



TOWN OF WEBSTER
November 2, 2022 Board Meeting Minutes

The Webster Board of Commissioners met at the Webster Town Hall on Wednesday, November 2, 2022, at 5:15 p.m. for the monthly board meeting.

Members/Staff Present: Mayor Tracy Rodes; Vice Mayor Leigh Anne Young, Commissioners Allen Davis, Kelly Donaldson, and Danell Moses; Town Clerk Debbie Coffey; Town Attorney Will Morgan

Absent: Commissioner Dale Collins

Public Present: Julie Van Leuven, Rick and Jana Fulton

Call to Order/Ethics Statement: Mayor Tracy Rodes called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. and read the Ethics Statement. No board member expressed any conflict of interest.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION: Commissioner Young moved to approve the agenda amended to include the Animal Control Ordinance. Commissioner Moses seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the October 5, 2022, meeting were emailed prior to the meeting for review.

MOTION: Commissioner Moses moved to approve the minutes of October 5, 2022. Commissioner Young seconded. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Julie Van Leuven addressed the board to follow up on her concerns expressed at the August 3, 2022 board meeting about the Great Blue Heron habitats being compromised by construction of a subdevelopment near SCC. She has had no response from the state or federal agencies she contacted. She wanted to let the board know she was renewing her passion to protect the bird habitat.

Mr. and Mrs. Fulton addressed the issue of speeding throughout the town of Webster. Mr. Fulton noted that he does not feel money budgeted for Jackson County Sheriff's patrols is well spent based on the amount of tickets that are issued. The Fultons are very concerned about families with small children and residents who use the sidewalks along Webster Road for walking and for exercise. They would like additional flashing speed signs throughout town. Commissioner Davis expressed his appreciation to the Fultons for sharing their concerns and noted that the board was working to address the issue. Mayor Rodes noted that our traffic patrols and sheriff department have been told about the Board's concern with speeding, and that we should find out when we were eligible for another DOT speed study. She added that letters to the newspaper or to the Sheriff Department from concerned citizens about speeding have influence, and would be helpful.



CONSENT AGENDA

Financial Report: Financial statements will be available at the end of November. October transactions currently include income of \$8,404.71 and expenses of \$3,009.90. ARPA funds expended as of October 31 are \$23,895.70. Account balances as of today are:

\$ 243,183.13- First Bank Business Essentials

\$ 85,541.18- First Bank Money Market

***MOTION:** Commissioner Young moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Donaldson seconded. Motion carried.*

NEW BUSINESS

1. Proposed Cell Tower (Mike Poston and John Jeleniewski): Mr. Poston and Mr. Jeleniewski outlined plans by Vogue Towers to construct a cell tower on property owned by SCC. Vogue Towers is requesting a modification waiver to forgo the Special Use Permit process, to exceed the maximum height requirement of 180', and to forgo the required road maintenance log. Each waiver is allowable under Jackson County Ordinance and such waivers have been approved in the past, including for the WRGC radio tower, a cell tower on the WCU campus, and the VIPER emergency communications tower. Mr. Poston explained that the Town could grant the waiver without having a Public Hearing, but in the interest of governmental transparency, it would be auspicious to hold one at the December meeting prior to approving the waiver. Slides were presented to show the proposed location next to the existing TWSA water tank and representations of how the tower will look from several locations throughout the area. Additional slides depicted the current cell coverage and improved coverage upon completion of the project. When asked about the timeline and process, Mr. Poston stated that the tower could be expected to be online by the end of 2023. In addition to the waiver being granted, Vogue Towers must receive state and federal approvals that will take approximately four months to complete. A similar request in 2018 was rescinded prior to being approved. It was suggested that the best location for the Public Hearing would be the Council on the Aging Building to accommodate a larger audience. Mr. Poston said the JC Planning Department will notify all adjoining property owners of the public hearing and post the location with notice of hearing signage. Commissioner Young noted that she would like to see a graphic of the view of the proposed tower from the River Road area.

***MOTION:** Commissioner Davis moved to move forward in the process with a Public Hearing at the December 7th meeting. Commissioner Moses seconded. Motion carried.*

2. TWSA Appointment: Mayor Rodes' term on the TWSA Board will expire in December, and she indicated a willingness to serve for an additional term.

***MOTION:** Commissioner Moses moved to appoint Mayor Rodes to an additional term on the TWSA Board. Commissioner Young seconded. Motion carried.*

3. NCLM Legislative Goals: Mayor Rodes encouraged board members to think of potential municipal goals for submission to the NCLM. The comprehensive list of



submissions will be provided to members for ranking after being compiled by the League.

OLD BUSINESS

- 1. Funding for Webster Park Project:** A Scope of Work application has been filed with the Southwestern Commission for funding of \$90,000 made possible by Sen. Kevin Corbin to assist with funding the pavilion at the park location. By approving that the funds be expended by the Southwestern Commission directly to the Jackson County Parks and Recreation Department, it will limit the Town's liability while still providing a community park and meeting space for Webster and the general public. The Board would still provide input and recommendations for designs and ideas for park development. Several pavilion kits available through Bliss Products were considered. Don Adams has also requested project Plans from County Parks and Recreation to present to County Commissioners to seek additional funding for the project in its entirety.

MOTION: Commissioner Moses moved to allow the Southwestern Commission to disburse funds to Jackson County for construction of the pavilion. Commissioner Donaldson seconded. Motion carried.

- 2. Speeding:** Mayor Rodes has talked to Lt. Blake Watson at the Jackson County Sheriff's Office concerning the speeding issue. Commissioner Young suggested inviting LEO officials to a meeting. Commissioners Young and Davis both suggested being persistent in inviting LEO officers to address the issue. Commissioner Young expressed concern over data that showed people traveling over 60 MPH and considers speeds of 30 to 35 MPH on Webster Road as unacceptable. Webster is unique in that there are sidewalks on both sides of Webster Road which many people choose to use for recreational walking and family biking. Speeding is creating an unsafe environment for this and adding liability to the town should a tragedy occur. Mayor Rodes noted that during the week of October 26 through November 1, 17,233 vehicles were captured by the digital speed sign averaging 29.8 miles per hour. The wreck that occurred in the curve that destroyed the Shallock's fence on October 7 was not related to speed, but was attributed to mechanical failure. Mayor Rodes expressed concerns that continued complaints to the hired deputies could result in loss of coverage. Commissioner Donaldson expressed frustration with continued discussion and lack of action. Several action items were discussed that included:

Providing raw data from the speed sign to Commissioner Collins to create spreadsheets organizing data to provide factual numbers to substantiate the complaints;

Invite Sheriff's office staff, NC DOT, NC Highway Patrol, and other governmental officials to a board meeting for discussion;

Host a town hall public forum with LEO, DOT, and other governmental officials to sit on the panel discussion to address community concerns;

Start a public education via social media and mass mailing to residents in Webster to draw attention to the problem and ask residents to make sure they are following the speed limit; and A letter writing campaign to local and regional media to raise awareness of the problem.



3. **Animal Control Ordinance:** A revised copy of the ordinance was provided prior to the meeting for review. It was the consensus of the Board to hold a Public Hearing prior to the December meeting, with adoption following.
4. **Firearms Ordinance:** Copies ordinances from Dillsboro and Johnston County were provided as examples to use as models for drafting an ordinance. Discussion of including the ETJ and/or limiting application to high density areas. Commissioner Moses provided verbiage to include prohibiting firearms on town property. It was the consensus of the board to proceed with drafting an ordinance prohibiting the discharge of firearms within the town limits.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mayor's Report:

- Mayor Rodes reported that TWSA is trying to locate a leak, and RSV and Covid numbers in wastewater treatment viral samples are increasing.
- Wards Plumbing and Heating was contacted to address non-compliant issues that the county inspector found when conducting an inspection of the new HVAC system. Mayor Rodes is also concerned about a possible gas leak within the system based on the odor of gas in the storage room.
- Mayor Rodes noted that Halloween was very successful and would like to make plans for decorating for Christmas. Commission Young will request volunteers from the Planning Board to assist with bows and luminary bags.
- She also requested that Council Reports be emailed to all board members prior to the meeting rather than waiting to send to the clerk the week before. This is so that important information can be utilized as soon as it is available rather than having a month lag time.
- Mayor Rodes noted that she has contacted Chris Lee and Steven Buchanan from NCDOT to request that the location near the sharp curve at the juncture of Buchanan Loop and Hwy 116 be assessed for additional safety signage. Mr. Buchanan replied that he would look into it.

Council Members' and Clerk's Report:

Commissioner Young provided a link to the Bliss Products website for board members to look at pavilion options. She also mentioned that the Department on Aging is accepting donations for Christmas boxes for their clients.

ADJOURNMENT

***MOTION:** Commissioner Moses moved to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.*



Next Meeting:
December 7, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.

Tracy Rodes, Mayor

Debbie Coffey, Town Clerk