

TOWN OF TOWNSEND
March 7, 2012
Council Meeting Minutes

7:00 pm – Public Hearing

- I. Call to Order:** 7:13 pm
 - II. Roll Call:** Mayor Steve High, Councilwoman Sandy Sturgis, Councilman John Ness, Councilman Dwain Haines, Secretary Cathy Beaver. (Not present Councilwoman Karen Jennings, Attorney Fred Townsend, Town Manager Dawson Green, Finance Officer Azure DeShields)
 - III. First & Second Reading: Ordinance No. 12-02 – Comprehensive Plan Amendment –** CW Sandy Sturgis
 - a. CW Sturgis motioned, CM Ness seconded with unanimous vote to read Ordinance No. 12-02 by title only.
 - IV. Adjournment:** 7:15 pm, CW Sturgis motioned, CM Ness seconded with unanimous vote.
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7:30 pm – Council Meeting

- I. Call to Order:** 7:30 pm
- II. Opening Ceremonies**
 - a. Roll Call: Mayor Steve High, Councilwomen Sandy Sturgis and Karen Jennings, Councilmen John Ness and Dwain Haines, Attorney Fred Townsend, Town Manager Dawson Green, Finance officer Azure DeShields, Secretary Cathy Beaver
 - b. Pledge of Allegiance: Pledge was said.
 - c. Recognition of Visitors: 21
- III. Additions/Deletions to Published Agenda:**
 - a. CW Sturgis asked to add Principal Sheppard to the agenda under new business.
 - b. CW Sturgis asked to table the discussion of the Lupo property to the workshop on 3/21/12.
 - c. Agenda approved by general consensus.
- IV. Council Minutes – Approval of February Council minutes (copies on back table)**
 - a. Minutes were approved by general consensus.
- V. Unfinished Business**
 - a. Course of action for 626 Commerce Street – CW Sandy Sturgis
- VI. New Business**
 - a. Council trip to Washington DC – CW Sandy Sturgis
 - CW Sturgis motioned, CM Ness seconded to have the Town sponsor the trip for Council to attend the DLLG trip to Washington DC.
 - Vote – unanimous.
 - b. Voter Registration Dates – CW Karen Jennings
 - Saturday – April 7, 2012 - 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
 - Two (2) evening dates (prior to April 21, 2012) – 4:00 pm – 8:00 pm
 - CW Jennings asked M High if these are the dates for voter registration. CW Jennings read the above as it is written on the agenda. She added that the two evening dates will be announced.
 - c. Principal Sheppard – Townsend Elementary School (TES)
 - Mayor High introduced Principal Sheppard and added that he is getting ready for some school renovations once school is out in June. Mayor asked him to address this with the residents.
 - Principal Sheppard said that several years ago we passed a no tax increase referendum that included renovations to TES. The State sped up having the funds available, we weren't supposed to get them until next year, so will start renovations early. We have built the new elementary school on Old State Road so they will be able to house all the TES students for the next school year enabling the renovations to be done without students in house. TES will be closed for one year.
 - Most of the work being done is interior work. Very little work on the outside. Some work on the roof and a small awning will be added. There will very little traffic, minimal impact on the Town.
 - Principal Sheppard said they are very excited about this.
 - Mayor High asked if anyone had questions, none did.

VII. Reports of the Officers

a. State Police: Lt. LaMarche

- CM Ness said Lt. apologizes for not being able to make it to the meeting.
- CM Ness added that as the weather stays nice and lighter later, be aware of kids outside and please tell your children the park closes at dusk.
- If anyone has any questions, issues, comments or suggestions please let me know.

b. State Representative: Quinn Johnson

- Quinn said he has a police issue to discuss. We have discussed the ATV and motorcycle issue before. They go all over and ride the railroad tracks. St. Anne's Church in Middletown has a piece of property that they run on often. They ride from Middletown to Townsend, I know you feel like it does no good to call the police, but it is illegal to ride them on the tracks and the police ask that you please call if you see them. Also get a good description if possible. The purpose of the call is to discuss in the morning meetings and get trends. The Middletown Police did get two of them and confiscated the bikes. Please call the police.
- Rt. 71 from the Shorestop at Rt. 13 through Middletown is slated to be re-paved this spring. It will be done in sections.
- We went back in session this week. There are tons of things on the agenda. When I come here I try to talk about items that are specific to Townsend interests. You can go online anytime and track a bill you are interested in and can email me anytime with questions or comments.
- I work on a lot for individuals with a disability and our aging population. This bill will help get some universal design in homes and business'. No step entries, bathtub rails, wider hallways and doors, etc.
- Amazon is up and running. If you go to Home Depot you will see large piles of dirt around. You will be surprised how fast this will go, want to be done by October. The site work has been awarded to a Delaware contractor and the infrastructure work has been awarded to a Delaware contractor. The electrical contract was awarded to a Georgia contractor. They put in the lowest bid but assured us they will be hiring local electricians. It is the shell of the building they want to get up quickly, just like Johnson Controls. There will be a lot of work for local people.
- Waste Industries (IDS) has a proposed property on Rt. 13 and Rt. 1. Not sure if they will be moving everything out of Town but they wanted room for 70 plus trucks and a bay for wash down, basically a much larger facility. They are looking to expand and want to get out there. This will reduce truck traffic through Town which some residents were concerned about. There is opposition from the people who live close to the site. This does have to go through a county process, if they meet all the requirements they will move there.
- Mayor High thanked Quinn for all he does for the Town.

c. Townsend Fire Department: Keith Shoemaker/Jeff Dawson

- Jeff is sick and couldn't make the meeting.
- The women are having a spring craft show on March 24, 2012.
- The chicken and dumpling dinner was a success, ran out of dumplings at 5:45 and had to close the doors. I didn't even get any.
- CM Haines has spring fling tickets if anyone wants to purchase one.
- If anyone wants to rent the hall call the fire company for details.
- Mayor High said the chicken and dumplings were very good.

VIII. Reports

a. Town Attorney Fred Townsend III:

- Nothing to report, things are very quiet. That is a good sign.

b. Town Engineer Tom Wilkes: Out sick.

c. Town Manager Dawson Green:

- IT Bid – award contract – Mr. Green said we only received one bid from Versalign. He will put a summary sheet together for Council to discuss at the workshop.

- CW Jennings asked if anyone could put things on our website. She stated residents are looking for the February Council minutes online.

IX. Committee Reports

a. Finance Committee: Chair – Mayor Steve High

- December, January & February reports (copies on back table)
- Mayor High asked Azure to read the current finance report.
- Total assets - \$3,185,175.66 as of February 29, 2012.
- Total liabilities and Equity - \$3,154,102.44 as of February 29, 2012.
- Mayor High stated the reports for December, January and February are on the back table.

b. Streets Committee: Chair – CM Dwain Haines

- TVII Street Review – no update.
- CM Haines saw the sign for TVII on Wiggins Mill Road is damaged and needs to be replaced.
- The light that shines up on the flag of the war memorial by the post office is out and needs replaced.

c. Health & Public Welfare Committee: Co-chairs: CM John Ness & CM Dwain Haines

- Proclamation – CM John Ness
- CM Ness said there is a local person who is a supporter and is able to assist people who are victims of incest. He is asking Council to support this by proclamation declaring April 1st as incest awareness day. He added that there is support and website information if anyone is interested that is available at the Town Hall.
- Mayor High asked CM Ness to read the proclamation, which he did as follows:

Proclamation

WHEREAS, Incest Awareness Day 2012 is a promotional event for the release of the first book written by author, ALANI – Advocating Liberation and Non-oppression in Incest; and

WHEREAS, individuals and organizations alike can stand with ALANI to expose the darkness and silence of the life-altering traumatic world of incest; and

WHEREAS, those affected (whether as a victim, perpetrator or spouse of a victim or perpetrator) are encouraged to speak out against the destruction of individuals and families in our community at the hands of family sexual abuse; and

WHEREAS, those affected make a vow to seek and take responsibility for their own healing from family sexual abuse; and

WHEREAS, those not personally affected by incest vow to extend a helping hand and demonstrate expressions of love and compassion rather than that of judgment and condemnation; and

WHEREAS, individuals and organizations alike can stand with ALANI to acknowledge that we are all touched by incest whether or not we are the victims;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved, that the Town of Townsend Mayor and Council hereby proclaim the first day of April as Incest Awareness Day, and with ALANI encourage all citizens to recognize the importance of coming together in unity to save lives and overcome what can potentially be lasting pain as a result of incest and to support and/or participate in any planned events.

INCEST AWARENESS DAY
April 1st

- Council approved the proclamation by general consensus.
 - Resident Mr. Rocke asked CM Ness what the police say about this proclamation.
 - CM Ness said “about”?
 - Mr. Rocke said about the Town getting involved. Legally where does this go?
 - CM Ness said he doesn’t believe the police have an opinion. This proclamation is showing support for a support group and supplying information to anyone that is interested and wants to support this. We aren’t advocating anything, just supplying information where needed.
 - Mr. Rocke asked if we are stepping on any toes.
 - CM Ness said no, they contacted us and asked if we could pass this information on. It is a local person that has a support group and a website. We aren’t passing on any legal information. I can ask the attorney but believe it is a non-issue.
 - Mr. Rocke asked who has checked out this person who wants to help.
 - CM Ness said we talked to them and checked out the website.
 - Mr. Rocke stated we all know websites, things can happen.
 - Mayor High asked Fred if there are any legal issues with supporting this proclamation.
 - Fred said no, this proclamation isn’t designed to address the concerns of any one person, it is an awareness device to promote concerns and activities of a group called ALANI – Advocating Liberation and Non-oppression in Incest. I assume there are other Towns that are supporting this also. This is a unique situation, but there are no commitments here that should cause the Town to pause before supporting this by proclamation.
 - Ness said he mentioned this to Lt. LaMarche and he gave no indication for a yea or nay.
- d. Energy & Environment Committee: Chair –CW Karen Jennings
- Townsend Wildlife Habitat Project
 - I. If you are interested in certifying you back yard as a habitat, please email me.
 - Astronomy Night in the Park
 - I. We had an astronomy night in the park on Saturday night which got clouded out. Transparency was really poor but a few people came out and got a chance to look at Venus and Jupiter. They look like bright stars but are actually planets.
 - II. Right now it is really incredible. Mars is the closet to earth right now that it will be until 2014, is very bright.
 - III. Having another astronomy night in the park this Saturday night from sunset to 9:00 pm. Come out if you want to see the planets. The moon is very bright and beautiful now.
 - IV. You can contact me by email or on the Town facebook page.
- e. Veteran Affairs Committee: Co-Chairs – CW Karen Jennings & CM Dwain Haines
- Project 19734 Soldier Support
 - I. CM Haines stated project 19734 in ongoing.
 - II. Please bring your coupons, even expired coupons in so we can send them to our veterans overseas.
 - Veteran Plaque foundation
 - I. CW Jennings said we will have the plaque installed in better.
 - II. Mayor High told CW Jennings the cost of the plaque foundation...
 - III. CW Jennings said we’ll have a whole dedication ceremony for it.
 - IV. Mayor High stated CW Jennings needs to make a motion to spend money for the foundation.
 - V. CW Jennings said right now. She then asked Mr. Green if he were prepared to speak about the bids he received or any information he has regarding the plaque installation.
 - VI. Mr. Green said no.
 - VII. CW Jennings asked if spring or summer would be better for the dedication ceremony and asked Mr. Green how bids he had come in.
 - VIII. Mr. Green said two (2).
 - IX. CW Jennings said they will look them over and discuss them next month.

- f. Police Committee: Chair – CM John Ness
 - Townsend Community Watch
 - CM Ness reiterated that if residents see anything suspicious to call the police.
 - He asked residents to be aware of kids outside with the nicer weather.
 - Bud Higgins: nothing to add.
 - Mr. Rocke asked if we heard any more about the white pick-up.
 - CM Ness said no, the police are still investigating it.
 - g. Parks & Recreation Committee: Co-chairs - CW Sandy Sturgis & Mayor Steve High
 - Easter Egg Hunt
 - I. CW Sturgis said the date for the Easter Egg Hunt will be April 14 with a rain date of Sunday, April 15. Start time is 11:00 am. We are looking for volunteers to help hide eggs etc. This is for residents only. You will receive a postcard in the mail and must bring it with you; it is your invitation to participate.
 - II. If you want to volunteer or have questions call me or Cathy at the office.
- X. Announcements:** Mayor High read the following announcements.
- a. If you are interested in running for Town Council, the candidate packets are available at the Town Hall.
 - b. Petitions of Candidacy must be turned into the Town Hall by 4:00 pm on April 5, 2012.
 - c. You must be registered to vote at the Town Hall to vote in Town elections, even if you are already registered to vote in State and National elections.
 - d. Elections will be held Saturday, May 5, 2012 at the Town Hall. Voting will be from 8:00 am – 6:00 pm. There are two (2) seats up for election this year, those held by Mayor Steve High and Councilwoman Sandy Sturgis.
- XI. Citizens Comments & Participation**
- a. Resident Diane Hanlin asked why we are having the Easter Egg Hunt after Easter.
 - b. Mayor High said we will shift and adjust the dates.
 - c. The Easter Egg Hunt will be on Saturday, March 31 with a rain date of Sunday, April 1st starting at 11:00 am.
- XII. Adjournment:** 8:06 pm

THE AGENDA ITEMS AS LISTED MAY NOT BE CONSIDERED IN SEQUENCE. THIS AGENDA IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE TO INCLUDE THE ADDITION OR THE DELETION OF ITEMS, INCLUDING EXECUTIVE SESSIONS WITH THE TIME TO BE DETERMINED