Town of Walden
Regular Monthly Meeting
April 08, 2025

CALL TO ORDER OF THE PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED ORDINANCE #2025-375, AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET

The public hearing was called to order by Mayor Lee Davis at 6:30 PM. Town Administrator Mariah Prescott confirmed that the purpose of this amendment was make money available for paving, striping, and TDEC projects. Mayor Davis invited members of the public to speak. No citizens chose to speak.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Lee Davis adjourned the public hearing at 6:31 PM.

CALL TO ORDER OF THE REGULAR MEETING

The regular monthly meeting of the Walden Board of Mayor and Aldermen (BMA) was called to order by Mayor Lee Davis at 6:31 PM. Several interested citizens were in attendance. The sign-in sheet is attached as an exhibit (Appendix A) to these minutes.

PRAYER AND PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

Town Administrator Mariah Prescott opened the meeting with a prayer, and Town Attorney Sam Elliott led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Town Administrator Mariah Prescott called the roll, noting the presence of Mayor Lee Davis, Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt, and Alderwoman Angela Cassidy. Town Attorney Sam Elliott was also present.

APPROVAL / CORRECTION OF THE MINUTES OF SPECIAL CALLED MEETING, 03/11/2025

ALDERWOMAN ANGELA CASSIDY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CALLED MARCH 11, 2025 MEETING BY ACCLIMATION, AND THE MINUTES WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

APPROVAL / CORRECTION OF THE MINUTES OF SPECIAL CALLED REZONING MEETING, 03/11/2025

ALDERWOMAN ANGELA CASSIDY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CALLED REZONING MARCH 11, 2025 MEETING BY ACCLIMATION, AND THE MINUTES WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

REPORTS

POLICE

Hamilton County Sheriff's Deputy Chad Faulkner gave the Police Report, which is attached as an exhibit (Appendix B) to these minutes. These statistics reflect all of District 2, which includes the towns of Walden and Signal Mountain, and also the unincorporated portion of Hamilton County on the mountain.

FINANCIAL

The Financial Report, given by Town Administrator Mariah Prescott, is attached as an exhibit (Appendix C) to these minutes. Administrator Prescott noted that the town is on track financially.

WRES

Mr. Bill Thornton gave the report for Walden's Ridge Emergency Services. In the last 30 days, 39 calls were received: 20 fire-related, 13 emergency medical services, and six assist-to-citizens. Mr. Thornton also noted that WRES will be celebrating 50 years of volunteer services this year. In closing, he reminded the audience that the Taft Highway fire hall is open to the public every Thursday evening from 6:30 to 9:00 PM.

ROADS AND SAFETY

Ms. Kristin Allen gave the report for the Roads and Safety Committee, and she noted that the recent road sign cleanup effort was a success. She further stated that her committee is looking forward to the paving and striping projects, and also the implementation of traffic-calming measures.

MCCOY FARM AND GARDENS

Ms. Melissa Nimon gave the report for McCoy Farm and Gardens (MFG), noting that the annual "Egg Roll" will be held on April 13, 2025, from 1:00 – 4:00 PM. Entrance to the event is free. Food and beverages will be available for purchase, and the "Mutt Parade" will begin at 2:30. All leashed and well-behaved dogs are welcome. To participate in the games at the event, you may purchase a souvenir wooden egg. In closing, Ms. Nimon reminded the audience of the annual Memorial Day Picnic, and also stated that sponsorships are now available for all MFG events.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. **CONSIDERATION OF FINAL READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE #2025-375, AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF WALDEN, TENNESSEE, AMENDING THE FISCAL YEAR 2024-2025 BUDGET, PASSED BY ORDINANCE 2024-365**

VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT MOVED TO ADOPT ORDINANCE #2025-375, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN ANGELA CASSIDY, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

2. **CONSIDERATION OF FINAL READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE #2025-376, AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP FOR THE TOWN OF WALDEN, TENNESSEE, TO ZONE PARCEL 052.00 OF HAMILTON COUNTY TAX MAP 098 FROM R1 RESIDENTIAL TO TC-R TOWN CENTER RESIDENTIAL PURSUANT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS**

Mayor Lee Davis reminded the audience that the public hearing on the first reading of this ordinance was held on March 11, 2025, where all interested citizens were permitted to speak. Two individuals who did not speak at the March meeting turned in speaker slips and were allowed to address the board.

Ms. Catherine Colby stated her opposition to the rezoning and potential development at 2315 Taft Highway based primarily on environmental concerns. She is also concerned about how stormwater runoff will be impacted given the "rain bursts" that are becoming more common in our area.

Ms. Andrea Mynatt stated that she saw no good reason to change the zoning. She also noted a concern that the topography of the site had not been properly considered.

Mayor Lee Davis then invited comments from the board. Alderwoman Angela Cassidy read a prepared statement, which is attached as an exhibit (Appendix D) to these minutes.

ALDERWOMAN ANGELA CASSIDY MOVED TO SEND THIS APPLICATION BACK TO THE WALDEN PLANNING COMMISSION. THERE WAS NO SECOND. THE MOTION FAILED.

Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt addressed Town Attorney Sam Elliott and asked several clarifying questions. First, she wanted to verify that the property owned by Mr. William Raines is within the proposed Town Center-Residential (TC-R) zoning as defined in the Walden Land Use Plan. Attorney Elliott stated that it is. Vice Mayor Schmidt further noted that, according to section 3.1.2 of Walden's zoning ordinance, a pre-application conference is required prior to submission of an application for re-zoning to TC-R. Attorney Elliott verified that this did occur. Vice Mayor Schmidt also stated that a survey of existing conditions, conceptual site plan, narrative impact statement of the project – including traffic and environmental impact - and economic viability of the proposed site were also required. Attorney Elliott verified that all had been completed and submitted.

Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt stated that the applicant has met all initial requirements for rezoning, and she therefore feels she has no option but to vote in favor of the application. In closing, Vice Mayor Schmidt wanted to verify with Attorney Elliott that - if the rezoning was approved - this did not mean that Mr. Raines would have the freedom to build whatever he wanted. Attorney Elliott verified that this was also correct.

Alderwoman Angela Cassidy asked under what circumstance this rezoning could be back before the BMA. Town Attorney Sam Elliott stated that the responsibility for the site plan is before the Walden Planning Commission, as designated by the BMA. Alderwoman Cassidy also asked if the rezoning vote would come before the BMA again if there was an issue with an outside agency, such as the WWTA, and Mr. Raines had to re-do the site plan. Attorney Elliott affirmed that the rezoning would not come back before the BMA. Alderwoman Cassidy noted that the Walden Land Use Plan (LUP) says that rezoning is not guaranteed just because an application meets the town plan. Attorney Elliott stressed that the developer could not proceed with any planning without the rezoning being approved first.

VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT MOVED TO APPROVE THE FINAL READING OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE #2025-376, REZONING TI-IE PROPERTY AT 2315 TAFT HIGHWAY FROM R-1 TO TC-R, SECONDED BY MAYOR LEE DAVIS. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH VOTING AS FOLLOWS:

AYE - Mayor Lee Davis and Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt
NAY - Alderwoman Angela Cassidy

NEW BUSINESS

1. **CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED RESOLUTION #2025-623, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF WALDEN, TENNESSEE, ADOPTING RULES FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, PURSUANT TO TENNESSEE CODE ANNOTATED 8-44-112**

ALDERWOMAN ANGELA CASSIDY MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION #2025-623, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

2. **CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION #2025-624, A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF WALDEN, TENNESSEE, AMENDING RESOLUTION #2023-592 ESTABLISHING THE WALDEN CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE BY-LAWS UPDATING CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE BY-LAWS**

VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION #2025-624, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN ANGELA CASSIDY, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

3. **CONSIDERATION OF LIZ ROTHBERG ER FOR FULL-TIME WALDEN TOWN CLERK**

Town Administrator Mariah Prescott introduced Ms. Rothberger and noted that she has completed her 90-day probationary period. Ms. Prescott recommends approval of the move to full-time employment.

Mayor Lee Davis stated that part of Ms. Rothberger's compensation package would be for the town to fund the remaining 17 hours required for completion of her undergraduate degree. Town Administrator Mariah Prescott stated that the town is required to have a certified clerk on staff, and receipt of a college degree will be applicable towards half of the hours required for this certification.

ALDERWOMAN ANGELA CASSIDY MOVED TO APPROVE THE HIRING OF LIZ ROTHBERGER AS WALDEN'S FULL-TIME CLERK, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

4. **CONSIDERATION OF WALDEN TRAFFIC-CALMING PLAN**

Town Engineer Carson Willis introduced a proposed traffic-calming plan for the Town of Walden. The proposed plan is attached as an exhibit (Appendix E) to these minutes. There is no action taken on this agenda item.

5. **CONSIDERATION OF CURB CUT APPLICATION FOR 4104 IVORY AVE**

Town Administrator Mariah Prescott noted that the town's engineer recommends approval.

MAYOR LEE DAVIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE CURB CUT APPLICATION FOR 4104 IVORY AVENUE, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN ANGELA CASSIDY, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN.

6. **UPDATE OF SPECIAL PERMIT PROCESS REGARDING APPROVAL OF PUBLIC SEWER AND DECENTRALIZED WASTEWATER SYSTEMS**

Town Administrator Mariah Prescott stated that Hamilton County has recently approved a resolution stating that the WWTA is going to be taking over all decentralized systems in their territory, which will include Walden.

7. **DISCUSSION ON NEXT W ROAD CLEANUP DATE**

Mayor Lee Davis announced that the next W Road cleanup date will by on May 18, 2025.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM CITIZENS

Ms. Grace Mynatt spoke in opposition of the approved rezoning for 2315 Taft Highway. She stated her belief that Mr. Raines' conceptual site plan does not meet the requirements for TC-R land use. She further stated her belief that the rezoning request did not conform to the Walden Zoning Ordinance.

Ms. Jean Trohanis stated her support of the proposed traffic-calming measures. She also noted that she hopes Forest Park will be considered for traffic-calming. Mayor Lee Davis stated that Forest Park would definitely be included.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Lee Davis adjourned the meeting at 7:27 PM.

Respectfully submitted:
Stacy Stewart, Town Recorder

Approved:
Mariah Prescott, Town Administrator

Approved:
Lee Davis, Mayor