

Town Council Meeting
Regular Meeting
August 8, 2017

The regular meeting of the Town of Mount Jackson Town Council was held August 8, 2017 at 7:30 p.m. in council chambers at 5901 Main Street. Roll call was taken with the following in attendance; J. Bucky Miller, Mayor; Dennis Andrick, Ken Hackenbracht, Whitney Miller, Donnie Pifer, Roger Rudy and Rod Shepherd, Councilmembers. Also in attendance, Kevin Fauber, Town Manager; Neil Showalter, Finance Director; Town Attorney, Matt Akers; Chief of Police, Jeff Sterner and Town Clerk, Heather Taylor. Heather Richards of The Conservation Fund was present as well as several other people from the community.

Agenda Additions/Deletions/Changes: Mayor Miller requested that Dakota Baker, Troop 117-Eagle Scout Project be added to Presentations and removed from New Business. Motion made by Councilmember Hackenbracht, seconded by Councilmember Andrick.

VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Councilmember Andrick	None	None
“ Hackenbracht		
“ Miller		
“ Pifer		
“ Rudy		
“ Shepherd		

6 AYES, motion passes

Mayor Miller stated in his report that with the upcoming Yard Crawl for everyone to please be careful. He also said the town is finally going to have sidewalks.

Remarks from Council Members: None

Presentations: Dakota Baker of Scout Troop #117 is working on his Eagle Scout Project. He would like to construct a U.S Flag Retirement Box, 4' x 2' x 16" and have it displayed in town hall. Dakota feels that most people aren't sure how to respectfully retire their American flags and he would like to help them to do it properly. This project will be in town hall by October 1, 2017 and the members of the troop will assist with dropping off and collecting flags in the future. The Mayor would like this project to be kicked off with a flag ceremony at the Mount Jackson Harvest Festival Friday, October 27, 2017.

Town Attorney Report: None

Chief of Police: The Mount Jackson Police Department has two new officers on the force, Keith Cowart and Devin Caplinger. Officer Cowart came from Shenandoah County and has 13 years of experience and Officer Caplinger has 16 years of experience and came from the Dayton Police Department. Officer Armentrout has recently become the Investigator for the Town of Mount

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Jackson. The police department's National Night Out was a big success. The Mayor commented that he is grateful to have so much experience on this police force.

Town Manager Report: Awaiting to award the sidewalk project and working towards finalizing the Wells 7 & 8 project.

Committee Reports: Councilmember Andrick, Chairman of the Ordinance Committee, said thank you to Finance Director, Neil Showalter for collecting taxes and business licenses that are in arrears.

Councilmember Rudy, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee, reported from Rescue & Fire that total responses for July were 88 with 65 of those being EMS responses and 23 being Fire responses. Responses were up by 16 from last month. Company 21 is planning a public breakfast 10/28, (the morning of the Mount Jackson Harvest Festival), and a steak dinner 10/14/17. The Northern Virginia Daily newspaper did an article about the '63 Cadillac Hearse that was donated to Co. 21 which will be restored. Rescue & Fire assisted with National Night Out. The police department had 504 calls in July which was up from June's report. There were 13 criminal reports, 9 of those were cleared leaving 4 under investigation. The monthly announcement page, which is mailed in the monthly water bill, included comments about open windows and doors being a problem. This month, only 5 open doors and windows were found. Councilmember Rudy thanked the police department and the rescue squad for their help with National Night Out.

Councilmember Miller, Chairman of the Public Properties committee, stated that the sidewalk projects are moving forward.

Councilmember Pifer MOVED, seconded by Councilmember Rudy to APPROVE the Consent Agenda consisting of the Approval-Minutes of July 11, 2017 Regular Meeting.

VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Councilmember Andrick	None	None
“ Hackenbracht		
“ Miller		
“ Pifer		
“ Rudy		
“ Shepherd		

6 AYES, motion passes

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Old Business: 1. 6044 LLC (Contract Purchaser), 6044 Main Street (Old Triplett School Property), Rezoning Application for Parcel 91A1-A-259, 4.218 acres from B-1 to R-2 for residential duplex project. Approval recommended by the Mount Jackson Planning Commission on 8/7/17, Motion made by Councilmember Shepherd, seconded by Councilmember Hackenbracht.

VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Councilmember Hackenbracht	None	Councilmember Andrick
“ Miller		Councilmember Pifer
“ Rudy		
“ Shepherd		

4 AYES, 2 ABSTAIN, motion passes

New Business: 1. 6044 LLC (Contract Purchaser), 6044 Main Street (Old Triplett School Property), Subdivision Application for Parcel 91A1-A-259, 4.218 acres. Introduction and Set Public Hearing Date-September 11, 2017 at 7 p.m. Motion made by Councilmember Shepherd, seconded by Councilmember Miller to Introduce and Set Public Hearing for September 11, 2017.

VOTE:

<u>AYE</u>	<u>NAY</u>	<u>ABSTAIN</u>
Councilmember Andrick	None	None
“ Hackenbracht		
“ Miller		
“ Pifer		
“ Rudy		
“ Shepherd		

6 AYES, motion passes

2. The Knob/Conservation Fund Discussion

Charlie Moore introduced the property, which is east of Mount Jackson, as a rock knob on the ridge that sits above and south of the town’s watershed. This property is privately owned but has been consistently maintained by the U.S. Forest Service for the past 30 years. The land was originally owned by Mr. Meems who left the land to his granddaughter. The granddaughter needs to sell the land. Heather Richards is the Sr. Representative for the Conservation Fund, which is a non-profit organization that purchases important pieces of land which are acquired by govt/state agencies and through notes, holds the property until it can be protected. Holding costs, (\$75K) are

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needed and to date, \$25K has been donated which leaves \$50K more needed by the end of the year. These funds hold the property through a note until the forest service can acquire the land. The holding costs would include surveys, environmental assessments, fees and the interest on the loan. Ms. Richards is asking Town Council to help close the gap.

Councilmember Andrick- There's no Right-Of- Way to the Knob.

Ms. Richards-The property owner has another road where there could be access. The owner's property has 2 points where the property ends. The subdivision, which is plated but only holds approximately 6 finished houses but has possibly 100 lots, has a 3 way access and it is believed that this land will perk. There is access from Massanutten Trail which would include a 2 mile hike to the Knob.

B. Ryan commented that that was too far of a walk and that there was no reasonable access.

T. Day-Can it be guaranteed that the George Washington National Forest won't resell the land in the future but keep it permanently preserved?

Ms. Richards- The money that was borrowed would have to be returned to the donators.

R. Whitehurst-Why is the town being confronted rather than the county since this is county land? They have more people and more money. It's county property.

Ms. Richards- I would be happy to approach the county.

Councilmember Shepherd asked R. Whitehurst if he supported building on this property and R. Whitehurst explained that no he doesn't support building on this property but does feel the county should be approached with this request rather than the town.

John Coleman, retired U.S. Forest Service Ranger, Lee District, is familiar with this land and knows that the elevation, approaching the Knob is not very steep.

T. Holtzman supports development but feels that the Knob is such a focal point and it needs to be protected. We need to fund it into the forest service.

Mayor Miller commented that the Knob has been used on our flag and is a beacon to the east. The Knob is a part of Mt. Jackson and Mt. Jackson has always claimed the Knob. We have wonderful wells and need to protect them. (For clarification, Mt. Jackson is not purchasing the Knob, we are securing the note.)

T. Day suggested doing a fundraiser rather than giving the town's money away. Perhaps local businesses could contribute and a banner could be set up and displayed for the fall festival.

Mayor Miller suggested a matching fundraising. The Town Challenge and have the community match those funds.

Ms. Richards has approached other foundations & sources and is waiting to hear back from them. The Conservation Fund is not expecting the Town of Mount Jackson to pay all of the funding. Councilmember Andrick-What if after 2 years the money doesn't come from the government?

Ms. Richards-The Conservation Fund takes responsibility for that. We change our strategy if necessary and figure out a way. This property is a top priority with The Conservation Fund.

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Councilmember Shepherd asked Ms. Richards if she could report back to Council in September which she will do.

Councilmember Rudy stated that he noticed reluctance from the audience in approaching the county and he would like to see that explored. The county should have some interest at the county level with this property.

Councilmember Shepherd made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

CLERK

MAYOR