

REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Town of Sylva Board of Commissioners
September 12, 2019

The Town of Sylva Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on September 12, 2019 at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Room of Municipal Hall, 83 Allen Street, Sylva, N.C.

PRESENT: Lynda Sossamon, Mayor
Barbara Hamilton, Vice-Mayor
Harold Hensley, Commissioner
Mary Gelbaugh, Commissioner
Greg McPherson Commissioner
David Nestler, Commissioner

Amanda Murajda, Town Clerk
Paige Dowling, Town Manager
Eric Ridenour, Town Attorney

ABSENT:

Mayor Sossamon called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT: Rick Bryson (Asst. Police Chief), Chris Hatton (Police Chief), Daniel Reid (Sergeant), Aimee Watson (Lieutenant Detective) and Jake Scott (Public Works Director).

VISITORS: Deborah Stanley, Marie Leatherwood, Pat Purdy, Bob Kelley, Jason Kimenker, Kristy Kelley, David Schulman, Barbara Bell, Teresa Cheek, Charley Woodring, Michelle Dillard, Keith Dillard, Garry Wells, Jason Sherrill, Deborah Freels, Dave Russell, Kent Dillard, Eric Myers, Eric Fisher, Austin Gardner, Jay Coward, Lisa Ford, Aaron Littlefield, Brian Burch, Jeannette White, Ben Guiney, Jeff Sykes, Holly Kays and Joe Hamilton.

AGENDA: *Commissioner Nestler made a motion to add a closed session to the agenda pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(5) for contract negotiations. The motion carries with a unanimous vote. Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to approve the amended agenda. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

CONSENT AGENDA: *Commissioner McPherson made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

- (a) Eric Myers, resident of Jackson County, expressed his concerns about the width of the median. He also added that the public wants a redesign of the project and NCDOT is not responding.
- (b) Jay Coward made a request on behalf of the Smart Roads Alliance committee to engage WCU in an economic impact study of the project. He added that this type of project had not been completed and the committee would also like to conduct a public opinion survey.
- (c) Pat Purdy commented that she believes the project should be put to public vote.
- (d) Barbara Bell, resident of Jackson County, commented that the amount of money being spent on the project needs to be reviewed.
- (e) Teresa Cheek, resident of Jackson County, believes that concrete medians will promote vehicular racing and could result in fatalities. She requested that surveys be mailed instead of just using on-line media.
- (f) Charley Woodring, resident of Jackson County, spoke about how the traffic will be delayed because of the medians.
- (g) Deborah Stanley commented that not one person who has voiced an opinion has promoted the project.
- (h) Deborah Freels, resident of Jackson County, voiced her opposition to the project.

MAYOR'S REPORT: None.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT: Commissioner McPherson asked when crosswalks would be installed on Grindstaff Cove Road. Jake Scott reported that NCDOT was working on that and should be finished soon.

MANAGERS REPORT:

- Nantahala Brewing started working on their crosswalk yesterday. The handicap accessible curb ramps will be installed. NCDOT will paint the crosswalk lines after the curbs are completed.
- The Asheville Design Center should have a report to the Town by the first week of October.
- Daniel Reid has been promoted to Detective.

MAIN STREET REPORT: The September meeting was moved to September 16, 2019 at 4:00 p.m.

FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT: None.

PUBLIC HEARING—PETITION FOR ANNEXATION: Mayor Sossamon opened the hearing at 6:06 p.m. and explained that the hearing was for a petition for annexation at 5 Hilltop Drive in the Dillardtown Community. Anyone wishing to express an opinion may speak. Keith Dillard commented that he did not see the advantage to the Town to annex the property. There is already police and fire service and they do not need sidewalks and streetlights. Gary Wells also commented that the community does not need this property to be annexed. Jason Sherrill and Kent Dillard noted that they were also against the annexation. Aaron Littlefield, owner of the property, told the board he petitioned the board for satellite annexation so that he and his wife could vote in municipal elections. Being no further comment, Mayor Sossamon closed the hearing at 6:14 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

PETITION FOR ANNEXATION: Manager Dowling reviewed the petition for satellite annexation and explained the requirements and associated costs that would have to be completed if approved. She also explained that a petition for satellite annexation has typically been from a business. *Commissioner Hensley made a motion to deny the petition for satellite annexation. Commissioner Nester then commented that philosophically he cannot see denying the request but by design he would never extend the city limits of the Town of Sylva by satellite annexation because of the inequality it creates. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

R5600 PROJECT UPDATE: Brian Burch, with NCDOT, addressed the board with an update on the R5600 project. He made the following points:

- The first public workshop was held in February 2017.
- A previous project for a bypass around Sylva was opposed by local governments so it was never built.
- The NCDOT has been engaging the public for more than three years which is more than any other project.
- The project is 4 ½ months from beginning the right-of-way negotiations and acquisitions.
- In January 2020 property owners will be contacted about right-of-way.
- NCDOT has looked at all alternatives available and evaluated them.
- At this point in the project NCDOT must move forward.
- If NCDOT was required to start over, it would require new funding appropriations.
- NCDOT does not have the cash balance to redo the project so it would be approximately ten years for a new project.
- Anyone with questions is encouraged to contact NCDOT
- NCDOT right-of-way cannot be used for commercial activity
- Similar projects:
 - Franklin, NC—5 lane converted to 4 lanes with median (R5734A)
 - Murphy, NC—4 lanes retro to 5 lanes (R5735)
 - Waynesville, NC—5 lane converted to 4 lanes with median (U5839)

CLOSED SESSION: *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to enter closed session pursuant to NCGS. 143-318-11(a)(5) in regards to contract negotiation at 6:45 p.m. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to come out of closed session. The motion carries with a unanimous vote and the Board entered into regular session at 7:08 p.m. No action was taken during closed session.

ADJOURNMENT: *Commissioner Hensley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:09 p.m. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

Lynda Sossamon
Mayor

Amanda W. Murajda
Town Clerk