

**MINUTES OF A TOWN COUNCIL
WORK SESSION MEETING
TOWN OF LURAY, VIRGINIA
Tuesday, August 25, 2020
5:30pm**

The Luray Town Council met in a Work Session on Tuesday, August 25, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in the Luray Town Council Chambers located at 45 East Main Street, Luray, Virginia at which time there were the following present:

Presiding: Mayor Presgraves

Council Present: Ron Vickers
Jerry Dofflemyer
Jerry Schiro
Leroy Lancaster
Joseph Sours
Leah Pence

Others Present: Steve Burke, Town Manager
Bryan Chrisman, Assistant Town Manager
Mary Broyles, Clerk Treasurer
Danielle Babb, Deputy Clerk Treasurer
Chief Bow Cook, Luray Police Department
Lowell Baughan, Luray Parks Association (present electronically)

Due to the threat of transmission of COVID-19 and in recognition of the Governor's Executive Order, this Work Session will have limited seating. The meeting was made available to the public via the Town's Facebook page live-streaming broadcast.

A quorum being present, Mayor Presgraves declared the Council to be in session for the transaction of business. Mayor Presgraves led members in the United States Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called with all members present.

Councilwoman Pence stated that she would like to add two items to the evening's discussion. First, for consideration by the Council to receive public relations and diversity training and, second; to offer the community diversity training. Mayor Presgraves stated that in order for an item to be added to the agenda, two members of Council must request the change. He noted that Councilwoman Pence was the sole member making the request, therefore the agenda remained as stated. No further discussion was held.

UPDATES & DISCUSSION ITEMS

Luray Park Association Agreement

Town Manager, Steve Burke, stated that the Town Attorney has prepared a draft agreement between the Town and the Luray Park Association to maintain the property. The Town has historically maintained the property owned by the association since 1949. Mr. Lowell Baughan was present electronically to provide a presentation on the history of the Park Association.

Mr. Lowell Baughan, Luray Park Association, provided a power point presentation detailing the history of the board beginning in 1917. Mr. Baughan stated that it all began with the historic Luray Inn (built in 1881) which was formerly located near the top of Inn Lawn Circle. At the time, visitors came to Luray via the railroad and stayed at the Inn. On November 5th, 1891, the historic Inn caught fire and was destroyed completely. In 1917, the Luray Land Corporation donated several of the lots to create a public park for the Town of Luray. In December of 1917, the Park Association was formed with 7 founding members. The mission of the Association was *"the establishment and maintenance of a public park in the Town of Luray shall not only be a place of adornment to said Town, but also a place of enjoyment and recreation for all its people. It shall not be an amusement park operated for profit"*. The purpose also clearly stated that the trustees shall not sell or encumber the park property.

The park then continued its expansion later with the additions of the tennis courts (gifted by the Town of Luray), and the Belle Brown Northcott Memorial Carillion (Luray Singing Tower). Most recently in 2013, the Parks Association acquired the Performing Arts Luray building in order to provide long term financing for the PAL Center. The Parks Association also provides support of other organizations including the Page Library Association, whereas the Page Public Library is located on park board property, and the Page County Heritage Association placed the Massanutten School on park land in 1974.

In closing, Mr. Baughan stated that the Association in its longevity from 1917-2020 has maintained the mission *" Holding properties in trust which support recreational, historical and cultural programs in our community"*.

Councilman Vickers inquired about the slave block that is located within park association property. Mr. Lowell Baughan stated that the slave block was indeed placed there at the request of Minister Fred Henson to recognize that slavery did exist in Page County. Councilwoman Pence inquired who the block now belongs to. Mr. Baughan indicated that it would belong to the park board as it was gifted and placed on park association property.

Mr. Baughan addressed the question of why the Town is maintaining the park. He noted that as early as 1918 the trustees met with the Town to acquire financial assistance to defray costs of maintenance. Later, around 1937 the Town imposed a park levy on property taxes in order to provide maintenance funds. Mr. Baughan said that around 1970 the Town overhauled its code and eliminated the park levy. The response to the elimination of the levy was that the Town would continue to maintain the park lands for the enjoyment of the citizens.

Councilwoman Pence stated that with a parks system in place, the Town should not continue to maintain without the merger of the Parks Association into the Town of Luray, as opposed to continued private ownership. Town Manager, Steve Burke, along with Mr. Baughan maintained that the property cannot be sold nor conveyed in ownership. Councilman Vickers expressed his appreciation for Inn Lawn Park as a public facility and the benefit it provides to town citizens. Mr. Vickers stated that he feels the Town is in a good position to continue the maintenance as is. Mayor Presgraves said the park is a tremendous asset to the community and thanked Mr. Baughan for his presentation.

North Broad Street Park (LDI)

Mr. Steve Burke requested Council review the proposed North Broad Street Improvements. Luray Downtown Initiative has notified town staff of its award of a \$25,000 grant from Virginia Main Street. The Town has previously placed an option to purchase the property, and staff is seeking authorization to proceed. Additionally, staff is seeking approval for the Town and LDI to enter into a memorandum of agreement to provide parking, drainage and physical improvements utilizing both the grant and Town funding. Mr. Burke believes the estimated cost to the town will be around \$23,000. Mr. Burke believes the budget can accommodate this expenditure through savings recognized in several line items in the general fund. The current name for the project is the "North Broad Street Park".

Announcements and Adjourn

With no further business, Mayor Presgraves adjourned meeting of the Luray Town Council at approximately 6:03 p.m.

Mayor, Barry Presgraves

Deputy Clerk, Danielle Babb