



Townsend Council Meeting Minutes September 3, 2014

7:30 pm – Council Meeting

I. Call to Order: 7:30 pm

II. Opening Ceremonies

- a. Roll Call: Mayor Jermaine Hatton, CM John Ness, CW Lorraine Gorman, CM Rudy Sutton, CW Cindy Cook, TA Fred Townsend, TE Owen Hyne, TM Dawson Green, TC Cathy Beaver
- b. Pledge of Allegiance: Pledge was said
- c. Recognition of Visitors: 13 visitors
- d. Announcements: Town fair and parade is Saturday, September 27, 2014. Parade is at 10:00 am with the fair following. Bring your family and friends, will be a great day at the park.

III. Additions/Deletions to Published Agenda:

- a. CM Ness motioned, CM Sutton seconded with unanimous vote to accept the agenda as written.

IV. Council Minutes (copies on back table)

- July 23, 2014 Mid-Month minutes approved 8/20/14
- Approval of August 6, 2014 Council minutes

- I. CM Ness motioned, CM Sutton seconded with unanimous vote to accept the minutes as written.

V. Mayors Report

- a. Was invited to a sneak peak at Dollar General with TM Green today, very pleased with the store and overall construction. It should be open in the next couple weeks.
- b. The streetscape should be done in 3 – 4 weeks. Working on the punch list.
- c. There are several other new businesses in Townsend that have opened in the last several weeks. The old Farie's property on Gray Street is an operating business as a buy, sell, trade car business. The Farie's property on Cannery Lane is a scrap type business. It is good to see new business in Town.

VI. Reports

a. State Police: Lt. Tom Paskevicius

- Since the last meeting there have been some thefts of copper in TVI and problems in the park.
- Our goal is to increase patrols during the day and night in the park area and trouble areas. Working with CM Ness on this.
- Arrested an individual last week that was going through neighborhoods and stealing items from unlocked cars. We have tied him to many robberies in the Townsend and Middletown area.
- Safety Discussion:
 - I. 30% of home burglaries are through unlocked homes.
 - II. Nationwide 60% occur during the day and during the summer.
 - III. Most common entry is through the front or back door.
 - IV. Please lock your windows when on vacation and use a security bar on sliding doors.
 - V. Do not advertise on social media that you are going to be on vacation.
 - VI. Troop 9 will check on your home while you are on vacation, just call to let us know and we will do drive byes.

- VII. Recruit a trusted neighbor or friend and if you are vacationing in the summer, make arrangements to have your lawn mowed, in the winter have your driveway shoveled, paper picked up, mail picked up. You can also put a stop on your mail and paper at the post office and newspaper.
 - VIII. The more normal your home looks, the better. Use automatic timers to turn on lights in the evening. Park a car in driveway, locked, and remove automatic garage door openers. Better yet, unplug your garage door opener. Leave your curtains or blinds the way you normally keep them when you're home. Do not leave any spare keys outside. Ensure trees and bushes are trimmed back from the windows. Install motion sensors for outside lights.
 - IX. Consider an alarm system. It can easily deter criminals and make them think twice about burglarizing a residence. Ensure alarm system signage is visible on the property.
 - X. Final notes: take pictures of valuables and make a list of model numbers/serial numbers. Consider placing valuables in a secure safe inside the residence while you are away or use a bank safety deposit box.
 - XI. Most of these items are common sense items.
 - There are laws for pawn shops and they have to get ID information on everything a person pawns. They also have to hold the item for 18 days. We are able to make arrests and recover stolen items because of these laws and people who have pictures of their valuables.
 - To put you at ease, the Town of Townsend is not a high crime area, which is great. Within the Town limits through the month of July there was 1 robbery, 1 home invasion, 3-4 burglaries and 5 thefts (mostly vehicle).
- b. Representative Jeff Spiegelman
- Out of session until January.
 - I was contacted by someone interested in starting a senior center in the MOT area, I suggested the Town of Townsend. The person talked to the MOT Senior center, they are filled to capacity and would love to have a senior center in Townsend, would be no competition at all. If Council is interested I can put you in contact with the person.
- c. Townsend Fire Department: Keith Shoemaker – not here
- d. Town Attorney Fred Townsend III:
- Am working on some proposed amendments to the zoning codes for the use or conditional use of a sporting goods store. This should be ready for the next workshop.
- e. Town Engineer Owen Hyne:
- Working on the punch list, which is large, for the streetscape.
 - Mr. Ruhman asked if we are going to get any lights for the light posts.
 - TE Hyne said DelDot is reviewing everything for ADA compliance. There is a problem with one item and were told to hold off on the lights until it is addressed. The issue is 99% resolved at this point.
 - Mr. Ruhman stated you told us 3 weeks ago the lights were going up.
 - TE Hyne said we are working on it.
 - Ms. Sturgis said she was told the fill put back into residents yards would be top soil. What was put in her yard (from someone else's yard) is junk and grows nothing but weeds. She stated she never had weeds in her yard before and will not mow it until it is fixed. Ms. Sturgis then showed the weeds growing in her front yard and said they are very invasive weeds and taking over the yard. Used to take pride in my yard. Also told
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them not to seed my yard as I have a child with grass allergies and have to use a special seed. They came through and seeded anyway.

- TE Hyne stated it is common practice to replace soil in yards with what has been removed from yards.
 - All the residents complained about the dirt put in their yards. Mayor Hatton asked TE Hyne to look into this issue.
 - Ms. Sturgis said her other concern is her front walk. She stated she has a disabled brother that lives with her, took him shopping last night and he can't jump over the swimming pool on my sidewalk. His feet were soaked. Was told weeks ago this would be fixed, am I supposed to make him stay in the house every time it rains.
 - Mayor Hatton asked TE Hyne to bump this issue up on the punch list.
 - Mr. Ruhman stated Ms. Winnie at 306 Main Street asked him to talk on her behalf as she is elderly and can't come to the meetings. She had a very nice driveway and sidewalk, easily maneuverable for her prior to the streetscape. Now she can't get around with the way it was put back in.
 - TE Hyne stated DelDot said it met their standards.
 - Mr. Ruhman stated DelDot has very low standards. It used to be very nice and easy for this elderly resident to move around.
 - Mayor Hatton stated they will look into this tomorrow.
- f. Town Manager Dawson Green:
- Talked to Carol at the post office who asked if we could get handicap parking in front of the post office. TE Hyne will talk to DelDot about this.
 - One permit was issued in August.
 - Handler is submitting a permit for a sales trailer on Rt. 71 in front of TVII.
 - Am working with Mark Sapperstein on getting the open areas in TVII completely graded and done. Should see some movement in the next couple weeks.

VII. Committee Reports

a. Finance: Chair – Jermaine Hatton

- Finance Report – no report, the financial office out of the office today.
- Still in the midst of the audit, they will be back on 9/18/14. The final delivery of the audit should be in mid-October.
- Looking at the budget to find extra money for additional patrols. Can't afford the vandalism in the park. If you see anything, please call the police. Spoke with a resident today and her children think they know who spray painted the skate park. Appears to be a small number of children doing all the damage.
- Ms. Sturgis asked if Council has considered putting cameras in the park.
- Mayor Hatton said they aren't cheap and would probably be torn down like everything else. There was a long discussion about purchasing cameras for the park. Mayor Hatton added the lock was cut off the Konox box last night and the wheelbarrow was stolen.

b. Public Works: Chair – CM Rudy Sutton

- Streetscape Change order #7 – Discussion/Vote (added 8/29/14)
- This change order reflects final adjustments to the contract quantities based on the final project quantities. The contract time is being extended based on claims of weather and additional work. The contract is still \$10,000 under budget.
- Mr. Ruhman said he was told last month when he asked for a bench in front of his house that there was no money, now you say the contract is under budget.

- There was a long discussion about the benches and the width of the sidewalks.
 - CM Sutton motioned, CW Gorman seconded with unanimous vote to approve change order #7.
- c. Land Use & Development: Chair – Jermaine Hatton
- We are still waiting on NCC to assign a new parcel number for the annexed property on Commerce Street.
 - Mr. Fitzhugh asked who waters the streetscape trees.
 - Mayor Hatton said the contractor is responsible for watering them and have put gator bags on them.
 - TE Hyne added they are responsible for the trees for 2 years and will replace any that die.
- d. Community Relations: Chairs – CW Cindy Cook
- Thanked Council for their articles for the newsletter. It will be mailed to residents next week.
 - Gave a special thanks to Cathy for all her work on the newsletter and CW Gorman for all her help.
- e. Public Safety: Chair – CM John Ness
- If anyone has any recommendations for discussions at future meetings from the State Police please let me know.
 - Tonight’s information will be on the website.
 - Mr. Rocke said when his shed was broken into the police highly recommended putting in a motion light. With the electric in the park, can’t we put up motion lights?
 - CM Ness said we could put some in. We don’t want a lot of lights there as we don’t want people to think the park is open after dark.
 - Mr. Ruhman asked where things stand with the Town Watch.
 - CM Ness stated there will be a meeting at 6:30 pm prior to the Council meeting on October 1, 2014.
 - Mr. Glanding asked if the police ever patrol on Gray and Walnut Street, he never sees any. Someone has been cutting tires in Town and the police were called.
 - CM Ness said yes and asked Mr. Glanding to call the police every time he sees something suspicious.
 - Mr. Ruhman said he suggested at the last meeting the Town hire a security firm rather than pay the state police overtime. He was told security had no authority to do anything, yet he works in some pretty shady places and they are all armed and can make arrests.
 - CM Ness said the Town is looking into hiring a fully qualified policeman part time.
 - There was a long discussion about this subject.
 - After extensive discussion, TA Townsend stated this subject is not on the agenda. It can be added to a future agenda and discussed then, but having this discussion in an abstract isn’t very productive. Council needs to put some information together and then add it to a future agenda. Do not believe all these issues will be brought to bear tonight.
 - Mr. Ruhman asked to put it on the agenda next month.
- f. Parks & Recreation: Chair – CW Lorraine Gorman
- Electric Installation in the Park
 - I. The contractor should be done installing the electric in the park next week. Next step will be inspections and then Delmarva comes in to fire it up. Hopefully it will be done by the fair.

- II. CW Gorman said we will have the capability of low light in the pavilion and gazebo once the electric is done. Don't know if it will be a deterrent for the vandalism but it is a start.
- Annual Town Fair & Parade – Saturday, September 27, 2014
 - I. There are fair flyers on the back table. We hope for a bigger turn out this year. There has been a lot of exposure. Really pushing the fair!
 - II. Still need more volunteers, MHS National Honor Society will be helping with this.
 - III. Still need several people to be clowns. If you know anyone, please call me.

VIII. Citizens Comments & Participation

- a. Mr. Rocke stated Phase I of the streetscape took years to happen. Will it take that long for Phase II and III?
- b. Mayor Hatton stated he is working on the funding now and has been in touch with DelDot.
- c. Mr. Haines asked when the barrels and excess concrete will be removed from Main Street and was told soon.
- d. Mr. Ruhman stated DelDot is unwilling to make changes to the truck traffic on Main Street. They said this is the only route through Town. He thanked Mayor Hatton for looking into this and getting back to him with an answer but added he doesn't agree with it. He stated trucks could go down Dexter Corner and Greers Corner Road to avoid Main Street. He then asked Mayor Hatton if this answer was satisfactory for him.
- e. TA Townsend interrupted and said in all due respect, this is residents opportunity to make comments to Council to try and possibly influence what public policies to change and pursue in the future.
- f. Mr. Ruhman asked if traffic coming through Town wouldn't qualify for this. I'm taking Mayor Hatton's comments and commenting back to them.
- g. TA Townsend said it does, you can say your piece but you are not entitled to quiz and cross examine the Council.
- h. Mr. Ruhman asked why, aren't they working for me? Aren't they my Council?
- i. TA Townsend stated this is your opportunity to say what you want to say and if they would like to answer it they can but they are not under obligation to do that.
- j. Mr. Ruhman asked why his Council isn't obligated to answer his questions. Isn't that what the meetings are for? Aren't citizens entitled to voice their opinions?
- k. TA Townsend said it doesn't work that way. You have been invited to voice your opinion, you were given the floor and told Council what you wanted. However, it isn't an opportunity to quiz the Council. This is about citizens' suggestions for making policies in the future. That is what this is for.
- l. After a long discussion, Mr. Ruhman stated again that DelDots decision not to enforce a weight limit on Main Street and re-route traffic is not acceptable to him and shouldn't be to Council. They need to step up and tell DelDot it isn't acceptable for their citizens. Why won't they step up and do this.
- m. TA Townsend said Council could draft a resolution but it could be a waste of time. DelDot is the entity to lobby on this issue.
- n. Mr. Ruhman said he doesn't understand why Council accepts this and won't fight for their citizens and added he doesn't know why TA Townsend is stepping in on Town Council problems.
- o. TA Townsend said he attends many public meetings and from time to time people need be reminded that these meetings are an opportunity to see their government at work and there is an opportunity at the end of the meeting to express themselves and their dis-satisfaction or

satisfaction of policies. It is not an obligation of volunteer commissioners during the course of a meeting to answer direct questions that may or may not be relevant to what is on the agenda. It is not a time to pester or harass them. You can schedule a meeting at Town Hall with anyone on Council to discuss your issues.

- p. Mr. Ruhman stated he doesn't agree with this, Town Council meetings are held for just this reason, which is why they are public meetings, for us to grill the people that work for us, that we elected into office. He then asked Mayor Hatton to provide him with the name and number of the person he talked to at DelDot and he will pursue it with them.

IX. Adjournment: 9:07 pm, CW Gorman motioned, CM Sutton seconded with unanimous vote.
