



TOWN COUNCIL
Work Session
Cape Charles Civic Center
August 13, 2015
6:00 p.m.

At 6:00 p.m., Mayor George Proto, having established a quorum, called to order the Town Council Work Session. In addition to Mayor Proto, present were Vice Mayor Bannon, Councilmen Brown and Godwin and Councilwoman Natali. Councilman Bennett arrived at 6:03 p.m. Councilman Wendell was not in attendance. Also in attendance were Town Manager Brent Manuel, Town Planner Larry DiRe and Town Clerk Libby Hume. There was one member of the public in attendance.

Mayor Proto stated that the order of business for the evening would be to review the following: A. Electronic Summons System Ordinance; B. Parking of Trailers on Streets; C. Harbor Access Road; D. Wayfinding Signs; and E. Mason Avenue Reverse-Angle Parking.

A. Electronic Summons System Ordinance

Town Manager Brent Manuel stated that effective July 1, 2015, the Code of Virginia permitted towns to establish the assessment of an additional fee up to \$5 in criminal and traffic cases arising within the town for the purpose of funding software, hardware and associated costs for the implementation and maintenance of an electronic summons system. Establishment of this fee must be done by ordinance. Council reviewed the draft ordinance to establish the additional fee. There were no objections to the ordinance as presented. This item would be on the August 20th Regular Meeting agenda for a vote.

B. Parking of Trailers on Streets

Brent Manuel stated that complaints had been received regarding the storage of boats and trailers on the town's streets. Town Code § 42-90 addressed this issue and currently prohibited the parking of "travel trailers, coaches, motorized dwellings, tent trailers, boat trailers, amphibious houseboats and the like" on "any public street or public right-of-way for more than 48 hours" but the ordinance was not enforced.

There was much discussion regarding enforcement of the ordinance as well as the issue of construction vehicles/trailers, dumpsters, storage pods and abandoned vehicles which were not covered by this ordinance. Councilman Brown stated that abandoned vehicles were already addressed. Councilman Brown went on to state that several years ago, when he was the police chief, he had about 30 abandoned vehicles removed from both public streets and private property. Photos were taken of all affected vehicles and notices were given to the owners. The majority of the owners removed the vehicles upon notification.

After further discussion, Council reached an agreement as follows: i) The existing ordinance needed to be enforced. All future complaints should be submitted to the town manager to contact the police chief regarding enforcement; and ii) Staff would research procedures taken by other localities in regards to abandoned vehicles, storage containers, dumpsters, utility/construction vehicles or trailers, etc. parked or stored on public streets.

C. Harbor Access Road

Brent Manuel stated that a letter was received from County Administrator Katie Nunez regarding the planned Harbor Access Road and its prioritization because of the economic development value. The project was expected to reach the stage of right-of-way acquisition this fall and the County had agreed to assemble all the donation properties into one closing

for transfer to the Virginia Land Trust. Bob Panek was the principal contact for the town and with Charles McSwain's departure, Ms. Nunez would be the contact person for the County.

There was much discussion regarding this issue as follows: i) Council was supportive of the project and the donation of the necessary property but there was concern regarding the transfer of the property first to the county, then to the Virginia Land Trust and whether the town would get the property back if the project was not completed. Council requested staff to research the Virginia Land Trust and whether this process was VDOT's standard procedure when acquiring property; ii) There was some discussion regarding a separate utility project in which some utilities needed to be relocated. As a result of this project, another issue was discovered regarding the proximity to the town's wells located on the former Keck property; and iii) No determination could be made until more information was received regarding the location and amount of land to be transferred and the Virginia Land Trust.

D. *Wayfinding Signs*

Town Planner Larry DiRe stated that the town along with various partners had developed a new Town Map and Information brochure featuring an updated wayfinding map showing locations of commercial, recreational and public properties around town. Staff contacted several major businesses about the benefits of cooperative directional signage and the Oyster Farm and Cape Charles Yacht Center expressed a willingness to site the Town's wayfinding map sign board on their properties as well as an interest in working with the Town to site directional sign boards to their locations on town-owned property. Staff was awaiting the digital file of the wayfinding map for production into a directional sign board which would be posted at key locations throughout the town. Specific locations at the Oyster Farm and Cape Charles Yacht Center had not yet been determined.

Larry DiRe went on to state that the Oyster Farm was requesting approval to site a permanent free-standing directional sign on the town-owned property at Fig Street and Randolph Avenue. Currently several directional and informational signs were on this property and the area was frequently used as a location for temporary signage.

There was much discussion regarding this issue as follows: i) Council expressed their concern regarding setting a precedent by allowing such a specific sign on town property; ii) The purpose of wayfinding signage was to provide directional information regarding a number of businesses and properties vs. one business; iii) The wayfinding signage should be consistent in size and appearance; iv) There were a number of other signs, provided by VDOT, directing travelers to businesses in town. The business owners contracted with VDOT directly and Council had no opposition to these signs; and v) The proposed size and location of the Oyster Farm sign would pose a traffic hazard. Councilman Brown stated that placement needed to be a minimum of 15' from the curb to not obstruct the views of drivers.

Larry DiRe noted that a wayfinding strategy for pedestrians would be different from a vehicular strategy, but he would draft both strategies. Council agreed that the proposed strategies should be reviewed first by the Planning Commission and presented to the Council with the Commission's recommendations.

E. *Mason Avenue Reverse-Angle Parking*

Brent Manuel stated that additional signage was needed along Mason Avenue to put a typically observant person on notice that if they parked heading the wrong way they could be fined.

Larry DiRe stated that the current signage met VDOT's requirements. Two white signs were installed by VDOT and were located on the east and west ends of the area. The town purchased additional signs showing the three-point process to park. All signs currently faced the west bound traffic. A major issue was the east-bound traffic that crossed over the oncoming traffic lane to pull into the spaces on the north side of Mason Avenue. Larry Dire

recommended additional signage at the east and west ends of the area facing the east bound lane and another sign at the corner of Bay and Mason Avenues to alert east bound drivers of reverse-angle parking on the north side of Mason Avenue. Another consideration would be to request VDOT to paint double yellow lines down Mason Avenue vs. the current broken line adding that people normally know not to cross a double yellow line.

There was much discussion regarding this issue as follows: i) Councilman Brown noted that the majority of vehicles pulling into the angled spaces were locals; ii) The reverse-angle parking did have a traffic calming effect; iii) Staff would contact VDOT asking whether pull-in angle parking could be a consideration for Mason Avenue; iv) The possibility of restriping the lines back for parallel parking; v) The newly opened gravel parking area leased from the railroad and the fact that people typically preferred to park in front of the businesses vs. walking the additional distance from the gravel parking area; vi) Mayor Proto asked Council to consider extending the non-enforcement of the parking ordinance for another year and modifying the ordinance to add an effective date. Councilman Brown stated that Council could postpone the enforcement for another year, but the town would have the same issues next year when the police officers began enforcing the parking; vii) The possibility of mandating the parking spaces on the north side of Mason Avenue as short-term parking, i.e. for 30 minutes or an hour, to allow better access to the spaces in front of the retail businesses. Several business owners had commented that they liked that angled parking allowed more people to park in front of their businesses; viii) Mayor Proto stated that the town did not properly roll out the change to reverse-angle parking. Brent Manuel added that VDOT moved the paving project up from the fall to early spring. The timing change did not allow the town to give timely notice to the residents and business owners. Articles were published in several issues of the Gazette and with the utility bills, but it was difficult to get the word out to everyone; ix) Mayor Proto stated that the town had a problem with effective communication in getting messages out to everyone. Although notices were published in the Gazette and with utility bills, the town needed to blanket the entire town with notices, flyers, signs, etc. Councilwoman Natali stated that notices should be placed on the utility pole in front of the post office adding that the town had a variety of residents – some were very tech savvy and some were at the other extreme where they were afraid of technology; and x) Safety issues regarding different types of parking were discussed and nationwide statistics showed that reverse-angle parking overall was safer than pull-in angle parking.

Council reached a general consensus to continue with reverse-angle parking with the installation of additional signage, provision of flyers and brochures to all businesses along Mason Avenue, the Bed & Breakfasts, real estate companies, rental property owners and agents, etc. Electronic copies of the flyer, brochure and signage wording would be emailed to the Council for their review and comments. Once finalized, electronic versions would be emailed to everyone as well as being included in the utility bills and the Gazette.

Motion made by Councilman Brown, seconded by Councilwoman Natali, to adjourn the Town Council Work Session. The motion was approved by unanimous vote.

Mayor Proto

Town Clerk