

Special Meeting Minutes of the Town of Highlands Board of Commissioners Meeting of May 1, 2020, via Zoom, Highlands, North Carolina

Town Board Present: Commissioner John Dotson, Commissioner Amy Patterson, Mayor Pro Tempore Donnie Calloway, Commissioner Brian Stiehler, Commissioner Marc Hehn and Mayor Pat Taylor

Also Present: Town Manager Josh Ward, Town Attorney Jay Coward, Finance Director Rebecca Shuler, Parks & Recreation Director Lester Norris and Town Clerk Gibby Shaheen

1. Meeting Called to Order

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 8:36am.

2. Adjust and Approve the Agenda

COMMISSIONER STIEHLER MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS PRESENTED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER DOTSON AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

3. Macon County Covid-19 Update

Emergency Management Director Warren Cabe updated that the Order signed March 26, 2020, would expire on May 8, 2020 at 5:00pm. Cabe continued that the decision was difficult but the conclusion was the numbers were extremely low, so the measures taken have worked and the health care system has been protected. Cabe said with the reopening plan and things start changing that we aren't comfortable and the trends go up and the Governor's Plan isn't working then we will rescind and take a look at what is needed to be done.

Commissioners asked several questions and had discussion, and asked if there were more testing and Cabe confirmed more tests were available and also private testing, however those numbers were not included in the County reports.

4. Highlands Chamber of Commerce Update

Chamber Executive Director Kaye McHan complimented the County and the Town for putting things in place. McHan presented an outline that echo's the Governor's Orders that can possibly be used for a guideline for the businesses. Information was compiled by McMahan and some businesses and shared with them for input. Mayor Pro Tempore Calloway asked how it would be enforced and McHan replied the supervising Manager and the Health Department.

5. Town of Highlands Covid-19 Topics for Discussion

• Short term rentals and hotel openings

Commissioners discuss many aspects of re-opening short-term rental and hotels and asked McHan to come up with short term rental guidelines.

COMMISSIONER STIEHLER MADE A MOTION TO ALLOW SHORT TERM RENTALS AND HOTELS TO OPEN.

Town Attorney Jay Coward stated you would just generally rescind the Proclamation.

COMMISSIONER STIEHLER RESCINDED HIS MOTION.

COMMISSIONERS ASKED TOWN ATTORNEY JAY COWARD TO REVISE THE WORDING OF THE PROCLAMATION AND HAVE ANOTHER SPECIAL MEETING TO APPROVE TO INCLUDE THE CHANGES DISCUSSED IN THE MEETING.

Short term rentals need to register so they can be checked to see if they are following the guidelines for COVID-19 and so they can be informed of any changes.

- **Change from curbside to inside takeout and review outside tables**

Town Manager Josh Ward started discussion regarding curbside going back to inside takeout and mentioned Fire Marshal Jimmy Teem stated outside tables were not allowed. Discussion was held.

COMMISSIONER STIEHLER MADE A MOTION TO AMEND THE STATE OF EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION REQUIRING CURBSIDE AT RESTAURANTS DISCRETION TO INSIDE TAKEOUT PROVIDED PROTOCOLS AND HYGIENE ARE COVERED, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER PATTERSON AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

- **Social distancing and mask requirements? When and Where? Recommended or Mandated?**

Commissioners discuss agree that masks are strongly recommended.

Mayor Pro Tempore Calloway thanked Commissioner Patterson and Cookie for the signs reminding to social distance and wear masks.

- **Opening of Recreation Facilities, park, bathrooms, tennis courts, etc.**

Town Manager Josh Ward asked the Board to consider opening the tennis courts, Ward said we were still not there for the inside gym to be open and mentioned this year's summer camp. The Commissioners concede to open the tennis courts if the benches and tables are removed, and not holding summer camp this year. Commissioners also agree to open the public restrooms by May 9th, 2020.

- **14-day quarantine. Mandated, recommended or vacated all together**

COMMISSIONER DOTSON MADE A MOTION TO REMOVE THE 14-DAY QUARANTINE FROM THE STATE OF EMERGENCY PROCLAMATION BEGINNING MAY 9TH, 2020, WHICH WAS SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER STIEHLER AND THE VOTE WAS UNANIMOUS.

Special Meeting to be scheduled for Wednesday, May 6, 2020, at 3:00pm to review possible guidelines to opening hotels, motels and short term rentals and a revised Proclamation, with the registration form being available on the website on Monday and direct all to register.

6. Adjournment

AS THERE WERE NO FURTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, COMMISSIONER DOTSON MOVED TO ADJOURN WHICH WAS SECONDED BY MAYOR PRO TEMPORE CALLOWAY AND UPON A UNANIMOUS VOTE, THE TOWN BOARD ADJOURNED AT 10:37AM.

Patrick Taylor
Mayor

Gilberta B. Shaheen
Town Clerk