

Council Work Session
May 14, 2012
8:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor M. Jane Seeman
Council Member Laurie Genevro Cole
Council Member Laurie DiRocco
Council Member Edythe Frankel Kelleher
Council Member Michael J. Polychrones
Council Member Carey J. Sienicki
Council Member Howard J. Springsteen

Also present: Mercury T. Payton, Town Manager
Kirstyn Barr, Public Information Officer
Steve Briglia, Town Attorney
Robert Carlisle, Chief of Police
Mike Gallagher, Deputy Director of Public Works
Greg Hembree, Director of Planning and Zoning
Dennis Johnson, Director of Public Works
Cathy Salgado, Director of Parks and Recreation
Carol S. Waters, Deputy Town Clerk

(1) Follin Lane, SE Right Turn Restriction signs

President of Navy Federal Credit Union (NFCU) George Eichert attended the meeting to support NFCU's request to allow right turns from Follin Lane to Echols Street and/or Hine Street, S.E. during the evening rush hour between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Police Chief Bob Carlisle reported on the situation. Currently during specified times in morning, lunch time, and evening hours, no turns are allowed from northbound Follin Lane until it reaches Route 123 at the traffic light, where NFCU employees normally wait 15 minutes or more to get off of Follin Lane. Repairs to lengthen the right turn lane on Follin Lane at Route 123 are planned for some time in the future, and are expected to help somewhat.

Council expressed serious concern for residents of the side streets where NFCU employee traffic would spill. It was agreed that traffic count information would be required before any changes could be recommended. The traffic data should be referred to the Transportation Safety Commission (TSC) for review and recommendation, after which the matter will come back to Council for a Regular Council Meeting.

Recommendation: Chief Carlisle will have traffic counts done as soon as possible and get the reports to the TSC for their meeting in late May.

(2) Possible Voting Precinct changes for Vienna

Cameron Quinn and Judy Flagg represented the Fairfax County Office of Elections to discuss reducing the number of Vienna's voting precincts. According to Ms. Quinn, the last consolidation was about twenty years ago and the Office of Elections has been looking at possible consolidation all across Fairfax County for the last year. One thing to consider is variable voter turnout. In most November elections, the percentage of voters showing up will be about 35 to 40%, but with the presidential election this November they expect 75% turnout in Fairfax County. Another consideration is the difficulty of recruiting new volunteers to replace the existing election officials as they retire. All things considered, the facts and figures support consolidating the four Town of Vienna voting precincts into three.

Some Council members agreed that lowering the number of voting precincts made sense and the new precinct division lines proposed by Fairfax County made sense, but they would like to review the polling place sites. Ms. Quinn said that polling places must be within the voting precinct or within one mile of it, and the County prefers public buildings for polling places but non-profit buildings may also be allowed. If Council would offer some suggestions, Ms. Quinn said the County would evaluate the locations for parking, disability access, and willingness. Possibilities suggested by Council were Louise Archer Elementary School, The American Legion, Vienna Presbyterian Church, and First Baptist Church. Mayor Seeman remarked that this topic could be re-visited in January.

Recommendation: No further action required until after the November election.

(3) TSC's Recommendation to create a Pedestrian Advisory subcommittee

The current and the former Chair Persons of the Transportation Safety Commission (TSC) discussed their ideas to form a Pedestrian Advisory Committee as a subcommittee in support of the TSC. This proposed subcommittee would target commuter related issues, researching the issues and making recommendations to the TSC. Initial topics for their consideration would include street lighting, commuter parking, and sidewalks. Two people have already volunteered to serve as the committee chair and co-chair. They would like to recruit PTA representatives from the elementary schools, Madison High School and Thoreau Middle School as well.

No Town staff would be allocated to support the subcommittee. The meetings would be public, and would need to be advertised as such. One TSC member would attend. The Bicycle and the Pedestrian committees would have some overlap. Council suggested that they not routinely meet together, but schedule meetings on the same day of the month to facilitate meeting together when appropriate.

Council advised that the Pedestrian Advisory Subcommittee (PAC) would need to create a mission statement and list their objectives and action items, determine how they would interact with the TSC, define how they would interact with the other subcommittee (the Bicycle Advisory Committee), identify who should be invited to attend meetings, choose a regular time

to meet, advertise the time and place of the meetings to the public, and produce an annual report to the Mayor and Council.

Recommendation: Notify the other Town Boards and Commissions and move forward with formation of the Pedestrian Advisory Subcommittee.

(4) Tree Size Discussion and Review #2

Cathy Salgado introduced Maureen Alonso of the Community Enhancement Commission to share her expertise on trees.

Mrs. Salgado reported that developers are bringing issues to the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) regarding the Town Code requirements for 4 inch caliper “street trees” on site plans. They say that trees large enough to meet the criteria are too large to plant in the right-of-ways between sidewalks and streets, because of the root ball size. Parking lot islands are sometimes a problem, too.

Maureen Alonso stated that for the viability of a tree, it is best to transplant when the trunk is 2 ½ inches or less in diameter. She said that the increase in a transplanted tree’s size will proportionately decrease the viability of the tree. Ms. Alonso went on to say that a 4 inch caliper tree suffers more root loss during a transplant, a more dramatic transplant shock, and may not grow much for a couple of years, if it survives. Because of this, a 2 ½ inch caliper tree could catch up to the size of a 4 inch caliper tree in four to five years.

Mayor and Council conversed on using two separate definitions for trees, possibly “street trees” and “subdivision street trees,” or “public use trees” and “private use trees.” They also discussed using some kind of ratio between the size of the area for planting the tree and the size of the tree, as Mrs. Salgado has seen in the codes of some other jurisdictions.

Mr. Hembree said that staff will re-write ordinances in support of the policy decisions Council makes. Trees are referenced in the Town Code’s Chapter 17, Subdivisions, and Chapter 18, Zoning.

Recommendation: Schedule this issue for an October work session.

(5) Section 18-167; Possible Revisions to Carport/Garage Encroachments

Mr. Hembree briefed Council on the history of this Zoning section: approved in June of 2009, it allows an enclosed garage to be built on a carport pad, which had already been permitted to encroach five feet beyond the minimum side-yard setback line, as long as said garage does not exceed fourteen feet in height within that five foot extension. Per Mr. Hembree, the initial idea for the ordinance was that if there is going to be an open space where residents store things, allow them to enclose that so it is not visible from the street.

After discussing the issue, the Mayor and Council decided to leave this ordinance unchanged for the time being. The ordinance has only received one complaint. Mr. Hembree will give it further consideration and will advise Council if any innovative solutions arise. The issue will be addressed with the Board of Zoning Appeals when the Director of Planning and Zoning and the Town Attorney meet with them in July.

Recommendation: No action required by Council at this time. Director of Planning and Zoning and Town Attorney will discuss it with the Board of Zoning Appeals at their work session meeting in July.

(6) 2013 Town Council Meeting Schedule

Council reviewed the proposed Town Council meeting dates for the 2013 calendar year as presented by Kirstyn Barr, and found the schedule to be acceptable.

Recommendation: No action required by Council at this time. Public Information Officer (PIO) will proceed with preparation of the 2013 Town Calendar.

(7) Strategic Communications Plan

Kirstyn Barr and Council discussed some of the ideas in her Strategic Communications Plan draft.

Recommendation: No action required by Council at this time. Ms. Barr will proceed with the implementation process of the plan.

The Town Council Work Session Meeting of May 14, 2012 adjourned at approximately 10:18 p.m.

Mayor M. Jane Seeman

Signed / Dated: _____

Attest:

Deputy Town Clerk