

## Town Council Meeting

April 13, 2021

The Town Council of Victoria, Virginia met on April 13, 2021 in the Victoria-Lunenburg Community Centre with the Honorable Allen D. Smith, Mayor, presiding: Councilmember's in attendance were Ronald Mattox, Johnnie Brame, James G. Elam, Jr., Christopher Garrett, Sandra Jones and Chris Gill. Also attending were Town Manager Rodney Newton, Treasurer Diane Harding, Clerk Vickie McDaniel, Corporal Matthew Gatling and Assistant Fire Chief Chris Garrett.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Gill to go in to a Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Commission on a Solar Project on the Poorhouse Rd and re-zoning request on High Street from R-1 to R-2. Motion carried. Motion was made by Mr. J. B. Crenshaw and seconded by Mr. Rob Williams to go in to a Joint Public Hearing with Town Council on a Solar Project and re-zoning request. Motion carried.

Representatives Ms. Jessie Robinson, Project Director and Mr. John Bennett, ADS Engineer with Borrego gave a presentation on the Solar Project. Ms. Robinson stated Borrego was founded in 1980 and have built over 750MWac solar systems. In April 2020, the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA) passed mandating increased solar adoption in the state. Dominion Virginia Energy will go from 1,100MW of 0 to 3 MW solar projects by 2035 with production of 100% carbon-free electricity by 2045. Mr. Bennett discussed the proposed project area on the Poorhouse Road. It's approximately 48 acres with the proposed solar project area around 24 acres. There is a small acreage of swamp area which will not be disturbed. There will be 8,500 ground mounted solar panels with a barrier of trees or buffer to reduce visibility along with a fence for security. Mr. Bennett stated a gravel driveway from the Poorhouse Road will be used for access and no properties are in site. Mr. Bennett advised they have been working closely with Town Manger Newton and met all required setbacks and requirements. The construction timeframe is four to six months. Mr. Bennett stated the solar panels have a projected life of about 30 years. After that time, decommissioning will take place by removing anything that was brought in and the land will be returned to its original state.

Citizen Mr. Sean Au stated 30 years was a long time. Ms. Jessie Robinson explained it was a decommissioning bond. Town Manager advised there were copies available of the presentation for any of those interested.

Mr. Newton discussed the High Street re-zoning request from R-1 to R-2. Mr. Newton explained the reason for the re-zoning request was due to structures being built in the future. He stated there will be two duplexes that would sit on two existing town lots. The proposal is for three duplex housings. The request is to re-zone 12 parcels from R-1 which only allows single family dwelling to R-2 for duplex or two family homes.

Citizen Ms. Kathleen Baldwin of 418 High Street addressed council regarding the re-zoning. She attempted to purchase these two parcels twice with anticipation to put evergreens on the land. Ms. Baldwins concern is High Street is not a big street or graded or paved street. Ms. Baldwin stated there is very little traffic and was concerned with construction traffic being difficult and disruptive. Ms. Baldwin met with Town Manager Rodney Newton on Monday, April 12<sup>th</sup> regarding very little R-2 zoning in the town and would like to keep it as an R-1 residence.

Citizen Mr. Sean Au of 1609 6<sup>th</sup> Street also addressed council regarding the re-zoning on High Street and who would be paying for the street maintenance as it's not a state road. Town Manager Newton stated it is not a state approved road, however, emergency services and other traffic can use the road. Mr. Newton explained council will have to authorize an upgrade to the road and then work with VDOT to get up to their standards whereby they will maintain. There are currently four streets in town that are not maintained by VDOT.

Also, Citizen Mr. Lee Smyth of 1100 S. Broad St., Kenbridge addressed council on behalf of the owner of the property. Mr. Smyth discussed some of the questions brought up as far as impact and construction. These buildings are made off site and brought to the property and placed on a foundation. They are considered stick built homes, not a manufactured home. Mr. Smyth stated approximate cost of each duplex was \$200,000.00. and will draw in tenants who can support the rental amount. Mr. Smyth is working with Mr. Walter Cleaton of Home Solutions. Mr. Smyth concluded with we are in need of housing and this would be a great improvement to the area.

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Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Mattox to come out of the Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Commission. Motion carried. Motion was made by Mr. Rob Williams and seconded by Mr. J. B. Crenshaw to come out of the Joint Public Hearing with Town Council. Motion carried.

Mayor Allen called the meeting of the Town Council to order.

The invocation was given by Mayor Allen followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Mayor Allen asked if there were any additions to the meeting. There were none.

Mayor Allen asked if there were any Conflicts of Interest on matters being discussed on the agenda. No comments.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Gill to accept the March 2021 regular meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Gill to accept the Treasurer's report for March 2021. Motion carried.

Corporal Matthew Gatling gave the Police Report. Corporal Gatling stated they had a slow month with 40 calls, 0 citations and no arrests. Corporal Gatling stated they met with the Commonwealth's Attorney regarding new laws that passed for March 1, 2021 and upcoming July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. The town is currently advertising for a police officer and they have two applicants so far. Town Manager Rodney Newton advised the deadline for applications will be April 30, 2021 because the academy starts July 1, 2021 in case someone needs to go for training. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Elam to accept the Police Report as presented. Motion carried.

Assistant Fire Chief Chris Garrett gave the Fire/Rescue Department Report. He stated they had an average month with 149 calls. Station 2 in Victoria had 90 calls while Station 7 in Kenbridge had 59 calls. Assistant Chief Garret advised on the Financial Statement, EMS Supplies was due to stocking for the additional medic unit purchased through the Cares Act fund. They will have their state inspection on Thursday, April 15, 2021 with Medical Emergency Department of Health. Assistant Chief Garrett advised with this new medic unit added to the fleet, they have six total units. There were no questions regarding the budget. Mayor Allen asked about this year's Truck-n-Tractor Pull. Chief Newton advised they will have one on June 5, 2021 and again on October 9, 2021. Motion was made by Councilmember Elam and seconded by Councilmember Garrett to approve the Fire Department report as presented. Motion carried.

Informational Items:

- a) Town Manager Newton requested from council a Public Hearing at the May council meeting for the FY2022 budget. They had a work session and there is very minimal change with expenses and revenues. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Elam to have a Public Hearing at the May council meeting for the FY2022 budget. Motion carried. Mr. Newton advised we will advertize in the newspaper and add to the town website.
- b) Mr. Newton discussed a letter from the Commissioner of Revenue regarding disabled veteran vehicle license fee. The vehicle license fee used to be the \$25.00 sticker fee. Due to changes in the Code of Virginia, a vehicle license fee cannot exceed the fee charged by the Commonwealth of VA Department of Motor Vehicles for registration of a vehicle. Mr. Newton advised in this session of the General Assembly, they voted to allow a 100% service connected, totally, and permanently disabled veteran to have the personal property tax on one vehicle waived. This affects two of our citizens in the town of Victoria. Mr. Newton requested to waive the vehicle registration fee for these two individuals or any 100% service related disabled veteran. Mr. Newton advised this will eventually require an adoption of an ordinance. Town Treasurer, Diane Harding, can

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exonerate the two citizens this year. Motion was made by Councilmember Brame and seconded by Councilmember Gill to waive the vehicle license fee for disabled veterans. Motion carried.

- c) Councilmember Mattox reported after hearing the public comments that the Victoria Planning Commission would like additional information and table their vote until next month's meeting. Mr. Newton will supply the additional information to the Planning Commission.

Town Manager Update:

- a) Mr. Newton advised the roof at the water filtration plant has been completed. There were significant leaks at the plant and Mast Construction completed the work last week. We have an 18 year warranty and also increased some thermal protection on the roof.
- b) Mr. Newton provided council information on golf cart usage. Mr. Newton has been approached by several citizens about the use of golf carts on the streets in town. Code of Virginia does allow this and there are towns around us that do allow it (Boydton, Clarksville). Mr. Newton provided several different ordinances for councils review. Also, Mr. Newton discussed possibly adopting a Solar Revenue Sharing Ordinance in the future.
- c) Mr. Newton advised council to start reading about the legalization of marijuana. During the General Assembly session, the legalization of marijuana was moved to July 1, 2021. This changes all the timelines with retail sales for marijuana. Town council and/or the citizens of the Town of Victoria have to make a decision. Therefore, we will need to hold a referendum by December 31, 2022. Retail sales cannot start until 2024. Mr. Newton stated he would try to have a packet available at next month's meeting.

Councilmember Brame commented on the Treasurer's report for March 2021 stating he has been on town council for 19 years and never seen a seven digit figure and applauded the town employee's on its accomplishments.

With no further business to discuss, Mayor Allen adjourned the meeting.

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Vickie McDaniel, Clerk

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Allen D. Smith, Mayor

Approved May 11, 2021

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Rodney Newton, Town Manager