Town of Washington Park

Municipal Building

November 11, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

United Bank General Fund $ 416,322.47

United Bank Capital Reserve Fund/Truck Account 82,100.00

United Bank Capital Reserve CD 80,392.97

United Bank Powell Bill Checking 50,392.66

United Bank Powell Bill/Saving CD 10,625.19

United Bank American Rescue Plan Act Account 97,958.34

Total $ 737,791.63

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. Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all.

Public Input:

Isabel Farrell provided an update on behalf of the Townscape Committee. With the assistance of Michelle Oros, provided requested additional information to the NC Forest Service for the grant application. The Committee’s next meeting is November 13, 2024; their next project is developing plans for landscape work at the municipal building. At this time, the Board went ahead and addressed the Washington Park signs item; action noted under New Business. Ms. Farrell reported that herself, Anne Baxter, and Francis Hogan recently attended a rain garden workshop. The Committee also wanted to thank PW Supervisor, Todd Askew, for his diligence and attention to watering the recently planted shrubs.

Kim Warren asked the Board to uphold the current noxious growth ordinance (93-027) as it pertains to 320 River Road. Additional discussion under new business with regard to this specific location. She also discussed 602 Small Street, 511 Hickory Street, and 300 Riverside Drive. The Board noted they would assess 602 Small Street further. The clerk shared that the owner of 511 Hickory Street does plan to sell the property and is working to remove his personal belongings.

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

Old Business

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

320 Isabella Avenue: Clerk Alligood received an email update from the homeowners; they are working with vendors to finalize the scope and price of the project and are aiming to have a contract to start the work before the end of year holidays. Their 90-day deadline to show significant activity is December 23, 2024.

Resilient Coastal Communities Program grant projects: The RFQs for the Phase 3 Living Shoreline project have been posted; responses are due November 15 and will be reviewed November 19.

Fee schedule: The fee schedule will need to be adopted by an ordinance. The clerk was asked to have the Town attorney review the proposed schedule and bring the item back at a later time.

New Business

Noxious Growth – 320 River Road: Commissioner Bowen, Mayor Richter, and Clerk Alligood met with resident Derek Cooper on November 7, in order to survey the location in question. Commissioner Bowen recommends having a professional third party assess and note the noxious growth and what needs to be removed. Mr. Cooper is amenable to removing the material once identified. Extended discussion regarding noxious growth, wetlands location, varying levels of oversight (local ordinance, state regulations, and federal regulations), potential solutions, and matters of concern from both sides. There are other areas in town that are left natural; this location is different because one, a complaint has been made that needs to reviewed, and two, this location is next to the creek which brings in different regulations. A similar complaint in another location, Small Street as an example, would not involve DEQ or other State agencies since it is not near a body of water. The Board’s role is to enforce the Town’s ordinance, not to get involved in other issues between the residents. Through discussion, it was determined removing the noxious growth was the priority, and not the wetlands. The ultimate goal is to get the noxious material identified, removed, and establish a remediation plan so the cycle does not continue. The final recommendation was for the Town to contact the NC Cooperative Extension office to see if someone there is able to assist with identifying the noxious growth that will need to be removed and ways to maintain it in the future.

Washington Park signs: Commissioner Cowell made a motion to authorize the Townscape Committee $425 to have the entrance signs for Washington Park refurbished and installed. Seconded by Commissioner Rumley. During discussion, Mayor pro tem Peacock suggested increasing the authorized amount to $500. Passed by all for $500 limit.

NCGS §143-805 Resolution: NCGS §143-805 became effective October 1, 2024, and prohibits viewing of pornography on the Town’s network and devices. It also requires each public agency to adopt a policy no later than January 1, 2025. The proposed Resolution was reviewed by the Board and Town attorney. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to adopt the Resolution. Seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all.

Commissioners’ Reports

Commissioner Dale: Tennis court update – the contractor has three (3) jobs in front of ours; hopes to begin work in three (3) weeks. Fitness Unlimited is scheduled to host a Turkey Trot event on Thanksgiving Day. Ask PW to rake out under the swings weekly for cushioning.

Commissioner Rumley: Three (3) people filed reports for stolen property in October (unlocked cars). Sammy Corey notified Commissioner Rumley he will no longer serve as the Community Watch coordinator for Washington Park.

Mayor pro tem Peacock: Noted he received complaints regarding the RV that was temporarily parked on a vacant lot on Isabella, and asked if any future regulations need to be considered; will ask the Mid East Commission to consider in their ordinance review. Discussion led to parking in the median; letters sent last month because current ordinance specifically states no parking in the median. Another potential infraction noted at 301 College Avenue; Clerk Alligood asked to send them a letter. Discussion regarding wording in letter and/or calling first, providing more explanation; will discuss at the next meeting. Spoke with Trey Howdy regarding his sump pumps; he has diverted the water further up the property; will wait and see how that works.

Commissioner Bowen: 101 Edgewater Avenue - resident filled in the ditch in front of his house, partially in the right-of-way. Commissioner Bowen and Mayor Richter spoke with the homeowner, who indicated if it negatively affects the intersection or the neighbor across the street on Isabella, he will do whatever to make it right. Commissioner Bowen also spoke with Stuart Dudley; he was satisfied with the work performed at 101 Edgewater. With regard to the west end of Isabella, Dudley did not recommend scraping now, but wait until the spring when the grass will grow. Work that can be done now includes cutting a couple of swells around the basin to allow water to flow into the drain. The ditch on the other side of Edgewater also needs to be cleaned out. And he recommended bringing in a few loads of dirt in a low area right off the bridge. Dudley estimated being able to do all of this work (swells, ditch clean out, and loads of dirt) for approximately $1000. Commissioner Bowen made a motion to have Stuart Dudley perform this work; seconded by Commissioner Dale. Passed by all.

Commissioner Bowen noted the speed hump for Pine Street has been ordered. It was also determined that the location of this speed hump will not impact the ability to exit the Park and access River Road. The total cost (product and shipping) exceeded the $2,000 cap set at last month’s meeting by approximately $100. Commissioner Dale made a motion to amend the not to exceed price, in order to resolve the minimal cost difference; seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all.

Brief discussion regarding a request from Vance Moore for a driveway permit. The town does not own that portion of Shorewood; however, the Board would still like to review the plans to discuss drainage impacts. It was asked if the Blantons, on Edgewater, have asked for a driveway permit; they have not to date.

Brief discussion regarding the intersection of Fairview and Walnut, limited visibility due to shrubs. Need to revisit the triangle drawings.

Commissioner Cowell: No additional report.

Clerk’s Report: deposits received in October totaled $24,585.15 (Ad Valorem: $8,914.92, NCVTS: $1,290.29, local option sales tax: $14,349.94, tennis/pickleball keys: $30.00); paid City of Washington for Fire/EMS contract: $45,842.88; FY24 Audit approved by LGC, board presentation in December; renewed membership to Chamber of Commerce; Cleggs sprayed waterfront. Discussion regarding uniform contract; expires in April 2025, 90-day notice to cancel; Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion not to renew the contract; seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all.

Just before moving into closed session, Ms. Warren noted some benches in the playground appeared broken.

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

Mayor pro tem Peacock made a motion to return to open session. Seconded by Commissioner Bowen. Passed by all.

Commissioner Bowen made a motion to give a 5% merit award to PW Supervisor Todd Askew and Clerk Alligood based on their FY24 evaluations. Seconded by Mayor pro tem Peacock. Passed by all.

The next regular meeting will be Monday, December 2, 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. Meeting adjourned.

April S. Alligood, Clerk

Town of Washington Park