

REGULAR MEETING

JANUARY 22, 2002

At a regular meeting of Council held this evening at 7:30 p.m., there were present: Mayor Carolyn W. Frank; City Manager Roger Baker; Assistant City Manager Kurt Hodgen; City Attorney Thomas H. Miller, Jr., Vice-Mayor Dorn W. Peterson; Council Member Larry M. Rogers, Hugh J. Lantz, Joseph Gus Fitzgerald; City Clerk Yvonne "Bonnie" Ryan, CMC/MMCA, and Chief of Police Donald Harper.

Mayor Frank delivered the invocation and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Mayor Peterson offered a motion that Council resolve to approve the consent agenda, including approval of the minutes and the second reading of a supplemental appropriation for the Police Department, Rescue Squad Building bonds, construction of a building for the Rescue Squad, School Board and the Public Transportation Department. The motion also included approving a rezoning request by John Monger & Estate of Paul W. Whitmer. The recorded roll call vote was taken as follows:

Vote: Yes - Council Member Fitzgerald
Council Member Lantz
Council Member Rogers
Vice-Mayor Peterson
Mayor Frank

Absent - None

Vice-Mayor Peterson requested the unanimous consent of Council to change the agenda by adding a presentation from the Harrisonburg High School Drama Club.

✓ Sara Stevens, a soloist from the cast of Fiddler on the Roof, presented a brief performance of a musical to be held at the Harrisonburg High School Auditorium February 21-24. City Council was invited to attend any of the performances.

✓ Council Member Fitzgerald presented an overview of a report from the Pedestrian Issues Committee. He explained that the committee had conducted a survey and had received more than 600 responses, comments, suggestions and pleas to improve the situation for pedestrians in Harrisonburg. He also said the survey revealed that many people did not feel safe walking or biking in the City. Mr. Fitzgerald suggested that since the City had included \$50,000 in the current budget to hire a transportation planner, but could not find a qualified candidate, that the money should be used to hire consultants for a transportation study. He also noted that members of the Transportation Safety Commission have agreed to undertake an educational and safety program and James Madison University and Eastern Mennonite University have volunteered help from their communication departments to inform people about pedestrian safety.

Bill Blessing, Chairman of the Harrisonburg Transportation Safety Commission, expressed his appreciation that a committee had been established to conduct an educational and safety program; however, he pointed out that help would be needed from the local media.

Leonard VanWyk, a resident of 1065 South Dogwood Drive, and also a member of the Harrisonburg Transportation Safety Commission, said that between the passing of the revised bicycle plan, traffic-calming program, applications for TEA-21 funding for improvements on Port Republic Road and South Main Street, and the pedestrian issue report there is room for optimism. He said, "Talk might be cheap, but no talk is even cheaper." The report takes a sober look at the City's problems and makes some very reasonable suggestions. He encouraged City Council to pass and support the report.

Some discussion by Council Members relative to the report included postponing funding for the transportation planner position until after July 1st, studying traffic patterns, stoplights, and having a consultant look at pedestrian issues.

Council Member Fitzgerald offered a motion that Council resolve to authorize the Transportation Safety Commission to go forth with planning an educational campaign and present a plan to City Council at a later meeting. The motion also included authorizing the City Manager to request proposals for a study of the pedestrian issues. The motion to resolve was approved with a unanimous vote of Council.

City Manager Baker presented an overview of a report on the cost of the golf course. He explained that the cost of the golf course was \$8 million, which included the cost of the land, City personnel costs, City equipment used, and material, but does not include purchasing the land for the driving range. These expenses are for three fiscal years. The amount paid from the bond proceeds was \$5,823,642.49, which included Turf Drain's contract, construction of the driving range, and construction of the clubhouse. The rest of bond proceeds was \$1,813,266.55 which included architect fees, engineering fees, additional field work, interest payments on the debt, purchasing necessary maintenance equipment, and clubhouse architect design.

Some discussion by Council Members relative to the report included additional cost for purchasing the driving range land, cost for hauling the fill dirt, fiscal or calendar year, revenue received and revenue spent, advertising expense, and monthly totals of City employee's expenses from each department spent on the golf course. Vice-Mayor Peterson requested an updated report annually and questioned how difficult would it be to provide an annual report which would overlay two fiscal years. He said, "I am not expecting it to be kept to the penny, but at least to the \$100." The citizens of the City should know all the expenses. City Manager Baker said that he didn't anticipate any department of the City spending additional money on the golf course. Council Member Fitzgerald said, "We can debate these numbers for a long time. We have been discussing it for three years. The fact is we wound up with a \$6.4 million golf course that cost \$8 million." It is time to reach closure on these numbers.

Vice-Mayor Peterson offered a motion that Council resolve to appoint Mayor Carolyn Frank to the Executive Committee of the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission to expire on June 30, 2004. The motion to resolve was approved with a unanimous vote of Council.

City Manager Baker announced that a joint work session with City Council and the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority will be held January 29, 2002 at 6:00 p.m.

Council Member Fitzgerald offered a motion that Council resolve to adopt the following resolution that the General Assembly approve Our Community Place for tax exempt status. The recorded roll call vote was taken as follows:

Vote: Yes - Council Member Fitzgerald
Council Member Lantz
Council Member Rogers
Vice-Mayor Peterson
Mayor Frank

Absent – None

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Our Community Place, a Virginia non-profit corporation (hereinafter referred to as "Corporation"), has requested the City Council of the City of Harrisonburg, Virginia to adopt a resolution supporting its request to the General Assembly to designate the property of the Corporation exempt from taxation pursuant to Article X, Section 6(a)(6) of the Constitution of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of the City of Harrisonburg held a public hearing concerning the request of the Corporation, pursuant to Section 30-19.04 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, on January 8, 2002; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 30-19.04(B) of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, the City Council has examined and considered all of the questions as set forth in said section;

NOW, THEREFORE, in compliance with Section 30-19.04 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council, after examining and considering all of the questions as set forth in the above referenced section, supports the request of the Corporation and recommends to the General Assembly that the Corporation be exempted from taxation with a specific classification of charitable. That the assessed value of all property owned by the Corporation in the City of Harrisonburg for the year 2001 was \$81,600 and the taxes paid to the City for the year 2000 was \$505.92.

ADOPTED AND APPROVED this 22nd day of January, 2002.

MAYOR

Attest:

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL

Warren Dillenbeck, a resident of 1121 South Dogwood Drive, expressed his appreciation to City Manager Baker for preparing the financial analysis of the golf course. It does bring a measure of closure to the whole project. But, he did question whether the City had enough capitalized interest funds available from the bond.

Bucky Berry, a resident of 877 North Main Street, suggested that some of the funding used to prevent vandalism at the golf course could have been used for the Weed and Seed Program.

City Manager Baker read the following letter from Joan Strickler, Executive Director of First Night Harrisonburg.

✓ On behalf of the entire board of directors of *First Night® Harrisonburg 2002*, I want to express our deep appreciation for the excellent cooperation we received from the City in all aspects of planning and coordinating another incident-free and enjoyable New Year's Eve celebration.

It is such a pleasure to work with the members of various City departments in putting this festival together! Over the years we have all gotten used to what is needed and things now seem to go very smoothly. We were also pleased to have the opportunity to work with Brian Shull on the special "Peek into Hardesty House," and hope that our efforts there are of benefit to the City in its request for renovation funds.

In my letter to the editor noting how many ways people donate to our celebration, I took special note of the police, road and engineering, sanitation, transit, fire and emergency crews whose efforts make the whole thing work. The citizens of both the City and County enjoyed themselves and we're very happy that our tenth anniversary came off so well. Thank you for sponsoring us!

✓ Vice-Mayor Peterson offered a motion that the Council resolve that Thomas R. Syre, 1061 Blue Ridge Drive, be appointed to a first term on the Community Services (Chapter 10) Board to expire on July 1, 2004. The motion to resolve was approved with a unanimous vote of Council.

✓ Vice-Mayor Peterson offered a motion that the Council resolve that George W. Pace, 503 Fairway Drive, be appointed to a first term on the Harrisonburg Electric Commission to expire on December 31, 2004. The motion to resolve was approved with a unanimous vote of Council.

✓ Vice-Mayor Peterson offered a motion that the Council resolve that George Homan, 1241 Alpine Drive, be appointed to a first term on the Blue Ridge Disability Services Board to expire on February 1, 2005. The motion to resolve was approved with a unanimous vote of Council.

✓ Council Member Lantz offered a motion that the Council resolve that Vice-Mayor Peterson, 1822 Smithland Road, be appointed to a first term on the Rockingham Extension

Leadership Council, to expire on January 1, 2004. The motion to resolve was approved with a unanimous vote of Council.

Cheryl Talley reminded everyone of the upcoming Healthy Community Council Summit to be held on January 24th at the Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community.

At 8:35 p.m., there being no further business and on motion adopted the meeting was adjourned.

Yvonne Ryan Cmelina
CITY CLERK

Carolyn W. Frank
MAYOR