

The regular meeting of the Murphy Town Council was held on December 5, 2022 at 5:00 pm at City Hall.

Town Manager: Chad Simons
Attorney: Mack Cowan

Council: Barry McClure, Frank Dickey
Keisha Dockery, Gail Stansell
Barbara Hughes, Charlene Smith
Mayor Tim Radford

Mayor Tim Radford led the town with the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Motion was made by Hughes to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Mrs. Edie Spence spoke out in opposition to a proposed social district in downtown Murphy.

Ms. Margaret Ackiss spoke out in opposition to a proposed social district in downtown Murphy.

Mr. Joseph Simon suggested changes to speed limits on Tennessee Street, Connaheeta Street, and Valley River Avenue.

Mr. Jeff Crane spoke out in opposition to a proposed social district in downtown Murphy.

Mrs. Linda Ray informed the Town Council about recent maintenance projects Heritage Partners was funding on the River Walk, and also issues they have discovered while performing the maintenance. Mrs. Ray stated Heritage Partners was retiring from maintaining the River Walk as soon as their monies were depleted, but would still exist as an advisory Board.

Approval of the Minutes

Motion was made by Dickey to approve the November 7, 2022 meeting minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously. A copy of the minutes are attached in the minute book and posted online at townofmurphync.com

Tax Releases

None

Proposed Social District Ordinance

Town Attorney Mack Cowan said the ordinance was redrafted to include only the first Friday of the month for Art Walk, at the same locations considered last month.

Mrs. Keisha Dockery said she was good with the proposed ordinance, and believe they can change or eliminate the ordinance if issues do emerge.

Ms. Charlene Smith said she believed they needed to listen to their constituents, and it seems like the overwhelming majority do not want the social district. Mrs. Smith also said some of the rules would be hard to understand and difficult to enforce.

Mrs. Barbara Hughes said she did not feel good about it.

Motion was made by Dickey to reject the proposed social district ordinance as presented. Motion carried. Vote: 5 to 1. Voting against: Ms. Keisha Dockery.

Presentation of 2021-2022 Fiscal Year Audit Report

Ms. Holly Turner of Turner&Company presented the 2021-2022 fiscal year audit report for the Town of Murphy. Mrs. Turner said there were no material misstatements and one budget violation with Murphy Housing Authority. Ms. Turner reviewed some of the budget highlights and explained that the Town's fund balance and water/sewer liquidity was reduced due to significant capital outlay spending.

Homeless Path to Success – Teri Palmer

Ms. Teri Palmer informed the Town Council about their work trying to resolve and mitigate homelessness in Cherokee County, emphasizing how their work is not just oriented toward the homeless shelter in Murphy. Ms. Palmer said there is a large portion of the homeless population that does not reside at the Murphy shelter. Ms. Palmer said they are looking for answers as to how people end up homeless, how they end up in Murphy, and potential resolutions on how to fix the problem. Ms. Palmer said they are in the process of creating and performing the survey of the local homeless population. Estimates suggest there can be up to 400 homeless people in the county, and they hope to survey ten percent of the estimated population, Ms. Palmer concluded.

Budget Amendment for Konehete Park Performance Stage

Town Manager Chad Simons said the Council accepted the grant for the performance stage at Konehete Park, and now they needed to approve the budget amendment. Mr. Simons said the Council needed to increase grant revenue by \$70,000 and increase professional services expenditures by \$70,000.

Ms. Charlene Smith asked if approval meant accepting the stage at Konehete Park, because she believed Warner Park was the better location.

Town Manager Chad Simons said nothing was a done deal, and stated that a good portion of the 70,000 grant needed to be used to pay for a design.

Mrs. Dockery said she still had a lot of questions about the stage, and those concerns have not been addressed yet; location, maintenance, planning, bathrooms, etc.

Motion was made by Stansell to approve the budget amendment as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Monthly Reports

Motion was made by McClure to approve the monthly reports as presented. Motion carried unanimously. A copy of the monthly reports are attached in the minute book.

Discussion

Mr. Frank Dickey informed the public about the Town getting two electric charging stations in the near future, as a result of work by Murphy Power Board.

Mrs. Keisha Dockery stated that she disagreed with the social district vote, and believes a trial period would have showed that it would not have been an issue. Mrs. Dockery said drinking is already here, and moving it outside was not going to change anything. Mrs. Dockery said similar arguments were made regarding liquor by the drink. Mrs. Dockery said crime caused or influenced by alcohol reduced substantially after liquor by the drink passed, and she believes a similar thing would have occurred with the implementation of the social district. Mrs. Dockery said numerous other towns were implementing social districts without issues.

Closed Session – To Establish, or to instruct the public body’s staff or negotiation agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public bod in negotiation the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease.

Motion was made by McClure to enter into closed session pursuant to NCGS concerning real property acquisitions. Motion carried unanimously.

The Town Council discussed with Main Spring representatives about the possibility of acquiring two tracts of land near the existing Piney Knob bike trails.

Motion was made by Stansell to enter back into open session at about 6:05 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by McClure to explore other options of acquiring the properties for recreational purposes. Motion carried unanimously.

Adjourn

Motion was made by Hughes to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.