

**MINUTES OF A REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE  
TOWN OF LAUREL PARK, N.C.  
OCTOBER 18, 2011  
9:30 A.M.**

The Laurel Park Town Council held its regular meeting in the Laurel Park Town Hall on October 18, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. The following members were present: Mayor Henry T. Johnson, Commissioners Richard P. Cooke, Dona M. Mennella, J. Carey O'Cain, and Robert O. Vickery. Town Manager Jim Ball was also present. Town Attorney Monica Gillette-Stallings was absent.

Mayor Johnson opened the regular meeting and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Johnson asked for any additions and/or deletions to the agenda. Commissioner Mennella moved to approve the Agenda. Mayor Johnson asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA**

- a) Minutes from the September 20, 2011, Council Regular Meeting
- b) Minutes from the September 20, 2011, Closed Session
- c) Minutes from the October 13, 2011, Council Work Session

Commissioner Cooke moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Mayor Johnson asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

There were none.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**CONSIDERATION, TOWN AUDIT REPORT AS PREPARED BY BURLESON & EARLEY, P.A. FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2011**

Mayor Johnson stated Council had received a detailed review of the FY 2010-2011 draft audit from Bronwyn Burleson of Burleson & Earley, P. A. at the Council work session on October 13, 2011. The auditor stated that the results of the audit disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that were required to be reported under Government Auditing Standards.

Mayor Johnson stated the auditor would forward a copy to the North Carolina Local Government Commission for review. He also stated that, once the process was completed, the final audit would be prepared and a copy would be made available for public inspection.

Commissioner Mennella moved that Council accept the Town Audit Report as prepared by Burleson & Earley, P. A. for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011. Mayor Johnson asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

Mr. Ball stated he had three items to discuss with the Council.

- First, he gave each Council member a copy of the draft Parks and Greenways Comprehensive Plan. The Parks and Greenways Board had asked for Council input on the plan.
- Second, Mr. Ball stated that he gave each Council member a copy of the notice of public hearings by Duke Energy reference their proposed rate structure changes.
- And third, Mr. Ball stated that Chief Fisher had announced his retirement effective January 19, 2012. Chief Fisher had over thirty years of law enforcement experience with eighteen years of service as Police Chief for the Town of Laurel Park.

Chief Fisher gave the following police statistics for the month of September: 5 accidents, 4 arrests, 236 business checks, 134 foot patrols, 4 assist County Sheriff, 27 citations, and 405 residence checks for a total of 2,259 service events for the month.

## **OTHER ITEMS TO BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE TOWN COUNCIL**

Don McIntyre, President of the Timbercreek Homeowners' Association, addressed Council in reference to the decision not to have a fall brush collection. He stated that the residents had become dependent on the brush collection. He wished to make the following points: Laurel Park was a wooded community and brush collection in the past has helped tremendously in the removal of dead or trimmed debris. He asked if there would be anyway the service could be restored, what was the cost of the service, and what was Laurel Park saving by cancelling the service?

Jim Ball responded that he recommended cancelling the service. The reason was more a manpower issue than a money issue. He evaluated both the fall brush collection and leaf collection and felt the brush collection should be cancelled. The service began approximately thirteen years ago and no additional staff or equipment was procured for the service. Over that time, Laurel Park had grown by approximately two hundred fifty households and the amount of residents using the service had increased. The Town has added additional park space that requires maintenance. Again, it was a manpower saving issue more than a dollar saving issue. There were areas that Public Works was falling behind on, such as, training within the Town's water system and the general upkeep of the system (exercising valves and replacing water meters on a set schedule). The leaf collection program had been moved further back into the fall and early snow falls had impacted that service. The Town had the option to add staffing or cut services. With the current economic conditions, raising taxes would not be a good option.

Mayor Johnson added that the intent of the service was to eliminate dead debris and minor clean up. The amount of time to pick up the brush had increased as some residents use the service to clear their entire lot. He stated that, in the past two years especially, leaf collection had not been completed until well into the spring on some of the Town roads.

Dick Jones asked if this was a permanent cut in service.

Mayor Johnson stated yes.

Dick Jones stated that he did not see that it was a dollar saving decision.

Jim Ball stated that it was not a dollar savings decision but a manpower savings decision. Plus, Public Works could start leaf collection much earlier than in the past couple of years.

Commissioner Cooke stated it was not always an issue of manpower but also an issue of availability of equipment or the type of equipment needed for the various services. Hendersonville uses a specialized piece of equipment for its brush collection.

Jim Ball stated the Town looked at that type of equipment several years ago. The cost was over \$90,000.

Dick Jones asked if this was the only service that was discontinued.

Jim Ball stated yes.

Commissioner O' Cain stated Council would look into whether the service would be cancelled permanently.

Dick Jones asked how much the bagged leaf collection program cost. He had a neighbor who puts 8-10 bags of leaves out every week.

Jim Ball stated he did not have a cost figure but that it was clearly less than brush collection.

Don McIntyre stated that cancelling the fall collection would increase the amount of brush put out in the spring.

Jim Ball stated that Council had already discussed that.

Mayor Johnson stated that the bottom line was that there was no plan to reinstate brush collection for this fall but there was a commitment from the future Council to revisit the issue for next year.

Dick Jones stated that he hoped Council would consider reinstating fall brush collection in the future. He felt the Timbercreek area, as ninety three households, could mustard up enough votes.

Commissioner Vickery stated that the Town could create a special tax district.

Commissioner Mennella added that, in County Ridge, they have a program for collecting brush as an association. Should they subsidize other areas?

Mayor Johnson thanked Don McIntyre and Dick Jones for their comments.

**MAYOR AND COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS**

**MAYOR JOHNSON** – Mayor Johnson had no comments.

**COMMISSIONER MENNELLA** – Commissioner Mennella had no comments.

**COMMISSIONER COOKE** – Commissioner Cooke had no comments.

**COMMISSIONER VICKERY** – Commissioner Vickery had no comments.

**COMMISSIONER O'CAIN** – Commissioner O'Cain stated that the Parks and Greenways Board should attend the next work session to present its report. He had read the draft and felt Council should commend them for their work. The document would be an asset in any effort to procure grant funding for the Town's park system. The review of the report will be added to the next work session agenda.

There being no further business, Commissioner Cooke moved to adjourn the Regular Meeting. Mayor Johnson asked for discussion; there was none. The vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Attest:

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Henry T. Johnson, Mayor

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Kimberly B. Hensley, CMC  
Town Clerk

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Date