Social Media Policy

Mr. Getchell presented a draft Social Media Policy and discussion was held. The Policy was created by the Foundry and reviewed by the Town Attorney and Staff for the Town of Denton seeking consideration for approval.

Councilman Branson made a motion to approve the Town of Denton's Social Media Policy, seconded by Councilman Lister, passing unanimously.

Miscellaneous

Market St. Mill & Pave

Mr. Getchell presented a proposal from David A. Bramble to pave Market Street from Gay Street to 2nd St. to fix the deteriorating road base. Mr. Getchell further explained that while this section of street repair was not originally included in the budget, it will tie in nicely with the paving of S. First St. and the Town has an opportunity to secure pricing through the County Contract at an estimated cost for the project of \$122,551. Mr. Getchell stated the cost will be covered by using the Highway User Funds carried over the previous year.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve the Contract with David A. Bramble for \$122,551 as requested, seconded by Councilman Taylor, passing unanimously.

Comprehensive Plan Update

Mrs. Donna Todd, Director of Planning & Codes, provided the Council with the revised draft of the Comprehensive Plan which reflects the newest changes. Mrs. Todd stated that the Planning Commission is scheduled to hold their Comprehensive Plan Public Hearing on Nov. 28. Then the Plan will be forwarded to the Town Council to hold a Public Hearing on December 11, 2023, and for consideration of adoption.

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees

Mayor McNinch shared that the Town met with the County to discuss the Town's Draft Comp Plan and future infrastructure needs.

Councilman Lister added that the Town put in an application to seek State Grant Funding to improve sludge management, but it was not awarded. To upgrade and change the method for managing the sludge, it is very costly. They met with Delegate Ghrist, the County and folks from Maryland Dept. of Environment and conducted a walk thru of the Wastewater Treatment Plant to show them the Town's current sludge removal process and discuss what improvements the Town is proposing so it can be more efficient to effectively handle the sludge at the WWTP. While the Town has plenty of available ERU's, without improvements to the plant, the sludge is almost at capacity, and it is costly to continue to haul the sludge to the landfill. The Town is hoping the State will reconsider the Town's Grant Application.

Councilman Johnson announced the Christmas Light Decorating Contest will be published soon.

Mayor McNinch attended LGIT's Annual Meeting earlier today, with Mr. Getchell, Mrs. Monteith and Mrs. Spencer. There were presentations on the legalization of Cannabis and Cyber Security.

Councilman Lister mentioned the moratorium on cannabis and asked the status on establishing the Cannabis Zoning Legislation.

Mr. Getchell shared they have drafted a map of the 500' buffer area which includes most of the Town, and they are researching and working on drafting legislation.

Mayor McNinch stated that the other step with the legalization of recreational cannabis is updating the Town Workforce Policy as it pertains to personnel.

Mr. Drummond and Mrs. Todd will look around to see what other jurisdictions have put in place.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch invited the Scouts to come back up front, and they assisted the Mayor in adjourning the meeting at 6:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen L. Monteith,
Clerk - Treasurer*