

## Altavista Town Council Regular Meeting – November 14, 2023

The Altavista Town Council held their November 2023 Regular Meeting in Council Chambers of the Town Hall/J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on Tuesday, November 14th, at 6pm.

1. At six o'clock p.m., Mayor Mike Mattox called the meeting to order and presided.

### Council Members

Present: Vice Mayor Reginald Bennett  
Mr. Tracy Emerson  
Mr. Timothy George  
Mr. Jay Higginbotham  
Mayor Michael Mattox  
Dr. Scott Lowman

Absent Member(s): Mr. Wayne Mitchell

Town Staff present: Mr. Gary Shanaberger, Town Manager  
Mr. Matt Perkins, Asst. Town Manager  
Chief Tommy Merricks, Altavista Police Dept.  
Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Treasurer/Finance Director  
Mr. Tom Fore, Public Services Director  
Mr. Paul Hill, Asst. Public Services Director  
Mr. Jeff Arthur, Public Works Manager  
Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney  
Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Assistant Town Clerk

Reverend Ed Soto, Altavista Presbyterian Church, delivered the Invocation.

After the Invocation, Mayor Mattox led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance to the US Flag.

2. Agenda Adoption

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had questions regarding the agenda. There were none.

Councilman Tracy Emerson motioned to approve the November 14, 2023, Meeting Agenda as presented; seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, the motion carried, with a 6-0 vote of approval

3. Recognitions and Presentations

Town of Altavista Personnel Changes – September 2023:

- Milestone:  
Pauline “Polly” Brown, Water Treatment Plant, **15 years**
- New Hires:  
Jed Daniels                      Facilities Maintenance Mechanic, Water Dept.  
Adam Emerson                  Maintenance Specialist, Utilities  
Ronald Shank                      Water Trainee, Water Treatment Plant
- Departures:  
Cody Putnam                      Water Department  
Ben Mitchell                      Public Works Dept.  
Sharon Williams                  Community Development Dept.

Mayor Mattox recognized Polly Brown for her 15 years of service to the Town of Altavista, stating that she was a hard worker and good employee.

4. Citizen’s Time

There were no citizen comments at this time.

5. Town & Community Partner Updates

There were no partner updates on this date.

6. Consent Agenda

- TOA Monthly Financial Reports - October 2023
- Meeting Minutes – Town Council’s September Work Session and October Regular Meeting and Work Session

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Upon a motion by Councilman Tracy Emerson, seconded by Councilman Tim George, Town Council voted 6-0 to approve the November 14th Consent Agenda as presented.

### 7. Public Hearing

The Altavista Town Council held a Public Hearing to consider a Special Use Permit (SUP) application submitted by John Kinman, to operate at 216 West Road, Altavista, a detached accessory apartment, as defined in *Section 86-32 and 86-453* of the Town Code.

Assistant Town Manager Matt Perkins presented this item to Town Council, and informed them that the public hearing for this item had been advertised as required; and from a public hearing held on November 6th for the same item, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend that Town Council approve the aforementioned Special Use Permit. Mr. Perkins stated that Mr. Kinman was present that evening to answer any questions Council may have regarding his request.

Mayor Mattox opened the hearing at 6:02pm; and with no public comments given, he closed the hearing at 6:03pm.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any comments regarding the SUP request, or questions for Mr. Kinman, of which there were none.

Councilman Tracy Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett, to approve Mr. Kinman's Special Use Permit, to operate a detached accessory apartment, at 216 West Road. The motion carried, with a 6-0 vote of approval.

### 8. New Business

No new business items were scheduled for this meeting.

### 9. Unfinished Business

#### ▪ Vista / Leggett Feasibility Study

Mr. Mike Griffin, Vice President of CJMW Architecture, Lynchburg, presented Town Council a PowerPoint presentation of the completed feasibility study for the Vista/Leggett Project, which showcased the three most viable options for the two buildings, with proformas estimating expenses/revenue for each. Option one combined the spaces as a performing arts and entertainment center; the other two options kept the Vista building as a movie and music space, with the Leggett building having supporting elements, such as a restaurant or bar, and potentially (loft) apartments or a short-term rental boutique hotel on the second floor.

Councilman Higginbotham referenced Council's recent visit to the Harvester (music venue) in Rocky Mount, and stated that he liked the idea of not having food, other than snacks, served at the theatre, lending to the efforts of having people eat at the adjacent bar, as seen in one of the aforementioned options, or at one of Altavista's local restaurants. Council concurred.

Mr. Griffin reminded Council, with the feasibility study complete, the Town could investigate available grant opportunities to assist with this project, such as the Industrial Revitalization Fund (IRF), through the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

After presenting the proforma data, Mr. Griffin stated that final expense and revenue numbers would fluctuate, depending on how the variables changed; such as the number of events offered each week/year. He said the Harvester offered 3-4 shows per week.

Mayor Mattox questioned whether Altavista and the surrounding community would support the Vista Theatre offering that many events per week.

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Consultant Robert Lee stated that the events would not all have to be the same type, or the same price, but could be varied in both, to attract interest to the event space.

Mr. Griffin said that one of the keys to a successful venue was to offer multiple types of events, to help draw in, not only local citizens, but also people from further away, such as Lynchburg and Danville in Altavista's case.

Councilman Emerson said he believed having shows 2-3 days per week, whether movies or music, was very doable; and was the number to start with, that had potential to grow.

Vice Mayor Bennett reminded everyone, in its early years, the Harvester was not well known in the area, and not well-received in Rocky Mount, but the venue had since grown in popularity, which brought new businesses to their town.

Mr. Bennett said that he believed the Town purchasing the Vista Theatre was an investment in its future, and would spark economic and community growth.

Councilman Higginbotham suggested that Council "keep the project moving", and to schedule special work session for this topic only, in order to fine-tune the elements of the two spaces, with the Town's likes and dislikes for this project.

Councilman George concurred that additional discussions/work sessions were needed.

Councilman Lowman thanked Mr. Griffin and CJMW for giving the Town viable options that were not "gold-plated", but reasonable for Altavista's project. He said one of the next steps would be to apply for available grants from the DHCD and the Tobacco Commission.

Councilman Higginbotham asked what was required from the Town to start a grant process.

Dr. Lowman stated that having a completed feasibility study was an important start, and in most cases, a dollar match for the requested funds was required, but each grant was different in that aspect.

Councilman Emerson suggested the Town utilize Liberty University, and other nearby colleges, to gain volunteers and/or interns, that needed community service or work hours to complete their studies.

With not further questions or comments from Town Council, Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Griffin, CJMW, and Robert Lee for their work on the Vista/Leggett Project.

### **10. Town Staff Departmental Reports and Project Updates – October 2023**

- TOA Finance Reports
- Utilities – Project Updates
- Public Services Monthly Report
- Community Development Report
- Altavista Police Department Reports
- Town Council Monthly Meeting Calendars

These items were included in Town Council's monthly agenda pre-packet, and delivered to Council on the Friday before their meeting, giving them time to review the reports.

There were no questions from Council, or comments from Town Staff regarding the reports.

### **11. Matters from Council**

- Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett asked for the following item to be discussed at a future meeting: - Rt. 43 Traffic - "chip trucks" traveling on Bedford Avenue
- Mayor Mattox thanked Town Council, Town Staff, and Town Employees for their continued hard work, for striving to work together, and for supporting one another.

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- Councilman George asked Staff for an update on the Cemetery Connector Trail.

Assistant Public Services Director Paul Hill informed Council that he had just received the quotes requested, and would update them at their November Work Session.

- Councilman Lowman referenced Altavista On Track, representing as AOT's President, and informed Council that they recently approved two (2) Downtown Business Investment Grants, and one (1) Façade Improvement Grant.

At this time, Mayor Mattox revisited Section #4. Citizen's Time, and allowed Dale Moore to offer comments to Town Council.

Mr. Moore referenced the aforementioned Vista/Leggett Project and said that he believed the Town was doing a good thing for the community. He suggested the Town renovate the old Leggett building into a "boutique hotel". He also encouraged the Town to apply for grants through the Virginia Tobacco Commission for the Vista/ Leggett Project.

Mayor Mattox thanked Mr. Moore for his time and his input.

### 12. Closed Session

There were none scheduled for this meeting.

### 13. Adjournment

With no further items for discussion, Mayor Mattox adjourned this meeting at 6:59pm.

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Michael Mattox, Mayor

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Gary Shanaberger, Town Manager/Town Clerk