

Narrows Town Council Meeting
July 11, 2022

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

Staff members present were John Davis, Susan Kidd, Landon Patteson, Benji Ratcliffe, and Debbie Thomas.

Councilman Mills gave the invocation.

Council and audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Joint Public Hearing with Planning Commission

Mayor Spangler read a thank-you note from Benny Johnson's family for the flowers sent after his passing.

Mayor Spangler opened the joint public hearing concerning a special permit exception application for Leea Smith.

Terry Nicholson, chairman for the Planning and Zoning Commission, said the following Planning and Zoning Commission members were present for the joint public hearing: Jerry Rhodes, Carolyn Kirby, John Mills, and himself. Leea Smith would like to be allowed to operate an Airbnb at 103 Brookman Street, also known as a short-term rental. The adjacent property owners at 101 Brookman Street, 105 Brookman Street, 105 Fairview Street, and a vacant lot across from the property were notified of the public hearing by certified mail and a posting on the property. The property is currently zoned as R-2, General Residential District. Tourist homes are not allowed as a permitted use but can be allowed as a special exception. Adjacent properties to the north (Fairview Street), south (across Brookman Street), and east/west are zoned R-2 General Residential District. The adopted Future Land Use in the Comprehensive Plan remains as R-2 General Residential and the adjacent properties all maintain their current zoning. Tourist homes are only allowed by special exception in the R-2 Zoning District. Section 17-603.01 of the Narrows Zoning Ordinance states the following: *The intent of the General Residential District is to encourage residential neighborhoods and to stabilize and protect the essential character of such neighborhoods in accordance with the Town of Narrows Comprehensive Plan. The regulations for this district tend to protect against encroachment of commercial, industrial, and other uses likely to generate noise, crowds, large concentrations of traffic, light, dust, odors, smoke, and other obnoxious influences.* Council recently passed on May 5, 2022, a Transient Lodging Tax Ordinance and it outlines how lodging taxes are to be collected and paid by short-term rental owners and/or their intermediaries (VRBO, Airbnb, etc.). The ordinance requires the registration of a short-term rental provider with the town treasurer and monthly reporting and remittance of taxes. The ordinance also specifies penalties for failure to comply. The following is the wording for special exceptions and how a special exception within a particular zoning district: *When, after review of an application and hearing thereon, in accordance with Article 17-800 herein, the Narrows Town Council finds as a fact that the proposed use is compatible with the surroundings uses, is consistent with the intent of this Ordinance and of the Comprehensive Plan, is in the public interest, and will comply with all other provisions of law and ordinances of Narrows, the following uses may be permitted with appropriate conditions: 17-603.03-2 Boarding houses; tourist homes; Bed and Breakfasts.* One issue they wanted to make sure was met was off-street parking. Off-street automobile storage or parking space shall be provided on every lot on which any permitted or Special Exception is established in accordance with this ordinance. The requirements are:

- ❖ 17-703.01-1 Parking spaces for all dwellings and other uses shall be located on the same lot with the main buildings to be served
- ❖ 17-703.01-6 Any new use established in an existing building after the effective date of this ordinance shall provide off-street parking which conforms to the requirements of this section

- ❖ 17-703.03-3-f Boarding and Rooming Houses – One and one-half (1-1/2) spaces for each bedroom, and one space for each two employees

The property itself does have a paved driveway that he believes is relatively new.

The following is what has to be considered concerning a Special Exception:

17-802.03-5 In evaluating the proposed Special Exception, the Planning Commission and the Town Council shall consider the following concerns:

- (a) The character of the existing neighborhood and the compatibility of the proposed use on adjacent and nearby properties;
- (b) The effect of the proposed use on existing and projected traffic volumes in the neighborhood;
- (c) The current and future need for the proposed use in the Town of Narrows; and
- (d) The effect of the proposed use on neighborhood property values;
- (e) The relationship of the proposed use to the Town of Narrows Comprehensive Plan;

Terry Nicholson said if there were any adjacent property owners or anyone from the public that would like to speak they are more than welcome to do so. Hearing none he closed this portion of the public hearing on behalf of the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will adjourn for a few moments to discuss the special exception in private and bring back a recommendation to council.

Mayor Spangler closed the public hearing for council.

Mayor Spangler said next is the recognition of the Little League Baseball Teams that will be presented by Clyde Turner.

Councilman Turner said on behalf of the Narrows Recreation Department and Narrows Town Council they would like to recognize the teams on their accomplishments. He told the players they need to thank their parents for what they do because if they didn't do it they would not be here. He had been to a few of the ballgames and they were very exciting. He told them to respect their parents, coaches, and themselves. The town appreciates the sportsmanship they've shown.

Approval of June 13th, June 21st, and June 29th Meeting Minutes

Mayor Spangler said council is being asked to approve the June 13th, June 21st, and June 29th meeting minutes.

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the June 13th, June 21st, and June 29th meeting minutes. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Consent Agenda

Library Report

Councilman Goorskey told Cindy Laws it was nice to see she would be receiving increased state funding this year. He also said she has had some very successful programs this summer.

Councilman Turner made a motion to approve the library report. Councilman Conley seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Parks & Recreation Report

Councilman Turner asked Landon Patteson why they haven't been having any parks and rec meetings?

Landon Patteson said it is hard to get everyone together at one time.

Councilman Turner said he read through the last 3 months of council minutes and there hasn't been a parks and rec meeting. It is very important to have those and he would like to see these held again.

Landon Patteson said he will work on getting the meetings going again.

Mayor Spangler said the Farmer's Market is really going great and they need to keep it up.

Councilman Conley said the July 4th festival was great and very well attended.

Councilman Goorskey said he enjoyed the festival also. There are an assortment of concession items to choose from at the concession stand during t-ball games.

Landon Patteson said they also started selling concessions at the splash pad.

Councilman Goorskey said the difference in money taken in for concessions at different locations could be the assortment of items available.

Councilmember Bowles asked if they could advertise concessions being sold at the splash pad?

Landon Patteson said absolutely.

Councilmember Bowles commended John Davis and his crew on getting the park ready for the July 4th festival. It looked really great.

Mayor Spangler said in the past the park boosters were contacted by telephone, he believes it was on Facebook, but there were only a limited number of park boosters that participated. In the future they may get several people to make calls to the park boosters to ask for a donation.

Landon Patteson said they will look into that.

Councilman Turner said t-ball has been very well attended this year.

Landon Patteson said they had around 150 kids playing this year.

Councilman Goorskey made a motion to approve the parks and rec report.

Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Police Report

Mayor Spangler said he appreciates all of the police officer's hard work and it is hard to do the job they do.

Councilman Mills said it has been brought to their attention that there has been some suspicious behavior taking place on high school hill at the church parking lots.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said he has been briefed on that and they are looking into it.

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the police report. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Financial Report/Treasurer's Report

Councilman Conley made a motion to approve the financial report/treasurer's report. Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Director of Strategic Development's Report

Councilman Turner made a motion to approve the director of strategic development's report. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Public Works Director's Report

Mayor Spangler asked John Davis if he was comfortable with the information he had received about the water meters?

John Davis said yes.

Mike Bedsaul asked John Davis if he had received a contract concerning the water meters?

John Davis said not yet. They have ordered the meters and have gotten with the FCC to get antennas licensed.

Mike Bedsaul asked if there was any issue with the price of the meters?

John Davis said no.

Councilman Goorskey asked what the timeframe was on the installation of the water meters?

John Davis said 8 months.

Councilman Goorskey asked what they could do in the meantime to stop paying for 2.5 million gallons of water every month?

John Davis said fix water leaks.

Councilman Goorskey said they may need to start manually reading some meters every month.

John Davis said are manually reading approximately 10% of the water meters now, every month.

Councilman Goorskey asked if they are seeing discrepancies in those?

John Davis said they have fixed several leaks and busted meters. He can't give an estimate of what they are losing in these leaks and busted water meters.

Councilman Goorskey asked if the manual reads are showing discrepancies in what the radio reads are recording?

John Davis said no because the ones they have to read certain meters manually because they can't be picked up by the computer.

Councilman Goorskey said they probably need to read some meters manually that are not reporting correctly. What does this amount of water cost us versus what it costs to manually read the meters? He knows that with the limited amount of staff the town has he can't expect them to read all of the meters but if they manually read 10% of them and a certain amount are incorrect they can figure out the cost for the amount of water loss they are experiencing. It would probably be a good idea for an employee to manually read more meters. He is trying to figure out some ideas on this because that is a large sum of money they are talking about.

John Davis said he feels they need for someone to do more leak detection but they don't have the manpower to do leak detection like they should. He feels like there are leaks in town that aren't coming to the top of the ground so they know nothing about them. The best time to do leak detection is at night but they don't have the manpower to do that and then fix the leaks during the day.

Councilman Mills asked if there was a way to make some sort of arrangement with another entity to help with leak detection? He would be willing to invest some money into something like that to help the guys out. There are outfits that perform this service and they could make a trial run.

Councilman Goorskey said they need to get an idea on how much would need to be spent on this. If he is just hiring someone part-time to read meters, and he doesn't really need to look for an extremely experienced individual, he would need to know ahead of time that there is a potential percentage of loss due to the meters they can kind of get comfortable saying they will cover the cost. Leak detection at night would cost more but it may save the town in the long run. He wouldn't mind reaching out to the PSA to see if they have anyone that could help.

Councilman Mills said on this type of operation they will get what they pay for.

Councilman Goorskey said he knows the PSA is interested in drawing from the town's tanks and different things so they may be willing to help the town for the next 8-12 months looking for leaks while the town is putting meters in the ground.

Councilman Mills said there will be a PSA meeting on Thursday. There will be a public hearing to increase the solid-waste rates. With council's blessing, he will ask the PSA if they can help the town out.

Councilman Goorskey said he thinks that is great.

Councilman Conley asked John Davis if he had a date by which he wanted this project completed?

John Davis said he does not have a date.

Councilman Goorskey asked if they could check 34 meters?

John Davis said yes. He will get with the contractor concerning the installation of the water meters and get back with council on a completion date.

Councilman Goorskey said he would pick 34 meters that are outside of the 10% they are already having to manually read.

Councilmember Bowles asked if the walking trail was going to be paved?

John Davis said it would be gravel.

Councilmember Bowles asked when the adaptive swing would be arriving?

John Davis said it has arrived.

Mayor Spangler asked if the adaptive swing would need padding underneath?

John Davis said no.

Councilmember Bowles said she believed it would need some ADA work.

John Davis said he didn't know about that. The area they placed it at the park is the best area for it.

Debbie Thomas told John Davis he could probably contact Eddie Shelton with VRSA and he would know about any ADA specifications.

Councilman Mills made a motion to approve the public works director's report.

Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Communications, Concerns and Requests from the Public

Councilman Mills said he and John Davis have ridden on Williams Street and Wolf Street and there has been a request to install more stop signs so that it is a four-way stop. He is requesting this to be done.

Councilman Goorskey said he has no objection to this at all but citizens may want the same thing on other streets.

Police Chief Ratcliffe said he believes the slower they can keep traffic around schools the better off they are.

Councilman Conley said he is thinking they may need to ask the community about this because he has heard the request for a four-way stop on the boulevard. They may need to have a public hearing.

Councilman Goorskey said he doesn't believe there will be any resistance toward this.

Mike Bedsaul asked Councilman Conley if he wanted a public hearing or just put it on the agenda.

Councilman Conley said put it on the agenda.

Councilman Mills said the request comes from his mother and a neighbor across the street from her.

Mayor Spangler asked if there was a motion to approve the signs or did they want to table this and have it on the August agenda? Hearing no motion this can be tabled and placed on the August council agenda.

Communications from Mayor and Council

Councilman Mills said he missed the last PSA meeting. He received a notice for the next meeting this Thursday and there will be a public hearing for a rate increase for solid waste. He has been in discussion with the Town of Pearisburg and a representative from Thompson & Litton discussing a regional sewer approach. He is excited if what they are telling him manifests itself. There will be studies that council will have an opportunity to review before they enter into any agreement. At the cost of upgrades on these sewer facilities, he can guarantee the town can't stand it on their own. They would be talking around \$18 million for each entity. They will have to have some county-wide effort to address this issue or they will all go broke trying to get sewer plants upgraded. He will keep council updated on this.

Councilman Goorskey said this is concerning the email Lindsey Caudill sent back concerning the ducks. Did they find out if Chad Fox or someone else could come and speak to council concerning the ducks?

Landon Patteson said Chad Fox was planning on attending the meeting but was unable to attend. He hopes to attend next month. Andy Rutledge wants to also attend but wants Chad Fox to be at the same meeting.

Councilman Goorskey said he believed one of the other questions they had was what other areas in Virginia allow for the feeding of wildlife. If they will Google ‘the 10 best duck feeding locations in Virginia’ they are advertised and are asking people to come down. The town has been told they will be fined and other things could happen if they put up a feeder. He would like that question answered in print or in a meeting directly. There is an excellent printout done by them containing what specific diseases and at what population levels this stuff starts to occur. They need to start incorporating to the public why they are even talking about this and why this could be an issue. Some of this is about geese and ducks becoming a nuisance but there are some serious health issues that could be occurring right now. They are not serving their wildlife population very well by continuing to feed them and he keeps bringing it up because this is a real concern. How do they preserve and protect their duck pond and continue to have ducks in it because people love them? They have a problem that is coming and getting bigger and they are doing things to address it. He is glad the email came out and he would like to continue to push for more and more information and more direct responses as to why they can’t feed them. There are even some code sections in Virginia that reference feeding ducks.

Councilman Conley said he has Lindsey Caudill’s email in front of him and it says that Chad Fox would be glad to attend the council meeting in August as well as Andy Rutledge.

Councilman Goorskey said he would like to run in the paper what date they are coming to the council meeting and send them a copy of the article. He wants the public to have a chance to be involved in that discussion.

New Business

Mayor Spangler said council has met, discussed, and interviewed potential town-manager candidates and has come to a decision on who they would like to be the next town manager. They would like to extend that invitation to Terry Nicholson and it does require a vote.

Councilman Conley made a motion to appoint Terry Nicholson as the next Town Manager for the Town of Narrows effective July 25, 2022. Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Mayor Spangler said there was a severance agreement that was drafted and council needs to vote on that.

Councilman Goorskey made a motion to approve the severance agreement as contained in the agenda packet and authorize it to be signed by Mayor Spangler on behalf of Town Council. Councilman Conley seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Unfinished Business

None.

Matters for Consideration by Council

Mayor Spangler said council is being asked to consider the Planning Commission recommendation and approval of the special exception for Leea Smith.

Terry Nicholson said the Planning Commission would like to hold their recommendation until they can speak with staff and the applicant because council raised several questions

they would like to address. There is the possibility of noise complaints and they wanted to come up with compromises on how to deal with those. Parking must be contained on the property itself and they want to make sure they deal with that with the applicant. Other municipalities limit how many days out of the year that a property can be used as a short-term rental and they also want to talk to the applicant about that. They will meet with the applicant and address those questions and then the Planning Commission will meet and come up with a recommendation for council before the next council meeting.

Mayor Spangler said council is being asked to reappoint Joe Goorskey as the PSA alternate.

Councilman Mills made a motion to reappoint Councilman Goorskey as the PSA alternate. Councilman Turner seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Mayor Spangler said he would like to congratulate Debbie Thomas for being involved with the New River Valley Regional Commission on their Revolving Loan Fund.

Councilman Goorskey made a motion to amend the agenda to add a request to go into closed session for discussing personnel matters concerning specific employees, appointees, or officers (Sec. 2.2-3711.A.1). Councilman Mills seconded the motion. Sec. 2.2-3711.A.1

Councilman Goorskey made a motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters concerning specific employees, appointees, or officers (Sec. 2.2-3711.A.1). Councilman Mills seconded the motion.

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

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

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

Nays: None

Motion Carried 5-0

Councilman Mills made a motion to adjourn. Councilman Goorskey seconded the motion.
Ayes: Turner, Bowles, Conley, Mills, and Goorskey
Nays: None
Motion Carried 5-0

Clerk, Debbie Thomas

Mayor, Tom Spangler