



**VILLAGE COUNCIL
MINUTES FOR REGULAR MEETING OF APRIL 28, 2020
ASSEMBLY HALL
395 MAGNOLIA ROAD
PINEHURST, NORTH CAROLINA
4:30 PM**

The Pinehurst Village Council held a Regular Meeting at 4:30 p.m., Tuesday, April 28, 2020 remotely, via Zoom. Assembly Hall, located at Pinehurst Village Hall, 395 Magnolia Road, Pinehurst, North Carolina was open to the public to view the remote meeting live and to provide public comments in real time.

The following were in remote attendance of the meeting:

Mr. John C. Strickland, Mayor
Ms. Judy Davis, Mayor Pro Tem
Ms. Lydia Boesch, Councilmember
Mr. Kevin Drum, Councilmember
Ms. Jane Hogeman, Councilmember
Mr. Jeffrey M. Sanborn, Village Manager
Ms. Beth Dunn, Village Clerk

And approximately 6 attendees, including 4 staff members.

1. Call to Order.

Mayor Strickland, called the Village Council meeting to order.

2. Reports:

Village Manager

- Working on installing pick up lanes and signage for the open businesses downtown.
- The Village is posting a weekly trivia contest on Facebook with questions about a local business. The questions will require a little research about the business which should help draw attention and also traffic to the business website. Answers are due on Tuesday of the following week. The winning prize will be a gift certificate from that particular business. Different questions for a different business will be asked each week.

Village Council

- Councilmember Boesch stated that Pinewild residents have made 5,255 cloth masks and 200 N95 masks for the hospital. John and Jan Cashion have donated the fabric for the masks.
- Councilmember Drum participated in the Triangle J COG meeting and they shared the way every community. NC Retail call and restaurant association. Scheduled to open in Phase 2 of the Governor's plan.
- Councilmember Hogeman expressed thanks to the Beautification Committee for their hard work on the plantings around the Village. She thanked Councilmember Boesch for heading the face masks operation in Pinewild.
- Mayor Pro Tem Davis encourage all citizens to complete the 2020 Census.
- Mayor Strickland stated he has had weekly contact with the hospital and they are operating on schedule and have adequate backup. He also spoke with the Executive Director of NC Retail Merchants and he explained there are some supply chain

issues and he believe this issue will resolve itself in the next few weeks. Mayor Strickland stated for the public to remember to buy only what's needed and not hoard supplies and hopefully this issue will rectify itself.

3. Motion to Approve Consent Agenda.

All items listed below are considered routine or have been discussed at length in previous meetings and will be enacted by one motion. No separate discussion will be held unless requested by a member of the Village Council.

- Approval of Village Council Meeting Minutes.
 - April 9, 2020 Special Meeting
 - April 9, 2020 Closed Session
 - April 14, 2020 Regular Meeting
 - April 14, 2020 Closed Session
 - April 20, 2020 Special Meeting
 - April 20, 2020 Closed Session
- Budget Amendment Report

End of Consent Agenda.

Upon a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Davis, seconded by Councilmember Boesch, Council unanimously approved the Consent agenda by a vote of 5-0.

4. Review and Discuss Key Findings of the Library Services Needs Assessment and Draft ETC Survey.

Natalie Hawkins, Assistant Village Manager, stated this agenda item is to review and discuss the key findings and the alternative strategies as well as review and discuss the Draft ETC Survey to be distributed to a random sample of Pinehurst households as part of the Library Services Needs Assessment.

Debbie Joy, Library IQ, noted that the Library Needs Assessment Report will not be finalized until they receive the results from the ETC Survey and she reviewed the timeline to date of the research activities that brought them to the preliminary findings. Ms. Joy stated that the preliminary findings indicate that, among who participated, resident's needs are not being met by the Given Memorial Library today and residents want expanded public library services in the Village. Ms. Joy explained some of the key theme and takeaways which included that the current library funding structure is not sustainable and the Village should provide library services, the building is too small to meet the desires of residents, especially those households with children, basic technology should be included, and the library hours of operation currently restrict access for working people and families. Ms. Joy stated their recommendations were for the Village to assume responsibility for operating a public library and either relocate the current library services to an existing building or construct a new one. Ms. Joy reviewed some alternative strategies they looked at to meet resident needs for library services. One strategy included collaborating with other municipal or academic libraries. She doesn't feel this is a viable solution, as the Southern Pines library exceeds their capacity already, Moore County Library/Sandhills Regional System declined to participate in the study, and the Community College is not a long term solution.

Fred Belledin, Clearscapes, explained he evaluated the size of a facility based on the industry best practice in terms of the population and also based on the programs and type of services desired by the community. The optimal squared footage would be around 17,000 square feet (sf), based on 1 person per square foot and between 14,000 sf and 20,000 sf based on programing desires heard. Mr. Belledin noted that it's also standard practice to understand what your funding allows and custom design a facility for appropriate services. Mr. Belledin explained they looked at four different sites for a potential Library with an emphasis on sites within or adjacent to Village core areas. Mr. Belledin reviewed the four potential sites they identified to either relocate services to or build a new facility on and the cost and square footage associated with each one. The sites were identified as:

1. Co-locate with Cannon Park Community Center
2. Co-locate with Village Hall
3. Renovate/Expand Historic Fire House
4. Renovate Carolina Theatre Building

Ms. Joy reviewed different options for operating and funding a municipal run library. She explained the next step would be to take the preliminary findings and recommendations and test those in the ETC Survey. She also noted they have discussed adding another question to the survey to find out what level of investment residents would support.

Mayor Strickland asked who the consultants spoke with in regards to collaborating with Southern Pines and Sandhills Community College. Ms. Joy stated she had conversations with Amanda Brown with Southern Pines Library and John Dempsey with Sandhills Community College. Mayor Strickland also asked how they determined the Theatre Building and the Fire Station as potential locations and if they had a chance to walk through those buildings while they were in Pinehurst. Mr. Belledin stated that both locations were brought up by the community and the Fire House was mentioned in the New Core Master Plan as a potential location as well. He explained that the Theatre Building was the only building in the Village Center area that is the appropriate scale and size for a library. Mr. Belledin also explained that the Fire House is in that in between area, the Village Core, that is not yet developed and this could help link the two areas together.

Councilmember Drum stated he was looking for a Needs Assessment and it looks like we have a house built on opinions. Ms. Joy explained that typically they take the information from the personal interviews, online surveys, and focus groups and use that as a sampling, given they can't talk to every person in the community. Councilmember Boesch stated she was uncomfortable listing buildings that we don't own in the survey as possible places to relocate the library. Councilmember Boesch also stated she is concerned that the draft report represents it's speaking for the entire community and she is not comfortable that it is. Ms. Joy stated they could change the language in the draft report to state participants in this study instead of community but explained she is confident in the methodology that was used and was certain that this reflects the community. Mr. Belldin stated the feedback received is only as good as the people that participated, but based on the information received from participants this represents a pretty broad cross section of the community.

Councilmember Hogeman stated she is not comfortable going forward with the survey or the report and noted she feels the report has already concluded that a bigger library is needed and demanded. She doesn't feel the greater financial context hasn't been given to the public to this point and that wish list items have been taken and turned into conclusions. Councilmember Hogeman stated she would like to see broader information on lower cost options. Mayor Pro Tem Davis stated she was very comfortable at where we are in the process. She feels we need the facts to back up the information in the report. Mayor Pro Tem Davis stated she wasn't bashful at looking at property that the Village doesn't own, as property can always be for sale. She also stated we need to face the reality that if we don't do anything then the library is going to go away.

Council reviewed and discussed a draft copy of the ETC survey. Mr. Sanborn, Village Manager, noted that this process can be parallel, we can move forward on creating the ETC survey and move forward on improving the language in the draft report at the same time. Mr. Sanborn stated the only way to get true and representative information from the community is to complete the ETC Survey. Council agreed to have a Special Meeting on May 5th at 9:30 a.m. to discuss the draft ETC Survey and Draft Needs Assessment Report further.

5. Other Business.

- Jeff Batton, Assistant Village Manager, stated he and Melissa went downtown and selected locations to install the 125th Anniversary banners on light poles, around 15 to 20 locations scattered around downtown. Melissa is working on several banner concepts to bring to Council to choose from, along with a map of locations where they would be installed. Mr. Batton stated he checked with Duke Energy on their requirements for installing banners on their poles and they only allow an 18 X 18 size banner to be installed, which is too small. The cost of the banners is around \$2,500. Mayor Strickland stated Jack Farrell is still willing to provide us with the information of historic dates to publish. We would use Facebook and normal publications to showcase these dates.
- Mayor Strickland asked if there were any updates in regards to the Village's revenues due to COVID-19. Jeff Sanborn, noted that Brooke Hunter, Financial Services Director, has been looking at the worst case scenarios from the revenue projections provided by the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM). Mr. Sanborn stated that the projections issued from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) that was a little more severe. Mr. Sanborn explained that although we should be cautious of the uncertainty, we should also be aware that we have a 46 million dollar fund balance, and times like this is why we are required to have a fund balance. Also, there is the one million set aside for the library and we have the ability to absorb that as well. Mr. Sanborn stated that things are forever changing and we are going to factor in the latest information as we move forward. Councilmember Hogeman stated that we need to have the priorities set ahead of time so we know what we can set aside, if we need to. Ms. Hunter stated she went back and reviewed the projections by the NCLM and the 3 different scenarios they projected. She explained the Village used the moderate scenarios, the NCLM projected, and then went back and ran the proposed numbers on the worst case numbers and there was a difference of \$207,000. Ms. Hunter stated she is hoping the online sales tax revenue will help mitigate the offset.

6. Comments from Attendees.

- Bernard Peters, 1205 Monticello Drive, submitted the following public comment by email: "Hello Lt. Ebel, I want to personally thank yourself and Deputy Chief Webb for your attention to the ongoing issue of the public not adhering to the posted 25 MPH speed limit on Monticello Dr. Yesterday, April 16, 2020, I noticed radar being enforced in the afternoon hours! Hopefully, this will curtail the overall disregard by the motoring public of the posted limit. I certainly appreciate your efforts! Stay safe and healthy."
- John Webster, Pinehurst resident, submitted the following public comment by email: With reference to the Library consultants' report and proposed survey questions: 1. The report seems based on opinion, rather than statistical analysis, in part because the statistically valid survey has yet to occur. This did not stop the consultants inferring that the 386 participants online survey is statistically valid, which it is most clearly not. 2. Their recommendations are based on the input of some 2.5% of the VOP population, most of them interested citizens in favor of a new library. Little comment is given to alternatives other than building a new library. The report then goes on to define the where, the size, estimated initial and operating costs, staffing, layout, etc. 3. The survey questions are biased in themselves and in their reference to the consultants' report. I ask the Council members to make sure the consultants (i) revise their report in line with what they were asked to do and (ii) adopt a neutral stance in relation to an array of options that go from doing nothing, restructuring the existing library space with or without a library/archives separation, collaborating with other libraries, through to building a new library. In this, they must suppress their own bias and accept that their exposure to a small interested segment of the VOP population is not a necessarily valid representation of the opinions and wishes of the majority. I also request that the Council revise and redraft the survey questionnaire to ensure its neutrality while making it abundantly clear to survey respondents what are the property tax consequences of the various options. For example, a \$8 MM build cost (assume a 10 year loan) plus \$1 MM annual operating cost (not including maintenance) arguably translates into an annual \$2 MM cash requirement which is equivalent to raising municipal property taxes by 20%. Utilizing existing municipal property for a new library does not mean the property has no value and thus represents an opportunity cost which must also be part of any calculation.
- Deb Wimberly, Pinehurst resident, submitted the following comments by email: I am in receipt of the libraries 2019 Annual Report. Colorful, upbeat, expensive but not hugely informative. I was taken aback that only 6% of the expenditures were for "Library Collection." Additionally I think that contributions of a meager 3.4% of the population to the facility reflects the population's interest better than any survey, no matter how expensive. The county is blessed with several excellent libraries, a couple with free access to the state's system. I can find nothing in the survey offering partnering with them to enhance services as an option. A very smart friend ran numbers far above my head and calculated the following - \$8 MM build cost (assume a 10 year loan) plus \$1 MM annual operating cost (not including maintenance) arguably translates into an annual \$2 MM cash requirement which is equivalent to raising municipal property taxes by 20%." Can that be possible? Let's get some FACTS and FIGURES into that survey that appears to be less than neutral.
- Carol Coates, 21 Edinburgh Lane, submitted the following comments by email: I have been reviewing the Library material that will be presented at today's Village Council meeting. It would appear that the consultants did a thorough job of soliciting public input on this matter. But I have to question whether this whole process was totally unbiased since Library IQ is a company that is very pro-library with a mission is to steer "local libraries into destinations for enrichment, community connection and contemporary living." For example, I am skeptical of the assertion that a "key theme" uncovered in their research was a community desire for "teen "hangout" space, and possibly a small performance space/amphitheater." (from Page 5-Library Services Needs Assessment.) Also it is my understanding that the Given library staff had considerable input in this process and I can't help but wonder if this doesn't present a "conflict of interest". We're living in an age where everyone wants everything and they want it now. I think the Village of Pinehurst needs to step back and seriously consider what can reasonably be provided to Village residents considering all of the other capital expenditures/projects proposed in the newly minted comprehensive plan. There is only so much money to go around and an \$8 million construction cost plus a \$1million annual maintenance expense seems extremely excessive. (And what was the cost overrun for the Community Center?) Also, due to our current situation with Covid-19, I suspect that revenue to the village from sales tax will be decreased. Bottom line for me is that this is not the time to be embarking on another very expensive building project. Even though we are currently 'sheltering in place' my hope is that there will be public Village Council meetings later on where Pinehurst residents will have the opportunity to speak openly to the Village Council expressing their support or concerns. This issue is too important to not have open hearings.

7. Regular Meeting and Enter a Closed Session.

Upon a motion by Councilmember Boesch, seconded by Councilmember Drum, Council unanimously approved to recess the special meeting and enter into a closed session, Pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11(a)(5) to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease and pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11(a)(4), for Village Council to discuss economic development matters involving a prospective new business or the expansion of an existing business or industry, by a vote of 5-0.

8. **Motion to Adjourn the Closed Session and Re-enter the Regular Meeting.**

Upon a motion by Councilmember Drum, seconded by Councilmember Boesch, Council unanimously approved to adjourn the closed session and re-enter the regular meeting, by a vote of 5-0.

9. **Motion to Adjourn.**

Council unanimously approved to adjourn the regular meeting by a vote of 5-0 at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Beth Dunn,
Village Clerk

A videotape of this meeting is located on the Village website: www.vopnc.org

Vision: The Village of Pinehurst is a charming, vibrant community which reflects our rich history and traditions.

Mission: Promote, enhance, and sustain the quality of life for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Values: Service, Initiative, Teamwork, and Improvement