

REGULAR BOARD MEETING of February 20, 2002, with Mayor Buck Trott and Commissioners H. N. James, Ron Sanders, Mike Cavender, Amy Patterson, and Hank Ross present.

Also present were Richard Betz, Lamar Nix, Christopher Shook, Kurt Wright, Bob Wright, Charlie McDowell, Alan Marsh, Jack Bourneman, and Kim Lewicki.

I. Call to Order.

The Mayor called the Regular Board Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. Approval of Agenda.

Copies of the agenda had been distributed by mail. Comm. Cavender said that he would like to ask Zoning Administrator Christopher Shook a question during Reports.

MOVED BY COMM. SANDERS, SECONDED BY COMM. CAVENDER, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS DISTRIBUTED.

III. Approval of Minutes.

Copies of the minutes of the February 13 Regular Board Meeting had been distributed by mail.

MOVED BY COMM. PATTERSON, SECONDED BY COMM. SANDERS, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS DISTRIBUTED.

IV. Reports.

1. The Mayor reported that a joint meeting of the Vision 2025 Committee and the Macon County Board of Commissioners had been held on February 18, following the recent decision by the Board to send the proposed County Zoning Ordinance back to Committee for study. He said that, in his opinion, the Ordinance presented had been a "watered-down" plan that was as fair to property owners as possible. The Committee had felt there was a window of opportunity to adopt some form of Land Use Planning, and had decided to stick with it; he hoped that the County Commissioners would persevere.

2. The Town Administrator reported that Geraldine Crowe would be retiring at the end of May, and he asked for permission to advertize for an employee in the Town Office.

MOVED BY COMM. JAMES, SECONDED BY COMM. PATTERSON, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADVERTIZE FOR AN EMPLOYEE IN THE TOWN OFFICE.

He also reported that he had prepared Requests for Proposals for banking services for the Town, which were to be submitted by April 1; he would be asking the Finance Committee to review them.

He also distributed copies of a memo from Town Engineer and Cemetery Superintendent Lamar Nix containing a recommendation of the Cemetery Committee, which had met on February 19 and discussed fees and rules for the new columbarium; the item would be on the agenda of the March 6 meeting.

3. Comm. Cavender asked about an application by Bill Nellis/Village Developments for a Special Use Permit involving the re-location of eighty feet of Mill Creek; he understood a permit had been required from the Army Corps of Engineers as a condition on the permit. He said he did not like the idea of a developer relocating a stream in order to develop his property, and he felt that the additional impervious areas might increase the risk of flooding downstream. He asked the Board to adopt a resolution requesting the Corps of Engineers not to approve any re-routing of Mill Creek.

Bob Wright was present and noted that the Upper Cullasaja Watershed Association (UCWA) had also made several suggestions about this application, especially in light of the ongoing studies of Mill Creek which had not yet been published and its listing as impaired on the EPA's list.

The Board discussed the matter at some length. Comm. Patterson said she had no objection to a statement that the Town is philosophically opposed to re-routing or channelizing of water courses inside the Town limits in general, in addition to this case. The Board agreed to ask the Town Administrator to draft a resolution for approval at the next meeting.

V. New Business.

1. W. K. Dickson consulting engineer Kurt Wright was present to discuss the preliminary engineering report for the Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion, subject of a public meeting held on January 30 at the Highlands Civic Center. Each Board member had received a memo from Comm. Ross dated February 5, and a letter from the UCWA dated February 12, commenting on the report. The Mayor thanked Mr. Wright for the excellent presentation which he and Bob Goldstein had made at the public meeting.

Mr. Wright then proceeded to address all of the points raised in the memo, which Comm. Ross said he had compiled from comments the Board had made after the public meeting. He said that a cost comparison between expanding to 1.0 MGD v. 1.5 MGD indicated a savings of between 18% and 24%, or between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000. The cost of sewer collection system expansion was not included in the report because it was not part of the scope of services the Town had requested from the engineers. All of the golf courses had been contacted regarding use of treated effluent, and all had declined.

The methodology used to project growth was based on the normal method used by State agencies, which was to take the current population and project it from the historic population growth. An alternate "bean-counting" method could be used, which would involve a count of all of the houses served by sewer and a detailed estimate of houses that could be added in the future. He felt both methods would provide an estimate justifying an expansion to 1.5 MGD capacity. Finally, questions concerning sound abatement, light abatement, and visual aesthetics would all be addressed during the design phase.

The Board then discussed at some length the Town's policies on extensions of the sewer collection system. Mayor Trott was concerned that the emphasis in the report had been on new growth, rather than serving the existing users that have been paying for the sewer plant for many years. Comm. James agreed; he also felt that the Board needed to discuss extending collection lines, and re-visit its policies of prioritizing such lines around the lakes and rivers. Comm. Patterson noted that many of these main collection lines had been constructed already, and the Town Administrator agreed. Comm. Cavender questioned the need to expand the plant to 1.5 MGD if the Town was not committed to constructing collection lines. Comm. Ross agreed; he felt that the discussion seemed to boil down to the problem of separating plant expansion and delivery system. The Town Engineer pointed out that since the Town was required to expand the plant, it made sense to look down the road and expand it to a realistic capacity.

Mr. Wright also reviewed the letter from the UCWA. He said that the request that the Board consider gathering chemical data rather than macroinvertebrate data was a policy-oriented decision. Bob Wright was present and said that the UCWA was concerned that nobody was testing for water chemistry, and he felt this might be a good opportunity to obtain that data; he said the UCWA did not believe the effluent from the WWTP was degrading the stream, but upstream and downstream water chemistry data could prove that. Comm. Patterson felt that the health of a stream could better be evaluated by studying what grows in it than by chemical data. Comms. James and Ross both agreed that the Town should look at the cost of such

testing to determine whether it might be worth it. Mr. Wright pointed out that the WWTP operators could take grab samples further upstream and downstream.

Mr. Wright then addressed the UCWA's recommendation that the Town consider discharging effluent from the plant directly into Lake Sequoyah. He said that his recommendation would be to discharge into a moving stream with constant aeration, which would add to the natural assimilative capacity of the stream; discharging into the lake might affect effluent limits.

VI. MOVED BY COMM. CAVENDER, SECONDED BY COMM. SANDERS, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN.

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was declared adjourned by the Mayor at 8:40 p.m.

Richard Betz, Town Clerk