

**Town of Washington Park
Municipal Building
September 9, 2024, 7:00 p.m.**

United Bank	General Fund	\$ 446,646.86
United Bank	Capital Reserve Fund/Truck Account	82,100.00
United Bank	Capital Reserve CD	80,392.97
United Bank	Powell Bill Checking	41,291.96
United Bank	Powell Bill/Saving CD	10,625.19
United Bank	American Rescue Plan Act Account	<u>99,782.53</u>
	Total	\$ 760,839.51

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

Mayor Richter called the meeting to order. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all.

Public Input:

Isabell Farrell provided an update from the Townscape Committee.

- Coordinating a community landscaping event at Beech and River Road for October 13 at 2p; approx. 20 shrubs will be ready to plant and light refreshments will be available. Discussed different ways to advertise the event.
- Discussed ideas for a new Washington Park sign; Committee asked to obtain quotes for the Board's consideration.
- NC Forest Service Grant application survived the first round of cuts; next cut October 4 and award scheduled to be announced October 18.
- RCCP report referenced potential projects for Isabella. Committee asked how those projects might impact future planting in the median on Isabella; they do not want to do work that may have to be removed later. It was suggested the Committee hold off on replanting Isabella median for now. Led to discussion on maintenance for Isabella Avenue; Commissioner Bowen will take another look at it.
- Ms. Farrell planning to attend a rain garden workshop in October; Commissioner Cowell also interested in learning more about rain gardens.
- Committee met with Macon Respass (City of Washington); he is concerned with anticipated height of cherry trees currently in Isabella median. Committee informed him the trees will be relocated if needed; will keep Mr. Respass informed of future plans for median.

Lawrence McDowell asked when the tennis court work will be completed. Commissioner Dale shared work has been delayed because the contractor had surgery. He anticipates work starting within the next month.

Cheryl Lee asked who the RCCP point person will be. Clerk Alligood will share information/updates as it becomes available.

Regarding flooding on Isabella, Commissioner Dale asked if the pipe under Edgewater may need to be cleaned, or if a flapper valve would help. It was noted a flapper valve may help retard river flooding, but not rain flooding.

Minutes and Financial Report: The August minutes and financial report were reviewed. Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to approve the August minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all.

Old Business

Debris Pick-up: Clerk Alligood is working on getting the door tags made. Discussion about extra-large pile of yard debris on College Avenue; instructed PW staff to pick it up piecemeal, as time allowed.

Drainage North side of Isabella Ave East end: Commissioner Bowen anticipates working on this project after the storm season closes.

320 Isabella Avenue: Town Attorney Amanda Sasnett was present to discuss options for reinstating condemnation proceedings previously put on hold. Mr. Bell, property owner, was in town last week meeting with a potential contractor; he also did yard work, addressing overgrown materials. The mayor spoke with Mr. Bell, who shared the previous bids were astronomically high so he is having to scale back the scope of the project. The mayor shared the level of exasperation is building and if it goes on much longer, the Board may consider resuming condemnation. Attorney Sasnett noted given the amount of time that has passed, the Board could not proceed off the last condemnation order. She said the Board could ask City Inspections to review the property and if it still meets the criteria, proceed with the condemnation process. Attorney Sasnett also added if the house is demolished, the Town would have little ability to recoup expenses, outside placing a lien on the property. Additionally, the owner could file an injunction to stop the demolition; however, firm deadlines could be established from a judge or owner could be held in contempt. The administrative process takes approximately six (6) months (search warrant to bids). The Board recognizes Mr. Bell has some money invested to date; discussion regarding establishing deadlines; if he doesn't meet them, proceed with demolition.

Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to have the Town attorney send a letter to Mr. Bell noting he has 90 days for serious progress, evidenced by contracts with architects, or the Board will pursue condemnation. Seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all.

Resilient Coastal Communities Program grant projects: A zoom meeting is scheduled for September 19 to discuss the Stop Wastewater Gap grant with grant officials. Mayor Richter and Mayor pro tem Peacock plan to participate, along with Clerk Alligood and Jamie Heath from the Mid East Commission.

Stormwater Action Plan - Jamie Heath previously provided background information to the Board on FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure in Communities (BRIC) grant. If awarded, it would complete a stormwater ground assessment and surface hydrology analysis that could be incorporated into an online mapping system, providing the ability to take action on potential problem areas. A Town match of 25% (or approximately \$98,500) would be required. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to enter into the grant writing agreement with the Mid East Commission and to pursue the BRIC grant. Seconded by Commissioner Rumley. Passed by all.

Town picnic – brief discussion to possibly hold an event in the spring; table until October meeting.

New Business

Request for Speed Bump – Pine Street: Resident Evie Wicker submitted a request (via email) for a speed bump on Pine Street. Commissioner Bowen will investigate and provide a recommendation next month. Powell bill money can be used for this purpose.

Fee schedule: Review proposed draft and edit as needed for future adoption.

Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Cowell: Thanked Isabell Farrell and the members of the Townscape Committee for their work and the update provided earlier in the meeting.

Commissioner Bowen: Commissioner Bowen made a motion to go into closed session. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all.

Commissioner Bowen made a motion to return to open session. Seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all.

Mayor pro tem Peacock: New employee, Nicolas Villeda, is doing a great job. Park looking good. Plan to start research for small garage truck.

Commissioner Rumley: Pretty quiet; report of suspicious man on College avenue a couple of weeks ago. Spoke with Stacy Drakeford, City of Washington, regarding speed feedback signs; the City Police Department used "points" through a public safety initiative, so their signs were free. He will get pricing information for us to review.

Discussion regarding multiple Washington Park Facebook pages. The Town of Washington Park does not have a Facebook page; the current pages are developed and maintained by individual residents and are not recognized as official Town sites.

Commissioner Dale: Two (2) events this month – Hannah's Glow Run on September 21, and a run in support of ovarian cancer on September 28. Tennis court update provided during public input. Clearing work completed on Spruce Street extension; the Town needs to maintain its portion. Spoke with PW Supervisor Askew, who told him both power take offs on the tractors are down; asked staff to get an estimate to repair.

Clerk's Report: Deposits received in August totaled **\$20,469.38** (Ad Valorem \$1,530.73; NCVTS \$3,870.40; local option sales tax \$14,896.16; Solid waste Tax \$72.09 tennis / pickleball keys: \$100.00). Replaced bucket on tractor \$2,600; paid Dean Lucas \$1,500 for Spruce St extension clearing; renewed annual membership with Chamber of Commerce; transferred \$1,500 from ARPA account to pay Dudley Landscaping for work on clearing island; reminder that Ethics workshop course due December 1; Planning Board met September 5 to discuss overview of Town ordinances with Mid East Commission; NCLM Workers Comp insurance audit completed, will receive \$586 refund in premium payment for FY24. Completed week 3 of Clerk school; vacation week of September 23.

Additional comment regarding the RCCP Living Shoreline project. The mayor will send letters to the four (4) property owners whose property extends to the waterfront along Riverside Drive, regarding the upcoming project and their options to participate individually if they desire.

The next regular meeting will be Monday, October 7, 2024, at 7:00 pm at the Municipal Building. There being no further business, Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Rumley. Mayor Richter adjourned the meeting.

April S. Alligood, Clerk
Town of Washington Park