

Town of Spring Lake
Regular Meeting of the Board of Aldermen
Municipal Building
300 Ruth Street
Spring Lake, NC 28390

April 13, 2009

MINUTES

7:00

p.m.

The Spring Lake Board of Aldermen held a regular scheduled meeting in the Grady Howard Conference Room of the Spring Lake Municipal Building with Mayor Ethel T. Clark presiding.

Board Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem James O'Garra
Alderman Napoleon Hogans
Alderwoman Nellie McCoy
Alderwoman Fredricka Sutherland

Alderman Richard Higgins was absent.

Others Present:

Larry Faison, Town Manager
Allen Coats, Finance Director
Paul Hoover, Director of Inspections
Rhonda Webb, Town Clerk

John Jackson, Town Attorney
Robert Doberstein, Fire Chief
Tom Spinks, Planning Director

2. Invocation.

Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra gave the invocation.

3. Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Clark led the meeting in the pledge of allegiance.

4. Additions or Deletions to Agenda

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

5. Approval of Agenda and Consent Items.

The Board approved the agenda and approved the consent items: Minutes of the March 23, 2009 Workshop, Minutes of the March 23, 2009 Board Meeting and Minutes of the March 30, 2009 Special Meeting.

Action: The Board approved the agenda and the consent items.

Motion by: Alderman Hogans

Second by: Alderwoman Sutherland

Vote: Unanimous

(A copy of the agenda and consent items is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment one.)

6. Public Forum

Ms. Dot Myers, 1283 Lillington Highway, Spring Lake spoke concerning a problem with the Spring Lake Water Department that occurred on Saturday morning, April 4, 2009. The Spring Lake Fire Department and EMS Unit responded to her home that morning and parked the Fire truck on her water line and broke it. She called the Water Department and they did not respond to her concern in an appropriate manner. She stated that she was told by the on-call water department employee that they could not fix her line or they would loose their job. Later she was told that she could get a letter from the Fire Department verifying what happened and the water department would then fix the problem or she could hire a plumber and the Town may or may not reimburse her for the expense. She stated that this is not the way to treat customers and wanted the Board to know what was going on. Her intent is not to get anyone in trouble but to help the Town see where they can improve. She also stated that she had requested a meeting with the Town Manager, Supervisor of the Water Department and the Fire Chief and no one had responded to her request. She then requested to speak with the Manager and the Mayor and no one called her back.

Mayor Clark stated that she appreciated Ms. Myers bringing this incident to their attention.

7. Presentations

a. Appearance and Nuisance Initiative.

Mr. Spinks reviewed the process that will be used in creating an Appearance and Nuisance Ordinance.

The goal concerning open storage, carports and porches is to regulate the open storage of junk and to regulate unsightly carports and porches. He provided the Board with some potential solutions to this concern. He stated that the restrictions need to be measurable. He recommended that restriction of storage is limited to the rear yard, that storage be limited to no more than 100 square feet and a minimum of four feet high. He also advised that storage in carport areas could be restricted to a percentage of the overall carport floor. The Board stated that Mr. Spinks is on the right track.

The goal concerning drives, driveways, parking lots and service area parking lots is to set standards for existing driveways and parking lots. Mr. Faison stated that we should not try to impose requirements on existing dirt/gravel drives and that these standards could be imposed and are usually triggered by re-development. Alderman Hogans stated that his idea of creating a code would be to ensure that these types of things are presentable and safe. He also stated that the Ordinance needs to be inclusive for the entire Town and the standards need to be geared toward appearance and safety.

The goal for fences and walls is to set standards for new and existing fences and walls. Alderman Hogans stated that this may be an area where something can be

grandfathered in. He would like to have the Ordinance written so that fences like the one around Bragg Mutual Credit Union are not allowed. Mr. Faison stated that he believes we will find that we can allow or not allow, set a height limit, restrict certain types of materials used for fences, etc. Mr. Jackson stated that we are looking at two different things here: residential and commercial.

It was determined that dumpster enclosures should be restricted to the solid walls.

Mr. Spinks will bring back something for the Board to consider and provide feedback on.

(A copy of the supporting documentation is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment two.)

b. Utility Customer Service Initiative.

Mr. Coats advised the Board that he took the suggestions that the Board made at the last meeting and re-worked the initiative. He explained the extension of the grace period for water bills. Water bills are due on the 10th of each month. Delinquent account fees will apply on the 16th of the month. Second notices for past due accounts will be noted on the following month's bill. Disconnection of past due accounts would occur after the 15th of the following month. A single delinquent account fee will replace the current late fee and reconnect fee. The recommended revenue neutral rate for delinquent accounts will be \$20.

Mr. Coats also provided an update on the utility deposit structure. Deposits will be tiered based on a customer's credit history, \$50 for good credit, \$80 for fair credit and \$160 for poor credit.

Alderman Hogans requested that military payday be considered in determining the cutoff date.

Alderwoman Sutherland believes that \$160 for people with poor credit is too high. She would like to see a standard rate for all. There was an overall concern by the Board for poorer people and their ability to pay this large amount.

Alderman Hogans inquired if we will run a credit check on everyone and Mr. Coats stated that we will. He inquired what we will consider poor credit and Mr. Coats stated that we will have to determine the number that will be the cut off for poor credit. He also inquired why we want to subject the citizens of our Town to this if our collection rate is 93%. Mr. Coats stated that he is trying to protect the Town's interest.

Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra stated that he would like to see the billing process stay just the way it is. There is no need to fix something that is not broken. When we used to require the bills to be due earlier in the month our collection rate was way down. That is the reason a previous manager, Joel Davis, changed the due date.

The Board's consensus is to have a standard rate for all citizens even if it is a little

higher. They also agreed that should a person hit the cut off list a higher amount could be assessed since the person has shown that they are a risk.

Mr. Coats stated that once the Board decides on the changes that they want incorporated we will allow three months before the changes go into effect.

Mr. Coats was tasked with making additional changes and bringing a draft policy back to the Board for review.

c. Property Exchange.

Chief Doberstein requested approval from the Board to exchange, with the Autryville Fire Department, an out of service fire truck for radio equipment. He stated that the Autryville Fire Department's radio equipment is valued at \$45,000 and the fire truck that we have is valued at \$7,000.

Action: The Board approved the recommendation and directed staff to advertise notice and prepare appropriate documents to table this item to the next meeting.

Motion by: Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra

Second by: Alderman Hogans

Vote: Unanimous

(A copy of the supporting documentation is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes – see attachment four.)

8. Board and Staff Comments:

Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra

- Inquired about the Odell Road Park. Mr. Faison reported that Mr. Metcalf has sent a letter and if both parties are agreeable will work put the park back.
- Easter Egg Hunt was good but we need to work more on advertising events.
- Sprinklers on the medium are on during times that it is raining. We need to monitor that.
- Thanked everyone for coming out.
- Spoke with FAST concerning the bus stopping just past Taco Bell, near KFC, near 4th and Lillington Hwy., eliminating one stop in Deerfield, move the bus stop on Laketree and put it on Odell Road near Laketree, at the end of Odell Road, on Goodyear Drive at the stop sign, near Town Hall and on Ruth Street. We have a brand new bus coming.

Alderwoman McCoy

- Glad to be here.
- Trash cans are still being left out. Thanked Tom for putting stickers on the ones on Weaver Street, that helped take care of the issue.
- Expressed hope that we all can agree on a good appearance Ordinance.

Alderman Hogans

- Requested that Manager refocus our efforts on Police Department. Make sure that each Board Member is informed on any specifics that are found out. He feels a sense of urgency that the Board needs to stay on top of this issue. He is outraged by the amount of incidents involving guns lately. Citizens have commented on what they have heard is going on and it is not because of the newspaper.

Alderwoman Sutherland

- Thanked Mr. Coats and Mr. Spinks for their presentation.
- Speed bump is too high in Skyland Shopping Center. Her vehicle was damaged and she wants it brought to someone's attention.

- Bad accident occurred Friday night at the intersection of Hwy 210 and the entrance of Woodland West Subdivision. That neighborhood has requested a traffic light in the past but was turned down by DOT because there have not been serious accidents in that area.

Mayor Clark

- Saturday is the Town's annual Spring Fling.
- Saturday following that is the Spring Clean Up.
- We will not have a volunteer appreciation banquet this year due to the economy. We do have gifts for the volunteers and will do something to show our appreciation.

9. Closed Session.

Action: The Board went into Closed Session pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4) – Economic Development at 8:55 p.m.

Motion: Alderman Hogans

Second by: Alderwoman Sutherland

Vote: Unanimous

The Mayor called the meeting back into Open Session at 9:24 p.m.

10. Adjournment.

Action: There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem O'Garra

Second by: Alderwoman Sutherland

Vote: Unanimous

Rhonda D. Webb, CMC
Town Clerk

ATTEST:

Ethel T. Clark
Mayor