



**Townsend Council Public Hearing & Meeting
Minutes
December 20, 2017**

6:45 pm – Public Hearing

- I. Call to Order: 6:48 pm
- II. Roll Call: Mayor Rudy Sutton, CM Jermaine Hatton, CW Lorraine Gorman, CW Cindy Cook, CM Steve High, TE June Andres, TC Cathy Beaver
- III. Pledge of Allegiance: The pledge was said.
- IV. Discussion of Ordinance No. 17-06 – Zoning Change from R-AA to R-2, parcels 25-003.00-002 (0 Main Street and 25-003.00-003 (600 Main Street)
 - CW Gorman said the zoning change in this ordinance is changing it from R-AA, an active adult zoning to R-2 which is a single-family home.
 - CM High asked if there are any benefits or negatives in this ordinance.
 - CW Gorman said no, not sure why they were zoned AA.
 - CM Hatton said the current owner requested the AA zoning several years ago with intentions of building an active adult home there and the issue now is it is easier to sell land with R-2 zoning.
 - Mr. Haines asked where the property is.
 - CM Hatton said where the old Yellow Bucket was.
 - CM Hatton motioned to move Ordinance No. 17-06 to the council meeting for possible approval, CW Gorman seconded with unanimous vote.
- V. Adjournment: 6:51 pm, CM Hatton motioned, CW Gorman seconded with unanimous vote.

7:00 pm – Council Meeting

- I. Call to Order: 7:00 pm
- II. Opening Ceremonies
 - a. Roll Call: Mayor Rudy Sutton, CM Jermaine Hatton, CW Lorraine Gorman, CW Cindy Cook, CM Steve High, TE June Andres, TC Cathy Beaver
 - b. Pledge of Allegiance: The pledge was said.
 - c. Recognition of Visitors: 6
 - d. Announcements:
 - Town Hall closed Monday and Tuesday, December 25 and 26th for the Christmas Holiday
 - Town Hall closed Monday, January 1, 2018 for New Year's Day
 - Christmas Tree pick-up – Monday, January 8, 2018
- III. Additions/Deletions to Published Agenda:
 - a. CM Hatton asked to delete 6a and 6c.
 - b. CM High deleted 9 and 10.
 - c. CW Gorman motioned, CM Hatton seconded with unanimous vote to accept the agenda with the above deletions.
- IV. Council Minutes
 - a. Approval of 12/6/17 Council minutes
 - CM Hatton motioned, CW Gorman seconded with unanimous vote to approve the minutes.
- V. Mayors Report
 - a. Census 2020 discussion
 - Mayor Sutton said the Lucas census is only looking for addresses for mailings, don't want to send mailings out to vacant properties; deadline moved back to January 30, 2018 so we have time to do this.
 - CM Hatton verified this isn't the US census, it is the Lucas census and Mayor Sutton said yes; this was stated in last meeting.
- VI. Reports
 - a. Town Attorney Fred Townsend III: not here

- b. Town Engineers Aquilino Andres Jr.:
 - Nothing going on other than new home building permits for TVI and II.
 - CM Hatton asked how many new home permits have been approved since July.
 - TE Andres doesn't have the number with him, will email CM Hatton.
 - CM Hatton asked where things stand with the punch list for TVII West.
 - TE Andres said he hasn't heard from Sapperstein, TM Green said he was sending something out.
 - CW Gorman asked if this includes the grass fees owed the Town.
 - CM Hatton said no, they can't request anything from RVB until the grass fees are paid and escrow account replenished.
- c. Town Manager Dawson Green: not here

VII. Committee Reports

- a. Finance: Chair – CM Jermaine Hatton
 - Had some take aways from the last meeting to put some policies together concerning cash movements; working with accounting firm to come up with policy, want to make sure is a tight policy, Debbie Horn (auditor) wants to ensure it meets all accounting procedures. She is working on paper form with TM Green, FC Loboizzo and myself; hope to be done in early January.
 - Currently at \$654,000 in revenues, accelerating where we are versus the budget, could eclipse the budget number by the end of March. Have spent \$321,000 so revenue is higher than our expenses.
 - By January 15th, Council will have the calendar year close out numbers to the end of December. Going forward, Council should have reports emailed to them by the 15th of every month.
- b. Public Works: Chair – Mayor Rudy Sutton
 - Spoke to TM Green about our fire escape egress, never put finish on the wood and it wasn't in the contract. Wanted to have it done before the cold weather but will have George do it in the spring.
 - Want the punch list done on the Town Hall so TM Green can send it to Chris (Town Hall contractor) by the end of the year.
- c. Land Use & Development: Co-Chairs – CM Jermaine Hatton & CW Lorraine Gorman
 - Discussion/possible vote to approve Ordinance No. 17-06 – Zoning Change from R-AA to R-2
 - I. CW Gorman motioned to approve Ordinance No. 17-06, CM Hatton seconded with a unanimous vote.
 - Planning Commission Requests
 - I. CW Gorman said the Planning Commission sent an outline of their mission statement and several forms for Council to review. Everything is in Council folders and they would like our input.
 - II. Mrs. Albert asked that council review these forms. We felt the application form would be a good paper flow; keep a copy in the office and anyone could come in and see where the status is for an application for annexation. Recommend we charge a fee for re-zoning because of sending certified letters. The PC should have a budget; I mentioned this to TM Green who doesn't think it's necessary; however, if Council wants to know what the PC is spending, this would be a good way to track it. Other paperwork is what we would like added to the Town website; what the PC is and calendar of upcoming meetings, etc. Some of the things we deal with can take 60-90 days and the State doesn't want things to come in piecemeal, prefer all to come at same time.
 - III. CW Gorman asked Council to review the documents and provide comments to the PC by the next meeting.
 - IV. Mrs. Albert said the forms should be put on the website but people complain it is cumbersome.
 - V. CW Gorman stated the website will be revamped next year, and Council is open for suggestions on what the residents want to see and have on the website.
- d. Community Relations: Chairs – CW Cindy Cook

- “Let Your Lights Shine” contest is still going on. Collecting baskets for prizes, will announce the winners the day after Christmas but prizes will be awarded at the next Council meeting.
 - Thanked CW Gorman and Cathy for getting the newsletter together and mailed; looked good, as a resident I appreciated it.
 - Flag pole lights – looking into electric or solar lights to keep the flags lit at night at Town Hall and the park. Some holidays the flags aren’t put up if George isn’t in Town; would like permission from Council to research so can put lights up so flags are up at all times.
 - Mayor Sutton agrees we need to look into prices for both solar and electric lights.
 - Council all agreed and CW Cook will look into this; hope to have information by January meeting.
- e. Veterans Committee: Co-Chairs – CW Cindy Cook & CM Steve High
- CM High – nothing to report.
 - CW Cook said the VFW’s monthly breakfast is coming up. She added the Town may have a Veteran event here in February.
- f. Public Safety: Chair – CM Steve High
- Nothing new.
- g. Parks & Recreation: Chair – CW Lorraine Gorman
- Thanked the Townsend Fire Company for doing an amazing job bringing Santa around Town, had a whole army escorting Santa; kids were very excited, music was great, firemen walked the entire Town by the trucks and handed out candy canes.
 - Caroling was a great success, over 100 attended, thanked the United Methodist Church for their help again this year.
 - Easter egg hunt – 3/18/18
 - 3 Movies Under the Stars – 6/8/18, 7/13/18 and 8/10/18, second Friday each month
 - Annual Town Parade and Fair – 9/22/18
 - Christmas Caroling in the Park 12/9/18
 - An autism awareness event (organized by CW Cook) and other events can be added to the upcoming event schedule
 - CW Cook said several high school students will come to a meeting to explain the autism awareness project.

VIII. Citizens Comments & Participation

- a. Mr. Tait – pre-rental inspection, can any of Council meet with the landlords prior to a vote on this ordinance, there are 7 of us with questions?
- b. CW Gorman said Council is nowhere near ready to vote on this. She added she can meet with Mr. Tait anytime to discuss the draft of the ordinance.
- c. Mr. Tait asked how you will find landlords that don’t say they are landlords.
- d. CW Gorman said we will do the best we can and when found they will be assessed fines.
- e. Mr. Tait suggested Council drive through Town and see the many owner-occupied properties that are in worse shape than any rental properties; he said he has a huge problem with this and they (residents) aren’t dealt with in any way.
- f. CW Gorman agreed they should be addressed and asked Mr. Tait to give her the addresses he has with code violations.
- g. Mr. Tait said he complained about one a year ago about one of them and nothing has been done about it; CW Gorman asked for the address so she can look into it.
- h. CW Gorman stressed that Council isn’t after landlords, as a Council we should be enforcing our codes throughout Town.
- i. Mr. Tait said he was on Council in Delaware City for 2 years, feel it is important that people want to come into Town and fix properties; this will be a very expensive rental ordinance based on the draft and he added he owns property all over state. Smoke detectors and locks – ridiculous and could be expensive. There are two vacant homes by the old Town Hall that have been vacant for over 20 years and nothing has ever been done, nor have the owners ever had a notification.
- j. CW Gorman said Council is not looking to earn money from this ordinance; need a starting point and the entire ordinance can be changed, we are open to all suggestions.
- k. Mr. Tait asked who to contact to schedule a meeting.
- l. Mayor Sutton said TM Green as he has to be in the meeting as Town Manager.

- m. CW Gorman asked Mr. Tait if his questions could be asked in the public meeting when it is scheduled.
- n. CM High asked if Mr. Tait could submit questions and concerns to TM Green when he schedules the meeting so we all can be somewhat prepared prior to the meeting?
- o. CM Hatton asked how many properties are we talking about amongst the 7 landlords?
- p. Mr. Tait said possibly 20.
- q. Mayor Sutton asked Mr. Tait what part of the ordinance he feels is expensive?
- r. Mr. Tait said the registration fee. CW Gorman said there is a \$50.00 annual licensing fee per unit, (multiple or single) and there will be reinspection fees between tenants. Mr. Tait said New Castle County tried this and opted not to pass their ordinance because they didn't find any problems.
- s. CW Gorman said Council is not doing this to find problems; we want to ensure all residents are safe.
- t. Mr. Tait said won't argue with that but you won't find all the landlords, only the honest ones who come forward. There is a problem with dilapidated properties in Town that are owner occupied and nothing is done about any of them, get worse as the years go by. This is a major problem, worse than any landlord owned property in Town. Wilmington stopped their rental ordinance, only honest landlords call for inspections. Townsend can't withhold any services like Middletown as you don't supply electric or water.
- u. CW Gorman said we need to try to do something to ensure the safety of all residents in Townsend.
- v. Mr. Tait said have no problem with pre-rental inspections, have a problem with all the properties in Town that are out of compliance.
- w. CW Gorman agreed that more needs to be done about this.
- x. Mayor Sutton stated there have been many discussions with our inspector and we want to clean up the Town and help the residents; the ordinance has nothing to do with making money and the fees listed in the rental ordinance can still be adjusted. We understand how the landlords feel, but ask you to respect us, we only want to ensure all are safe.
- y. CM Hatton said 3-4 years ago we looked at many unsafe properties and all of them got letters with what had to be done to bring the property up to code. Some only had to be boarded up to meet code. I know the properties on South Street and hope they will sell but they meet code the way they are boarded up, nothing more we can do as they pay their yearly taxes, nothing else can we do.
- z. Mr. Tait gave several names of people Council can talk to; should charge a yearly fee for vacant homes. Elsmere charges \$100.00 per year for vacant property.
- aa. CM Hatton said the family that owns the 2 homes on South Street wouldn't care about the fee.
- bb. Mayor Sutton stated he appreciates all Mr. Tait's suggestions and Council will look into them.
- cc. Mr. Haines said car salesman on the corner has lots of u-hauls and asked if they have a license to rent them.
- dd. CM Hatton said no distinction, rent or sell, would fall under their business license.
- ee. Mr. Haines told Council not to send him the Holiday newsletter, put the postage for it toward his light bill.

IX. Motion to Recess for Executive Session – Executive session deleted from agenda.

XII. Adjournment: 7:52 pm, CM Hatton motioned, CM High seconded, with a unanimous vote.