

**Town of Walden**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 19, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER OF THE SPECIAL CALLED MEETING**

Mayor Lee Davis called the special called meeting of the Town of Walden to order. Mayor Davis clarified that this is a special called meeting because it was pushed back a week due to Spring Break.

The following interested citizens were present at the Walden Town Hall: Margha Davis, Joe Durek, Linda Collins, Juanita and Ted Tumelaire, Tony Wheeler, Karen Stone, Winston Robbins, Angela Cassidy, Mickey Robbins, Earl Hereford, Katy Murphy, Werner Slabber, Melissa Nimon, John Barry, and Jon Cook.

Mariah Prescott opened the meeting with a prayer, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Eagle Scout Andy Goidel.

**ROLL CALL**

Mariah Prescott called the roll and noted the presence of Mayor Lee Davis, Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt, and Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie.

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

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF MARCH 8, 2022, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

**REPORTS**

Mayor Lee Davis introduced Andy Goidel, an Eagle Scout with Troop 116 and a senior at Signal Mountain High School. Andy presented his planned Eagle Scout project to those in attendance. Andy's plan is to install three split-rail fences (40', 50', and 50') at the Puppy Patch, on the McCoy Farm and Gardens' property. These fences will be made of cedar wood, and should take no more than two weeks to install. He will also be spreading gravel, mulch, and grass seed.

Andy is planning to begin his project by May 9, 2022. He is seeking volunteers to assist him, and also intends to work on some fundraising in order to pay for the cedar rails. He has collected and paid for nearly all of the other materials, and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen are providing a load of gravel for his work. Mayor Lee Davis confirmed that no special permits are required for this work.

**1. ROADS**

No Report.

**2. POLICE**

Officer Gregg Carson reported continuing his speed-reduction campaign, and noted that average speeds are between 36 and 42. He has issued warnings for those traveling over 40 MPH. He also responded to an "accidental trespass" call, where a motor vehicle had ventured onto a walking trail at McCoy Farm and Gardens. Officer Carson made contact with the vehicle's owner after the incident. Efforts have been made to more effectively block cars from entering the trail.

### **3. FINANCIAL**

The financial report, given by Mariah Prescott, is attached as an exhibit to these minutes.

### **4. CODES ENFORCEMENT**

Mayor Lee Davis reported on behalf of Codes Officer Dan Maxwell. The report is attached as an exhibit to these minutes. Mayor Davis noted that this month's report is very similar to what was reported in March of 2022, and he asked City Manager Mariah Prescott to follow up with Mr. Maxwell for an update.

### **5. WRES**

No Report.

### **6. BACHMAN COUNCIL**

Katy Murphy reported for Bachman Community Center. She reported that playground updates will begin during the summer. Further, she noted that there are several large trees on Bachman's property that need to come down. Ideally, these trees should be felled in a specific way so that the lumber can possibly be utilized for seating or as a natural climbing element for children. Ms. Murphy asked the attendees to please reach out to her with recommendations for anyone with a "creative eye" and also the skill to fell these trees in the manor and location desired. There will also be some concrete removed and new plantings in the garden beds.

Mayor Lee Davis recommended that Ms. Murphy get in touch with Andy Jones, who builds benches by hand. A McCoy Farm and Gardens' representative confirmed Andy's expertise and skill with projects such as this.

In closing, Ms. Murphy noted that Bachman will be working on restoring the large storage sheds behind the building. She would like to see the storage units upgraded, and has received the suggestion of using shipping containers. She asked that anyone with ideas for such an upgrade please contact her.

### **7. MCCOY FARM & GARDENS**

The McCoy Farm and Gardens (MFG) reported was presented by Mickey Robbins. He stated that the biggest announcement is that preparations are continuing for the Memorial Day Picnic. This event will be held on May 30, 2022, from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Food will be available, and entertainment will consist of bluegrass and patriotic music, a blacksmith demonstration, and the showing of a raptor.

Events at McCoy are continuing to increase. Over 20 weddings have been scheduled thus far for 2022. Mr. Robbins asks for any volunteers who may be interested in helping out in the office. The Oral History Project, in conjunction with UTC, is winding down and has been a big success. Several friends of Martha McCoy have been interviewed, and have shared many stories and mementoes. Mr. Robbins reminded attendees that they are continuing to take orders for the hand-crafted benches by Andy Jones, which he notes are "a work of art." In closing, Mr. Robbins thanked Sally Ford for her efforts in updating the MFG website.

### **8. DOG PARK**

No Report.

### **9. PUMPKIN PATCH**

No report.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **1. CONSIDERATION OF \$650 FOR WALDEN NATIVES.**

Mayor Lee Davis introduced the first item of new business, a request from Master Gardener Sally Ford. Ms. Ford and other volunteers have worked on the planting and upkeep of several native plants at the Walden Town Hall and also at each "Welcome to Walden" sign.

VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT MOVED TO APPROVE \$650 FOR THE PURCHASE OF WALDEN NATIVES, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

### **2. CONSIDERATION OF \$1,500 FOR TWO EZ-JECT INJECTORS.**

Mayor Lee Davis introduced the second item of new business. An "EZ-Ject" injector is a tool that assists in treating hemlock trees in order to save them from the Woolly Adelgid. If approved, these injectors will be made available – along with training (by Dan Reynolds) for proper use – to any citizen in Walden, Signal Mountain, or the unincorporated areas of Hamilton County. These tools will be housed at McCoy Farm and Gardens. Mayor Davis noted that proper training is crucial in order to prevent inappropriate use, which can result in irreparable harm to honey bees in the area.

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE \$1,500 FOR THE PURCHASE OF TWO EZ-JECT INJECTORS, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

### **3. CONSIDERATION OF LINE-ITEM TRANSFERS**

Mayor Lee Davis introduced the following line-item transfers:

- A) Transfer (\$1,500) from 41000-999 "Miscellaneous" to 41000-931, "Capital Outlay Equipment"
- B) Transfer (\$1,500) from 41000-999 "Miscellaneous" to 43100-267, "Tree & Brush Cutting"

City Manager Mariah Prescott summarized the two requests. Transfer A will be used to purchase the EZ-Ject injectors. Transfer B is to pay for the full removal of the large tree at East Brow and Gardenhire.

MAYOR LEE DAVIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE LINE ITEMS AS IDENTIFIED ABOVE, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **1. SECOND READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE #2022-344, AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF WALDEN, TENNESSEE TO GRANT APPROVAL OF THE ABANDONMENT OF THE UNOPENED 1100 BLOCK OF LYNES AVENUE (FORMERLY 1600 BLOCK OF VERNON TERRACE).**

Mayor Davis summarized the request, reminding attendees that other property owners who are adjacent to this unopened section are also in agreement with this request. Further, the RPA recommends approval.

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE PROPOSED ORDINANCE #2022-344, AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF WALDEN, TENNESSEE TO GRANT APPROVAL OF THE ABANDONMENT OF THE UNOPENED 1100 BLOCK OF LYNES AVENUE (FORMERLY 1600 BLOCK OF VERNON TERRACE), SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

## **1. CONSIDERATION OF TWO CULVERT OPTIONS AT FAIRMOUNT AVE. AND MCAMIS RD.**

Mayor Lee Davis introduced City Manager Mariah Prescott to summarize these options. City Manager Prescott noted that Mack McCarley, Town Engineer, noted that repairing the culvert would cost \$65,000 and would last approximately six-to-ten years. Fully replacing the culvert would cost \$140,000 and would last approximately 30 years. Mayor Davis confirmed that Mr. McCarley is wanting the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to approve one of the options so that he can seek bids.

Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt noted that the six-to-ten-year option may be more fiscally responsible at this time. Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie and Mayor Lee Davis both agree.

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE SEEKING BIDS FOR THE REPAIR OF THE CULVERT AT FAIRMOUNT AVENUE AND MCAMIS ROAD, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

## **2. DISCUSSION ON WALDEN PAVING LIST**

Mayor Lee Davis introduced this discussion, noting that paving of the roads in Walden is typically the Board's largest expense. This is typically done on a two-year rotating basis. City Manager Mariah Prescott stated that Engineer Mack McCarley recommended paving all "Priority 1" needs, including the paving of Forest Trail. This recommendation was seconded by the Budget Committee. The full "Priority 1" listing is attached as an exhibit to these minutes.

MAYOR LEE DAVIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE PRIORITY 1 PAVING LIST, INCLUDING THE PAVING OF FOREST PARK DRIVE, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

## **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITIZENS**

Ms. Karen Stone, representing the Walden's Ridge Civic League, noted that the quarterly membership meeting would be held on Thursday, April 21, 2022, at the auditorium. If you are not a member and would like to join, membership is \$1 per year. On Saturday, April 23, 2022, there will be a "basement clean-out party" at the Guild's building. There will also be a leveling of the dirt floor there, followed by a pizza party. Volunteers are encouraged to attend. The clean-out day will begin at 9:00 AM.

Mr. Tony Wheeler stated that he is currently working with a number of environmental groups. This work with many of them includes what is happening on the mountain as far as development. A bill that would have removed any authority of a municipality to govern gas lines was defeated and re-written. Mr. Wheeler further noted that Commissioner (Chip) Baker's steering committee for an all-inclusive land use plan for Walden's Ridge was poorly received. He believes this is due to the fact that Mr. Baker's committee was "pro-growth." In closing, Mr. Wheeler highlighted the events of March 26, 2022, when a large brush fire occurred on the main road up the mountain. Since this road had to be closed to fight the fire, and Roberts Mill Road was already closed due to the collapse under heavy rains, this led to a two-hour traffic jam on the W Road. Mr. Wheeler cited the needs for an emergency notification system and additional fire hydrants. He also stressed his belief that there should be no more approvals given for ridge-top development.

Mr. Jon Cook, a member of the Budget Committee, noted that this committee has spent a lot of time and effort in order to make a responsible recommendation to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on how to

best spend the federal funding provided by the COVID relief act. The Budget Committee recommended that some of this money (\$318,000) be split equally among the three non-profits on the mountain. These are: Bachman Community Center, McCoy Farm and Gardens, and the Walden's Ridge Civic League. Mr. Cook is concerned that some of the discussion at today's Budget Workshop was counter to what the Budget Committee had recommended. Mr. Cook noted that each non-profit had requested different amounts of money for various repairs and / or upgrades. Specifically, WRCL requested \$250,000 / MFG requested \$180,000 / BCC requested in excess of \$100,000. If the current funds are split equally among the three, then any additional funds the town may receive could be appropriated to help fund these other requests. Mr. Cook closed with asking two questions: (1) When will it be decided how this money will be spent? (2) Will citizens be allowed to give feedback regarding this decision?

Mayor Lee Davis noted that feedback was being received right now on this issue. Mayor Davis stressed that citizen input is always welcome, and even offered his cell phone number. The first reading of the proposed budget for FY23 will be at the regular May meeting. The second reading will be at the regular June meeting. At both of those meetings, public comments will be welcome. Mayor Davis also stressed the fact that no elected members of the Board are allowed to discuss the budget outside of an open meeting. Due to the Sunshine Law, their next discussion of the budget will be at the regular May meeting. In closing, Mr. Jon Cook wanted to inquire as to how Walden's monetary resources are being invested. Mayor Lee Davis recommended that Mr. Cook reach out to City Manager Mariah Prescott for complete information on where and how our funds invested.

Margha Davis spoke out, asking for more information on the issues at 201 Clegg Street. Ms. Davis is concerned that the Board is not doing enough to manage this situation, and that perhaps we do not have the proper zoning ordinances in place to address situations such as this. Mayor Lee Davis confirmed that the owners have not yet secured the proper permits or setback variances for the pool house. Angela Cassidy also spoke on this issue, noting that other structures were built on the property after the stop-work order on the pool house was in place. Ms. Cassidy is further concerned that the gravel area seems to be being used as a car lot. Ellen Young, from Walden Town Hall, requested that citizens take pictures of issues that are concerning and send them to her in order to begin documentation.

The meeting was adjourned by Mayor Davis.



Respectively submitted:  
Stacy Stewart



Approved:  
Mariah Prescott, City Administrator



Approved:  
Lee Davis, Mayor