

Narrows Town Council Meeting
March 14, 2022

Councilman George Conley called the meeting to order. Council Members present were Clyde Turner, Sara Bowles, George Conley, John Mills, and Joe Goorskey.

Staff members present were Lindsey Caudill, John Davis, Susan Kidd, Benji Ratcliffe, and Debbie Thomas.

Attorney Mike Bedsaul was present.

Councilman John Mills gave the invocation.

Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Hearings

Councilman Conley opened the joint public hearing with the planning commission concerning the special exception for 905/907 Wolf Street.

Terry Nicholson said he was the chairman of the planning commission but because he is also an adjacent property owner to the properties they will be speaking about tonight he is going to abstain from voting and participating in the discussion concerning the special exception. He has asked John Mills to lead the planning commission's part of this and John Davis has prepared a staff report which is in council's packets and can answer any questions they may have.

Councilman Mills said staff will give a report outlining the special exception. After that, the applicant will be allowed to speak and after that if anyone in the audience has a comment they are welcome to speak at that time.

John Davis said he received an application for a zoning request at 909 Wolf Street in Narrows. According to the request, Douglas Meadows wants to place a 14'x70' trailer on a lot that he owns on Wolf Street. This property is not zoned for this type of application so Douglas Meadows applied for a special exception on the same property. Douglas Meadows has two lots there and both are non-conforming. He has gone through the process to combine those lots to make them one lot. If there are any questions or comments, he will answer them at this time.

Councilman Mills asked if the lots are combined into one will Douglas Meadows meet all of the setbacks?

John Davis said yes.

Councilman Mills asked Mr. Meadows if he would like to address council or the planning commission?

Douglas Meadows said no.

Councilman Mills asked if there was anyone in the audience that wished to speak on this matter?

Terri Fisher said she and her husband own 400 and 412 Main Street and the vacant lots behind 400 Main Street and next to 905 Wolf Street, which appears as two lots on the map given to council. They live at 412 Main Street and their parcels surround the properties on two sides. She wants to express that her comments tonight do not reflect on Buck and Missy because they are good neighbors. Her comments are concerning the placement of mobile homes on residential lots within town limits. She has to question why mobile homes in residential areas are considered a special-exception use when in the past they have been banned outright. Narrows has an amazing variety of housing within town limits at a number of different price points that make housing affordable for most people. There has been a lot of investment in housing over the last few years from new roofs and siding to renovations and new houses being built on empty lots where there were derelict houses. Mobile homes do not fit in with the character of houses in town as

they are not permanent by their very name. While they are not permanent, they usually do become permanent when they are placed. They do not age well or lend themselves to renovation like stick-built homes do and whether fair or not mobile homes bring with them a reputation that can bring down property values. They have mobile home parks in town specifically for this type of housing that brings some regulation with it however once a mobile home is placed on a residential lot it is much harder for the town to remove it. The special exception stays in place as long as the mobile home remains regardless of its condition. In this instance, the mobile home is being offered free of charge and they do not know anything about this mobile home. They do know that the two lots on Wolf Street will have to be combined, which John Davis says they have been, to create a single lot for the mobile home. They also know that the slope to the property will require significant site work to level it out or a foundation with a lot of skirting. While Buck and Missy may have no intention of selling the lot with the mobile home on it now they do not know if future circumstances may have them sell the property with the mobile home on it. The special exception remains in place as long as the mobile home remains, even if the ownership of the lot changes and then the special exception becomes the rule. The town will be setting a precedence if they approve this special exception for a mobile home on a residential lot. Please do not set that precedence. Thank you.

Councilman Mills thanked Terri Fisher for speaking. He asked if there was anyone else that wished to speak?

Cheryl Woolwine said she lives at 420 Main Street. Her landlord, David Kingrea, has already written the town on his feeling about this issue. She feels like this has always been a neighborhood of homes and she would like to keep it that way. She knows there is a housing problem but she really feels that property values will go down. She does object to this.

Councilman Mills said he feels compelled at this time to read the letter from David Kingrea:

To Whom it May Concern, My family has owned the property at 420 Main Street for over 80 years. We are very much opposed to a mobile home or homes being allowed a permit to locate at 905 and 907 Wolf Street behind our property. Please deny this request. My family does not plan on selling this property but believe this could be the beginning of more permits being issued if rezoning takes place. We vote no. Thanks Sincerely, David L. Kingrea.

Councilman Mills asked if there were any other questions or comments?

Audrey Roberts said she lives at 902 Wolf Street. She asked if there was a picture or diagram of how the mobile home would be placed on the property?

Councilman Mills said yes.

John Davis asked Councilman Mills if he was aware of the emails that were received concerning this?

Councilman Mills said no. The following is an email from Crystal Riddle:

To Whom it May Concern, My name is Crystal Riddle and my address is 904 Wolf Street. Me and my husband, Benjamin Dale Riddle, would like to both vote no on the mobile home being placed on the property as requested. My reason is that since the people have moved in they try to start problems with us over parking, even though our vehicles were parked with all four tires on the asphalt. They even went as far as calling the police and were advised that how the vehicles were parked was completely legal since all four tires were on the asphalt. They even told neighbors that their daughter stole one of their kittens even though she gave one back to them that was left out in the road. I just feel it will cause more problems than it is worth.

To Whom it May Concern, My name is Leah Riddle. My address is 904 Wolf Street and me and my husband Benjamin Eugene Riddle would like to both vote no to the mobile home being allowed to be put on the property as requested. The reason for my vote is that me and my husband had inquired about placing a mobile home on land in town limits at

one point and was told no and there was nothing that could be done about it. I just feel everyone should have to follow the rules as written.

Councilman Mills asked if there were any other comments? Does the applicant have anything they would like to say?

Douglas Meadows said no.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said the applicant does not have any comments to make but he believes one of the things they need to base their decision on is the guidance on when and how to grant special exceptions. It asks them to consider the compatible use with surrounding areas, if it is consistent with the intent of the ordinance, is it in the public interest, will it comply with all other provisions, laws, and ordinances. Can the applicant give them any information on how this fits in with the neighborhood or anything like that for them to go on?

Douglas Meadows said his sister had a trailer that she had to get rid of and he just wanted to give it to one of their kids so they had something to move into and start life so they did not have to pay rent.

Councilman Conley said the application does not list the year and model of the mobile home.

Councilman Mills asked council if they had any input concerning this? Hearing none the public hearing is closed. The planning commission will now meet in a separate room and make a recommendation to council.

Vice Mayor Goorskey made a motion to recess. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Conley deferred the chair back to Vice Mayor Goorskey.

Councilman Turner made a motion to return to open session. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Vice Mayor Goorskey said he would like to open the public hearing concerning the disposition of real estate at 126 Monroe Street.

Susan Kidd said 126 Monroe Street is property the town obtained with the ARC grant when they purchased the old Shuff building. This is the small apartment next door. They have had an offer to purchase that and the town has to have a public hearing for the disposition of that property before they can make that sale. She has received no public comments concerning this.

Vice Mayor Goorskey asked if anyone had any comments concerning the disposition of 126 Monroe Street? Hearing none he declared the public hearing closed.

Approval of February 14th Meeting Minutes

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the February 14th meeting minutes. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Abstain: Conley

Motion Carried 4-0

Consent Agenda

Susan Kidd said Cindy Laws went home sick and Landon Patteson is either coaching or refereeing rec games this afternoon.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said they will discuss the items in the consent agenda and then approve the entire consent agenda at one time.

Library Report

No comments.

Parks & Recreation Report

Councilmember Bowles said she is happy to say that the Green Wave Talent Night raised around \$1,100 for the adaptive swings at the park.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said a lot of kids are looking forward to the dance this week.

Councilman Turner said he would like to thank Lindsey Caudill for all of her work and effort for the upcoming events at the Farmer's Market.

Councilmember Bowles said she would like to echo that comment and her graphics are great.

Police Report

Councilman Mills said no citations have been issued for 9-miles or 14-miles over the speed limit. The police department is doing a great job.

Councilman Turner said some of the streetlights are still out.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said they did replace a bunch of bulbs last week, some that have been out for months. They did check right before AEP came and got some other ones on the list so work orders have been put in for those. Those will hopefully be replaced soon.

Financial Report/Treasurer's Report

No comments.

Director of Strategic Development's Report

Councilman Mills said that staff has been very tenacious in trying to resolve the issue across the street with the outfitter building. For the first time in a long time he believes they have a clear path to a resolution.

Vice Mayor Goorskey asked if they had any issues with their architect preparing plans?

Susan Kidd said they had a team meeting today and they seem to be moving ahead with that.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said the building is now considered a historical structure.

Public Works Director's Report

Councilman Mills said he wanted to thank John Davis for looking out after the town's money. The contractor tried to sell the town a bill of goods and it is not going to happen. Vice Mayor Goorskey is one of the best bricklayers he knows and if he looked at the work he would cringe.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said he did. He knows this is the same contractor that did some sidewalk work for the town and has some repairs to do on that as well.

John Davis said Simcon did all of the downtown revitalization including parking lots, concrete, and other things. All they lack is the brick-paved alleyway, a bricked patio, dumpster enclosures, and some concrete work. He does not have a timeframe.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said there are some items that need to be addressed before they receive their final payment.

John Davis said that is correct.

Vice Mayor Goorskey asked what is attributing to the water loss?

John Davis said they had found more leaks and some were pretty large. The utility foreman has stated that they have had some large sewer backups they had to help work on. When those things are fixed they will get back to leak detection. They are also working on obtaining new water meters because they feel that is a large part of their water loss.

Councilman Conley made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Communications, Concerns and Requests from the Public

Susan Kidd said the American Legion came to council in January because they had a substantial leak and asked for an adjustment to their utility bill, which council granted. They thought they had it fixed but it was not and they had to do some very extensive work. Their February and March bills were very high at \$800 one month and \$400 the other. It is now fixed and they have asked that the bills be adjusted back to a normal bill which would be \$46/month. The utility clerk has recommended they do an adjustment, if council is inclined to do so, and average it out. That would give them \$193 for one month and \$136 for the other month. The town would have to write off a little over \$1,000.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said when they make an adjustment to a utility bill the town absorbs the cost so all taxpayers in town pay that cost.

Susan Kidd said yes.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said he has had an adjustment in the past and believes that is very fair. He believes the American Legion is asking town residents to pay for this water loss so it is hard for him to go home and tell his neighbor that is what they have paid for. Is there a way to adjust it back to what the water costs the town?

Susan Kidd said they could do that. She said they did install two new pressure regulators, fittings in commodes, kitchen faucets, and a water heater.

Councilman Mills made a motion to adjust the two water bills to what the water cost the town and limit it to this incident. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Tom Garrett said he would like for council to find a location where the July 4th fireworks can be set off so people do not have to leave the park. He does not know what those options are but he feels that having everything set up and then telling people that have tried to get in the park all day they need to go somewhere else to see the fireworks is the wrong direction. Please try to find a location where they can stay in the park and see the fireworks. He has been watching the news recently and he wanted to express his sympathy toward the upcoming budget. He sees expenses going up in all categories and revenues dropping in several and that makes it difficult to balance a budget.

Audrey Roberts said regarding last year's fireworks, she is a veteran and has service-connected PTSD. She tries to distance herself from fireworks as much as possible because of it. When she found out last year that fireworks were going to be set off near where she lives, she became very upset. It was a consolation to her that she could go on her balcony and see them being set off and realize they were just fireworks. She is not the

only veteran in town and not the only one with PTSD but she believes it would be a nice consideration if they could have adequate warning to distance themselves from things that are very upsetting.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said it would be nice to not only announce when there would be fireworks but where they would be firing them from.

Communications from Mayor and Council

Councilman Mills said there was no points discussed that affected the Town of Narrows at the last PSA meeting. They did agree and there was some discussion previously when they help each other to establish a stipend or figure to that effect. His position is that they are now getting along really good so he voted to leave it like it is. They try to help based on need. They talked about some more water sources but that is an ongoing debate and obstacle.

Councilmember Bowles said she has had a couple of people in town asking about the July 4th fireworks being returned to the park. She teaches with the father of one of the guys that was with the band Barren Minds and last year he asked her if he could see the fireworks from inside the park and she had to explain to him he would have to try to beat the traffic to go to another place to watch them. She has a front-row seat to the park so why should people exit the park and have to move. It feels different not being at the park. That is parks and rec's event.

Councilman Mills asked if there were any reasons they could not do it at the park?

Vice Mayor Goorskey said he knows the reason they were moved was because it was a Covid-related event they could not have at the park but still wanted fireworks. The overwhelming feedback council heard was that people loved it and they wanted them done in the same place again. They are also now realizing that it has created an issue with people paying to get into the park and having to leave to watch the fireworks. The only other comment he heard on it was where they are set off at the park, if it is humid, the area gets very smoky and cloudy so it is hard to see them from inside the park itself. They did not know if there were any other locations that could be used and the fireworks still be viewed from the park.

John Davis said he has been involved with the fireworks for the last 28 years. The spot they set them off at the park has a mountain on one side and a mountain on the other side so there is no proper fallout. The people in the park are there for events and attractions in the park, not the fireworks. Most people stand outside the gates and park on the street to watch the fireworks, he has seen it for years. Logistically, having them at the park is a nightmare. They have to shut down Route 61 and Old Wolf Creek Road.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said when they have the fireworks at the park it takes about an hour to clear traffic. Since they have moved the location traffic is so much better and people are out in around 30 minutes.

Councilman Mills said that was why the question was posed, to get feedback. They have to have confidence in the people that are working for them. As bad and as offensive as it can be to some people they have to do what is the safest and what is best for the most people.

John Davis said the property they set the fireworks off on near the park does not belong to the town but belongs to the Day family. Mr. Day recently passed away so he does not know if they can get permission to have them there anymore. If they do he will not have anything to do with setting off the fireworks there.

Councilman Mills said it sounds like if that option is not available they need to find one because the way he described the conditions at the park he is not down with that at all.

Lindsey Caudill said her suggestion would be that if they cannot find another place to set off the fireworks safely and have proper fallout they could start the festival and end it earlier.

Debbie Thomas said the Town of Abingdon is taking several nights and going to different locations to set off a few fireworks to see where the best location would be.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said he has thought about that too and different landowners could be contacted to see if that could happen. What size of an area would they need?

John Davis said they would need 100' inch and the biggest shell they set off is 6 inches so they would need a 600' radius. He hates to take people away from the park as much as anyone and has always enjoyed the festivities but it is just not a good place right now.

Councilman Mills said Narrows is known for a lot of things but they do July 4th and Christmas better than anyone and would like to continue those traditions.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said it sounded like the place they set off the fireworks last year was not an option anymore but do they know that.

Lindsey Caudill said it is an option. They could create something for people to donate toward fireworks.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said he has a feeling that with the momentum from the parks and rec committee and vendors they will be able to put together a list of quite a few things to do, to come and see, and spend the day at the park.

Councilman Mills said since there are veterans in town, and the town has received permission, they should have the fireworks where they did last year.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said he does not mind having the town look at other locations for the fireworks and tell council what other options there are, if there are any.

Councilman Mills said they can look at other locations since they do not have to decide tonight.

New Business

Susan Kidd said the parks and rec commission recommended and are asking council to appoint Phillip Fillinger and Bobby Lucas to the parks and rec commission.

Councilman Mills made a motion to appoint Phillip Fillinger and Bobby Lucas to the Narrows Parks and Recreation Commission. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Vice Mayor Goorskey said it has become increasingly harder for him to attend the PSA meetings and he would like for council to consider naming John Mills as the PSA meeting attendee and himself as the alternate.

Councilman Conley made a motion to change appointments to reflect John Mills as the PSA meeting attendee and Joe Goorskey as the alternate. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Unfinished Business

Vice Mayor Goorskey said council will now hear the recommendation from the planning commission concerning the special exception for 905-907 Wolf Street.

Councilman Mills said the planning commission convened and discussed the application in length with the applicant. There was a unanimous decision, based on the facts and comments they received, that council deny the request.

Councilman Goorskey made a motion to amend the agenda to add consideration of the application regarding the special exception for 905-907 Wolf Street. Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Goorskey made a motion to deny the special exception application for 905/907 Wolf Street. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Vice Mayor Goorskey said council now needs to take action on the approval or disapproval of real estate at 126 Monroe Street.

Susan Kidd said the town has an offer from Aubrey and Amy Huffman to purchase real estate at 126 Monroe Street in the amount of \$20,000. The money will go back into the grant project.

Councilman Mills made a motion to accept the proposal from Aubrey and Amy Huffman to purchase real estate at 126 Monroe Street in the amount of \$20,000. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Matters for Consideration by Council

Vice Mayor Goorskey said council is being asked to approve retaining pre-audit services from Mary K. Earhart, CPA.

Susan Kidd said some of the work that has to be done for the auditors can only be done by a CPA.

Councilman Conley made a motion to retain pre-audit services from Mary K. Earhart, CPA. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Vice Mayor Goorskey said council is being asked to consider donating to the Giles – Narrows After Prom 2022.

Susan Kidd said in the past council has donated \$200-\$300.

Councilman Mills made a motion to donate \$300 to the Giles – Narrows After Prom 2022. Councilman Conley seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Vice Mayor Goorskey said council is being asked to consider donating to the New River Community College Educational Foundation.

Susan Kidd said council has not donated to this in the past.

Councilman Mills asked Susan Kidd what her thoughts were on this?

Susan Kidd said she believes this is a good cause but you cannot give to all of them.

Councilman Mills made a motion to deny the request from the New River Community College Educational Foundation. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Vice Mayor Goorskey said council is being asked to consider approving a resolution for the Narrows Volunteer Fire Department to provide EMS services.

Mike Bedsaul said the fire department is wanting to provide emergency medical services and run an ambulance and has been in contact with the Virginia Department of Health concerning this. The fire department was also requesting a resolution from each locality where they house the ambulance itself. In addition to that there is a form or a 'signature page' they have to include with their application to the Virginia Department of Health that has to be signed by a local government representative. The way this form is laid out suggested to him that it may only need to be signed by the county. He contacted their regional representative with the Virginia Department of Health with the Office of Emergency Services and his name is Paul Fleenor and he said they only needed a resolution from the county. The purpose of this resolution is to authorize a volunteer fire department, or an emergency medical services agency, to operate their service within a locality. By adopting this resolution council would be saying that they meet all the regulations of the Virginia Department of Health and that council approves the fire department operating the service within the jurisdiction. Mr. Fleenor said the reason they only require a resolution from the county is because the county is the one that sponsors the emergency response plan. He received a copy of Giles County's resolution that was adopted on March 2, 2022, and it does state the fire department can operate EMS services in the Town of Narrows as well as Giles County. Mr. Fleenor said Narrows Town Council is welcome to adopt a resolution but it is not required.

Vice Mayor Goorskey asked members of the fire department if they would feel better if council did adopt a resolution to this effect?

Elwood Lambert said it would make his heart feel better.

Vice Mayor Goorskey made a motion to adopt a resolution for Narrows Volunteer Fire Department to provide EMS services within the Narrows town limits.

Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Vice Mayor Goorskey said council is being asked to schedule a budget workshop

Councilman Conley made a motion to schedule a budget workshop on March 23, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Vice Mayor Goorskey said council is being asked to consider allowing the Henry Reed Festival to use the Lurich ballfield June 9-12.

Susan Kidd said Terry Reed contacted her last week concerning this. They held the festival at Glen Lyn for years and then moved it to Newport. The festival attracts people from all over the United States and he wants to hold it this year in a very abbreviated form. They would not have big bands or a stage but mostly tents and jam sessions. They had mentioned Camp Success but it would be hard to hold it there since they cannot block the boat ramp. She spoke with Landon Patteson on using the ballfield and he is in favor of it.

Vice Mayor Goorskey said the only concern he had is that June 9-12 they should have fencing up at the ballfield and wonders if that takes into consideration the amount of space they need.

Susan Kidd said Terry Reed stated they only needed enough space to pull in a few pop-up campers and the bathrooms would be available for them to use. They only need space to pitch large tents where they can have their jam sessions. This year will not be as formal.

Councilman Conley said his biggest concern is weather. If it rains they will tear up the ballfield.

Susan Kidd said they would not allow them to go across the ballfield.

Councilman Mills made a motion to allow the Henry Reed Festival to use the Lurich ballfield June 9-12. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Mills made a motion to go into executive session to discuss real property (216, 300, and 302 Main Street) (Sec. 2.2-3711.A.3). Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Turner made a motion to return to open session. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Certification

WHEREAS, the Town of Narrows, has convened an executive meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative-recorded vote and in accordance with the provision of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act: and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification of the Town Council that such executive meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia Law:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE Town of Narrows hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia Law were discussed in the executive meeting to which this certification resolution applies: and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the executive meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Town Council.

ATTEST: _____

Councilman Mills made a motion to accept the certification. Councilman Conley seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Conley made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Clerk, Debbie Thomas

Mayor, Tom Spangler