

**TOWN OF ABINGDON  
COUNCIL WORK SESSION  
MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2009 – 5:30 P.M.  
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM – MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

A work session of the Abingdon Town Council was held on Monday, March 2, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. in the downstairs meeting room of the Municipal Building.

**A. ROLL CALL**

Members of Council Present: Mayor Edward B. Morgan  
Lois H. Humphreys  
Mrs. Cathy Lowe  
Mr. Jason N. Berry

*Absent:* Dr. French H. Moore, Jr., Vice Mayor

Administrative Staff: Gregory W. Kelly, Town Manager  
Cecile M. Rosenbaum, Town Clerk  
Debbie Icenhour, Town Attorney  
Floyd Bailey, Director of Information Technology  
Jim Cowart, Economic Development Coordinator  
Rob Case, IT Department  
John Dew, Dir. of Public Services/Construction  
Jim Smith, Town Engineer/Dir. of Wastewater Operations  
Sean Taylor, Asst. Town Planner

Mayor Morgan called the meeting to order and Cecile Rosenbaum, Town Clerk called the roll.

The following items were discussed by Council:

1. Mr. Morgan commented on the new schedule for the agenda for this night's meeting.
2. Mr. Morgan asked John Dew to comment on the bids received for the Walden Road Pedestrian Improvement project.
3. Mr. Berry gave a brief synopsis of his meeting regarding rail service in Tennessee and Virginia.
4. Mr. Kelly recommended the Council adopt the resolution regarding rail transportation that is included on the agenda.
5. Mr. Kelly recommended that the Council adopt the resolution on the agenda regarding the allocation agreement for the Walden Road Pedestrian Improvement Plan.
6. Mrs. Lowe commented that the work session minutes of the February 2, 2009 meeting should be changed in item #3 to add that the Council denied the Highlands Festival's request because of safety concerns. Mrs. Lowe also commented that the sentence be added in #3 that Mr. Kelly had previously approved a one day event at Latture Field.

7. Mr. Morgan commented that the February 2, 2009 work session minutes be changed in #7 to say Public Safety Commission and not budget.
8. Mr. Morgan commented that the February 2, 2009 regular meeting minutes under section G. *Reports from the Town Manager* be changed to add the phrase “since the 2002 Anderson and Associates Study” after the words pedestrian improvements in the first sentence in the sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) paragraph.
9. Mr. Morgan commented that the February 2, 2009 regular meeting minutes under section K. *Unfinished Business* 1. That the last sentence be amended to take out the words “the trees”.
10. Mr. Morgan asked Town Attorney, Mrs. Icenhour, to comment on the latest ruling in the Wal-Mart hearing case involving Blacksburg, Virginia.
11. Mrs. Lowe commented about a speeding incident she witnessed on Bradley Street.
12. Mr. Kelly asked the Council members to consider dates for the Pedestrian Improvement Public Forum. The Council selected March 26<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 in the Council Chambers.

Mayor Morgan declared a five (5) minutes recess for Council to move into the Council Chambers to hear presentations.

\*\*\*\*\*

At 6:30 p.m., Mayor Morgan called the meeting back to order to hear presentations from scheduled speakers.

The following presentations were made to Council:

13. **Donny Necessary from Virginia Department of Transportation** appeared before the Council members to inform them of an 89% reduction in VDOT’s urban allocation plan. Mr. Necessary indicated that 2017 was the original date for funding and due to inflation and the economy, that funding will no longer be available. Mr. Necessary commented that the impacted project is on the west end of the Town of Abingdon and had been ongoing for at least fifteen (15) years that he was aware of.
  - Mayor Morgan inquired for clarification purposes if the project would ever be fully funded and Mr. Necessary confirmed that it would not.
  - Mrs. Lowe inquired if this project was included in the Stormwater Management Study that the Town is currently investigating. Mr. Smith, Town Engineer, responded that it was not included because of its inclusion in the VDOT project scope.
  - Mr. Necessary commented that VDOT did have some funding remaining for engineering studies and recommended that staff from the Town and VDOT meet to discuss availability and project priorities.
  - Mr. Kelly inquired if any of the engineering study had been done on the West End project and Mr. Necessary indicated that it was about 75% complete.
  - Mayor Morgan inquired about Exit 17 and if any progress had been made by VDOT. Mr. Necessary informed the Council that the projected cost of Exit 17 was now at or around \$136M.

- Mr. Berry inquired if VDOT engineer, Steve Buston's, proposal regarding entrances off Cummings Street into Winterham and Country Club estates had been addressed among VDOT personnel. Mr. Necessary indicated he was not aware of that proposal and could not comment.
  - Mayor Morgan thanked Mr. Necessary for taking time to come and speak to the Council.
14. **Sean Taylor, Assistant Planner**, appeared before the Council members to provide an update on the Fairview in Abingdon project. Mr. Taylor indicated that several citizens were interested in an organic farming incubator project, coordinated through Appalachian Sustainable Development, and confirmed that the land at Fairview was suitable for this type of project. Mayor Morgan inquired about the size of the tracts for the farming projects and Mr. Taylor showed the Council a plat of the property with approximately one (1) acre tracts that could be used. Mr. Kelly indicated that Appalachian Sustainable Development would have to submit a proposal to the Town regarding the organic farming project and asked Mr. Taylor to contact their representatives to get this underway. Mrs. Lowe suggested to Mr. Taylor that he contact the agriculture department at Abingdon High School about interest in the Fairview project. In addition Mr. Morgan suggested also that he contact the horticulture department at Virginia Highlands Community College.
15. **John Buckland**, local artist and business owner of Blue Windmill Fine Arts Gallery appeared before the Council members to ask for their support in promotion of the arts in the Town of Abingdon. Mr. Buckland commented that he has a gallery at the Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator and invited everyone to come and visit. Mr. Buckland indicated that he is hopeful that the Tourism will increase with the promotion of the arts while enhancing the downtown area if more gallery spaces were located on Main Street. Mr. Morgan inquired if Mr. Buckland had a specific request and he replied that he wants to initiate the dialogue between the Town and local supporters of the promotion of the arts and the stimulation of cultural economy. Mrs. Lowe informed Mr. Buckland about the new Chamber of Commerce business breakfast meetings and invited Mr. Buckland to attend those meetings.
16. **Courtney Bledsoe**, Chairman of the Tourism Advisory Committee, appeared before the Council members to provide an update on the Committee's recommendations with regard to the promotion of cultural tourism in the Town. Ms. Bledsoe indicated the committee is supportive of a partnership with the Abingdon Arts Association in an effort to find new ways to promote the Town. Ms. Bledsoe informed the Council of the new date for the public Tourism Forum which will be held on Monday, March 23, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. at Barter Stage II. Ms. Bledsoe commented that the Tourism Committee was considering recommendations to the Town regarding sidewalks and pedestrian safety in Town. Ms. Bledsoe indicated that the Committee had commented that pedestrians in Town could not walk side by side in some areas or take a child's stroller down the sidewalk because of the location of flower arrangements in barrels. Ms. Bledsoe commented that the Committee would like to bike racks for Tourists located in areas around Town for visitors coming into Town from the Creeper Trail. Mayor Morgan commented that the Town was in the process of scheduling a public pedestrian forum to hear from citizens about these issues.

Mayor Morgan declared the work session adjourned.

---

Edward B. Morgan, Mayor

---

Cecile M. Rosenbaum, Town Clerk