**Town of Walden**

Meeting Minutes

November 10, 2020

**call to order of a public hearing on changes to the zoning ordinance for signs and advertisement**

Mayor William Trohanis called to order the public hearing. Attorney Sam Elliott addressed that board and meeting attendees, stating that there had recently been a new decision by the Sixth Circuit Federal Appeals Court that deals specifically with our part of the country. This decision noted that ordinances which regulate signs by their content is a violation of the 1st Amendment. Attorney Elliott has completed a re-vamp of the previous policy to adhere to this decision, and this new verbiage will be a part of the Zoning Ordinance. Since the board wanted to retain the right to issue variances, the draft was submitted to the Regional Planning Agency for review, where approval was recommended. Mayor Trohanis invites questions, comments, or discussion from the board or members of the public. There are none.

The public hearing is adjourned.

**call to order of the regular meeting**

Mayor William Trohanis called the regular monthly meeting of the Town of Walden to order utilizing the Zoom online platform.

**roll call**

Fern Lockhart called the roll and noted the presence of Mayor William Trohanis, Vice Mayor Lee Davis, Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie, and Town Attorney Sam Elliott.

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

VICE MAYOR LEE DAVIS MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF OCTOBER 13, 2020 AS SUBMITTED, SECONDED BY ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

**communications from the mayor**

Mayor Trohanis thanked all veterans for their service. The mayor then reflected on his campaign for re-election, thanking his wife and other supporters. He remembered the Town of Walden being divided in 2014 as it is now, but at that time it was over whether or not to spend taxpayer dollars on the McCoy property. He also recalled the town coming together as volunteers to work on beautifying McCoy, and he is hopeful the same unity will be reflected going forward. Mayor Trohanis closed by thanking Town Recorder Fern Lockhart, noting that the Walden Town Hall could not function without her knowledge and expertise.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. **first reading of proposed ordinance 2020-334, an ordinance to add a new title 14 to the walden zoning ordinance, relative to signs and advertisement**

Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie asks Town Attorney Sam Elliott for clarification on free-standing sign height limits, since there are conflicting heights of 12 and 15 feet. Attorney Elliott suggests striking the reference to a 15-foot height limit, and the board agrees. Specifically, on page 12 of the ordinance, Section 1409(2)(B): Strike “…and fifteen (15) feet above driveways.”

It is also suggested that the clause referencing digital billboards be stricken, since they are not allowed in Walden. Specifically, on page 16 of the ordinance, Section 1413(3): Strike “…except digital billboards as permitted pursuant to this Code”

ALDERWOMAN SARAH MCKENZIE MOVED TO ACCEPT THE ORDINANCE ON FIRST READING WITH THE ABOVE-NOTED CHANGES, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LEE DAVIS, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

1. **discussion / acceptance of resignation from steven bush from the land use committee**

Mayor Trohanis noted the receipt of Steven Bush’s resignation from the Land Use Committee, and he recommends consideration of Collin Johnson to replace Mr. Bush. Vice Mayor Lee Davis suggests that the board confer with incoming Alderwoman Lizzie Schmidt to see if she has a recommendation for replacement, since each board member brought their own recommendation to the table when the committee was originally formed. Alderwoman Sarah McKenzie suggests expanding the committee to include Mr. Johnson and also an appointee of Alderwoman Davis. Vice Mayor Lee Davis agrees with expanding the committee, and suggests that Mr. Bush be notified of this and given the opportunity to remain as a committee member.

MAYOR WILLIAM TROHANIS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF STEVEN BUSH FROM THE LAND USE COMMITTEE, SECONDED BY VICE MAYOR LEE DAVIS, AND UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN BY ROLL CALL VOTE.

1. **discussion on the receipt of two rfp’s for the land us plan and date of consultant selection**

Mayor Trohanis opened the discussion regarding these two items. Vice Mayor Lee Davis noted that the next step would be interviewing the consultants who submitted RFPs. Attorney Sam Elliott confirmed that the interview process did not have to be in the form of a public meeting, as long as the members of the board only ask questions of the candidates, with no discussion allowed between board members.

Town Recorder Fern Lockhart stated that interviews were scheduled from December 1st through December 10th, 2020, and the selection would be on December 15th, 2020. This selection will require a special called meeting unless the board chooses to put it on the agenda for the January meeting. After some discussion, it is determined that the selection will occur at the regular January meeting.

1. **discussion on parking at mabbitt springs**

Mayor Trohanis noted Vice Mayor Lee Davis and himself had both been contacted by a citizen who resides across the street from the Mabbitt Springs parking area. The citizen is requesting that the town install three “No Parking” signs on his property in order to deter or prevent visitors from parking on his lawn. Vice Mayor Davis has scheduled an upcoming meeting with the citizens in this area. He will bring the results of that meeting to the next regular board meeting.

1. **any other new business**

There is no other new business.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. **pumpkin patch maintenance**

Vice Mayor Lee Davis noted that he has not yet heard back from the citizen who first presented concerns regarding Pumpkin Patch maintenance. Mayor Trohanis confirms that the mulch is delivered twice annually for the playground. Town Recorder Fern Lockhart noted the cost of approximately $1,500 per load. The mulch is certified for playgrounds. Further discussion is tabled until the December meeting.

1. **any other unfinished business**

There is no other unfinished business.

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE CITIZENS**

1. Mickey Robbins spoke as President of the McCoy Farm and Gardens. The McCoy Board met on the previous evening, and wanted to express their appreciation to Mayor Trohanis and his wife, Jean, for the support they have given McCoy Farm and Gardens since its inception.
2. Vice Mayor Lee Davis stated that he has enjoyed serving with Mayor Trohanis. The mayor’s service is respected, and will be recognized by a commendation at the December meeting.
3. Joe Robbins asked if there would be discussion on the gas line proposal near Wilson / Northern Avenue. Town Recorder Fern Lockhart confirmed that Chattanooga Gas Company has indicated they are no longer requesting a right-of-way at this time, and the project may not go forward.
4. Eddie Lawson shared an update from Tim Burns, who noted that the gas company had decided to bring the gas line down Wilson Avenue instead of through the right-of-way.

The meeting adjourned by motion and unanimous roll call vote.

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 Respectfully submitted:

 Fern Lockhart, Recorder

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 Approved:

 William Trohanis, Mayor