

**TOWN OF ABINGDON
COUNCIL WORK SESSION
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2015 – 6:00 P.M.
COUNCIL MEETING ROOM - MUNICIPAL BUILDING**

A Work session meeting of the Abingdon Town Council was held on Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council meeting room of the Municipal Building.

A. ROLL CALL

Members of Council Present:

Mr. Edward B. Morgan, Mayor
Mrs. Cathy Lowe, Vice Mayor
Mr. Richard E. Humphreys
Mr. Robert M. Howard
Mrs. Jayne A. Duehring

Administrative Staff:

Gregory W. Kelly, Town Manager
Cecile Rosenbaum, Town Clerk/Int.Asst. Town Manager
Deb Icenhour, Town Attorney
Matthew Johnson, Dir. of Planning
Kevin Costello, Dir. of Tourism

Visitors:

Amy Looney, Martha Keyes, Susan Howard, and Marcy Miller

The following items were discussed by Council:

1. Mayor Morgan welcomed everyone and asked Ms. Duehring to address the first agenda item.
2. Ms. Duehring commented that she, along with Vice Mayor Lowe, Cecile Rosenbaum, and Kim Kingsley had met on several occasions to discuss changes to the application process for the Arthur Campbell Award. Ms. Duehring noted that the goal was to increase the publicity about the award, assist in making the award process fair to all nominees and inspire nominations that are based on inspiring stories and great deeds by residents. Mr. Humphreys inquired about the nominee signing the award. Ms. Duehring reported that the nominations would go out to many civic organizations following a detailed press release and then follow up by Council members visiting some local meetings to promote the process. Discussion ensued and Mr. Humphreys and Mayor Morgan commented on the good work done by the committee. Ms. Rosenbaum indicated that she and Ms. Kingsley would move forward with the nomination form and revised process.

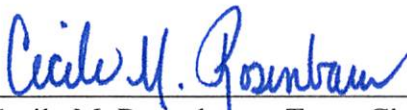
3. Mayor Morgan commented that Greg Morrell, local advocate for persons with special needs in the area had recently passed away.
4. Bob Howard inquired about setting a date for Council to do a walking tour in the downtown area. The date for the tour will be Thursday, May 28th at 2:30 p.m.
5. Greg Kelly, Town Manager reported on the issue of the cancellation of Council retreat earlier in 2015 and inquired if Council wished to reschedule the event. Mr. Kelly noted that several of the Council members were not agreeable with the cost of the retreat which included the amount of \$5,000 for the facilitator and an additional \$5,000 projected expenses for travel, lodging and food for the event. Ms. Rosenbaum noted that the facilitator cost would be the same at \$5,000 but the expenses for the location would increase. Discussion ensued and Mr. Kelly noted that he would like to build in a component of CIP review if we do reschedule the retreat. Mayor Morgan commented that there was a consensus of agreement among the Council members to proceed with finding a date and venue for the retreat. Council members agreed they would provide Ms. Rosenbaum with available dates during the summer and early fall months.
6. Kevin Costello reported that he had met with artist, Charles Vess, and he was interested in renting the Summers Law Office to house his art studio. Discussion ensued and Mayor Morgan noted that Council members agreed that this arrangement would work and staff would proceed with getting estimates to repair the house for a renter.
7. Mr. Humphreys asked about the LOVE letters and Mr. Costello reported on the latest meeting of the 3rd Plate book club.
8. At this time, Council members had a discussion relative to town owned historic properties and the need to prioritize the repairs and restoration that were needed for some of the properties. Mr. Kelly reported on the challenges the town faced in financing the renovation and repairs and the total amount of funds it would require. The following properties were discussed:
 - The caboose located at Depot Square and its need for repainting
 - The Arts Depot building
 - The Passenger Depot building currently housing the Washington County Historical Society
 - The Cummings Cabin located inside Sinking Spring Cemetery
 - The Breckenridge Cabin located on the Public Library property
 - The Station at Alvarado
 - The Sinking Spring Cemetery
 - The Virginia Creeper Trail
 - The Hassinger House and its need for repainting
 - Fields Penn House – Mr. Johnson commented that Davis Buckley had come back with a revised figure for total renovation of \$1.4M. Mr. Johnson summarized the pursuit of historic tax credits in relation to the Fields Penn project and Mr. Humphreys emphasized the need for the town to acquire the construction documents from Davis Buckley. Council discussed the need for staff to manage the projects and the possibility of an entertainment tax to assist with funding. Council members discussed establishing an ad hoc committee consisting of Matthew Johnson, Greg Kelly, Cecile Rosenbaum, Deb Icenhour, Kevin Costello and Jayne Duehring to make

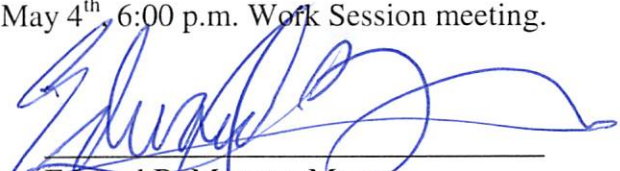
a recommendation to Council on the uses of the property. Mr. Kelly noted that the need for stabilization of the property was imperative and would cost approximately \$133,000. Council members agreed that staff should proceed with stabilization of the property at this time and consider the property's future and use at a later time.

- Mayor Morgan asked staff to consider the repairs needed for Retirement and make a recommendation to Council.
- Council members discussed the location of work session meetings taking place in the downstairs meeting room and the challenges associated with the Council Chambers. Discussion ensued and Mayor Morgan noted that the consensus was that Council wished to meet in the downstairs meeting room for work sessions.
- Mr. Howard reported that he had heard from residents on the south side of Interstate 81 and they were unable to hear the alert sirens in that area.

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Mayor Morgan declared the meeting recessed until the May 4<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. Work Session meeting.

  
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Cecile M. Rosenbaum, Town Clerk

  
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Edward B. Morgan, Mayor