

**Town of Walden**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 8, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER OF THE REGULAR MEETING**

Mayor Lee Davis called the regular monthly meeting of the Town of Walden to order.

The following interested citizens were present at the Walden Town Hall: Joe Durek, Ed and Mary Catherine O'Kelley, John and Keith Barry, Eddie Lawson, Mike and Angela Cassidy, Wade Sorenson, Mariah Prescott, Mickey Robbins, Linda Collins, Joe and Margha Davis, Karen Stone, Bo Chamberlain, Winston Robbins, Joe Robbins, John Dixon, and Bill Thornton.

Fern Lockhart opened the meeting with a prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Fern Lockhart called the roll and noted the presence of Mayor Lee Davis, Alderwomen Sarah McKenzie, and Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt. Town Attorney Sam Elliott was also present at the meeting.

**APPROVAL / CORRECTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MAY 11, 2021, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

**ROADS REPORT**

No report.

**POLICE REPORT**

No report.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

The financial report is completed and attached as an exhibit to these minutes.

**CODES ENFORCEMENT**

No report.

**WRES REPORT**

Mr. Bill Thornton reported for WRES, noting a busy month with a total of 30 emergency calls in May of 2021: 20 emergency medical and 10 fire calls. The WRES has returned to normal operations and training after the COVID pandemic shut-downs, and is looking forward to hosting an open house at the new fire hall in the fall of this year. Mr. Thornton also cited the need for continued recruitment of interested citizens to assist with emergency services. In response to a question, Mr. Thornton clarified that the fire hall contains four apartments for live-in firefighters and 12 single-occupant bunk-rooms.

## **BACHMAN COUNCIL**

No report.

## **PUMPKIN PATCH**

Mayor Lee Davis noted an email received from John Barlew on June 3, 2021. The email verified repairs completed by volunteers, but also stated concerns about the quality of some of the new construction of the playground equipment. Mr. Barlew intends to upgrade some of the connections (lag bolts instead of nails), and – while he believes the playground to be safe overall – he also believes more frequent inspections are warranted. He will work with the Parks and Recreation Committee to achieve this.

## **MCCOY FARM & GARDENS**

Mickey Robbins reported that McCoy Farm and Gardens is “open for business” for all available events and activities at the farm. Mr. Robbins further noted that the fallen Sweetgum Trees that lined the entrance have been replaced. Also, Grounds Chairman, Andy Jones, has been hand-crafting benches from these fallen trees. A new entrance sign has been created for the Anderson Pike entrance, and it will mirror the sign found at the Taft Highway entrance. A number of volunteers have responded to requests for assistance, and are helping with the state of the grounds and home. An intern, Madeleine Wyatt, has started an Instagram account for McCoy Farm and Gardens. Sally Ford’s committee has continued to enhance the Children’s Sensory Garden, which Mr. Robbins believes may be award-worthy.

## **DOG PARK**

See Item #4 under New Business.

## **LAND USE STUDY COMMITTEE**

See Item #1 under Unfinished Business.

## **WALDEN’S RIDGE CIVIC LEAGUE**

The Walden Ridge Civic League’s report, given by Karen Stone, is attached in writing as an exhibit to these minutes.

## **BUDGET COMMITTEE**

John Barry reported that the Budget Committee held a workshop last month, and their first quarterly meeting is scheduled for July 8, 2021. An agenda will be prepared and submitted to Fern, for posting on the Walden website in advance of the meeting.

## **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE**

Mariah Prescott reported for the Parks and Recreation Committee, first thanking the council for the funding made available to their group. Ms. Prescott noted that the committee has identified a few “major issues” thus far, including parking issues and overuse at Mabbitt Springs and Falling Water Park. Some of the parking issues have been addressed through the stenciling of “No Parking” on the road by the town. Specific parking spaces have been delineated as well. In the future, the committee plans to purchase and place a bike rack to encourage biking to the park instead of driving. Further, a sign denoting park rules will be placed at the entrance to Mabbitt Springs.

Ms. Prescott's committee is working with the adjoining private property owner adjacent to Mabbitt Springs in order to ensure his property is protected. The committee is also working with the State of Tennessee for issues relative to Falling Water Park. Ms. Prescott confirmed that her committee has already been in touch with a contact from the state.

Bo Chamberlain updated the board and citizens on the progress with the disc golf course, located behind Walden Town Hall. Mr. Chamberlain explained that the game is played and scored just like golf, but it is played with Frisbees. The disc golf course was designed and built nearly a decade ago, as a senior project for some students at Signal Mountain High School. The course was in disrepair after several years, and it has recently been renovated by Mr. Chamberlain and other volunteers. It is open for use and will continue to be improved in the near future.

### **ROADS AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Vice Mayor Lizzie Schmidt reported that her committee is meeting on the fourth Tuesday of every month at 7:30 PM at Walden Town Hall. The Roads and Safety Committee is focusing on the issue of speeding. Vice Mayor Schmidt reminded the citizens that all are welcome to attend their monthly meetings.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **1. WALDEN'S RIDE PARK: TAFT SIBLEY TO SPEAK ABOUT UPDATES AND PROGRESS ON THE PARK.**

Mayor Lee Davis introduced Taft Sibley, who shared a PowerPoint presentation regarding the new 200-acre Walden's Ridge Park, a hiking, bouldering, and mountain biking park. The trails will run between Mountain Creek Road and the top of the W Road. To date, Mr. Sibley and his organization have raised over \$450,000 to use towards construction of the park. This was donated by private citizens, businesses, and corporations. Mr. Sibley invited any citizens with questions or an interest in further donations to contact Town Recorder Fern Lockhart.

#### **2. APPROVAL OF PURCHASES BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE TOTALING \$4,435.**

Mariah Prescott detailed several purchases requested by the Parks and Recreation Committee. Ms. Prescott asked if her committee could order and pay for a custom bench for Mabbitt Springs prior to June 30, 2021 (the end of our fiscal year), even if the bench would not arrive until after that date. Town Recorder Fern Lockhart clarified that this purchase would be considered a "capital outlay over \$1,000." Because of this, the item would have to be placed on our list of assets and depreciated – and it cannot be placed on the list until it is received. Recorder Lockhart suggests that the committee's line-item budget be increased for the next fiscal year so that this item may be ordered, paid for, and received after June 30, 2021. Mayor Davis stressed that, since this is a custom-order item, it would need to be paid for at the time it is ordered. Recorder Lockhart stated that she would check with the auditors when they were in the office on June 10, 2021, and Attorney Elliott agreed that this is the proper step to take. The new total for these purchases is \$6,150. Mayor Davis suggested approving funding up to \$6,500 for the committee, and it was clarified that \$1,350 had already been allocated and spent.

MAYOR LEE DAVIS MOVED TO APPROVE EXPENDITURES OF UP TO \$5,150 FOR THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE , SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

**3. DISCUSSION ON COMMITTEES USING THE ZOOM PLATFORM FOR PLANNING MEETINGS.**

See Item #1, paragraphs 2-4, under Unfinished Business.

**4. APPROVAL OF AN ADDITIONAL \$75 PER MONTH TO KELL'S LAWN AND MAINTENANCE FOR MOWING OUTSIDE THE FENCE AT THE DOG PARK.**

Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie noted that the previous landscaping proposal did not include mowing outside of the dog park at McCoy Farm and Gardens, and she asks that this be corrected.

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE AN ADDITIONAL \$75 PER MONTH ADDED TO THE FEE FOR KELL'S LAWN AND MAINTENANCE FOR MOWING OUTSIDE OF THE FENCE AT THE DOG PARK, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

**5. SET DATE FOR A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING FOR THE FINAL READING OF THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2021 AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2022.**

Town Recorder Fern Lockhart noted that approval of the budget and the setting of the tax rate would need to be completed at separate meetings. Mayor Lee Davis announced that there will be no tax increase this year, as it is a reassessment year. The special called meeting is set for June 23, 2021, @ 6:30 PM in the Walden Town Hall.

MAYOR LEE DAVIS MOVED TO SET A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING FOR BUDGET APPROVAL ON JUNE 23, 2021, @ 6:30 PM IN WALDEN TOWN HALL, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

**6. ANY OTHER NEW BUSINESS.**

There is no other new business.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**1. PRESENTATION FROM ANGELA CASSIDY ON CONTINUING WORK FROM THE LAND USE COMMITTEE.**

Angela Cassidy stated that the Land Use Committee had a meeting at Town Hall with the planner (Common Ground), and this went very well. She noted a good turnout for the charrette that was held, likewise for the follow-up meeting at Bachman Community Center. It was suggested by the consultant that the Land Use Committee continue meeting publicly on a regular basis, perhaps monthly but at least quarterly. Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie noted an emphasis on ensuring that plans determined by the committee actually get moved forward and do not just "sit on a shelf." Ms. Cassidy suggested meeting on at least an every-other-month basis.

Attorney Sam Elliott reminded all committees that their meetings must be compliant with the Sunshine Law. Adequate notice must be given to Town Recorder Fern Lockhart so that she may advertise appropriately. A roll must be kept at all meetings, as well as rudimentary minutes. All committee meetings must be held in-person with a quorum present and be open to the public.

Mr. Dawson Wheeler inquired with Attorney Sam Elliott as to how his committee could continue to work with their consultant group out of Nashville. Attorney Elliott clarified that those out-of-town

entities could communicate with the committee members online, but the committee members themselves must be present together.

Mayor Davis suggests that all committee chairs get their 2021-2022 meeting schedules to Town Recorder Fern Lockhart so that she may advertise appropriately. Mayor Davis also inquired as to whether or not meetings could be held by Zoom if no decisions were being made, but Attorney Elliot stressed that all committees should “err on the side of caution” and hold public, in-person meetings. Attorney Elliot also noted that the consequence of not abiding by the Sunshine Law would be the invalidation of any actions taken during a meeting held in violation of this law, and also a possible injunction against the town. It was also asked if the advertisement had to be written in two languages, but Attorney Elliott said no.

## **2. ANY OTHER UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There is no other unfinished business.

## **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITIZENS**

1. Joe Robbins asked for clarification on the change in the lawn service at the dog park. Mayor Davis explained that the reason for the additional \$75, as mowing outside of the dog park fence and along Taft Highway was not included in the original contract.
2. Linda Collins noted that the Parks and Recreation Committee might want to look at having benches made from white pine by Andy Jones. Mayor Davis will send Mariah Prescott contact information for this.
3. John Dixon noted that he had requested the placement of a guardrail in his yard at the curve on Anderson Pike near the top of the W Road, and he asked for an update on this request. Mayor Davis noted that former Mayor Trohanis had discussed this with the town’s engineer, Mack McCarley. Mayor Davis will follow up with Mr. McCarley regarding this situation.
4. Ed O’Kelly inquired as to whether or not the town was aware of exactly where the new bike park would meet Walden-owned property, and he suggested that the Parks and Recreation Committee be a partner in this endeavor. Mayor Davis confirmed both in the affirmative.

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Davis. There will be no meeting held in July.

SES



Respectfully submitted:  
Fern Lockhart, Recorder



Approved:  
Lee Davis, Mayor