

Mayor J. Paul Kilgore, Jr. called a regular monthly meeting of the Amherst Town Council to order on August 10, 2016 at 7:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall at 174 S. Main Street. Council members Andr  Higginbotham, Kenneth Watts, Kenneth Bumgarner and Rachel Thompson were present; Council member Mike Mozingo was absent. Town Manager Jack Hobbs, Town Attorney Tom Berry, Police Chief Robert Kimbrel, Public Utilities Director Tom Fore, Office Manager Tracie Wright, and Deputy Town Clerk Vicki Hunt were present.

Rachel Carton came forward to offer a prayer as a citizen comment.

John Mason came forward on behalf of VFW Post 9877 to propose “renaming” the Mini-Park to “Village Garden Club Memorial Park” and installation of a donated 27”x9” “marker”.

Village Garden Club President Joyce Hoffman came forward on behalf of the Club in support of the name change.

After a brief discussion, Mrs. Thompson made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Watts and carried 4-0-1 to approve renaming the Mini-Park to “Village Garden Club Memorial Park” as proposed. Messrs. Bumgarner, Watts, and Higginbotham, and Mrs. Thompson voted “Aye”; Mr. Mozingo was absent.

Tyler Creasy, an MPA student from James Madison University and Town of Amherst intern, came forward to present a plan to improve communication between the Town of Amherst and its residents and business operators.

A request for the Town to support the 2016 Annual Ray Puckett Lions Club Christmas Parade was received.

Mary Lu. Gregg came forward on behalf of the Amherst County Lions Club and stated that due diligence will be made to keep the siren blows at a minimum for safety concerns and that the cost of providing adequate law enforcement staff for the event is a concern to the Lions Club.

Mrs. Thompson made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Higginbotham and passed 4-0-1 with Messrs. Bumgarner, Watts, and Higginbotham and Mrs. Thompson voting “Aye” and Mr. Mozingo absent, to approve the requests that the Town support the 2016 Annual Ray Puckett Lions Club Christmas Parade scheduled for Friday, December 2, 2016 on or about 6:30 P.M. subject to the following understandings:

- The Town staff would apply for the required VDOT permit that would allow the parade to “form up” on N. Main Street and proceed through the traffic circle and along S. Main Street to the library on that evening.
- Using not less than five other law enforcement officers funded by the Amherst County Lions Club, provide traffic control for the event by Town police and public works employees.
- The Town of Amherst would provide the usual nominal support such as posting entry forms and parade lineup information on the Town’s web site and otherwise encouraging participation and enjoyment of this traditional community event.

Mr. Watts made a motion that was seconded by Mrs. Thompson and passed 3-1-1 to approve the minutes from the July 13, 2016 meeting. Messrs. Watts and Higginbotham and Mrs. Thompson voted “Aye”; Mr. Bumgarner abstained; Mr. Mozingo was absent.

The Town Manager gave an oral report on various projects.

There was discussion on the adoption of the cigarette tax in order to generate more revenue to fund new initiatives such as a sixth Police Department employee and downtown improvements. Mrs. Thompson requested further documentation from Chief Kimbrel on the need for the sixth police officer. It was agreed that the discussion on the matter would continue at the September meeting.

Town Manager reported that no applications have been received to date for the seat vacated by IDA Chairman Meade. The Councilors agreed to discuss this and the IDA/county EDA merger at the September meeting.

Police Chief Kimbrel came forward to report on the status of the CodeRED service, its implementation and best practices, development of policies defining its use, maintenance of user lists, and how to encourage and educate first time user residents and business operators on the service.

Councilman Higginbotham reminded the Town Council of the Church Street property maintenance issue. Paul Higginbotham came forward to express his concerns. After discussion, Mr. Higginbotham made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Watts as follows:

- That Council finds that a health hazard exists at property known as the Pitsenbarger property at 178 Washington Street (TM# 96A4-15-1thru3);
- That all underbrush on the property smaller than 1” in diameter from ground level to the height of 7’ needs to be removed to eliminate this health hazard; and
- That the Town Manager is directed to issue an order to abate the problem and effect the cleanup per Sec 7-2. 1B of the Town Code

After additional discussion the motion and second were withdrawn. By consensus it was agreed that Mr. Pitsenbarger would be asked to voluntarily address neighborhood concerns over the 30 days and that the Town Council will consider his response and actions during a vote on the matter at the September 14 meeting.

There being no further business, at 8:55 PM Mr. Bumgarner made a motion that was seconded by Mr. Watts and passed 4-0-1 to adjourn the meeting. Messrs. Bumgarner, Watts, and Higginbotham, and Mrs. Thompson voted “Aye”; Mr. Mozingo was absent.

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J. Paul Kilgore, Jr.  
Mayor

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Council