

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND THE TOWN COMMISSIONERS OF
BILTMORE FOREST HELD NOVEMBER 17, 2020.

Be it remembered by those that follow these proceedings that the Governing Board of the Town of Biltmore Forest met and conducted the following business:

Roll call taken by the Clerk:

Mayor George F. Goosmann, III, present

Commissioner Doris P. Loomis, present

Commissioner E. Glenn Kelly, present

Commissioner Fran Cogburn, present

Mr. Jonathan Kanipe, the Town Manager was present and Mr. William Clarke, the Town Attorney were also present.

Mayor Goosmann called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

Mayor Goosmann asked for a motion to approve the October 13, 2020 meeting minutes. The motion was made by Commissioner Cogburn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Kelly. Roll call was taken by the Clerk and the minutes were unanimously approved.

Chief Ryan Cole was not present to give the monthly report for the Skyland Fire Department.

Chief Chris Beddingfield said there were 720 calls last month. There were many issues with political signs not being compliant with the Town ordinance. A new idea this year was calling residents to let them know their sign was not in compliance rather than going on property and removing it. It was successful procedure and made those not in compliance less emotional over an emotional topic.

A major storm came through the area. Trees came down and roads were flooded. Several vehicles were also flooded in the middle of the road. Chief Beddingfield thanked Public Works and Mr. Kanipe for all the staff working together and helping during this time.

The drive through Halloween event was a success. There was a great deal of positive feedback about the event. A canopy was set up outside the police department and pre-bagged treats were distributed to trick-or-treaters. Chief Beddingfield thanked Ms. Jacobs for putting the treat bags together.

Chief Beddingfield discussed the delivery of two hybrid vehicles. They are currently at the outfitter and will be in service soon.

Commissioner Kelly thanked all the Town staff who have been working during these times which are very stressful right now.

Mr. Kanipe said the disinfectant machine arrived yesterday which should help tremendously. Chief Beddingfield said the air purifier also helps purifies the air.

Mayor Goosmann suggested having a drive through tree lighting ceremony with Santa Claus. The Board agreed and said this would be an excellent idea. Mr. Kanipe said they will check on Santa's availability first. Mayor Goosmann thanked the police department for all of their hard work.

Mr. Harry Buckner gave the report for Public Works. They are currently in leaf collection and brush collection mode. Mr. Austin Tucker retired and Mr. Buckner and Mr. Kanipe are working to fill this position. Mr. Buckner also said another position to fill will be Mr. Keith Bowman as he is retiring as well. Mr. John Divello put in his notice yesterday and will be moving on to work elsewhere.

Mr. Eric Anderson passed his pesticide license. Mr. Buckner wants all of the public works employees to be CDL certified. Mr. Buckner thanked the police department for helping with the

“hurricane” winds and clearing the roads. Within 24 hours, the road were cleared and the public works staff worked very hard.

Mr. Buckner mentioned the Greenwood Park restoration schedule which was included in the Board packet. The project will not start until spring.

Leaf and brush collection will keep staff very busy at this time. Commissioner Loomis asked if brush collection ended on the 15th of this month. Mr. Buckner said yes. Brush season will last until January if needed and can be picked up on an as needed basis. Mayor Goosmann said Mr. Buckner is doing an excellent job. Mayor Goosmann said Mr. John Divello will be missed and was an excellent employee. Mr. Buckner agreed.

The next topic of discussion was the sign ordinance update and discussion. Mr. Billy Clarke said the Board discussed the changes to make last month. “No trespassing” signs were mentioned. Mr. Clarke said they are supposed to be placed close to the boundary and not more than 200 feet apart. Mr. Clarke suggested to leave the no trespassing sign ordinance “as is.” Commissioner Loomis suggested security signs be set back 30 feet but she was not sure if that distance would be too far away. Mr. Clarke recommended dimensions of security signs and up to two locations for these types of signs. It cannot be in the right-of-way. Ten feet was agreed upon to be a reasonable distance.

Mr. Kanipe discussed the storm water capital improvement project update. This is the first project out of the stormwater master plan. The second part of the plan will include the pipe going under Park Road which discharges to the creek.

Mr. Kanipe asked the Board to discuss impacts on Ridgefield. Mr. Kanipe heard back from five residents about their thoughts on the closing of the intersection of Ridgefield and Hendersonville Road. Mr. Kanipe has received a great deal of feedback regarding people trying to turn left onto Ridgefield avoiding the traffic light at Eastwood. They did petition to Department of Transportation to get the traffic light changed to a flashing yellow light. There is also the issue of contractor traffic which is also an issue everywhere in Town but particularly in this location

because it is such a narrow road. Mr. Kanipe suggested to the Board this area really needs to be focused on by speaking to the residents in this area and also have staff see what impacts may be from an emergency services standpoint. Mayor Goosmann suggested considering speaking to the residents about having a no left turn and only a right turn and making that road a no entrance. Mr. Kanipe said the Department of Transportation may not have an objection to closing off Ridgefield.

Commissioner Cogburn suggested having Browntown and Cedarcliff closed off as well.

Commissioner Loomis and Commissioner Cogburn asked Mr. Kanipe to check on the online mapping, specifically related to how navigation systems route people into the Town. Chief Beddingfield said turning left onto Hendersonville road is definitely a safety hazard due to the many lanes of traffic. Mr. Kanipe said they will look into this situation further and discuss with residents.

Mr. Kanipe said the Town has been locked for eight months now due to COVID-19. In terms of personnel impacts, the Town has one employee working remotely which is working very well. In July, the Town developed a relationship with the a local urgent care to receive COVID-19 rapid tests. Coronavirus relief funds have reimbursed us for this testing. Mr. Kanipe is also asking all employees to continue monitoring their temperatures and symptoms. Mr. Kanipe is also asking employees to socially distance and wear a mask. Mr. Kanipe is very proud of the Town employees and accepting the challenges and working through them during this time.

The financial projections for the Town due to the COVID-19 crisis had some unknowns such as property tax and sales tax. Property tax so far has been relatively stable. Regarding sales tax, staff projected a 17.5% reduction and right now we are currently 12.5% higher than our projected revenues.

The town hall facilities remain closed to the public. The town hall is now open on an appointment only basis and doors remain locked. Mr. Kanipe and Ms. Jacobs have been physically present during the week and being available for people when they need to come by.

Commissioner Cogburn asked when the Christmas lights will be turned. Mr. Kanipe said Friday, December 4th.

Commissioner Loomis suggested informing the residents who are watching the meeting via Zoom, there is a doorbell to get to the police department if needed. Commissioner Loomis asked Chief Beddingfield if it has an intercom. Chief Beddingfield said no but they have discussed doing this.

Mr. Kanipe explained the North Carolina Capital Management Trust Portfolios and the changes made. Nothing will change in terms of interest rates for the next two years.

There was no public comment.

Mayor Goosmann received a suggestion from a resident to ban all signs in the Town. Mr. Clarke said it is unconstitutional for the Town to prohibit ideological or political signs. The size and location can be regulated. Mr. Clarke referenced the 2015 Supreme Court case Reed vs. Town of Gilbert, Arizona. Commissioner Loomis said we should all be educated further about this and suggested referencing this in the town newsletter.

Mayor Goosmann adjourned the meeting at 5:31 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, December 8, 2020.

ATTEST:



Ms. Laura Jacobs
Town Clerk



George F. Goosmann, III
Mayor