

Town of West Jefferson - Board of Aldermen
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 3, 2022 | 6:00 pm

Board Members Present: Mayor Tom Hartman, Alderman Rusty Barr, Alderman Calvin Green (absent), Alderwoman Crystal Miller, Alderman John Reeves, and Alderman Stephen Shoemaker

Town Staff Present: Town Manager Brantley Price, Town Attorney Jak Reeves, Police Chief Brad Jordan, Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller, and Wastewater Superintendent Brandon Patrick

At 6:00 pm Mayor Hartman called to order the meeting of the Board of Alderman. After the invocation was given, those in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of October 3, 2022 Agenda – Mayor Hartman requested to add a discussion to reschedule the 2022 Stomp and Brew as the original date was cancelled due to the weather from hurricane Ian. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the agenda with the addition of Stomp and Brew. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Public Hearings

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 19227 491 from Highway Commercial to Medium Density Residential – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed rezoning of the property located 1106 South Jefferson Avenue. The public hearing was open at 6:03pm. With no comment Mayor Hartman closed the public hearing at 6:03pm.

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 19223001 974 from Conditional District to Community Shopping – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed annexation of the Jefferson Station property located at 230 Hice Avenue. The public hearing was open at 6:03pm. Property owner Jennifer Byland spoke first giving an overview of the future plans for the building including a family entertainment center and office space. The family entertainment center is set to include 60 arcade games, blacklight golf, laser tag, party rental rooms, soft play area, jumping pillow, ax throwing, concession style restaurant serving beer and wine as well as a grab and go sandwich counter. Jennifer stated the establishment would be closed by 10pm. Jefferson Station condo owner Caroline Beamon expressed her concerns for the type of establishment and activities offered. Jefferson Station condo owner Lisa Leeper shared her worries about noise originating from the outdoor pavilion area if drinking is permitted outside. Jefferson Station condo owner Roger Gupton spoke about potential troubles with patrons parking in tenant spaces and how these issues are to be mitigated. Mayor Hartman closed the public hearing at 6:33pm.

Consideration of Text Amendment to Article V – Mayor Hartman stated the purpose of the public hearing is to hear any comments on the proposed amendment to Article V of the West Jefferson Zoning Ordinance. The public hearing was open at 6:33pm. With no comment Mayor Hartman closed the public hearing at 6:36pm.

Regular Session

Approval of Minutes – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Discussion of Stomp and Brew New Date – Harry Galer and Jon Gatewood with Stomp and Brew came before the board to request a new date for the 2022 event as the original date was rained out. The new date requested is Saturday, November 5, 2022 with the request to close the parking lot on Friday to allow for tent and fence installation. The footprint for the new date will include the road closure on Main Street from below Third Avenue to the top of North Sixth Street. Alderman Reeves made the motion to approve the new date and requested footprint. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Award to Engineering Firm for ARPA State Funds – Town Manager Brantley Price explained that a Request for Qualifications for engineering service was advertised in the paper as required for the state ARP funds. The town received one RFQ from Municipal Engineering that met all requirements for the project. With no further discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to award the project to Municipal Engineering. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 19227 491 from Highway Commercial to Medium Density Residential – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the rezoning. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Rezoning Parcel 19223001 974 from Conditional District to Community Shopping – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the rezoning. Alderman Barr seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Text Amendment to Article V – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the text amendment to list Short Term Rentals as a Special Use in Residential Agriculture, Medium Density Residential, and Highway Commercial and to give all short term rentals in existence before the ordinance adopted until December 31, 2023 to comply. Alderman Shoemaker seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Statement of Consistency with West Jefferson Land Use Plan – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made a motion to approve the statements of consistency. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Discussion of Planning Board Appointments – There are 3 planning board appointments that have expired. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to reappoint Rusty Barr and Rick Price to an additional term and to appoint Phillip Absher to the board to replace Joy Campbell who is no longer able to serve on the board. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief Appointments – With no discussion, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to reappoint Eric Miller as Fire Chief and Jody Walters as Assistant Fire Chief. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of TDA Appointment – Mayor Hartman stated that Joseph Kesslerling is no longer permitted to serve on the TDA board as he is no longer employed by the Holiday Inn. The newly appointed member to the board must collect occupancy tax as required by state law. The Mayor recommended local business owner Mark Beck to fill the vacancy. Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to appoint Mark Beck to the TDA. Alderwoman Miller seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Consideration of Tax Releases – With no discussion, Alderman Barr made the motion to approve the tax releases as presented. Alderman Reeves seconded the motion with a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Police Report – Chief Jordan gave his report to the Board for the month of September. A total of 207 calls were dispatched through the communications center including 20 motor vehicle crashes, 2 larcenies, 16 drug cases, 4 DWIs, 11 minor citations, 3 trespasses, 6 warrants, and other miscellaneous calls. The Board thanked Chief Jordan for his report.

Water and Wastewater Report – Wastewater Superintendent Brandon Patrick gave his report to the Board. A total of 4.8 inches of rain were recorded for the month of September. The state completed their annual collections inspection for 2021. A new valve was installed at the filter plant to allow easier access to divert the raw water coming in to make maintenance on other valves easier. One filter is current running at the filter plant. The Board thanked Brandon for his report.

Maintenance Report – Maintenance Supervisor Eric Miller gave his report to the Board. A total of 61 one call tickets were located, 3 water leaks, 1 sewer issue, 1 sump pump and 1 gutter system was removed from flowing into the sewer system. A valve was replaced at the wastewater treatment plant. A new water tap was made in the Beaver Creek neighborhood. The tile was fixed by NCDOT by the old Chevrolet dealership. A total of 4 trips were made to the landfill, the tree was removed from the park, and storm prep was completed. The board thanked Eric for his report.

Town Managers Report – Brantley Price, Town Manager gave his report to the Board. Sewer rehab will begin in the next few weeks to continue working on I and I issues. Taxes collected to date total 77% of our levy. Sales tax for the month of June is up 16% with YTD up 13.5%. The town received \$49,000 in Powell Bill funds which was \$9,000 more than budgeted. Downtown Trick or Treat will be held on Monday, October 31 from 3-5pm for any of the businesses who wish to participate. Brantley extended a thank you to the Sexton family for decorating town with pumpkins and gourds. A state of emergency proclamation was signed by Mayor Hartman for Hurricane Ian to all for the coordination of emergency services if needed. The Board thanked Brantley for his report.

Public Comments – Roger Gupton thanked the board for allowing him to be part of the meeting during the public hearing.

Aldermen Comments – The Board thanked all those in attendance along with town staff and wish Jenn Byland and her partner the best in their new endeavor.

Closed Session – Alderman Barr made the motion to enter closed session under GS 143.318.11(a)(3) to consult with the Town Attorney.

Adjournment – With nothing further, Alderman Shoemaker made the motion to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Alderman Reeves with a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Tom Hartman, Mayor

Rebecca Eldreth, Town Clerk