

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL
January 12, 2016
Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held on Tuesday, January 12, 2016 at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell, Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown, Council Members Jerry Rice, Cindy Wheeler, and Lee Greeson.

Also present were Town Administrator Gary Deal, Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia, *Creekside Chronicle* reporter Tomas Murawski, and two area residents. There was no representation from the District II Sheriff's Office.

Mayor Fennell called the meeting to order, and asked Council Member Jerry Rice to offer the invocation.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mayor Fennell asked for any speakers from the floor; and no one asked to be acknowledged.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of the Minutes

Mayor Fennell asked for any changes to the minutes from the December 8, 2015 regular monthly meeting; and hearing none, asked for a motion to adopt the minutes as written. A motion to adopt the minutes as written was made by Council Member Cindy Wheeler; motion was seconded by Council Member Jerry Rice. By unanimous vote, the December minutes were approved.

2. Any Other Old Business

Mayor Fennell asked if there were any other old business to be discussed; there was none.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Planning Board

Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia had nothing to report.

2. Enforcement Committee

3. Enforcement Officer

Enforcement Officer Gary Deal reported that since last Council meeting, there had been no committee activity and no Development Clearance Permits had been issued.

4. Town Administrator

Town Administrator Deal reported that he had received inquiries and information concerning possible start-up of a business in Dow Acres, and in response had sent a letter to the Dow Drive property owner William Brown, requesting additional information about any such pursuits so that proper processes could be followed. Mr. Brown and his spouse Toni reside on Fernway Road, and were present at tonight's meeting.

Deal then reported that the county-wide Hazard Mitigation Plan that had been adopted by the Town Council at its November 2015 meeting had received final approval by FEMA. Of importance, the Plan contained an opportunity for the county and municipalities to apply for grant funds for both pre- and post-disaster events. Details on the process are expected in late spring or early summer. Deal offered that perhaps the Town should seek monies to replace the Town Hall generator, given its age and its periodic faltering; and applying for funding assistance could be well supported since the generator supplies current to the well water pump that the Fire Department and the Town Hall share. Council Members gave a nod to the incentive.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Any Items from Council Members

Mayor Fennell asked for any items from Council members; and there were none.

2. Announcements

Mayor Fennell asked for any announcements and no one had any.

3. Speakers from the Floor

Mayor Fennell asked if there were any speakers from the floor; and signified to Fernway Road residents Bill and Toni Brown that if they had anything to say, this is the opportunity. Mr. Brown opened with requesting to know what prompted the Town's letter. Town Administrator Deal replied that he had received an inquiry about the Town's knowledge of a kennel-type operation being started or planned, and was provided with an advertising flyer to the like.

Questions had surfaced about violations of the zoning ordinances, including the permitted use schedule of those types of businesses allowed to operate within the Town corporate limits. A noise factor was also raised, which comes under the purview of the Sheriff's office for enforcement. These inquisitions led to the letter as a fact-finding mission to substantiate whether or not a venture of this type was or would be occurring in order to arrest plans until the proper application, review, and approval process could take place.

The Browns stated that the occupant of their property was a Sheriff's deputy raising several German shepherds he owned for the K-9 corps line of duty, while also protecting his family and the property that sits a marked distance from Dow Drive. The Browns had researched the Town ordinances, and could not see where this practice would be in violation. The publicly-posted flyer, however, reads "kennels" [for] "breeding, training, boarding..." and a copy of the flyer was provided to the Browns—unaware of its existence.

Mayor Fennell explained that the Town does not cruise for violations; but, when information is brought to the Town, typically by neighboring parties, then the Town needs to investigate. The letter was the initial step in attempting to gather additional information, so matters could be addressed properly and put in good order.

If the deputy is raising his own dogs as pets and protectors, likely there is no violation; but, the information in hand suggests otherwise. If then, a business as the flyer indicates were functioning or planned, a violation of the zoning ordinance and the permitted use schedule would exist. In short, the Council would like to hear firsthand from the resident at 6915 Dow Drive to clear up what is actually going on.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. Council Member Jerry Rice made the motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown. Motion passed by unanimous vote; and the January 12, 2016 Town Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:43 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, February 9, 2016 at the Whitsett Town Hall.

/s/

Jo Hesson, Town Clerk

/s/

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: February 9, 2016