

**TOWN OF ABINGDON
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
MONDAY, MAY 7, 2012 – 5:30 P.M.
DOWNSTAIRS MEETING ROOM – MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

A Work session meeting of the Abingdon Town Council was held on Monday, May 7, 2012 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
Mrs. Cathy Lowe, Vice Mayor
Mr. Jason N. Berry
Mr. Richard E. Humphreys
Mr. Robert M. Howard

Administrative Staff: Gregory W. Kelly, Town Manager
Cecile M. Rosenbaum, Town Clerk
Debbie Icenhour, Town Attorney
Garrett Jackson, Asst. Town Manager/Dir. of Planning
Mark Godbey, Town Treasurer/Dir. Finance
Jim Smith, Town Engineer
John Dew, Dir. of Construction/Public Services
Deborah Atkins-Vance, Director Human Resources
Kevin Costello, Director of Tourism
John Phelps, IT Department

Visitors: Debra Mcown, Rich Macbeth, Sara Cardinale

The following items were discussed by Council:

1. Mr. Kelly inquired about setting a date in the coming summer months for Council's annual Capital Improvement Retreat meeting. Mr. Kelly suggested that the Council consider Greenville, South Carolina which shares many of the same attributes as the town such as a trail system and public/private partnerships which have proven to be very successful. Mrs. Lowe indicated that she was unable to commit to a date at this time and Mr. Humphreys suggested that the staff consider holding the retreat in a location holding a festival. Mr. Berry suggested Boone, NC and Mr. Humphreys suggested Winston Salem, NC. Council members agreed that the best weekend for retreat would be July 13, 14, and 15 and asked staff to research potential locations and bring it back to Council for final determination.
2. Mr. Jackson commented that Sarah Cardinale, Abingdon Farmer's Market Manger was present to address the proposed changes to the Abingdon Market Pavilion Rules and Regulations which was on

the regular agenda for Council's consideration. Mr. Jackson commented that town staff had made some modifications to the Market Pavilion Rules and Regulations to bring them up to date and make the farmer's market guidelines more consistent for any organization that wanted to use the space for a market. Mayor Morgan commented about the use of the word "ambiguous" and expressed his concern about the market items being locally grown with less focus on organic vs. non organic. Mr. Jackson indicated that staff had considered expanding the space of the market. Ms. Cardinale indicated that all Washington County, Virginia farmers who applied for a booth at the market had received a space and commented further on concerns her group had about market expansion. Ms. Lowe commented on using the space at Fields Penn to place craft vendors and that location would also be suitable for an open mic night for local musicians. Discussion ensued about insurance for the events that could be located at Fields Penn.

3. Mr. Kelly commented that he and several town staff had participated in a webinar sponsored by the Virginia Retirement System to address the new mandate with regard to changes in employee contributions to VRS. Mr. Kelly confirmed that town staff will now have to pay 5% of their salary into VRS per mandate by the state and each locality will have to raise the salaries of each employee 5% to cover the new deduction. Mrs. Lowe inquired about the level of protection for the mandated funds. Discussion ensued with regard to the most efficient way to pay the cost that the town will incur to give a 5% increase to employees. Mr. Kelly commented that the money could be taken from reserves and indicated the amount needed was \$254,000. Mrs. Lowe commented that she was opposed to taking the cost from reserves and suggested that the funding come from the money allocated for employees to receive a bonus in FY2012/13 budget. Mr. Howard commented that he was not opposed to taking the cost from reserves and Mr. Humphreys suggested that it be split with \$150,000 coming from the employee bonus allocation and \$100,000 from reserves to cover the remainder. Council agreed to review the budget again at the end of the calendar year to see if additional funds might be available. Mr. Kelly indicated that a resolution will be on the upcoming June agenda for approval by Council with regard to the terms of VRS mandate.
4. Mayor Morgan inquired about the status of the Historic Properties Committee and Mrs. Lowe commented that it is her hope that Cooper Planning can give the Council recommendations on the uses of the town properties in her development of a Master Plan. Mayor Morgan commented on the significance of the Hassinger home.
5. Mr. Costello, Director of Tourism commented on a plan he has developed for the Abingdon Music Experience. Mr. Costello commented that he was focusing several major annual events which include a Jazz concert, a Blues and BBQ event, and a Crooked Road festival. Mr. Costello commented on partnering with sponsors to host the events as well as grants that he can apply for to assist in setting up a website and an online ticket order outlet. Mr. Humphreys commented that he approved of the approach especially the sponsorships by media outlets. Discussion ensued about the scheduling of the events and the possibility of providing a discount on tickets for residents of Abingdon.
6. Mr. Dew provided Council with an update on the Exit 19 VDOT study. Mr. Dew commented that the firm of Kimley Horne had gathered data and reviewed the distribution paths for Exit 19. Mr. Dew noted that VDOT will hold a public hearing on the study on June 19th from 5-7 at the Coomes Center. Mr. Dew indicated that he was concerned about growth in the area and the best measures to manage the growth. Mayor Morgan inquired about the property behind the Exxon station located near Exit 19 and its status with regard to change in ownership. Mr. Kelly provided a summary of the multiple discussions with the owner of the property and adjacent owners. He commented that he

had informed the owner that the town was interested in looking at the property if it should ever become available in the future, but was unable to commit and move forward until the completion of the VDOT study at the Exit 19 to Exit 22 Corridor.

7. Mrs. Lowe inquired about the letter that Mayor Morgan had received from Governor McDonnell with regard to a transportation bill.
8. Mr. Dew reported on the proposed changes to the Solid Waste Ordinance and commented that staff wanted to make the Ordinance in line with current services and update the language within the ordinance. Discussion ensued about the language in the Ordinance with regard to containers and what items can be placed in the containers. Mr. Humphreys inquired about the status of the position of Code Enforcement Officer. Mrs. Lowe inquired about the punishment level for someone in violation of the Ordinance. Council members agreed that the Ordinance changes warranted further discussion and asked that it be put back on the June agenda for further consideration.
9. Mrs. Icenhour commented on the kickoff event for the Country Club Stormwater Management Project; the need for a Council member to be placed on the King School of Medicine Board; and the status of the Breckenridge Cabin which is now being considered by Washington County.

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Mayor Morgan declared a 5 minute recess for Council and Town staff to reconvene in the Council Chambers for the regular 7:30 meeting.

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Edward B. Morgan, Mayor

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Cecile M. Rosenbaum, Town Clerk