

Working Session – 6:30 PM

The Working Session of the Denton Town Council was called to order by Mayor McNinch at 6:30 PM on this date. A moment of silence was held in memory of the Howard County Fire Fighter that lost his life earlier today, while battling a house fire.

Mayor McNinch lead everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

In Attendance:

Mayor McNinch, Councilman Branson and Councilman Johnson were present.

Councilman Lister arrived around 6:38 PM. Councilwoman Wilson was absent.

Staff present included - Mr. Don Mulrine, Town Administrator, Chief Rodney Cox, Lt. George Bacorn, Phil Clark, Superintendent of Public Works, Water and Waste Water Division, David Renshaw, Senior Codes Enforcement Officer, and Karen Monteith, Clerk-Treasurer.

Discussion:

Parking Kiosk / County Employee Discount

Mayor McNinch and Mr. Mulrine gave some history on the Town's plan to install parking kiosk around the Courthouse. The kiosks will accept cash or credit cards and make it more convenient for those utilizing the parking spaces to pay the meter fees.

Mr. Mulrine shared that an easement agreement had been provided to the County and the Commissioners requested an opportunity to discuss the agreement and consideration from the Town to offer a discounted parking permit for the court house staff.

Caroline County Commissioners Dan Franklin and Wilbur Levengood were present for the discussion.

Lt. Bacorn provided an overview on how the kiosk operates. The units are solar powered, with battery backups. Anyone wishing to park in a metered space will be required to key their vehicle tag number into a unit and purchase as much time as they need. There will also be an App available allowing individuals to easily pay and manage their parking needs right from their mobile devices. Lt. Bacorn stated that the Council will need to adopt legislation to amend the existing parking regulations if they wish to establish different time limits; designate certain spaces to be by permit only and to adjust fees. The kiosk can be programmed to accommodate many options.

Councilman Lister arrived at 6:38 PM.

Mayor McNinch shared that Easton offers discounted permits, which are \$300 a year for their premier parking lots, while other lots run about \$150. The Town will need to know how many permits the County is seeking.

Commissioner Franklin mentioned that a full-time staff member currently pays approximately \$1,040 a year in parking meter fees in Denton and they would like the Council to consider offering a discounted rate for their staff. They would probably need around 10 permits.

Councilman Lister mentioned that a letter was sent over a year ago trying to work with the County to negotiate a fair permit fee and explained the Town's goal is to promote movement in the meters to accommodate those that have a need to do business at the Courthouse, and other surrounding businesses. Sharing that he is supportive of offering a discount, but not for as low as \$150 a year, as was previously suggested by the County.

2018-18

Different fee amounts were discussed, as well as adding another handicap parking space in front of the Courthouse.

Mr. Mulrine said an employee would pay for an annual permit and then be given a code to key into the kiosk, no paper permits would be issued to be placed in the vehicle. Mr. Mulrine asked if the County would be willing to offer something as an offset and share in the loss of revenues to not burden Town Taxpayers.

Lt. Bacorn further explained that upon purchasing a permit, the employee will be given a code, rather than an actual permit to display in their vehicle, this will reduce enforcement time. The Officers will be using an electronic device for enforcement that will let the Officer know what vehicles have been paid for and which ones are non-compliant. Tickets will continue to be issued to any vehicle that is not compliant with the code.

Councilman Johnson talked with Lt. Bacorn about data storage requirements and privacy.

Commissioner Franklin felt the County would need about 10 permits – maybe up to 15; he will check and find out for sure.

The consensus of the Commissioners and some of the Council Members was to consider an annual parking permit fee discount.

The Town presently receives approximately \$15,000 a year in parking meter revenues. Discussion continued regarding if the Commissioners would consider reducing the Administration Fee that is assessed for handling the Town Taxes. Or guarantee to maintain the current rate, with no increases in the future; possibly consider not charging a fee for mosquito spraying, etc., These could help offset the loss of revenue and reduce the burden to the Town Tax Payers should the Council approve a parking discount.

The Commissioners agreed to discuss further the idea of an offset.

Mayor McNinch asked, if the Town implements a discounted parking program, what will happen if an employee does not comply and receives a ticket. Will the County continue to pay the employee's parking tickets and then deduct them from the tax differential that is provided to the Town?

Commissioner Franklin mentioned the only obstacle maybe for the shift workers at the Detention Center.

Additional discussion was held on how permits would work, how the permit program would affect shift workers, discounting for juror parking, whether refunds would be allowed on permits bought in advance, handicap parking locations and stripping.

The stripping of the parking spaces is automatically handled by the Town and Mayor McNinch mentioned it does not need to be a part of the proposal for implementing a discounted parking program.

In the end, the County Commissioners agreed to confirm the number of discounted parking permits to be considered and to discuss, as a board, the possibility of providing some type of offset to relieve some of the Town Tax Payers burden and loss of revenue.

The Town Council supported establishing a parking discount program; adding one additional handicap parking space on Market and to work on Ordinance changes.

The Council and the Commissioners thanked each other for their time and support.

2018-19

Mayor McNinch introduced Mr. Jim Beauchamp, of Centreville, who was interested in the parking discussion.

Tats for Tails Request

Tats for Tails recently submitted a request to the Police Dept. seeking permission to hold a parade in Town.

Chief Cox and Mr. Mulrine held discussion with the Council about what is involved when a parade is held in Town. Chief explained that parades require 8-10 officers to cover the intersections, as well as Public Works Staff, and the cost is substantial.

Lt. Bacorn suggested doing a cruise-in, instead of a parade.

Councilman Lister previously drafted a special event policy in Annapolis that he will share with staff and suggested to establish a fee for special events held in Denton.

Councilman Johnson shared information about MSP contracts which establish cost.

Chief Cox will speak with the Humane Society.

Waste and Recycling

Discussions continued about garbage collection, the new contractor, whether to provide cans, consider charging a fee for collections and establishing a recycling program.

Mr. Mulrine and Mr. Clark gave an overview on the existing laws that have established a policy requiring that all garbage shall be placed in containers with lids and nothing laying on the ground. The previous contractor was picking up everything, which increased the Town's landfill cost and there have been complaints received about items not being picked up. Staff started the notification process reminding the public about the policy that is in place and indicated it will take a few weeks to get everyone back into compliance with the regulations.

Some consideration was given to providing one 64-gallon container to each household, and to offer for property owners to be able to purchase or rent additional containers to accommodate their needs. Any fees would be included on the quarterly utility bill.

Discussions will continue pertaining to containers and offering recycling and staff will continue working to enforce the existing laws.

Planning & Codes Fee Increase Proposal

Discussion continue with Mr. Renshaw on the proposed permit fee increases.

Mr. Renshaw explained the proposal to increase permit fees is primarily to help offset staff's time and the cost to have MDIA handling the inspections, the heaviest and most costly work is with developers.

Mayor McNinch stated that she has no problem increasing fees for developers and commercial, however, she does have an issue with charging homeowners for improving their properties.

Councilman Lister inquired about the Town's role in building.

Mr. Renshaw explained the Town has a responsibility to comply with the International Building Codes that was adopted which sets the standards for building. And that it is his job to carry out the laws, those adopted by the Council, to protect the residents and homeowners in Town. Mr. Renshaw shared some examples of flaws and safety issues recently discovered, short-cuts taken by contractors, crossing property lines and further described the benefits of having code enforcement.

2018-20

Councilman Johnson shared that he understands that it is a necessity for Government process to protect neighbors, but they should not increase fees to cover the departments cost.

Councilman Lister shared that he is concerned about interfering too much, and that a property owner should be allowed to do what they want with their property.

Additional discussion was held about raising rental fees from \$25.00 to \$35.00, or per rental unit, except for locations with more than 25 units.

Discussion to be continued.

Water and Sewer Budgets

Mr. Mulrine providing an update on the FY2019 Water and Sewer Fund Budgets and announced that the bids for the WWTP UV Upgrade came in over budget. He has already reached out to MDE seeking more money.

WIFI

Mr. Mulrine provided an update on his discussion with Cambio regarding bringing WIFI – broadband to Town and a lease agreement for the water tower.

Other Miscellaneous

Caroline Goes Purple

In September, Caroline County is planning to go Purple to stand up against substance abuse. Discussion was held on ways the Town can promote and help participate.

Smoking in Buildings & Parks

Mr. Mulrine inquired about possibly updating the Town's Non-smoking Policy, establishing no smoking in parks, public events and expanding setbacks for areas around public buildings. Mr. Mulrine will obtain a policy adopted by the City of Dover for future discussion.

Summerfest

Mr. Mulrine shared that Governor Hogan, Lt. Governor Rutherford and Comptroller Franchot are all scheduled to attend the 30th Annual Summerfest in August.

Tennis Court Updates

Mr. Mulrine announced that the electrical power changes have been made to the Fourth St. tennis courts. The retreatment of the tennis courts will begin after Kids Camp finishes up on August 3, 2018.

FDR 80th Anniversary – Sept. 5, 2018

The planning for the ceremony to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's visit to Denton is coming along nicely. Mr. Mulrine is working on obtaining Proclamations to be presented during the 80th Anniversary Ceremony set for Sept. 5.

With no further business to discuss, McNinch closed the Working Session at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen L. Monteith
Clerk-Treasurer*