**Town of Walden**

Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2021

**Call to Order of the Regular Meeting**

Mayor Lee Davis called the regular monthly meeting of the Town of Walden to order utilizing the Zoom online platform. Town Attorney Sam Elliott reminded the citizens that the Governor had extended his authorization of meetings via electronic means in consideration for the public’s safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

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, Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt, and Town Attorney Sam Elliott.

**Approval / Correction of Minutes from Previous Meeting**

Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt noted that her name was incorrectly listed as “Davis” on page 3.

VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES, OF JANUARY 12, 2020, WITH THE ABOVE CORRECTION, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

**Roads Report**

Mayor Lee Davis asked Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt to update the meeting participants on one of the current roads’ initiatives. Vice Mayor Schmidt reported that Sallie Ford is leading a group of 25-30 volunteers, who will be beautifying the flowerbeds around each of the “Welcome to Walden” signs. Each sign will be decorated with the same design, with plants and trees that are native to Walden’s Ridge. Vice Mayor Schmidt further noted that the group would like permission to name this project the “Walden Native Plants Initiative,” and also may need a modest budget. It is hoped that the group may be able to solicit native plant donations via the Walden website. The specific plants to be used are: TREES – Redbud, Serviceberry, Winterberry Holly Tree, Dogwood / SHRUBS – Rudbeckia, Native Azalea or Mt. Laurel / PLANTS – Coreopsis, Verbena, Muhly Grass, Salvia, Daffodils, Turk’s Cap Lilies.

Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie reminded the council that, at the time the signs were originally installed, the town worked closely with the impacted property owners to receive their blessings. It is agreed that the same consideration should be given with this newest initiative, and Mayor Davis stated he will personally contact those citizens.

In closing, Town Recorder Fern Lockhart confirmed that quotes were only necessary for accounting purposes if any individual service or purchase would exceed $1,000.

**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**

No report.

**Bachman Council**

Katy Murphy reported on behalf of the Bachman Community Center. Ms. Murphy noted her optimism about the upcoming summer of 2021. Despite the pandemic, it is reported that finances continue to hold steady for the center. Ms. Murphy expressed excitement over the planning of summer camps and other activities for children in the future, and she looks forward to the return of kids to Bachman this year.

**Pumpkin Patch**

No report.

**McCoy Farm & Gardens**

Mickey Robbins reported for McCoy Farm and Gardens, stating that the board is pleased to report continued progress, even in the face of COVID. McCoy now has a working office, located on the second floor of the home. Board member Sallie Ford is moving ahead with a new children’s garden, in addition to her work with the Walden Native Plants Initiative. Related to this initiative, there are new videos available on YouTube now, covering subjects such as McCoy’s gardening, the arboretum, history of the facility, and other seasonal items.

There is also a new plan to create a covered entry point through which visitors will enter the gardens. This covered area will contain benches, maps, information, rules, and donation instructions. This shelter will be located where the first horse ring parking lot meets the apple orchard. There is also work being done to upgrade the signage at the Anderson Park entrance to more closely match the Taft Hwy sign.

Mr. Robbins stated that Earl Hereford is going to be heading up a lighting committee in the hopes of balancing the “Dark Skies” concepts with the need to provide lighting for security purposes and also for events occurring after dark. There are also plans in the works for a new storage building – but construction will not commence until a full archeological study has been completed. In closing, Susan Snow is heading up the initiative to add the McCoy home to the National Registry for Historic Homes.

**Dog Park**

No report. Mayor Davis noted the increased utilization of the “Puppy Patch.”

**Land Use Study Committee**

Dawson Wheeler reported that a “kick-off meeting” was held with Common Ground on February 11, 2021, primarily to discuss timelines. Meetings will begin in March, and these meetings will be advertised in advance, as required.

Mr. Wheeler also noted the upcoming finalization of up-to-eight stakeholder groups that would work with his committee. For example, “Non-Profit Walden Properties,” would include the Pumpkin Patch, Bachman, and McCoy. Another example would be, “Government Agencies,” including T-DOT, the Towns of Walden and Signal Mountain, Walden’s Ridge Emergency Services, etc. Other proposed stakeholder groups are: “Property Owners and Businesses,” “Interested Group on Connectivity,” “Churches, School, Neighborhood Associations,” and “Non-Profit Groups.” Mayor Davis encouraged the Land Use Committee to determine the individuals who would most likely be leading each group. He further encouraged any citizen of Walden to contact the Town Hall if they are interested in volunteering.

Eddie Lawson joined the conversation, asking if these committees would be open to open discussion with landowners whose property is adjacent to some of these proposed “usage areas.” Mayor Lee Davis answered in the affirmative. Mr. Lawson expressed his concern regarding liability with walking trails being opened next to private property, especially relative to domesticated animals being kept on such property. Mayor Davis responded that a concern such as this certainly should be brought up at a Land Use Committee meeting, which will be advertised in advance for the benefit of citizens who would like to attend. Mayor Davis further confirmed that each impacted “right-of-way” would be dealt with on an individual basis, with individual meetings with and feedback from impacted citizens. There will be no sweeping changes that impact all Town-owned ROWs.

**Walden’s Ridge Civic League**

Ms. Karen Stone’s report on behalf of the WRCL is attached as an exhibit to these minutes.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **Discussion on Appointment Process for Membership of Citizens’ Advisory Committee / Subcommittees. Resolution #2021-546, a Resolution Organizing the Citizens’ Advisory Committee.**

Mayor Lee Davis summarized that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen have approved a resolution for the formation of committees, the purpose of which is for interested citizens to be a part of a group that will bring pertinent ideas to the board for consideration. It is the board’s preference that initiatives and priorities be launched from “the bottom up” rather than “the top down.”

At tonight’s meeting, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen is seeking the approval of three sub-committees, including: Budget (Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie, Board Representative), Parks and Recreation (Mayor Lee Davis, Board Representative), and Roads and Public Safety (Vice Mayor Lizzy Schmidt, Board Representative). Mayor Davis asked all interested citizens to go to the Walden website and complete the one-page application for inclusion on any of these sub-committees. Mayor Lee Davis read the full resolution, which is attached as an exhibit to these minutes.

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO APPROVE RESOLUTION #2021-546, ORGANIZING THE CITIZENS’ ADVISORY COMMITTEES, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LIZZY SCHMIDT, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

1. **any other new business**

Mayor Lee Davis informed the citizens that another W-Road clean-up operation will be held on March 21, 2021. More details will follow at the regular March meeting.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. **Proposed Resolution #2021-544, Walden Policy Regarding Ordinance #2019-331, LOP. (Table from January 12, 2021 Meeting)**

This item has been tabled to the regular March meeting, following an in-person hearing with developer John Anderson on March 3, 2021.

1. **any other unfinished business**

There is no other unfinished business.

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITIZENS**

1. Mr. Sam Robinson asked if citizens could attend the hearing on March 3, 2021, and it was further clarified that this public hearing will be held in Cleveland Circuit Court.
2. Mr. Tal Cohen asked for the Town’s email to posted on the website. Although the “Contact Us” form does result in an email being created and sent, the actual email address will be posted on the website as well, so as to avoid confusion.

The meeting adjourned by motion and unanimous roll call vote.

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 Respectfully submitted:

 Fern Lockhart, Recorder

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 Approved:

 Lee Davis, Mayor