VARNVILLE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 7th, 2025

1. **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mayor Nathaniel Shaffer

**Officials present ;** Mayor Nathaniel Shaffer, Pro – Tem Henry A. Campbell, Councilman Ronald Williams, Councilman Faye Gooding, Councilman Jospeh Williams, Councilwoman Linda Cooler. Councilman Nicholas Ginn.

**Others-** Wade Hadwin, Bryan Adams, Pike Jones, John Kirkland, Karen Harrison, Stephaine Harrison, Morgan Shaffer, Dorris Sheffield.

1.1 Invocation – Mayor Nathaniel Shaffer

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance – Nathaniel Shaffer

1.3 Freedom of Information Act (**FOIA**) Compliance – Clerk Shannon Shaffer

1. **Consent Agenda Items –**

2.1 Approval of amended Agenda – Approved. No objections

2.2 Approval of Minutes –11/14/2024 Approved. No objections

1. **Reports of Department Heads**

3.1 Mayor Shaffer reported that we have 3 active grants as of right now. Money that we received from the legislative delegation and the Rehabilitation of the Gin Building. And the Dr. H.W. Brooks Park improvements.

Also, the Town’s Attorney is currently working on the new Animal Control Ordinance.

Also, the Town Employees and Staff had an informative Safety Meeting on Friday, Jan 10th. With discussion on Service Protocols/Management Practices/ Risk Management Safety.

3.2 Fire Chief Brian Adams reported that the fire department responded to 24 in-town calls and 26 county calls.

3.3 Karen Harrison- Mrs. Harrison informed the Council of the damage sustained to her building caused by fallen bricks from the building next door, which is owned by the Town of Varnville, during Hurricane Helena,. She stated her claim to cover her building was denied by the town’s insurance company on the bases that the damage was caused by an “Act of God or Natural Causes” She Claimed, the towns insurance adjuster asked her to send additional information about the damage if she had any.

Mrs. Harrison allowed Mrs. Amy Steinmeyer to speak on her behalf.

Amy Steinmeyer introduced herself to the council by stating, “ I’m an attorney, but not a practicing attorney, I’m on disability…But I did some research on behalf of Karen Harrison.”

Mayor Shaffer asked Mrs. Steinmeyer if she was Mrs. Harrison legal representative, to which she replied, “I am.” He then cautioned the council and her that this appears to be a legal matter and suggested this discussion may need to be in an executive session, however the agenda had already been published. Mayor Shaffer asked if Mrs. Harrison filed a claim on her insurance for the damage.

Mrs. Harrison said she did file and was paid $4,000.00 after being told that she was under insured at the time. She shared with the council details about the damage and the bid she received from a “special contractor”.

Mrs. Harrison and her daughter stated that the damage occurred the day before the storm occurred.

Councilmen Ginn suggested to Mrs. Harrison that she file suit against her own insurance and the towns insurance instead of attempting to negotiate with the Town Council & Mayor considering the situation has obviously become a legal matter.

**4.Public Hearing :**

A hearingtoamend the zoning of TM# 137-07-01-004; a 4.35 acres parcel at Carolina Ave, Elm St and Pepper St. from Highway Commercial to Flexible Residential District.

Pike Jones shared information with the Council with the Homeowners Association /Affordable Housing Project. This project is targeted for feasible ownership and to flourish this area. There will potentially be 14 Modular Homes at this site. This project has been discussed in several meetings with the Planning Commission. Mr. Jones has made offers on the mobile home park across the street in hopes of acquiring it as well and potentially added this to the scope of work.

**5. New Business**

5.1 The 2025 Town Council Meeting Calendar was approved. Motion by Mayor Pro- Tem Alexander Campbell and seconded by Councilman Joseph Williams. All were in favor.

5.2 Action taken on Zoning- Change of Zoning from Highway Commercial to Flexible Residential-The council determined to accept the Planning Commissions recommendation to change the zoning. Motion made by Mayor Shaffer and seconded by Councilman Nick Ginn. All were in favor.

5.3 Discussion / Action on 2018 Freightliner refuse – Council decided to speak with the towns attorney before making payment for repairs done on the 2018 Freightliner.

5.4 International Women’s Day- PEARLS is asking to have this event on Town Hall grounds on Saturday March 8th 11am-2pm on the Town Hall grounds. Councilwoman Faye Gooding and seconded by Councilman Campbell. All were in favor.

5.5 Schedule Budgetary Workshop – scheduled for 01/27/2025 @ 5:00pm.

5.6 Discussion/Update on Active Code Cases and Complaints- Judge Walter Sanders has given property owners at 964 Carolina Ave. 6 months to reach compliance.

Council would like Joshua Thomas from Safebuilt to attend the next council meeting.

5.7 Downhome Christmas Summary –

Council was given a summary of items/assets purchased during the Downhome Christmas Event.

**6. Executive Session**

No executive session at this meeting.

Metting was adjourned at 8:27pm

Respectfully submitted by,

Shannon Shaffer

Admin. Assistant/ Clerk