

**Minutes**  
**March 1, 2021**  
**Forsyth City Council Meeting**

**Call to Order**

Mayor Wilson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation and Roll Call**

Mayor Wilson led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Lawrence gave the invocation. In attendance for the meeting in person was Mayor Eric Wilson, Councilmembers Mike Dodd, and Chris Hewett. Also in attendance in person was City Attorney, Bobby Melton; City Manager, Janice Hall and City Clerk, Regina Ivie. In attendance for the meeting via zoom was Councilmembers Julius Stroud, Melvin Lawrence, Greg Goolsby and John Howard. All members of Council were in attendance for the meeting therefore all unanimous votes will be six votes (Goolsby, Howard, Stroud, Dodd, Hewett, and Lawrence).

**Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of the Minutes from the February 15, 2021 Council Meeting**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing for a zoning variance application request of QuikTrip Corporation**

Mr. Melton stated the zoning variance application seeks allowance for a sign variance for an illuminated sign, pole sign and monument sign in the corridor overlay at the corner of Highway 18 and Patrol Rd; tax parcel 054 008B. The current zoning of the property is highway business; zoning shall remain unchanged. Planning & Zoning recommended approval on January 25, 2021. The public hearing notice was published in the Monroe Reporter on February 10, 17, and 24, 2021.

Mayor Wilson opened the floor in favor of or opposition of the zoning variance application request for Quiktrip Corporation.

Ms. Pierson stated a variance is being requested due to what is allowed; no signage is allowed in the corridor overlay.

Mr. Dodd inquired about the variance for parking. Ms. Pierson stated 85 spaces is being requested. Mr. Melton stated it was advertised as a related matter for tonight's public hearing.

Ms. Judy Allie stated October or November is the current projected opening date.

There being no further discussion in favor of or opposition of the proposed variance request Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the variance request to include the parking variance request. Seconded by Mr. Stroud; the motion carried unanimously.

**Public Hearing for a zoning variance application request of Dustin Crews on behalf of Cabiness Rd, LLC.**

Mr. Melton stated the zoning variance application seeks a sign variance for an internally illuminated sign in a corridor overlay district for Shane's Rib Shack. The current zoning of the property at 448 Cabiness Road, tax parcel F33 018 is Highway Business, the zoning shall remain unchanged. Planning & Zoning recommended approval at the January 25, 2021 meeting. The public hearing notice was published in the Monroe Reporter on Feb 10, 17, and 24, 2021.

Mayor Wilson opened the floor in favor of or opposition of the zoning variance application request for Dustin Crews on behalf of Cabiness Road, LLC.

Mr. Crews was available for any questions. Mr. Hewett inquired about placement of the signs.

There being no further discussion in favor of or opposition of the proposed variance request Mayor Wilson closed the public hearing.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to approve the zoning variance request as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of Preliminary Plat for Juliette Crossing Phase II**

Ms. Pierson stated the preliminary plat was approved by Planning & Zoning on February 22, 2021; Phase II has 86 lots, some may not be used.

Mr. Stroud offered a motion to approve the preliminary plat as presented. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**CVB Quarterly Review – Gilda Stanbery**

Ms. Stanbery reviewed the current financials of the Convention & Visitors Bureau. She further discussed ongoing expenses and experiences planned for the current year. Ms. Stanbery expressed her appreciation to Ms. Swearingen for her service as the Convention & Visitors Bureaus Chairman for past couple years. New officers have been elected for the CVB.

**Economic Development Review – Tammie Pierson**

Ms. Pierson stated Forsyth Main Street had been awarded sign grants and received rural zone designation in 2020. The City had over 30 new business license applications in 2020; several new businesses within the downtown area. Currently there are several new development projects in progress including QT, Starbucks, and Super 8 Motel which will have retail space. Ms. Pierson further stated the City attracts interest due to its location, interstate access and the small-town charm; future interest and growth within the City is expected.

**1823 Artisan Guild 2020 Review – Denise Buff**

Ms. Buff stated all the members of the Artisan Guild are co-owners; we all have equal comments and votes. Members are offered a unique experience because of the gallery. Memberships raised by \$10.00 this year. Ms. Buff mentioned activities, various classes, online special shopping events, sidewalk shows, a silent auction and a raffle was all done in 2020.

Ms. Lori Nesmith reviewed the financials for 2020; sales for the year were \$22,941, artisans earned a profit of \$15,979, the Christmas ornament event the Guild earned \$710, monthly expenses for the Artisan Guild are \$626.29, with a yearend balance of \$890. Projections for 2021 are currently at \$56,000.

**Approval of change order #5 for Pellicano Construction**

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the change order as presented. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**Approval of firearms policy update by Glyn Corbitt**

Officer Glyn Corbitt reviewed the updates to the firearms policy.

Mr. Hewett offered a motion to approve the firearms policy as presented. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously.

**City Manager's Report**

Ms. Hall provided the following report:

- Census redistricting data originally scheduled to be released February 18 through March 31 but received announcement last week that the Census Bureau will deliver the redistricting data to all states by September 30, 2021.
- Working with Regional Commission to finalize the Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS) but Census Bureau submitted questions regarding several properties that is requiring research of annexations 20+ years ago. Will have this completed and submitted to Census Bureau by end of March.
- Surprise Art joint project with CVB winners should be presented soon. Several local artists submitted designs to be considered. The winning artwork will be transferred to a wrap and attached to several of the large electrical boxes downtown.
- ECG Board voted to move forward with purchasing the property previously discussed. Once additional details are released regarding the new training facility, I will provide that information to you.
- Schneider Electric will return to an April meeting to review the possible projects for consideration. Schneider Electric requires an agreement before going forward, they will then present the projects and how to fund those. If accept the projects and move forward, we owe them nothing; but if do not accept the projects and do not move forward, we would owe them their fee which is \$40,000+
- Scott Bogulski emailed me asking about placing signs on the city limits signs announcing the State Championship won by the MPHS Cheerleaders. To place the signs on city limits signs on state highways would require GDOT permission. I suggest changing the signage that is currently on the 3 sign boards as you enter town. All 3 need to be repaired and painted. If no restrictions due to those being Eagle Scout project, would like to remove the civic organization signs and only post city organization signs such a Main Street, Tree City, etc. and could include the State Championship signage.

- Steve Coleman delivered a copy of the survey for Memorial Hills Cemetery. He will record the survey this week and then provide hard copies as well as electronic copies. The pins should be delivered and installed by end of March. This survey created 173 lots with 4 graves each for a total of 692 graves all on the left-hand side as you enter the cemetery.
- Getting splashpad ready for season. Carlos was here this weekend installing a new sensor for the features and doing prep work for opening and making sure everything is working properly. Did not get to complete all work needed so will return another weekend.
- Mrs. Ivie and Mr. Grinstead have begun work on the 2020 audit. They will have all data to Mauldin & Jenkins by end of March.
- With the full reimbursement of the old workers comp case received at the end of 2020, discussing with Mr. Grinstead the possibility of using those funds for purchasing items needed in the police department such as vehicles, software, and ammunition. Once correct procedure is determined, will bring before council for your consideration.
- Continue to have issues with parking downtown. I asked Chief Harris to research for proper wording not allowing “back in parking” and to also research what is required to allow “back in parking”. Will present that information when received.
- **March 15 Council meeting:**
- Reminder that the department heads will be making their presentations of accomplishments in 2020 during the March 15 council meeting. This will include a report from the Code Enforcement Officer.
- Chamber of Commerce has requested to come before council at the March 15 council meeting rather than the April 5 meeting to request council reconsider street closings for the Forsythia Festival.
- Public Hearings:
- March 15 at 5:30 public hearing to provide information and receive citizen comments on the amendment to the Forsyth Community Work Program under the joint 2017 Joint Comprehensive Plan
- March 15 Council meeting-
  - Hearing for citizen input on CDBG application for water lines in Jackson Heights subdivision
- **April 5 Council meeting –**
  - Edgar Hughston Builder Inc. variance request to allow sidewalk in Juliette Crossings subdivision on one side only.
  - Integrity Development Partners request for rezoning from MI to HB with 24-month conditional use for multifamily complex located at corner of Industrial Park Drive and Harold G Clarke Parkway behind Shoney’s.
  - Public Service Data request for sign variance for internally illuminated sign at new location 35 S Lee Street (formerly Chamber of Commerce building).
- Panhandling draft ordinance is being reviewed by Mr. Melton and once reviewed will advertise for public hearing.

#### **City Attorney Report**

Mr. Melton stated that the variance requests currently being advertised for the April 5 Council Meeting; zoning variance issues must be advertised for a certain length of time. The pan handling ordinance carries enforcement penalties; 6 month or \$1000.

**Mayor's Report**

Mayor Wilson stated there is numerous exciting things happening in Forsyth currently; he campaigned on economic development as does the Council. We don't make the decisions; it's people who invest their money, time, energy, and talents in the community in opening these businesses. We appreciate what they do for the community; we have experienced a lot of growth and will continue to experience a lot of growth. We are inviting City, we have an Economic Development Director who is doing a great job. First Step connects new businesses with City government; it shows the City is open for business. New businesses create jobs, tax revenue, sale tax revenue, and utilities. Mayor Wilson further stated that the City doesn't make the decision as to who comes to the City and who doesn't. We do create an environment to facilitate the transition for coming to the City. Mayor Wilson expressed his appreciation to Ms. Pierson and Ms. Hall for their efforts regarding the City's recent economic development.

**Council Board Reports**

Mr. Hewett stated the next Housing Authority meeting will be Tuesday, March 9, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. at Aldermen Hall.

Mr. Howard stated the Convention & Visitors Board officers have been elected.

**Additional Business****Public Comments**

No one came forward for public comments.

**Executive Session to discuss personnel matters, pending litigation, and land acquisitions/lease/sale.**

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to adjourn into executive session as 7:29 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Dodd offered a motion to adjourn the executive session at 8:01 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Hewett; the motion carried unanimously.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business to discuss Mr. Hewett offered a motion to adjourn the Council Meeting. Seconded by Mr. Dodd; the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:02 p.m.