

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Norton City Council was held on Tuesday, September 2, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Council Chambers with Mayor William Mays presiding.

Present: Mark Caruso, William Mays, and Joseph Fawbush

Absent: Joseph Hunnicutt and Terry Roop

Also Present: Fred L. Ramey, Jr., City Manager and Bill Bradshaw, City Attorney

The invocation was given by the City Manager and was followed by the pledge of allegiance led by the Assistant Police Chief, Joe Baird.

Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to adopt the minutes of the August 19, 2014 meeting as presented. 26250

At this time, Mayor Mays amended the agenda to include Item 7-E-1 Confirmation of a Rabies Clinic in Conjunction with the PetSense Store and the Lenowisco Health District to be held on Saturday, October 4th, at the PetSense Store in the City of Norton. 26251

During the Mayor's call for visitors, Mrs. Linda Leonard, 1005 Virginia Avenue, NW, spoke to Council regarding the recent Arts in the Park activity held this past Saturday, August 30th. She said the Citizen Committee deemed it a successful event and had approximately 200 in attendance. On behalf of the committee, she thanked Mr. Ramey for all of his assistance in permitting this activity to be held and also thanked Michele Knox, the Fire Department, Police Department, and the Public Works employees. 26252

She further advised that they had been contacted by Heartwood Tourism Authority, who advised they would help advertise future events, and Crutchfield, who stated that they would like to consider making a donation for future events. They received very positive feedback and plan to conduct additional activities.

Mr. Ramey advised it was so refreshing to see citizens ask to do this for our community and the City will continue to be supportive of their efforts and he further advised that it was a pleasure to work with the individuals involved.

During Mrs. Leonard's presentation to Council, Councilman Hunnicutt took his seat on Council. 26253

Councilman Caruso advised Mrs. Leonard that everyone did a great job.

Mayor Mays thanked Mrs. Leonard for her presentation and also for the work done on this activity by the committee. 25254

At Council's last meeting, Mr. Russell Byrd of Comcast, appeared before Council asking for the adoption of an agreement to assign its current franchise agreement to Midwest Cable of the South, LLC. At the meeting and upon the recommendation of the

City Attorney, Council tabled adoption of this agreement and asked that it be put on the agenda for the September 16th meeting.

Mr. Bradshaw advised he had talked with a senior official of Comcast, as well as Mr. Byrd, on what could be done to make this agreement more amicable. He advised them of his concerns and at the end of their conversation, Comcast withdrew their request for Council to adopt this agreement.

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The City Attorney advised that, after 120 days, the transfer to Midwest Cable of the South, LLC will be automatic; therefore no action needs to be taken by Council.

Following a brief discussion, Council thanked the City Attorney for his work on this agreement.

The City Manager advised that several weeks ago he was approached by Brad Mathisen, a representative of the Southwest Virginia Climbing Coalition (SVCC), requesting approval from Council to open some areas of Flag Rock for climbing and particularly bouldering. Following a PowerPoint presentation, Mr. Mathisen advised he would answer questions from Council.

Mr. Ramey advised that this organization is also working on a Memorandum of Understanding with the U. S. Forest Service and if Council is interested in working with SVCC, the City Administration will work with the City Attorney on a similar Memorandum of Understanding.

25256

Mr. Jorge Hershel of the U. S. Forest Service, was present at the meeting, and advised that he recommended a Memorandum of Understanding process to establish this activity in the Flag Rock Recreational Area. He advised of some of the problems to expect, but advised it is a reasonably safe sport. In his opinion, a Memorandum of Understanding with sideboards is the way to proceed in order to promote this as another area of tourism for the City.

It was the consensus of Council for the City Administration and the City Attorney to work together on a draft Memorandum of Understanding and see if this is something on which Council would like to proceed.

Mr. Ramey advised that Council has before them for consideration a Memorandum of Understanding with the U. S. Forest Service for trail development. Showing a PowerPoint presentation of trails, one of which goes from the upper reservoir parking lot to the upper dam and ties into Lost Creek and various old logging roads, the concept for consideration tonight is the Lost Creek Trail.

Mr. Jorge Hershel, representing the U. S. Forest Service, advised that the trail is there to walk from the Flag Rock Campground area to the High Knob Tower; however it has not been maintained. There are two bridges and signage is needed. They are willing to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding allowing the City to cut brush, mark it, and work on the path. The trail was built in 2002-2003 and he advised that it would be a win-win for both of them. The Forest Service would hand over the management and repairs to the City and they would list the trail, making it a great opportunity to connect to the High Knob Tower.

25257

Council Caruso thanked Mr. Hershel for working on this.

The City Attorney advised he would like additional time to work on this Memorandum of Understanding.

Following a brief discussion, it was the consensus of Council to bring this item back at the next meeting.

Councilman Caruso asked if this trail prohibits motorized vehicles and was advised by Mr. Hershel that it does. Councilman Caruso advised it was a great trail and needs very limited work done to it.

Mr. Ramey, via a PowerPoint presentation, showed Council pictures taken during the grand opening of the new High Knob Tower held on August 22nd. The pictures showed Council the new gateway signs that the City partnered with the Norton Industrial Development Authority to purchase. He further advised that the City's Tourism Committee had worked very hard and this was their highest priority for this year.

The Upper Reservoir Parking Lot was used as a staging area and the City had a welcome center there. The Mountain Empire Older Citizens' vans were used to transport those in attendance to the new tower site. At the Welcome Center site, the City had cookies and lemonade. Home Hardware and Pathfinders had donated tee-shirts and free rentals of items.

Mr. Hershel advised the grand opening was a huge success with over 200 in attendance and there has been a steady stream of visitors since then. He then expressed his appreciation to the Police Department, Michele Knox, Fred Ramey, and Todd Lagow for helping tremendously to make this grand opening the success that it was.

At this time, Mr. Ramey advised that Mr. Hershel is retiring soon and advised of the excellent working relationship the City has had with him.

Mayor Mays asked Mr. Hershel to come forward and presented him with a Community Leadership Award. Council then came forward and had photos taken with Mr. Hershel.

Following this presentation and prior to the photo session, Councilman Hunnicutt left the meeting.

25258

In their packets, Council had been presented with information regarding the recent amendment to the Freedom of Information Act Open Meeting Requirements that allows remote participation at City Council meetings.

Mr. Bradshaw advised that the General Assembly is now allowing, under limited circumstances, council members to vote remotely; however a Policy Agreement would have to be written per requirements of the General Assembly.

25259

Following a brief discussion during which the requirements were discussed, it was the consensus of Council to place this item on a future agenda.

Council had been presented with a copy of a check in the amount of \$122,004.25 for approval.

Upon a motion by Councilman Fawbush, seconded by Councilman Caruso, and passed by unanimous roll call vote, Council moved to approve a check made payable to the Norton Industrial Development Authority in the amount of \$122,004.25.

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Mayor Mays advised that the City had a request for a confirmation of a rabies clinic to be held in conjunction with PetSense and the Lenowisco Health District on Saturday, October 4th, at the PetSense Store in the City of Norton.

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Upon a motion by Councilman Caruso, seconded by Councilman Fawbush, and passed by unanimous vote, Council moved to confirm a rabies clinic to be held in conjunction with the Lenowisco Health District and PetSense at the new PetSense Store in Norton on Saturday, October 4th.

Mr. Ramey will notify Dr. Cantrell of Council's action.

In comments from the City Manager, Mr. Ramey advised that:

The Arts in the Park activity was a great event and the City looks forward to working with this group in the future.

The annual Virginia Municipal League Conference has been scheduled in Roanoke from October 5th – 7th. Please advise him if you plan to attend.

25262

At the next Council meeting on September 16th, two public hearings will be held on the amendment of the Fishing Ordinance and the Zoning Amendment regarding fencing and hedges. He also anticipates an update on the potential refinancing of bond issue.

There were no comments from the City Attorney.

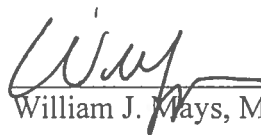
25263

In comments from Council, Mayor Mays advised he had planned to attend and represent the City at the ribbon cutting this Saturday at the new PetSense. His work schedule has changed and Vice Mayor Fawbush will be attending this function.

25264

There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned.

CITY OF NORTON, VIRGINIA



William J. Mays, Mayor

ATTEST:



Clerk