

The Signal Mountain Town Council held a special agenda meeting on Friday, March 27, 2015 at 12:30 p.m.

Those present were: Mayor Dick Gee
Councilmember Chris Howley
Councilmember Bill Lusk
Councilmember Robert Spalding

Others present were: Town Manager Boyd Veal
Town Recorder Carol White
See attached list for others present

Council discussed a tentative agenda for the April 13, 2015 regular meeting.

Town Manager Boyd Veal informed the Council that Volkert Engineering will make a presentation on traffic calming at the April 13th regular meeting. Mayor Dick Gee informed the audience that there would not be any discussion by the Council regarding the traffic calming issue at today's meeting, nor would there be an opportunity for citizen input on this matter until that time.

Mr. Veal informed the Council that due to rapid turnover in Fire and Police departments, the Town had recently performed a salary and benefits survey. He explained that the survey indicates that the Town is competitive in regards to benefits, but has the lowest salaries for Police officers and the second lowest for Firefighters in the local area.

Mr. Veal explained that while the focus of the survey was Police and Fire personnel, the Town also considered all other positions. He said this was due to the fact that the current compensation plan groups different job together that have related salary levels. He explained that of the 62 current full-time employees, only 15 are at or above the "market" level in the current compensation plan with all other employees below that level.

Based on these findings, Mr. Veal proposed a new compensation scale which would add 2 positions ("P1" and "P2") between the current "Minimum and "Market". Mr. Veal further informed the Council that there is a 5% increase between each of the steps. He explained that the "Minimum" would be the entry level for a new employee who has no previous experience or certifications, an employee with certification but no experience, (e.g. a certified Police Officer) could be started at the "P1" level, and an employee with certification and work experience could be started at "P2". He explained that the goal would be to have employees reach the "Market" level at three years of satisfactory service. In addition, he stated that he was proposing a 5% increase in the scale for all employees. Mr. Veal explained that this new scale and compensation plan had been reviewed and approved by the Personnel Committee. After extensive discussion, the Council agreed that the Town Manager will budget for the implementation of the 5% adjustment to scale and the new compensation scale as presented with an annual review of the plan.

Public Hearing

The regular meeting was temporarily suspended for the Council to convene a Public Hearing on the proposed Ordinance to amend the Town's Zoning Ordinance regarding allowing fitness centers in certain commercial districts.

Mayor Gee invited comments from the audience.

There being no public comment, the meeting was resumed.

Ordinance

1. "AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ARTICLE VI SCHEDULE OF DISTRICT REGULATIONS OF THE SIGNAL MOUNTAIN ZONING ORDINANCE REGARDING ALLOWING FITNESS CENTERS IN CERTAIN DISTRICT."

Councilmember Howley motioned to approve the second reading of the ordinance. Councilmember Lusk seconded the motion. All present being in favor, the motion was approved.

Discussion

Councilmember Howley asked that the discussion regarding the Advisory Group-Conservation Easement be postponed until Councilmember Wallace is present. All present being in favor, the discussion was tabled.

Councilmember Howley asked if there is any way to expedite repairs to US127. Councilmember Lusk gave the Council the history of the Town's association with TDOT and an explanation of the TDOT 2020 Regional Transportation Plan. He explained that while the US127 repairs are listed on that plan, there is no set time when those repairs will occur.

Councilmember Spalding presented the Council with proposed changes to the sign ordinance. He asked the Council to review the proposal.

Fire Chief Eric Mitchell presented the Council with a memo outlining options and information for the video presentation of council meetings (copy attached). After some discussion, the Council agreed that they are interested in live streaming and not archiving or providing on-demand. The Council also requested that the Town's website be updated.

Chief Mitchell provided the Council a copy of the facilities maintenance plan. He explained that last year he and Parks & Recreation Director Jarred Thompson had assessed each facility and prioritized needed repairs and maintenance. Chief Mitchell explained that the list was reviewed with the Town Manager recently and projects scheduled for needed repairs will be included in the upcoming budget proposal.

Other Business

Councilmember Howley stated that he believes that the WWTa moratorium is costing the Town sales tax revenues. He explained that this is because new businesses are not allowed to tie into the sewer system, even though the buildings were previously on the system.

Councilmember Howley informed the Council that there is an on-line petition with about 500-600 signatures regarding the traffic at Nolan and the high school. He explained that he has met with Jonathan Welch and Dr. Harwood and they believe that long term a second lane is needed, however in the short term is to use a different area to stage the waiting cars. Councilmember Howley asked that the Police department assist with this change in the staging area.

Councilmember Howley said that Rob Whitmeyer of Signal Mountain High School asked for directional signs to the high school at the top of the mountain and on Timberlinks.

Councilmember Howley said he has been speaking with Jim Fields regarding funding of a SRO at the schools.

Councilmember Howley informed the Council that the Park Board has suggested a part-time Ranger be hired to oversee trails and parks.

Councilmember Howley stated that Police Chief Williams has done a great job improving the police department facilities.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.


Dick Gee, Mayor


Recorder