

TOWN OF SEVEN DEVILS
TUESDAY, MARCH 14, 2023
PUBLIC HEARING – 5:00PM
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING – 5:30PM

The Seven Devils Town Council met for a Public Hearing for a PARTF Grant on Tuesday, March 14, 2023, at 5:00pm and followed by a Regular Town Council meeting at Town Hall.

Attendance included: Mayor Larry Fontaine, Mayor Pro Tem Lambert, Council Members – Leigh Sasse & Jeffrey Williams; Member Bonomo was absent.

Staff included: Parks & Rec Tech Jewel McKinney, Fire Chief Matt Millsaps, Town Attorney Rob Angle; the minutes were recorded by Town Clerk Hillary Gropp.

INVOCATION

Mayor Fontaine gave the Invocation for the Public Hearing and Town Council meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council members and citizens recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Fontaine called the Public Hearing to order at 5:01pm. Mayor Fontaine explained the purpose of the Public Hearing is to receive public comment only for the PARTF Grant for amenities in The Park of Seven Devils. No other business will be presented or considered at this hearing. Mayor Fontaine outlined the following guidelines:

- Citizens who want to speak during the public comment must sign up.
- Speakers will be limited to three (3) minutes each. The clerk controls the timer.
- Speakers must make presentations from the podium.

OPEN PUBLIC HEARING

Member Sasse made a motion to open the Public Hearing; Member Williams seconded the motion. All members agreed.

Presentation – Larry Fontaine, Mayor & Jewel McKinney, Parks & Rec Tech

Mayor Larry Fontaine provided an overview of the PARTF grant; the grant provides dollar for dollar matching grants to local governments for projects to serve the public. The Parks and Recreation Authority are the governing board that allocate the funding to projects that apply each year. The Town of Seven Devils has been a recipient of PARTF funds twice before for the Otter Falls project and received approximately \$300,000 in aid.

Parks and Recreation Program Tech, Jewel McKinney provided a summary on the process of planning for and applying for the PARTF Grant. The amenities the Town is requesting matching funding for are ADA compliant bathrooms, a playground, concert stage, picnic pavilion, PARS Course, and a dog park. The Park at Seven Devils Project will cost approximately \$525,000. If awarded, the grant would provide \$250,000 with the remaining \$275,000 paid from Cares Act funding and donations from the Seven Devils Tourism Development Authority. The grant application deadline is May 1, 2023. The Parks and Recreation Authority will meet in Fall 2023 to review applications and to determine awards. An overview of the project costs, matching funds, and a copy of site plan was distributed to all attendees and Town Council.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Bob Bridges – 147 Deepwood Court – He is supportive of the PARTF Grant as a citizen, and as Chair for the Parks & Recreation Committee. The funds to develop the amenities will not be from real estate taxes, but other sources including Occupancy Tax, TDA and the PARTF Grant, if awarded. He noted the landscape plan included removing scrub trees, allowing for a better site layout, and new trees will be planted.

Anne Fontaine – 127 Rocky Top Trail – She is supportive of the PARTF Grant as a citizen, and as Chair for the TDA. The planning for The Park at Seven Devils began 3 ½ years ago with the purchase of the Town Hall that included the additional acreage. TDA is committed with funding for the completion of The Park at Seven Devils, noting a PARTF Grant award will expedite the timeline.

CLOSE PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Pro Tem Lambert made a motion to Close the Public Hearing; Member Sasse seconded the motion. All members agreed.

RECESS

Member Sasse made a motion to Recess; Member Williams seconded. All members agreed.
Town Council recessed at 5:20pm.

CALL TO ORDER- End Recess

Member Williams made a motion to End Recess and call the meeting to order at 5:30pm; Mayor Pro Tem Lambert seconded the motion. All members agreed.

ADOPT AGENDA

Member Sasse asked about a topic and Mayor Fontaine stated the topic would be discussed at the Administrative update.

Member Williams made a motion to adopt the agenda; Mayor Pro Tem Lambert seconded the motion. All members agreed.

CONSENT AGENDA

Adopt minutes of Town Council meeting – February 14, 2023.

Mayor Pro Tem Lambert made a motion to approve and adopt the minutes; Member Williams seconded the motion. All members agreed.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

A. Resilient & Thriving Community – Amber Dixon, WYN Representative

Representatives with the Western Youth Network have requested a Town proclamation to declare April 29th – May 6th as “Resilient and Thriving Communities Week”. Council members had questions about the sample proclamation provided; Amber Dixon to follow-up with specifics.

B. FY24 Annual Workshop & Budget Calendar

Dates were discussed and agreed upon for the Town Council Annual Workshop and FY24 Budget Workshops.

Mayor Pro Tem Lambert made a motion to approve the dates; Member Williams seconded the motion. All members agreed. **~CLOSED~**

Town Clerk Gropp will amend the Town’s 2023 calendar year.

C. Board Room Furniture

Discussion occurred about the need for Board Room furniture. Member Williams asked Council to table the item.

Member Williams made a motion to table discussion and decision to a future FY24 Budget Workshop; Member Sasse seconded the motion. All members agreed. **~OPEN~**

CITIZEN COMMENTS – None

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

Mayor Fontaine & Staff provided the Administrative Update:

- Mayor Fontaine reported HCCOG offices suffered water damage from the deep freeze in December and need temporary office space. He suggested allowing the HCCOG staff to occupy the training area & extra office of Town Hall on the second floor. The members agreed. Town Clerk to coordinate the logistics with the HCCOG.
- Mayor Fontaine spoke about the lunch hosted at Seven Devils and it included the Mayors, Mayor Pro Tem and Managers from Beech Mountain, Blowing Rock, and Boone. Topics discussed included Emergency Medical response times in Watauga County and housing issues.
- Town Attorney Angle stated the lawsuit for Sales Tax Distribution between Watauga County and Municipalities has exhausted the final appeal. The distribution method will remain the same.

- Fire Chief Millsaps reported the Volunteer Fire Department had 6 members complete Emergency Medical Responder training, and these members are scheduled to test for the state exam.
- Town Clerk Gropp provided an update on the progress of the new website.
- New Police Officer Dalton Vines has taken his oath of office and currently in training.
- 305 water meters have been installed by Public Works and updated in the billing system; the project is completed.
- Discussions have occurred with Nordic about repair and relocation of the Town's webcam. Council Member Sasse requests consideration for an additional webcam to be located in Avery County/Skiview Road area part of the Town.
- Public Safety Committee requested funding to purchase a two-sided Fire Danger sign.

Important Dates:

Arbor Day Celebration – Friday, April 28, 2023 – Parks & Rec Tech McKinney provided details.

Public Works Debris Pick Up to begin the weeks of April 24th, June 26th and October 2nd.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Board of Adjustment – No meeting

Planning Board – No meeting

Public Works Committee -No meeting

Public Safety Committee – March minutes

Parks & Recreation Committee – February minutes

TDA – February minutes

ABC Board – February minutes

Tree Committee – February minutes

Police Report

Fire Report

Financial Report

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Member Sasse inquired about the concern/complaint list be provided to Council members. She also asked about the process of posting alerts on the Town's website. Town Gropp reported the new website will provide features for citizen alerts and will follow up with Town Manager Harris.

Mayor Pro Tem Lambert spoke of the recent accomplished tasks by Fire Chief Millsaps which included EMR training, Fire Danger signage, and location for a Helipad within the Town limits. All members offered their support and congratulations to Fire Chief Millsaps.

ADJOURN

Mayor Pro Tem Lambert made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Member Sasse seconded the motion. All members agreed. The meeting was adjourned at 6:39pm.

Brad Lambert

Brad Lambert, Mayor Pro Tem

Hillary Gropp

Hillary Gropp, Town Clerk

