

NAVASSA REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

July 18, 2024

7:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Eulis Willis, Mayor
William Ballard, Councilman
Ernest Mooring, Councilman

Jerry Merrick, Councilman
Ida Dixon, Councilwoman
LaTonyia Lowe, Councilwoman

STAFF PRESENT

Landin Holland, Planner
Dale Thomas, Police Chief
Quisha Booker

Norwood Blanchard, Attorney
Michelyn Alston, Clerk

CITIZENS & VISITORS PRESENT

José Gonzales Sanchez
Veronica Kelly
Judy Newkirk
Ernest Mosely III
Marshall Mckoy
Carl Parker Sr.

Dorsey Jones Jr
Clifton Ballard
Karl Davis Sr.
Marilyn Holmes
CJ Malone
Ella Beatty

Darlene Jones
Ray Willis
Denise Shaw
Wanda Willis
Craig Suggs

Council Member Ballard led the Invocation.
Mayor Willis called July 18, 2024, meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

ADJUSTMENT & APPROVAL OF AGENDA

COUNCILMAN BALLARD MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN DIXON, TO ADD THE FOLLOWING ITEMS TO THE AGENDA. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

- A. Awarding of Waterfront Park Project
- B. Website
- C. Town Hall Upfit

CONSENT AGENDA

COUNCILMAN BALLARD MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN DIXON, TO APPROVE THE CONSENT AGENDA. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

- A. Tint World (2) \$2,070
- B. Finalsité (CTY) \$1,665
- C. Interlocal Risk Ins. \$20,507.78
- D. NCLM \$2,595.00
- E. Workers Compensation \$4,612.43

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

COUNCILMAN BALLARD MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN LOWE, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES WITH NECESSARY CORRECTIONS. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

OLD BUSINESS

During the meeting, the council revisited the Town Hall Upfit Project, which was originally awarded to Brandon Tholen of Tholen Construction. However, the execution of the contract encountered complications because Mr. Tholen was unable to secure the necessary bonds required by General Statute. This obstacle prevented the project from moving forward under his leadership.

In response to these challenges, Mr. Tholen graciously withdrew from the process. The town's legal counsel confirmed that this allowed the council to consider other bids from the initial formal bidding process.

Four alternative bids were presented:

Port City Builders: \$1.2 million

Paragon Building Corporation: \$927,000

Wright Build International: \$1.109 million

Carl & Son's Construction: \$917,000

The council was informed that the remaining bids were still valid for consideration. The bidders provided examples of similar work and credentials to assist the council in making an informed decision. After careful evaluation, the council moved to award the contract to Paragon Building Corporation, which was seconded and approved by a majority vote.

COUNCILWOMAN LOWE MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN BALLARD, TO AWARD THE BID TO PARAGON BUILDING CORPORATION. 3 to 2 VOTE. 3 AYES, Merrick, Ballard, Lowe, 2 NAYS, Mooring, Dixon.

NEW BUSINESS

Chiwale Thomas

The council reviewed a request by Chiwale Thomas to organize a bookbag giveaway event for children, supported by Agency One. The event is scheduled for Sunday, August 4th, at 3 p.m. After discussing the logistics and benefits of the event, a motion was made and seconded to approve the request. The motion passed with all members voting in favor.

COUNCILMAN MOORING MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN DIXON, TO APPROVE CHIWALE THOMAS REQUEST TO DO THE BOOKBAG GIVEAWAY. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

Police Department Patrol Car Maintenance Workshop:

The council discussed the need to set a date for a workshop focused on patrol car maintenance. The workshop was tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, July 23rd, at 6:30 p.m. This will allow the council and relevant departments to address maintenance needs and plan for future patrol car acquisitions.

Resolution Athelstan Bethel R 2024-06

The council discussed the adoption of Resolution R 2024-06, a resolution commemorating Councilman Athelstan Bethel for his contributions and service to the community.

COUNCILMAN BALLARD MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MERRICK, TO ADOPT RESOLUTION R 2024-06. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

Commemorating Councilman
Athelstan Reynold Bethel
(TERM) 2011-2019

WHEREAS, Session Law 2001-325 was ratified by the North Carolina General Assembly on July 31, 2001, and

WHEREAS, Session Law 2001-325 authorized the appointment of a new member to the Town of Navassa' Governing Board from District 3 of the Navassa Town Limits, and

Whereas, Athelston Bethel was duly elected for 2(two) successive terms, thereafter, completing his final term in January of 2020, and

Whereas, during his tenure in office, he served faithfully on Finance Team and Parks and Recreation Coordinator, he served also as District 3 representative on the Governing board, and

Whereas, during Councilman Bethel tenure accomplishments included installing Public Water and Sewer in that District, Built and Open Phoenix Park, installed satellite Fire Station that led to decreasing our fire insurance by 50% we went from highest possible rate to the lowest rate in Brunswick County at that time.

Whereas, Councilman Bethel helped Navassa completed the I-140 bypass, built the Community Center, helped establish Lena Springs Estates, and

Whereas, Athelstan Bethel Passed away on June 21, 2024, and

WHEREAS, the Town of Navassa's Governing Body wants the Family and Friends of Athelston Bethel to have a Tangible keepsake that reminds them of what "Bunn" helped Navassa accomplish during his term in office.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, be presented to the Family of Athelstan Reynold Bethel on this.

July 18, 2024.

Website

COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCIL WOMAN LOWE, TO CHANGE THE WEBSITE. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

PARKS AND RECREATION

The planner presented an update on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, emphasizing the importance of conducting a comprehensive needs survey. This survey is a critical component of the effort to update the Master Plan, which will guide future development and improvements to the town's parks and recreational facilities.

The survey has been meticulously formulated in collaboration with the committee and is available in both hard copy and digital formats. The plan is to distribute hard copies throughout the community, including placement at churches, Town Hall, and other central locations. Additionally, cards with information about the digital version of the survey will be distributed to ensure broad access.

The primary goal is to collect as much input as possible from residents, using this feedback to inform decision-making and planning. The results of the survey will be used as a foundational basis for determining the community's recreational needs and priorities.

The council expressed support for the survey and emphasized the importance of gathering comprehensive data to support future parks and recreation initiatives. A motion was made and seconded to approve the

dissemination of the survey, with the council unanimously voting in favor. The committee is set to begin distributing the survey immediately, starting the day after the meeting.

COUNCILMAN MERRICK MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCIL WOMAN DIXON, TO APPROVE THE PARKS & RECREATION CITIZEN SURVEY. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

Phoenix Park Improvements

The council continued discussions regarding planned improvements to Phoenix Park. These discussions are part of ongoing efforts to enhance the park's facilities and overall user experience for the community.

Key improvements discussed include the installation of water services, specifically a drinking fountain and a sink. These additions are intended to address the basic needs of park visitors and improve the amenities available at Phoenix Park.

Councilwoman Lowe highlighted the need for upgrades to the sink design, suggesting that the sink and water fountain should be separate units rather than a combined setup. This adjustment aims to improve functionality and meet the community's expectations for park amenities.

The council has been working with the Parks and Recreation Committee to obtain bids for these installations and to finalize the details necessary for moving forward with the project. The goal is to have formal bids ready for consideration at next month's meeting, after which the council can make a final decision and proceed with the improvements.

The overall sentiment expressed during the meeting was supportive of making Phoenix Park a more welcoming and well-equipped space for residents. While the project is still in the planning stages, the council's discussions indicate a strong commitment to seeing these improvements through to completion.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Dorsey Lane Rezoning Summary:

The council held a public hearing to discuss a rezoning request for a parcel of land located on Dorsey Lane, bordering Eulah Lane. The request was made by Mr. Aguilio Sanchez, who proposed to rezone the parcel from R10 residential to R6 residential. The parcel in question measures approximately 0.29 acres (12,634 square feet).

The purpose of the rezoning is to enable Mr. Sanchez to subdivide the parcel into two buildable lots. Under the current R10 zoning, the minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet, while the R6 zoning would reduce the minimum lot size to 6,000 square feet, allowing for the subdivision.

During the discussion, the council reviewed maps and documents outlining the location of the parcel and the surrounding properties. Council members considered the potential impact of the rezoning on the community and any implications for future development in the area.

COUNCILMAN MOORING MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MERRICK, TO APPROVE THE DORSEY LANE REZONING REQUEST. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

Minimum Housing Code Ordinance

The Planner introduced the Minimum Housing Code Ordinance, which would allow the town to identify and address substandard and dilapidated housing. The ordinance is designed to work with property owners to remedy unsafe or uninhabitable conditions. If property owners are unable or unwilling to comply, the town

would have the authority to demolish the structures, with the cost of demolition being placed as a lien on the property.

The process for addressing substandard housing would take approximately three to four months per unit. The town plans to work with pre-qualified demolition contractors to handle two to three properties at a time, moving through the community to clean up properties that pose a health hazard or are considered eyesores.

Additionally, the planner mentioned exploring rehabilitation funding options, such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), for properties that are not as severely deteriorated and can be improved rather than demolished.

The ordinance is not intended to be punitive but is seen as a necessary tool for improving community health and safety. The council decided to schedule a public hearing for this ordinance on August 15th at 7:00 p.m. to allow for community input before any final decisions are made.

Nuisance Abatement Ordinance

The Nuisance Abatement Ordinance was introduced as a measure to address various public nuisances within the town, such as overgrown lots, junk vehicles, and debris accumulation. The ordinance is aimed at improving community standards and ensuring the town remains clean and safe for all residents.

During the meeting, it was discussed that this ordinance would allow the town to take action against properties that are not properly maintained. Property owners would first be notified and given an opportunity to remedy the situation. If they fail to do so within the specified time frame, the town will then have the authority to intervene, address the nuisance, and recover the costs from the property owners.

The ordinance is considered a companion to the Minimum Housing Code Ordinance, with both ordinances intended to address different aspects of community maintenance and public health. While the Minimum Housing Code Ordinance focuses on substandard housing, the Nuisance Abatement Ordinance targets general property upkeep.

COUNCILMAN BALLARD MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN LOWE, TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR BOTH ORDINANCES ON AUGUST 15TH AT 7:00PM

Public Hearing date for Trask Land Co. Parcel#023008403

During the meeting, it was decided to schedule a public hearing concerning the rezoning of a large parcel owned by Trask Land Co. The parcel is located on the southern side of I-140, near Cedar Hill Road. The hearing was set to discuss potential rezoning to allow for future development, with particular interest in reserving frontage at the I-140 interchange for commercial use.

COUNCILWOMAN DIXON MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MOORING, TO SCHEDULE A PUBLIC HEARING FOR TRASK LAND COMPANY AUGUST 15TH AT 7:00PM

Awarding of Waterfront Project

The council discussed the awarding of a waterfront project associated with the NIPWIP (Neighborhood Investment Program Water Improvement Project) funding. This project involves two waterfront parks and related stormwater efforts. The specific area of focus was Old Mill Road, where new developments are planned. Although the development will not have direct access to the waterfront project, the work is necessary to align with the surrounding road network as it is being developed.

The urgency to award the project was highlighted due to the requirement that it be awarded before August to comply with grant guidelines. Although the actual construction work is not expected to begin until February,

awarding the project now allows the contractor to begin necessary permitting and preliminary construction activities. This preparation ensures that by February or March of the following year, the project can progress swiftly.

The council was informed that the formal bid for the project was \$190,200. It was stressed that the approval of this bid is conditioned on the entire amount being covered by the NIPWIP grant, meaning there would be no cost to the town. Christian Preziosi assured the council that the funding would be fully covered by the grant, eliminating any financial burden on the town.

COUNCILMAN BALLARD MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN LOWE FOR APPROVAL TO AWARD THE BID WITH CONDITIONS THAT PROJECT WILL BE COVERED 100% BY NFW FUNDING. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

During the meeting, the Police Chief provided an update on crime and police activity within the town. He compared the current year's crime statistics with those from the same period the previous year. The Chief reported that the town had experienced an increase in police activity, with 72 incidents recorded this year compared to only nine during the same period last year.

The Chief noted that this increase in activity was due in part to the large event of "RageV" and ongoing operations, including the Property Abatement Services (PAS) management program, which had also contributed to the higher numbers. He emphasized that these statistics reflected the efforts of the town's officers and did not include additional activities handled by the Brunswick County Sheriff's Office. The Chief highlighted that the local police department was working hard to address issues and maintain safety within the town despite the limited resources.

CAD Software Payment Schedule Action

The council discussed the implementation of a new Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) software system for the Police Department. The payment schedule for the software was presented, with payments structured based on project milestones rather than specific dates. The Police Chief requested approval for the payment schedule, which would allow the department to proceed with payments as invoices are received, without needing to seek council approval for each payment.

COUNCILMAN BALLARD MADE A MOTION SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN LOWE TO APPROVE THE CAD SOFTWARE PAYMENT SCHEDULE WITH INVOICES BEING PRESENTED TO BOARD FOR PAYMENT. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

AmChar Invoice (Firearms) Action

The council reviewed an invoice from AmChar for the purchase of firearms and associated equipment for the Police Department. This purchase included duty firearms, holsters, and other necessary gear for the officers.

COUNCILWOMAN DIXON MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN MOORING, TO APPROVE THE AMCHAR INVOICE. ALL VOTED IN FAVOR.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Budget vs. Actual Report in Packets

During the meeting, the council was informed that the Budget vs. Actual Report had been included in their meeting packets. The mayor encouraged council members to take time to familiarize themselves with the new report format, noting that there had been changes with the new software used to generate the reports.

He emphasized the importance of understanding the differences in how financial data is presented now, compared to previous reports.

Monthly Bank Statements

The council also discussed the inclusion of Monthly Bank Statements in their review process. These statements provide detailed information on the town's cash flow, including deposits, withdrawals, and current balances across all accounts. This regular review is part of the town's commitment to fiscal responsibility and accountability.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Craig Suggs a concerned resident, raised questions about the number of police officers employed by the town and their patrol assignments. He expressed concerns about traffic safety, particularly at a specific stop sign where drivers frequently fail to stop, creating a dangerous situation. Chief Thomas responded by explaining that the town has three officers, including himself. Due to the small size of the force, officers are not assigned to specific districts but instead patrol the entire town as needed. The Chief mentioned that his own schedule typically involves being on duty from Monday to Friday, while another officer works a 12-hour shift pattern. Additionally, a part-time officer is on duty from 5:00 PM to 11:00 PM. Craig Suggs emphasized the importance of having a more consistent police presence at the problematic stop sign to deter traffic violations and prevent potential accidents. The Police Chief acknowledged the concern and assured Mr. Suggs that he could assign an officer to monitor the stop sign as necessary.

Wanda Willis stated her concerns about ongoing issues with debris that has not been removed after a tree fell. They also mentioned a specific traffic safety issue at a stop sign where the I-140 exits onto Cedar Hill Road. The citizen noted that vehicles often fail to stop at this sign, creating a dangerous situation for other drivers. They urged the town to take action to address both the debris and the traffic safety issue at this location. The notification mentioned in the meeting relates to an update provided by the town regarding traffic control measures at the I-140 intersections. The town received a notification that all four intersections at the I-140 will be signalized, meaning traffic lights will be installed to improve safety. However, the exact timeframe for when these traffic signals will be implemented was not specified during the meeting.

Clifton Ballard voiced concerns regarding the selection of contractors for the Town Hall Upfit Project. During the "Citizens to Be Heard" portion of the meeting, Ballard raised concerns about the selection of contractors for the Town Hall Upfit Project. He specifically mentioned that two minority-owned businesses, Parker & Sons Construction and Wright Build International, were present at the meeting and provided thorough presentations about their qualifications and plans. However, these businesses were not selected, and the contract was awarded to Paragon Building Corporation, whose representatives were not present. He expressed disappointment that local minority contractors, who actively participated and demonstrated their commitment, were overlooked in favor of a contractor that did not engage directly with the community during the meeting. He emphasized the importance of supporting minority-owned businesses, especially in a town with a significant minority population. His comments reflected a concern for fairness and representation in the town's contracting decisions, urging the council to consider the community's demographic and the benefits of empowering local minority businesses.

Frank Willis raised two key concerns during the meeting. First, he highlighted the lack of activities and designated space for senior citizens, reminding the council that the current Town Hall was initially intended for senior use but has not been made available for that purpose. He requested that the council allocate one night a week for seniors to gather and socialize, urging them to fulfill this commitment once the new Town Hall is completed. Secondly, Frank expressed concern about his mailbox, which has been knocked down five times due to vehicles navigating a nearby curve. He emphasized the safety risks this poses to his property and personal safety. Despite reaching out to the Department of Transportation, he was told the issue falls under the town's jurisdiction. Frank requested that the town take action, such as installing additional signage, to improve road safety and prevent further incidents.

Tony Burgess, a long-time resident, voiced concerns about the town's governance, emphasizing the need for transparency, accountability, and a clear vision for the future. He raised issues regarding the possible misappropriation of funds and the inefficient use of police resources, noting officers often seen at Walmart rather than patrolling. Tony expressed frustration over the lack of a coherent plan for the town's development, urging leadership, particularly the mayor, to provide a clear strategy. His remarks reflected a deep concern for the community and a desire for more meaningful engagement in the town's direction.

Ella Beatty raised a question regarding the future use of the current Town Hall building once the new Town Hall is completed. She wanted to clarify whether the current building would be repurposed for senior citizen activities, as there had been discussions about this in the past. She specifically referenced a previous comment made by another citizen, Frank Willis, who had emphasized the need for a dedicated space for seniors. The woman expressed her concern that the seniors in the community have not had the opportunity to utilize the current Town Hall building as originally intended. She highlighted the importance of having a local space where seniors could engage in social activities, receive services, and avoid having to travel to other towns for these resources.

ADJOURNMENT

COUNCILMAN BALLARD MADE A MOTION, SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN LOWE, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

ATTEST:

Town Clerk

Mayor Pro Tem

Town of Navassa
Public Hearings
July 18, 2024, at 7:00 pm

MEMBERS PRESENT

Eulis A. Willis, Mayor,
Ida Dixon, Councilwoman
LaTonyia Lowe, Councilwoman

William Ballard, Councilman
Ernest Mooring, Councilman

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jerry Merrick, Councilman

STAFF PRESENT

Michelyn Alston, Clerk

Dale Thomas, Police Chief

Landin Holland, Administrator/Planner

CITIZENS/VISITORS PRESENT

Jose Gonzales Sanchez

Mayor Willis called the July 18, 2024, Public Hearing Open.

The council held a public hearing to discuss a rezoning request for a parcel of land located on Dorsey Lane, bordering Eulah Lane. The request was made by Mr. Aguilio Sanchez, who proposed to rezone the parcel from R10 residential to R6 residential. The parcel in question measures approximately 0.29 acres (12,634 square feet).

The purpose of the rezoning is to enable Mr. Sanchez to subdivide the parcel into two buildable lots. Under the current R10 zoning, the minimum lot size is 10,000 square feet, while the R6 zoning would reduce the minimum lot size to 6,000 square feet, allowing for the subdivision.

Mayor Willis asked was the property next to Beulah Dixie and do you know who the owners of the adjacent land.

Mayor Willis asked for questions and comments from the public.

Councilman Ballard made a motion seconded by Councilman Mooring to close the Public Hearing. All voted in favor

