



**TOWN OF THUNDERBOLT
REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2023
6:00 PM**

AGENDA HEARING

Public has five minutes per person to ask questions or comment on any agenda item.

Mayor Williams opened the public hearing at 6:00 pm. He explained there would be a change in the format. Those individuals wishing to speak on an agenda item will be allowed to go first and have five minutes to speak. With the remaining time, individuals wishing to provide public input on anything, will be allowed with a three minute limit. This will only be for informational purposes.

Krystina Johnson, 3212 Gragg Street, commented on variance request on Cedar Street. She does not want Council to grant the variance because building on this property will cause additional flooding onto adjacent properties. There is a history of flooding since the drainage pipe was removed.

Catherine Clements, 3224 Cedar Street, explained Council needs to understand the history of the lot on Cedar St. There was a house there, it was the only one not tied into a septic tank. It was not tied into Sewer when the other houses were tied in. There has been a flooding issue since in 1953. There was a ditch running from Gragg to Robinson that was later closed off. The water table is changing and causing the houses to settle. Ms. Clements stated she was also representing Ms. Washington and Ms. Small, who also live on Cedar St. She explained other residents on Cedar do not have any flooding. Council Member Drohan asked if there was a house there. Ms. Clements stated yes, it was built in 1940s.

Karen Johnson, 3212 Gragg Street, owns the property behind and the adjacent property to the Cedar Street petitioned property. She stated they have not had flooding issues until the drain was removed and she has lived here since 1991.

Jan Yarbrough, 24 Bonaventure Rd, had some questions about the petition. She wanted to know if a house would be built. It was explained that the property is zoned R-1, so a single dwelling is only allowed. She also asked that P & Z should change the format of their meetings to allow discussion on more than what is listed on the agenda.

Mayor Williams asked Town Administrator Milie and Town Attorney Barrow to speak on the Cedar property issues related to the town involvement. Town Attorney Barrow explained the town was sued by the previous owner of the property because the town contractor placed a stormwater drain in the wrong location. The town had to remove the drain because of the lawsuit. Council Member Drohan asked Town Attorney Barrow if the town could require Mr. Cormack to do an impact plan. Town Attorney Barrow stated that is essentially what is required for the building permit.

Catherine Clements wanted to thank the Public Works Dept for working on the Nellie Johnson Park.

MILLAGE PUBLIC HEARING

Public has five minutes per person to ask questions or comment on millage rate.

Mayor Williams opened the millage public hearing at 6:30 pm.

Town Administrator Milie explained this was the third meeting for millage rate. The options for the millage rate are as follows: Maintain the current millage rate to 6.132, this would be a tax increase of \$56 for a home of fair market value of \$100,000; Second option is to roll back 25%, with a tax increase of \$42 per 100,000; Third is to do a 50% roll back with a tax increase of \$28 per \$100,000 and a complete roll back to have no increase in taxes. With option one, it was stated there would be an outreach to senior citizens to ensure they get assistance for the Stevens-Day exemption. Town Administrator Milie recommends maintaining the current millage to account for the 10% increase to medical cost and other increase in daily operations.

Council Member Crenshaw stated he is in support of the senior citizen support but would like to see at least a 50% roll back.

Council Member Barbaree stated we should look at the data of those on file for Stevens-Day and should compare to population numbers.

Council Member Drohan stated the millage rate is a little confusing. The millage rate should be to ensure the cost of services and infrastructure. We must increase the income level but it needs to be reasonable. He recommended a 50% roll back.

Town Administrator Milie stated the staff recommendation was to keep the current millage rate. He stated staff has done a lot to streamline to be efficient but there is only so much that can be done and growth and improvements increase cost of operations.

Council Member Barbaree stated we should look at the cost of things we have to purchase.

Council Member Lavin stated we have been at the same rate the last three years. There have been a lot of things that have been changed. There is a limited staff for Public Works and loss of a police officer. His recommendation was to stay at the current millage.

Council Member Ward pointed out need to cater to the senior citizens due to the high percentage here in Town.

Hearing no more discussion, Mayor Williams closed the millage rate hearing at 6:50 pm.

REGULAR MEETING

1. Call to order

Mayor Williams called the regular business meeting to order at 6:50 pm. Mayor Williams stated there is an addition to approve the millage rate at 6. c. under Financial Report.

2. Roll Call by Presiding Officer with Invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

In attendance were Mayor Dana Williams and Council Members Dave Crenshaw, Larry Ward, Ed Drohan, James Lavin, Brooks Barbaree. Bethany Skipper Greer came in late. Staff in attendance were Town Administrator, Bob Milie; Town Attorney, Charlie Barrow; Clerk of Council, Deatre Denion; Police Chief, Sean Clayton; Fire Chief, Andrew Bateman; Public Works Director, Oscar Crosby, Utilities and Account Manager, Katina Spaulding and Utilities Clerk, Renee Holmes.

3. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Mayor Williams asked for a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of 6.c. **Council Member Ward made the motion with a second from Council Member Crenshaw. The motion passed unanimously.**

4. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting:

Minutes of May 10, 2023 and June 6, 2023

Mayor Williams asked for a motion to approve the previous meeting minutes for May 10th and June 6, 2023. **Council Member Ward made the motion with a second from Council Member Crenshaw. Motion passed unanimously**

5. Presentations:

a) Alzheimer's Awareness Month

Mayor Williams presented a proclamation to Kristin Harkleroad for Alzheimer's Awareness Month.

6. Finance Report:

- a) Approval of the 2023 Asset Budget
- b) Approval of the 2023 SPLOST Budget
- c) Approval of the millage rate

Shannon Brett, Holland, Bromley, Barnhill and Brett, stated the financial documents were provided to Council. The audit is in the homestretch. All indications are clean with no findings. We want to continue to make improvements in the financial process. There was a meeting on May 31st with all the key financial staff to brainstorm on ways to improve the process. Recommendations will be coming soon to council. Ms. Brett explained revenue for end of May is at \$2.6 million. That is half of the expected budget. Expenses are at \$1.7 million which is at 37% of the budget. The GA Fund has increased its rate 4.996 and United Bank has followed suite.

Town Administrator Milie stated he has modified some of the United Bank Accounts. Example, moved SPLOST to a money account. The General and Water & Sewer was moved to a SWEEP. Council Member Crenshaw stated the feds have placed a pause on interest rates. The rates will come down. The Town needs to look at longer term bonds.

Town Administrator Milie explained about the asset budget. These are forfeitures funds. We must have a budget. There was only \$14 and no expenditures this year. **Council Member Ward made the motion to approve the asset budget with a second from Council Member Crenshaw. The motion passed unanimously.**

Town Administrator Milie explained the SPLOST budget is to be in line with the auditors. This is the SPLOST budget and there are no earmarks. He explained nothing will be spent without the approval from Council. **Council Member Crenshaw made the motion to approve with a second from Council Member Ward. The motion passed unanimously.**

Town Administrator Milie reviewed the four options for the millage rate. (Bethany Skipper-Greer entered the meeting) **Council Member Crenshaw made the motion to have a 50% role back to the 5.852 mil. Council**

Member Drohan made the second. There was a five to one (Council Member Lavin) in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

Mayor Williams asked to move 10. A up. No one opposed.

a) 2023 Blessing of the Fleet Report

Marianne Gannon Poppell provided a 2023 Blessing of the Fleet recap. There were 89 vendor and food trucks. Survey went out to the vendors and 88% of those vendors found the event profitable. Feedback from vendors: love being on River Drive and great atmosphere. The event exceeded attendees from last year with an estimated 5,000 people attending. Town Administrator Milie explained the total cost was \$44,406 but with sponsors and in-kind contributions the town paid \$8,606.

Council Member Drohan explained the professor of marine biology at Savannah State would like to do a cleanup along River Drive Earth Day/Arbor Drive and this would be before the next Blessing of the Fleet.

The next Blessing of the Fleet is recommended for April 27, 2024. Council Member Ward made the motion to have it on April 27, 2024 with a second from Council Member Drohan. The motion was unanimously.

7. Consent Agenda:

- a.) Approval to Renew Grand Life Massage Therapy's Home Occupation Business License at 2501 Mechanics Ave.
- b.) Approval to Renew Masonry Masters LLC's Home Occupation Business License at 302 Laurel Oak Ln.

Mayor Williams asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda. **Council Member Ward made the motion to approve the consent agenda with second from Council Member Crenshaw. The motion passed unanimously.**

8. Discussion Agenda:

- a) Petitioner:** Travis Cormack
Request: Front Set Back Variance
Parcel Involved: 30006 08021
Location: 3217 Cedar St.
P & Z approved unanimously

Council Member Ward made the motion to table this petition. Council Member Crenshaw seconded the motion. Mayor Williams asked if there was any discussion. Council Member Drohan asked why are we tabling. Council Member Ward stated to get more information. Town Administrator Milie stated the staff recommendation is to approve the variance. He explains the issues are not intertwined. The flooding is before this development. This private property and he has to the right to see if the parcel is buildable. Council Member Ward withdrew his motion to table.

Dawn Williams, 3110 Harris St., asked who pays if the developer cannot build? Town Administrator Milie explained it would be on the developer. She then asked if they do build and there are issues on the adjacent property, who is responsible to pay. Town Administrator Milie explained it is on the engineer who certified the plan.

Jan Yarbrough, 24 Bonaventure Rd, stated the Town was putting the horse before the cart.

Council Member Crenshaw asked why Milie is opposed to this table. Town Administrator Milie explained because of customer service. There are two sides to customer service. The side to the citizens but also the petitioner. Voting on the variance does not ensure the petitioner can build on the lot. It just allows them to design the dwelling to be in line with the adjacent homes. There will still need to be an engineered site plan provided.

Krystina Johnson, 3212 Gragg St, stated she contacted the town about the piles of dirt in front of the property. Clerk of Council Denion explained there was a miscommunication with the developer on whether he could bring in fill dirt. There is a work stop order on the property until a permit is granted.

Council Member Drohan made motion to approve the variance request consistent with staff and P & Z recommendation contingent that an engineer drainage plan is submitted. The motion was seconded by Council Member Skipper-Greer. The motion passed unanimously with Council Member Crenshaw sustaining from the vote

b) Approval of the Outdoor Event Permit for Luminary Salon, 2819 River Dr.

Mayor Williams asked for a motion to approve the outdoor event for Luminary Salon. **Council Member Ward made the motion with a second by Council Member Barbaree. The motion passed unanimously.**

c) Police Car Replacement

Town Administrator Milie explained car purchase is a part of the vehicle replacement program. The staff recommendation is to go with the low bid, which is with the state contractor. They will use the state procurement and request an additional \$10,000 to outfit. **Council Member Crenshaw made the motion to approve the vehicle with a second from Council Member Ward. The motion passed unanimously.**

d) Update on Fountain in Thomson Park.

There was a meeting to discuss the fountain. Anna Maria Thomas was able to find older pictures of the park. They are still collecting information. They have reached out to a landscape architect to assist in the design. Once all information is collected, they will have a meeting.

e) Update on Short Term Rentals.

Clerk of Council Denion provided a quick update on the status of short term rentals in Thunderbolt. Currently the 70 STR cap has been met. The host compliance system says there are six listing that have not submitted applications. The process has begun to have them cease STR activity. There is a waiting list of nine applications. Council Member Crenshaw asked for a change to the one permit per parcel needs to be changed and would like the STR ordinance to be next on the ordinance review.

9. Department Report – Written Reports Submitted

by: **Police / Municipal Court / Neighborhood Watch – Sean Clayton, Chief of Police**

Chief Clayton stated during a drug advisory meeting the county and municipalities were offered the use of a new trailer with props to come to in and educate parents/grandparents/guardians of the types of drugs they might see in their teens living area.

Fire –Fire Chief, Andrew Bateman

Chief Bateman reported state audit for training is complete and we passed with no issues. The Fire Department is working with Safe Kids to make improvements at the boat ramp and life jacket stand.

Public Works Department – Oscar Crosby, Public Works Manager

Director Crosby stated all potholes have been patched but must wait until it is warmer to add the sheet. Working on the unaccounted water loss and this month was five percent loss. The well meter # 4 was calibrated and construction error was rectified.

10. Town Administrator Report: Town Administrator, Bob Milie

a) **Code Enforcement**

Town Administrator Milie explained code enforcement has become more aggressive. There has been summons for court appearances. Staff are following up on the more derelict properties.

Senator Ossoff's office reported the full request for Thunderbolt for the force main has moved to Congress.

There will be a Planning and Zoning meeting, but it will only be about process.

11. Legal Report – Town Attorney

12. Mayor and Council

Mayor Williams congratulated Council Member Barbaree for his new position with the school system.

Council Member Drohan stated there should be a mechanism to recognize people. Suggested maybe using council chamber as a rotating venue to recognize individuals for their work for the town.

13. Thunderbolt Museum

Anna Maria Thomas updated council. Stated their last garage sale was this June. They collected a couple hundred dollars. The next garage sale will be in September. The focus now is on the oyster roast. Ms. Thomas announced Mr. Gregg Portman, a big supporter of the museum, had passed away.

Mayor Williams asked for a motion to recess into executive session for the purpose of legal, real estate and/ or personnel matters. **Council Member Ward made the motion with a second from Council Member Skipper – Greer. The motion passed unanimously.**

14. Executive Session- Mayor requests a motion and a second to recess into executive session for the purpose of Legal, Real Estate and/or Personnel matters.

Mayor Williams asked for a motion to reconvene into regular meeting. **Council Member Ward made the motion with a second from Council Member Crenshaw. The motion passed unanimously.**

Mayor Williams asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. **Council Member Ward made the motion with a second from Council Member Crenshaw. The motion passed unanimously.**

15. Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 9:22 pm.



Dana Williams, Mayor



Deatre N. Denion, Clerk of Council