

*****February 13, 2012*****

The Signal Mountain Town Council held its regular monthly meeting on Monday, February 13, 2012, at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall. Those present were:

Mayor Bill Lusk
Vice Mayor Susan Robertson
Councilmember Annette Allen
Councilmember Dick Gee

Also present were: Town Attorney Phillip Noblett
Town Recorder Mark Johnson
See attached list for others present

Mayor Lusk led the pledge of allegiance. Stacey Seals, Fire Chaplain, gave the invocation. The roll was called.

Minutes

The minutes for the January 9th regular meeting and January 27th agenda meeting were discussed. With no additions, deletions, or corrections the minutes were approved.

Honorary Resolutions

The following honorary resolutions were presented:

1. "A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING MARCH 2, 2012, AS ARBOR DAY WITHIN THE TOWN OF SIGNAL MOUNTAIN, TENNESSEE." Councilmember Robertson reviewed the history of Arbor Day. Noah Long, Tree Board Chairman, noted that the a poster contest for Thrasher and Nolan Elementary School students would be held as well as tree plantings at the schools and Bachman Community Center. Vice Mayor Robertson noted that tree sponsorship forms for the planting were available. She moved and Councilmember Gee seconded that the resolution be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments

Mayor Lusk invited comments from the audience. There were none.

Resolutions

The following resolutions were presented:

1. "A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO ADOPT THE 2012 NEW STREET CRITERIA AS THE OFFICIAL REGULATIONS OF THE TOWN OF SIGNAL MOUNTAIN FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW TOWN STREETS WHICH HAS BEEN RECOMMENDED BY THE TOWN

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT.” Loretta Hopper, Public Works Director, said that the criteria are almost ready, but final changes and a review are being made. Mayor Lusk moved and Councilmember Allen seconded that the resolution be tabled. The motion passed unanimously.

2. “A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO ADOPT AMENDMENTS FOR THE USE AND OPERATION OF MOTOR VEHICLES ASSIGNED TO EMPLOYEES WITHIN THE SIGNAL MOUNTAIN POLICE DEPARTMENT.” Chief Veal explained the proposed amendments to the current policy that allows police officers to keep patrol vehicles at home between shifts under certain conditions. He said that the policy was originally developed in 2007, and it is very conservative compared to the policies of surrounding communities. The proposed revision reduces the service period eligibility requirement and the proximity requirement; i.e., officers currently must not live more than 15 miles outside of Town limits to be eligible. He noted that very few officers qualify for vehicles now and that turnover this year has been high. He said that take-home vehicles not only benefit the officers, but after reviewing response times during the recent tornadoes, it would also benefit the Town. He explained that officers with take-home vehicles are at a higher state of readiness and keeping vehicles in different locations reduced the risk of the entire fleet being damaged by a single natural disaster. He presented two amendment options. – Option “1” would require officers who live outside Town limits to be employed for one year before becoming eligible, and option “2” would allow all officers to participate after completing the field training program. Both options provided for an increase in the proximity requirement to 25 miles, but a fee would be charged to the officer for any distance in excess of 15 miles.

Mayor Lusk asked how costly recruitment and training are. Chief Veal said that recruitment cost is difficult to track, but the field-training program costs approximately \$5,000, and therefore retaining one officer would make a difference. He noted that providing take-home vehicles is an effective recruiting tool.

Councilmember Gee asked how many officers currently live within Town limits. Chief Veal said about three or four. He said that after studying the policy and turnover rates, if there had been no changes in staffing, the existing policy would have disqualified two officers from the benefit; conversely, either of the proposed changes would yield the same result within the year.

Mayor Lusk said that option “2” seems better. Chief Veal noted that even option “1” *reduces* the difference in time restriction on eligibility, but option “2” eliminates that difference entirely. He noted that the allowable distance would be extended by ten miles and cost an officer \$63 per month – the same rate that the City of Chattanooga uses.

Vice Mayor Robertson said that having a different qualifying requirement for those who live outside Town limits might be perceived as discrimination. Chief

Veal said that that wasn't the intent; that is, the only reason for differentiation is the benefit received from having patrol cars visible in various parts of Town.

Councilmember Gee said that having vehicles dispersed across a wider area might not necessarily be a good thing. Chief Veal said that it depends on what event occurs. He said that dispersion is better for environmental contingency planning, and it creates a greater chance for quick response in certain situations.

Councilmember Allen agreed with Mayor Lusk that option "2" was better.

Mayor Lusk moved and Councilmember Allen seconded that the resolution with language indicated under option "2" be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Ordinances

The following ordinances were presented:

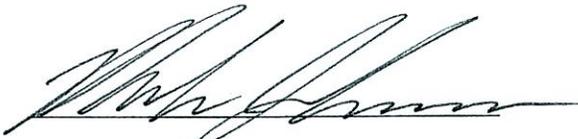
1. "AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE TOWN OF SIGNAL MOUNTAIN ZONING REGULATIONS BY DELETING ARTICLE XXV, ENTITLED "SIGNS" IN ITS ENTIRETY FROM THE TOWN ZONING ORDINANCE, AND INSERTING WITHIN TITLE 14 OF THE TOWN CODE ALL PROVISIONS REGARDING DESIGN REVIEW PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS IN A NEW CHAPTER 4 AND ALL PROVISIONS REGARDING "SIGNS" IN A NEW CHAPTER 5, ENTITLED "SIGN REGULATIONS," AND AMENDING SECTION 2-606 TO REFERENCE THE APPROPRIATE LOCATION OF SUCH REGULATIONS IN THE CODIFIED VERSION OF THE TOWN CODE." Vice Mayor Robertson moved and Councilmember Allen seconded that the ordinance be approved. Councilmember Gee noted that a request to erect a sign in excess of 25 square feet had recently been made. Vice Mayor Robertson explained that particular situation had already been resolved. The motion passed unanimously. Vice Mayor Robertson explained that the sign ordinance was the culmination of a two-year project by the DRC to update the previous sign ordinance, which was adopted 25 years ago and in need of review and revision. She thanked everyone involved in the project. Councilmember Allen thanked Vice Mayor Robertson for her work. Mr. Long warned that under state law, making exceptions to the ordinance would negate it. Vice Mayor Robertson said that the DRC was aware of that.
2. "AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE SIGNAL MOUNTAIN TOWN CODE, TITLE 2, TO AMEND TITLE 2 BY REPLACING CHAPTERS 1 THROUGH CHAPTERS 16 WITH THE TEXT BELOW TO INCLUDE REFERENCES TO ALL CURRENT BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS IN THE TOWN." Vice Mayor Robertson said that when she was first elected to the Council, one of her the initial projects was to consolidate into one ordinance all of the regulations governing the various Town boards. She completed the project; however, over

the last few years the council had recognized the need for some updating and clarification of that work. She explained that this ordinance was therefore an updated and clearer version of the previous one. For instance, she noted that a new provision was added to formally recognize ad hoc membership. She moved and Councilmember Gee seconded that the ordinance be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

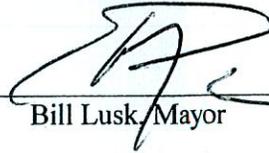
Discussions

Councilmember Gee mentioned that a new MACC rental fee is being considered, but must be approved by ordinance.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



Recorder



Bill Lusk, Mayor