

**Town of Washington Park
Municipal Building
February 5, 2024
7:00 p.m.**

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|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| United Bank | General Fund | \$469,018.44 |
| United Bank | Capital Reserve Fund/Truck Account | 82,100.00 |
| United Bank | Powell Bill Checking | 48,141.96 |
| United Bank | Powell Bill/Saving CD | 66,852.10 |
| United Bank | Capital Reserve CD | 78,059.50 |
| United Bank | American Rescue Plan Act Account | <u>137,667.68</u> |
| | Total | \$881,839.68 |

Present: Thomas Richter, Mayor, Jeff Peacock, Mayor pro tem, Lee Bowen, Commissioner, Belinda Cowell, Commissioner, Wade Dale, Commissioner, Vail Rumley, Commissioner

Absent: None

Mayor Richter called the meeting to order. Mayor pro tem Peacock noted he would like to add a closed session to discuss personnel and Clerk Alligood noted a budget amendment would need to be discussed for truck repairs. With the noted additions, Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all.

Public Input

Evie Wicker requested the town owned tree in front of her residence at the corner of Isabella and Pine streets be cut down. She presented photos and a written summary of the concerns with the tree. Additionally, she had an arborist look at the tree who indicated it is dangerous and needs to come down. Commissioner Cowell, aware of the concern with the tree, noted she had talked with Stuart Dudley, who also looked at the tree, and his recommendation was to remove the tree. Discussion followed regarding the tree's proximity to the power lines. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to contact the City of Washington to see if they will remove the tree; if not, we will ask Stuart Dudley to remove the tree. Seconded by Commissioner Dale, approved by all.

Frances Hogan asked for an update on the trees along Isabella Avenue. Commissioner Cowell reported there are currently 61 town trees planted along Isabella Avenue. She spoke with Stuart Dudley who indicated he could remove the trees and grind the stumps at a cost of \$100/tree. Commissioner Cowell also contacted Worthington Farms for ideas on replacement trees, under 15 feet tall. They indicated there are not a lot of trees available now, but they will research options. The recommended plan would be to remove all of the trees at one time, re-grade the area to help with better drainage, and re-plant new trees, incorporating the cherry trees recently planted and any other trees that could still be utilized. Mayor pro tem Peacock noted he spoke with Public Works Supervisor, Todd Askew, who shared the Town could rent the necessary equipment and he (Todd) could re-grade the area prior to re-planting. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to have Stuart Dudley remove the trees now, and have Todd Askew re-grade the area, coordinating with Mr. Dudley. Mayor pro-tem Peacock seconded the motion; approved by all.

Bill Rianhard asked for an update on 320 Isabella Avenue. Clerk Alligood shared she received a call from Carl Parker a couple of weeks ago, indicating he was conducting a

survey of the property for an architect who is working on renovation plans. Mayor pro tem Peacock stated he had tried to contact Mr. Bell but has had no response; he will try again. The Board indicated they would like an update on the architect's plan.

Julie Risher spoke about the house at 511 Hickory Street, noting it has been vacant for a long time, the roof is falling in, and it contains mold. She feels as an abandoned house, it is not good for the neighborhood. Per Mayor Richter, we will look into it, speak with the building inspector, and send the owner a letter.

Minutes and Financial Report

The January financial report and January 8, 2024, minutes were approved, after correction, upon motion by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Seconded by Commissioner Cowell. Passed by all.

Old Business

Contractor vs. Resident Debris Pick-up: This was briefly discussed at the January meeting, with the decision to bring back at the February meeting. Commissioner Bowen commented whatever yard debris is generated, whether by the resident or a contractor, the Town should pick it up, as long as it was a reasonable amount. Discussion occurred about what is a reasonable amount, how will it be measured (i.e. pick-up truck, cubic yard, or 8 ft x 4 ft x 4 ft.), how will we educate the community, is there a limit to the number of times a month debris could be picked up. Mayor Richter asked that copies of the pertinent sections of the ordinance be provided to the Board for continued review and discussion on this topic.

Drainage North side of Isabella Ave East end: No report.

Eastern Washington Park town limit: Commissioner Bowen reported Town Attorney, Amanda Sasnett, completed her review of the survey. She will proceed with preparing and recording a quit claim deed. Discussion followed regarding an easement to maintain the ditch.

Parking vehicles in the Town's rights-of-way: It was noted the Planning Board's decision on this matter was not to allow parking in the rights of way. However, this poses potential issues with driveways. Discussion then moved into asking the Mid East Commission (MEC) to look into this. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to contract with the MEC to review the specific issue of parking vehicles in the Town's rights-of-way; seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all. Commissioner Rumley indicated she would be willing to assist as available; Mayor pro tem Peacock and Commissioner Bowen will also continue to be involved in related discussions.

Multi-family occupancies of residences: No additional comments for now. The Board may consider asking the MEC to review in the future.

320 Isabella Avenue: see public input, Bill Rianhard notes.

Tree cut on College Avenue: Clerk Alligood said Stuart Dudley spoke with Mr. Spain and told him he would get the requested tree the next time he orders trees.

Resilient Coastal Communities Program: Clerk Alligood reported a Community Action Team (CAT) meeting was held on January 17, 2024, and the next one is

scheduled for Wednesday, February 7, 2024, at 10:00 am. Additionally, the Phase 2 open house is scheduled for March 20, 2024.

ARPA fund: No update

New Business

Plan for trees on Isabella Avenue: see Public Input, Frances Hogan notes.

Request services from Town Attorney: As a follow-up to prior discussions, this topic was added to the agenda to indicate who is able to ask the Town Attorney for assistance. Mayor Richter suggested the he, the Mayor pro tem, or the Town Clerk should be authorized to initiate assistance from the Town Attorney. If a Commissioner is working on a specific project, the Town Attorney could be authorized to work directly with that person. The Board agreed with this procedure.

Appointment to Mid-East Commission: Motion made by Mayor pro tem Peacock to appoint Mayor Tom Richter to continue serving as the Washington Park representative for the Mid-East Commission; seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all.

Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Dale – A deposit was paid for the tennis court repair work; it is anticipated work will begin during the summer. New sand is needed for the digger boxes in the playground. The Rotary 5K is scheduled for March 16. A new net is needed for the far side tennis court.

Commissioner Rumley – Break-ins were recently reported on Spruce Street, from car doors being left unlocked. The Beaufort County Sheriff's Office was called in response to neighborhood kids running around banging on front doors. A community watch meeting is being planned. Commissioner Rumley also researched speed limit signs, following public input from the January meeting. The signs are not cost effective, costing between \$3,000 and \$6,000; additionally, they are only effective at reducing speed for 300 – 500 feet after passing the sign. The most effective way to reduce speed is a road design similar to Isabella or Riverside Drive, with a median separating the two-way traffic.

Mayor pro tem Peacock – Repair work on the sanitation truck was involved and more expensive than anticipated, but all turned out well.

Commissioner Bowen – Contract details have been worked out with regard to road repairs; bidders are updating bids so everyone will be submitting comparable work plans. He anticipates receiving the bids/quotes by the next meeting.

Commissioner Cowell – nothing to add

Clerk's Report

Clerk Alligood reported: deposits received last month totaled \$53,787.22 (ad valorem \$39,966.59; local option sales tax \$13,559.27; \$221.36 refund from NCLM for Workers Comp insurance premium; \$40 facility use fee). Clerk Alligood reminded the Board she will be attending Clerk School at the UNC School of Government the week of February 12, 2024. The Washington Park Democratic Party is scheduled to use the municipal building for a meeting on February 15, 2024. Clerk Alligood also set-up a generic email (washingtonparkinquiry@gmail.com) to list on the website as an initial way to reach out

for information on the community. Lastly, an updated bond application is being processed for Clerk Alligood's role as Finance Officer.

Commissioner Bowen made a motion to go into closed session for a personnel matter. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock; passed by all.

Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to come out of closed session. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen; passed by all.

Commissioner Bowen made a motion to give Public Works Supervisor Todd Askew, a \$2/hour raise. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock; passed by all. Salaries for similar positions in surrounding communities will be obtained for future review.

Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to approve a budget amendment in the amount of \$7,984.39 for truck repairs. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen; passed by all

The next regular meeting will be Monday, March 11, 2024, at 7:00 pm at the Municipal Building. There being no further business, Mayor Richter adjourned the meeting.

April S. Alligood, Clerk
Town of Washington Park