

Town Council Regular Meeting April 13, 2021

A regular scheduled meeting for the Altavista Town Council was held in Council Chambers of the J.R. Burgess Municipal Building, 510 Seventh Street, on April 13, 2021 at 6:00 PM.

At six o'clock pm, 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
Mr. Wayne Mitchell

Absent: Dr. Scott Lowman

Town Staff present:

Mr. J. Waverly Coggsdale III, Town Manager
Mrs. Tobie Shelton, Treasurer/Finance Director
Mr. Thomas Merricks, Altavista Chief of Police
Mr. David Garrett, Public Works Director
Mr. Tom Fore, Altavista Utilities Director
Ms. Sharon D. Williams, Community Development Director
Mr. George Sandridge, AOT Main Street Coordinator
Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney
Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Administration

Absent: Ms. Amanda Owens, Assistant Town Manager

Altavista Utilities Director Tom Fore gave the invocation that evening.
Mayor Mike Mattox led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Agenda Adoption

Mayor Mattox informed Town Council of an amendment to the April 13, 2021 Regular Council Meeting Agenda.

Additions:

- #7D. English Park – Cruise-In Request
- #7E. John Mosley Proclamation Adoption

Relocate:

- Item #8A. Consideration of VDEM Generator Project Bid Award to #11. Closed Session, for consultation with legal counsel.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns in regard to the proposed April 13, 2021 Council Meeting Agenda, to which there were none.

Councilman Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett, to approve Council's April 13th Meeting Agenda as amended.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

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At this time, Mayor Mattox paused the Council meeting, in order to offer his condolences to Councilman Scott Lowman and his family in regard to the recent loss of his mother-in-law. He asked everyone to keep Dr. Lowman and his family in thought and prayer.

2. Recognitions and Presentations

- Personnel Changes

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale informed Council of the town's personnel changes since March 1st, 2021.

- New Hires:

Sandra Varnadore	Utilities Dept. Waste Water Trainee	3/03/2021
Timothy Boley	Public Works Maintenance Worker	3/15/2021

- Departure:

Sherry James	Utilities Dept. Waste Water Trainee	3/04/2021
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- Spark Innovation Center

Background:

Altavista's Spark Innovation Center Project consists of the renovation of the former Altavista Fire Station (508 7th Street) into a "co-working and innovative technology space". It endeavors to create an environment that supports and nurtures innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship.

At that time, Bif Johnson, Hurt & Proffitt, and Jacob Caldwell, Dominion Seven Architects, shared with Council a brief update in regard to the engineering and design proposal for this project.

Mr. Johnson stated his first meeting with Town Staff for the Spark Innovation Center Project was February 11th. He informed Council, since the initial visit, his engineer/design team had been meeting with the town's steering committee for this project on a weekly basis, gathering status reports and input, and also answering questions from the town.

Mr. Johnson stated the "investigation phase" of the project was complete, which included a feasibility study, environmental assessments, and overall measurements of the exterior and interior of the building.

Mr. Johnson stated, at that point, Town Staff and his design team had reached a "95% construction document phase". He stated, through this phase, there was a revised update on the estimated cost for Phase I of the renovation. He shared the revisions with Council.

Mr. Johnson informed Council the cost estimate also offered "alternative options" for the town's consideration.

At that time, Jacob Caldwell continued the presentation with a brief overview of the proposed floorplan design and fore-mentioned alternative options of Phase I, for both the interior and exterior of the building.

Mr. Caldwell stated the interior main floor would consist of a manager's office, co-working spaces, restrooms, a technology area, a mechanical area, and a conference space that could be divided into two conference rooms if needed.

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Mr. Caldwell stated he felt the Spark Innovation Center Project was a good way to bridge the town's history of the old Fire Station, with its current and future needs for the community.

Mr. Caldwell stated the exterior of the building was in good shape overall, however, the old siding was deteriorating and would need replacing. He stated replacing the roof and windows were listed with the "alternative options", as they could be replaced at a later date if the budget did not allow for replacement in Phase I of the process.

Councilman George asked for details of the outdoor space in front of the building.

Mr. Caldwell stated, in the current design, there would be no parking allowed in front of the facility, as it is currently. He stated the plan called for a "green space" on both the front and right side of the building, which included planter boxes and grass areas.

Mr. Caldwell stated the left side garage door on the front of the building would remain operable, in order to encourage indoor/outdoor activities.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if the right side door would be operable as well.

Mr. Caldwell stated it would not. He stated the original door would remain in place, but only as an esthetic element of keeping the historic "Fire Station" look of the building.

Mr. Bif Johnson referenced the alleyway on the right side of the building. He informed Council, due to relocating interior bathrooms, the existing sewer line would also need to be relocated in the alley.

Mr. Johnson stated the current asphalt driveway in the alley would be removed and replaced with grass after the sewer line work was complete, which would add to the outdoor "green space" as the town desired.

Mr. Caldwell continued the presentation by reviewing the project's cost estimate. He stated there were some items of concern that would need to be addressed, such as bringing the building "up to code" with ADA accessibility.

Mr. Caldwell stated there was also an issue with the sheathing of the exterior walls of the building. He informed Council there were spots in the sheathing starting to decay/rot.

Mr. Caldwell stated the design plan proposed replacing the existing vinyl siding with cement board siding. He stated the cement board would last longer than vinyl siding, however, it was heavier and needed a strong foundation (sheathing) for its application.

Mr. Caldwell concluded by sharing the estimated "base cost" of this project. He also went over some alternate options for the town to consider.

- Roof Replacement – Shingles or Metal
- Window Replacement – Upgrade (for energy efficiency)
- Conference Room Petition
- Restore Exterior Brick
- "Pit" for future ADA Lift/Elevator
- Front Exterior Canopy – Metal
- Exterior Patio and Landscaping

Mr. Caldwell referenced the pit for the ADA Lift. He stated, although the lift would not be needed until Phase II/Upstairs of the project, it was recommended to install the pit during Phase I, in order to minimize main floor interruptions during later construction.

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Mr. Caldwell stated all of the alternate options could be implemented during Phase I or Phase II of the project, as the town desired, or as the budget allowed.

Councilman George asked for the combined total for all of the alternate options presented.

Mr. Caldwell stated the estimated cost for all seven alternate options was \$200,000, however, the end cost would depend on whether the town chose to replace the roof with shingles or metal roofing; or if the town chose not to replace the roof at this time.

Councilman Higginbotham asked how much longer was the “life expectancy” for the existing roof material (shingles).

Mr. Caldwell stated he was unsure of the age of the current roof. He stated the proposed plan recommended replacing the roof material, in order to assure there would be no issue with “leaks” in the near future.

Mr. Higginbotham asked if there were any signs of the existing roof needing replacement, such as curling or missing shingles.

Mr. Caldwell stated there were currently no visual signs of roof damage. He stated, for that reason, the item was listed under “alternate options” in the design plan.

Mr. Higginbotham referenced the “canopy” item listed with the alternate options. He asked why the item was listed in both the base cost and the alternate options.

Mr. Caldwell stated the base cost included a “canvas awning”, whereas, the alternate option was for a metal canopy, which would be more costly.

Mr. Caldwell stated the base cost of the proposed design plan consisted of the “minimum” amount of work needed for the town to be able to open the Spark Innovation Center.

Mr. Higginbotham asked Mr. Caldwell, in his experience, was the estimated material cost of Phase I consistent with other current projects.

Mr. Caldwell stated the estimated cost was consistent with similar projects. He stated the lumber market had increased over the past year, but the increase was predicted to be “short lived”. He stated, however, metal material, such as metal roofing, had increased quite a bit over the past year and was not predicted to decrease any time soon.

Mr. Caldwell stated it was his and Mr. Johnson’s recommendation the Town of Altavista move forward to the bid process for this project. He stated, by doing so, the town would get a better idea of what the project’s cost would be, including or without alternate options.

Mr. Caldwell stated several contractors were contacted during the initial planning stage of this project, in order to inquire if they would be interested in bidding the project. He informed Council that he already had four or five contractors interested in doing so.

Mr. Caldwell stated interest was wide among contractors in the local and surrounding areas, such as Jamerson Lewis (Lynchburg), Price (Martinsville), Quality Construction (Danville), and J.E. Burton (South Boston). He stated interest in bidding was positive for this project.

Mr. Bif Johnson informed Council, during the initial building assessment, there were environmental items of safety concern found, such as asbestos. He stated the Phase I (base cost) proposal included funds to address these issues.

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Mr. Johnson stated there was a possibility the cost to address the environmental issues could be paid for with funding from additional grant resources. He stated Town Staff was diligently pursuing that grant funding, but with no confirmation to date.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if the demolition to remove the asbestos would have to be completed separately from the other construction work.

Mr. Johnson stated all of the construction work could be done at the same time.

Councilman Mitchell asked how the line items in the estimated base cost were figured.

Mr. Caldwell stated the costs for the line items for the Spark Innovation Center Project were figured using similar projects recently completed by his office.

Mr. Mitchell asked, during the bid process, who would be responsible for sending out bid requests (RFPs) for this project, the Town of Altavista or Hurt & Proffitt.

Mr. Johnson stated Hurt & Proffitt would reach out to the contractors that showed initial interest in the project to see if they were still interested. He stated they would also advertise for RFPs, so any additional contractor(s) had the ability to bid on the project.

Mr. Mitchell asked if Hurt & Proffitt had a minimum requirement for the number of bids they needed to receive before making a decision and ultimately choosing a contractor.

Mr. Johnson stated the minimum number of bids would be up to Council. He reminded Council, if the town was not comfortable with any of the contractors or bids submitted, they had the option to re-bid the project.

Mr. Mitchell asked for an itemized cost estimate for the presented alternate options. He stated, if the base cost came in under budget after receiving RFPs, Council could then consider which, if any, of the alternate options could be added, while staying within the town's desired budget for the project.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he felt replacing the roof could be postponed.

Mr. Higginbotham suggested "pre-qualifying" contractors for this project, in order to get reasonable bids and quality work.

Mr. Caldwell stated he would be happy to itemize the costs of the alternate options for Council's consideration.

Mayor Mattox stated he did not feel Council had enough information at that time to make any decisions. He stated, after receiving the additional information, Council could discuss the project further at a later date.

Councilman George asked how much money the town set aside for this project.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale reminded Council there was \$200,000 in the FY2022 Budget allocated for this project. He stated the town was also granted a \$184,300 Revitalization Grant from the Tobacco Region Commission, for use towards the construction (Phase I) of the Spark Innovation Center.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the \$384,300 was short by \$373,170 from the engineer's current estimated cost for Phase I of the project and their fee of \$94,700, totaling \$757,470.

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Vice Mayor Bennett referenced the different “spaces” within the Spark Innovation Center, such as the offices and conference room. He suggested the town consider offering local industries and/or businesses the opportunity to “sponsor” one of the spaces with a donation towards its construction.

Mayor Mattox stated he felt the town would utilize any opportunity it could to decrease the deficit in funding for this project.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, if Council desired, staff would investigate the potential for creating such a “donation/naming” program; and to be in an organized fashion and not sporadically.

Mr. Bennett asked if “American Rescue Funds” could be utilized towards the Spark Innovation Center Project.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, at that time, it was still unknown whether or not the possibility was available to use those funds towards this project.

Councilman Higginbotham asked for confirmation of the 3,500 sq. ft. mentioned in their estimated base cost for this project, under “metal canopy”.

Mr. Caldwell stated the 3,509 amount was the square feet for the entire building and listed throughout the quote. He stated the square foot price was configured with each item included in the Phase I construction process.

Mr. Higginbotham stated he felt the costs for the metal canopy and the exterior cement board siding were both high, but he understood they were placeholders estimated for the quote.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked how soon Hurt & Proffitt’s team would be advertising for RFPs.

Mr. Caldwell stated his team was ready to move forward when the town was ready. He stated, at that time, the team was waiting on direction/approval from Council to do so.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated Council had the option to place the item on a future agenda for further discussion, or to authorize Hurt & Proffitt to move forward with advertising for RFPs in regard to the Spark Innovation Center Project.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, if Council decided to move forward at that time, having bids may help them decide which, if any, alternate options they wished to include in the project.

Councilman Emerson reminded Council the engineer’s estimated cost for the project was only “an estimate”. He stated he favored moving forward with requesting actual bids for the project in order to compare current market prices for each item included in the plan.

All Council members were in consensus to do so.

Town Attorney John Eller stated Council would need to “vote” on the decision.

Councilman Higginbotham again suggested contractors be pre-qualified before being allowed to bid on the project.

Mr. Coggsdale stated there were pre-qualification measures in the local code that Hurt & Proffitt could use to move forward with this action.

All Council members were in consensus to authorize Hurt & Proffitt to pre-qualify contractors for the bid process of Phase I of the Spark Innovation Center Project.

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Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any additional comments or questions in regard to this item, to which there were none.

Councilman Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett, to approve authorization for Hurt & Proffitt to move forward with advertising for RFPs for the Spark Innovation Center Project's Phase I/Construction, exterior and main floor restoration. The motion included authorizing Hurt & Proffitt to pre-qualify contractors for the bid process.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

Mayor Mattox thanked the Town Manager and Town Staff for their work on this project.

Mayor Mattox and Council thanked Mr. Johnson and Mr. Caldwell for their presentation.

3. Citizen's Time (Non-Agenda Items Only)

Mayor Mattox asked if there were any citizen(s) present wishing to address Council with a comment or concern regarding a subject that was not listed on the April 13, 2021 Council Meeting Agenda, to which there were none.

Mayor Mattox reminded citizens Town Council would be glad to speak with a citizen at any time regarding an idea or concern they may have pertaining to the town or community.

4. Partner Updates

A. Altavista On Track (AOT)

AOT Main Street Coordinator George Sandridge gave Council a brief update on some of the organization's current and on-going projects since Council's March Regular Meeting.

- Mr. Sandridge referenced the building located at 525 Main Street, Altavista, previously NY Pizza. He informed Council that Ms. Kimberly Cottle recently purchased the building with the intent to turn the facility back into a restaurant.

Mr. Sandridge stated Ms. Cottle was also interested in joining the AOT Board. He stated it was always nice to have additional board members that could offer AOT different points-of-view in the community.

- Mr. Sandridge then referenced 616 Broad Street, Altavista, the location previously known as Clanton's Drug Store. He informed Council that AOT recently submitted a \$200,000 Grant Request to the USDA, with the intent to purchase the property.

Mr. Sandridge stated AOT was expecting to have an answer back from the grant submission by July or August 2021.

Mr. Sandridge reminded Council of the "market analysis" conducted on the property in 2016, which determined the property to be a good mixed-use development opportunity. He stated AOT was excited to seek the possibilities for the property.

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Councilman George asked how much the 616 Broad Street property was selling for.

Mr. Sandridge stated the owner was currently asking \$239,000 for the property, but stated he would be willing to negotiate the price if AOT secured the USDA Grant.

Mr. Sandridge asked if Council had any additional questions, to which there were none.

Mayor Mattox and Council thanked Mr. Sandridge for the Altavista On Track updates.

B. Altavista Area Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber)

Chamber of Commerce Executive Board Chair Romonda Davis shared with Council the most recent updates from the Chamber.

- Ms. Davis referenced the Chamber's upcoming "Lunch and Learn" event, scheduled for Wednesday, April 14th from 12 o'clock to 1PM. She informed Council that individuals could register for the "virtual" event on the Chamber's website, at altavistachamber.com.
- Ms. Davis continued by informing Council of the Chamber's upcoming "Movie Night" event. She stated the event was tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 17th, with a rain date scheduled for Saturday April 24th.

Ms. Davis stated the event was being held at the Altavista Trade Lot, and the movie showing would be the 1989 Best Picture Nominee *Field of Dreams*. She stated the show would start at 8PM, but the gates would open at 6:30PM, in order for movie-goers to find their parking space.

Ms. Davis stated the Altavista Band Boosters would have their concession stand open starting at 6:30PM, with snacks available, such as popcorn and hot chocolate.

Ms. Davis stated tickets to the event were being pre-sold on the Chamber's website, but there were still thirty-five spaces available for the show, at \$10 per vehicle, not per person. She stated, if all of the spaces were not filled/sold ahead of time, the remaining spaces would be sold at the gate, the night of the event.

- Ms. Davis then referenced the Altavista Train Station facility. She stated the Chamber of Commerce recently re-opened the facility for "rental", which could also be registered for on their website at altavistachamber.com/event-register.

Ms. Davis assured Council the Chamber would be adhering to the Governor's social distancing guidelines by only allowing attendance at a 50% capacity.

- Ms. Davis continued by referencing the Chamber of Commerce's annual TGIF events, held on the last Friday of each summer month May through August. She stated the Chamber would be holding the May TGIF in the Altavista Train Station's parking lot, adjacent to the Altavista's Staunton River Memorial Library.
- Ms. Davis concluded her updates by referencing the Chamber of Commerce's newest virtual event, "Coffee and Conversation". She informed Council it was the Chamber's intent to have the event be "live", starting in May.

Ms. Davis thanked Town Council and the Town of Altavista for their continued support. She stated she would be happy to answer any questions Council may have in regard to the fore-mentioned items/events.

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Councilman Emerson asked how many spaces were designated for the Movie Night event.

Ms. Davis stated there were approximately sixty spaces available to use, but the Chamber chose to keep the number at fifty, in order to spread out the vehicles for “social distancing”.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked if the Chamber would be holding more than one Movie Night event this summer (2021).

Ms. Davis stated it was the Chamber’s intent to hold additional Movie Nights, but the number of events would depend on how well the first event turned out, and how much interest there was in the community for such an event.

Mayor Mattox asked if Council had any additional comments or questions in regard to the Chamber of Commerce, to which there were none.

Mayor Mattox thanked Ms. Davis for her time and the Altavista Area Chamber of Commerce for their continued hard work for the Altavista community.

5. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes
 - o March 9th, 2021 Regular Meeting
 - o March 23rd, 2021 Work Session
- B. Acceptance of Monthly Financial Reports
 - o March 2021 Revenue And Expenditures
- C. Adoption of the Source Water Protection Plan
- D. Approval of FY2021 Budget Amendments and Departmental Transfers
- E. Approval of Altavista’s 2021 Grass Maintenance Services Contract
- F. Adoption of a Resolution:
 - o Declaring certain town property as surplus.
 - o Authorization for Altavista’s Public Works & Public Utilities Departments to utilize surplus equipment proceeds for the purchase of a mini excavator.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns pertaining to the April 13th, 2021 Consent Agenda, to which there were none.

Vice Mayor Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Emerson, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

Councilman Higginbotham referenced the large excavator listed with the surplus items of item F. on the Consent Agenda. He asked for staff to include a video when advertising this piece of equipment on GOV Deals, showing that the excavator was in working order.

Altavista Public Works Director David Garrett agreed to do so.

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6. Public Hearing(s)

There were four public hearings during the April 13, 2021 Town Council Meeting.

A. Town Code Ordinance Amendment to Section 86-428, Re: DRO Signs

Background:

Town Staff recently received a request from a downtown business requesting to install an additional wall sign. Staff reviewed the town's current Zoning Ordinance and saw that the additional signage was not allowed in the Downtown Revitalization Overlay (DRO) District, as the maximum allowable square footage had already been exceeded.

The Altavista Planning Commission and Town Staff reviewed Altavista's existing regulation compared to similar regulations of other Main Street communities, and were of the opinion that additional flexibility was warranted. Both concurred there may be cases where additional signage might be needed and recommend the town's Zoning Ordinance include a provision which would allow a business to apply for a Special Use Permit instead of a variance, in order to be allowed to exceed the number or square footage currently allowed by the existing ordinance.

Altavista Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams informed Council the Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 5th, 2021, and recommended that Town Council amend the town's existing Zoning Ordinance to increase the number of signs permitted, to increase the allowable square footage, and to establish a process where additional signs can be requested through a Special Use Permit.

Mayor Mattox opened the public hearing in regard to this item at 6:46PM.

Mayor Mattox asked if anyone would like to address Council in regard to this matter. No one came forward to speak.

Mayor Mattox closed the public hearing at 6:47PM.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions/comments in regard to this item.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if the public hearing was advertised.

Ms. Williams assured Town Council the public hearing had been properly advertised.

Mayor Mattox stated the Altavista Planning Commission had a great group of individuals on its committee. He stated he felt the recommendation was very "business friendly" to the community and would be an asset to the Downtown District and DRO.

Mayor Mattox also thanked Ms. Williams for her work on this item/matter.

Councilman Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett, to accept the Planning Commission's recommendation and approve the amendment to Section 86-428 of the Altavista Zoning Ordinance to increase the allowable signage, and square footage of such, in the Downtown Revitalization Overlay District.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

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B. Town Code Ordinance Amendment to Section 62-151, Re: Weed Control

Background:

Town Staff, as directed by Town Council, continues to improve its efforts to abate violations. Staff recently discussed a provision of State Code that was not currently being utilized by the Town of Altavista; under Section 15.2-901, a locality may provide for removal or disposal of trash, cutting of grass, weeds, and/or running bamboo, which carry penalties in certain counties/towns; a locality can allow one written notice to the owner of record to cover the entire growing season. The initial notice would be considered reasonable notice for the rest of the season. As grass season is nearing, staff expects to see an increase in the number of violations that are reported pertaining to tall grass (12 inches and above). Staff has found that in many cases there were repeat violations at the same address. The proposed text amendment did not require a public hearing before the Planning Commission. However, the Town Attorney, Director of Public Works, and Community Development Director discussed the request with the Planning Commission in October of 2020, as part of a discussion on various Town Code updates overseen by the Community Development Director. During the discussion, the Planning Commission recommended staff proceed with presenting an amendment to Town Council, to streamline the enforcement process and reduce the cost incurred with sending multiple violation notices.

Altavista Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams stated, at that time, Town Staff was seeking Council's consideration to amend Town Code and allow one notice to cover the entire grass cutting season as permitted by §15.2-901 of the Code of Virginia.

Ms. Williams stated, currently the town sends a notice for each violation, even if multiple violations occur at the same address. She stated, if approved, the amendment would allow the town to send one notice per growing season; if a second violation occurs, the town would send a contractor to cut the grass and then invoice the property owner for the cost, along with a \$75 Administrative Fee.

Councilman George asked if the fore-mentioned \$75 Administration Fee was "per incident", to which Ms. Williams stated it was.

Mayor Mattox opened the public hearing in regard to this item at 6:50PM.

Mayor Mattox asked if anyone would like to address Council in regard to this matter. No one came forward to speak.

Mayor Mattox closed the public hearing at 6:51PM.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions/comments in regard to this item.

Councilman Higginbotham asked, if or when a violation occurred, how long staff waited before sending out a violation notice.

Mr. Williams stated, when a violation occurs, the town immediately sends the property owner a written notice. She stated the notice informs the property owner they have five days to comply with Town Code, or the town would take further action.

Mr. Higginbotham asked who mowed the grass due to a violation, the town or a contractor.

Ms. Williams informed Council that a contractor mows the property, and then invoices the town for the work. She stated, in turn, the town bills the property owner for the yard being mowed, with the additional \$75 Administration Fee.

Mr. Higginbotham stated he felt the \$75 Administrative Fee was too high.

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Mr. Williams stated the fee, on top of the cost to cut their grass, was intended to deter citizens from violating the grass cutting ordinance.

Mr. Higginbotham referenced the sample “one-time” notification letter. He stated he felt the \$35 mentioned in the sample was more appropriate.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale informed Town Council that Section 62-151(d) of the Town Code currently sets forth the \$75 fee. He stated, if it was Council’s desire to change the fee amount, a revision would also have to be made to that section of the code.

Mr. Coggsdale asked the Town Attorney if the change would need to be advertised.

Town Attorney John Eller stated the modification would not need to be advertised, since the action would be “lowering” the cost, not increasing it.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked, if a citizen’s water was turned off due to non-payment, what cost was added to their utility account to have their service turned back on.

Town Treasurer Tobie Shelton stated the re-connect fee for utilities was currently \$35.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the fore-mentioned fees were designed to pay for the administrative cost (time) incurred due to processing the violation(s). He stated charging the property owner for their violation keeps the cost on the violator, not the taxpayers that are adhering to the Town Code.

Mr. Bennett asked if there were ever repeat offenders to the grass-cutting ordinance.

Mr. Coggsdale stated there were. He stated, usually, the majority of offenders are able to cut their grass after receiving the first notice, but there had been a few that did not. He stated those violators warranted a second and third notice to be given, and ultimately the town still had to cut their grass, and accordingly, charge the additional \$75 fee.

Mr. Higginbotham suggested a \$35 fee with the first violation notice, and a \$75 fee with any further notices.

Mayor Mattox asked Council for their input (vote) on whether or not to lower the administrative fee associated with violations of the town’s grass cutting ordinance to \$35, or leave the fee at the current \$75 amount.

There was a consensus of Council to keep the fee at the current amount of \$75.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any additional questions or comments in regard to this matter, to which there were none.

Councilman Emerson made a motion, seconded by Councilman George, to accept Town Staff’s recommendation and amend the Town Code, *Section 52-151 Weed Control*, to allow one violation notice to cover the entire growing season.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

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C. Town Code Ordinance Amendment to Section 58-32, Re: Compensation for Planning Commission Committee Members

Background:

Chapter 58, *Planning*, of Altavista's Town Code outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Planning Commission. It also contains a provision that they be compensated for those duties. Town Code currently states that Planning Commissioners may receive no more than \$300 per year for their service to the town. During the adoption of Altavista's FY2021 Budget, Town Council increased the salary to \$50 per month for non-Certified Commissioners, and \$75 per month for Certified Commissioners. Compensation is tied to attendance and set by Town Council each year during the budget process. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on Monday, April 5, 2021 and voted to recommend that Town Council approve the proposed text amendment.

Altavista Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams stated it was staff's request, under the recommendation of the Planning Commission, for Town Council to hold a public hearing to amend *Section 58-32* of Town Code, to eliminate the existing "maximum stipend" for Planning Commissioners.

All Council members were in consensus to approve staff's request.

Mayor Mattox opened the public hearing in regard to this item at 7:00PM.

Mayor Mattox asked if anyone would like to address Council in regard to this matter. No one came forward to speak.

Mayor Mattox closed the public hearing at 7:01PM.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions or comments in regard to this item, to which there were none.

Councilman Emerson made a motion, seconded by Councilman George, to approve the amendment to *Section 58-32* of Town Code, which would eliminate the existing "maximum stipend" for Planning Commissioners.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

D. Town Code Ordinance Amendment to Section 86-22, Re: ADA Ramps

Background:

Section 86-22 Definitions, of the Altavista Zoning Ordinance allows certain features of a building to project up to three feet (3') into a required yard, including window bays, vestibules, uncovered porches, eaves, and disabled access ramps. Town Staff recently received a request by a citizen wanting to install a ramp at their home. The property is zoned R-2 (Medium Density Residential), which has a front yard setback of not less than 35'. Staff reviewed the property pertaining to the request, and found the home had been built prior to the adoption of "zoning" by the town in 1948, therefore, the existing structure is nonconforming (grandfathered). A three-foot encroachment into the yard would not meet the citizen's need.

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Altavista Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams stated that Town Staff was of the opinion the current code did not currently meet the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) without the disabled citizen incurring additional cost (\$300) and time involved to request a “Variance” from the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Ms. Williams informed Council the Planning Commission held a public hearing on Monday, April 5, 2021, and voted unanimously to recommend Town Council approve the proposed text amendment.

There was a consensus of Council to accept the Planning Commission’s recommendation and hold a public hearing in regard to this matter.

Mayor Mattox opened the public hearing in regard to this item at 7:03PM.

Mayor Mattox asked if anyone would like to address Council in regard to this matter. No one came forward to speak.

Mayor Mattox closed the public hearing at 7:04PM.

Mayor Mattox asked if Town Council had any questions in regard to this item.

Councilman Mitchell stated his concern if allowing the proposed amendment would give a citizen any opportunity to encroach onto other property with their ramp.

Ms. Williams assured Council that any request for a ramp, in reference to the proposed amendment and the distance allowed, would be considered on a case-by-case basis; and would not permit encroachment onto other private, or public property.

Councilman Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett, to approve staff’s proposed amendment to *Section 86-22* of Town Code permitting required ADA-accessible ramps to project into a citizen’s yard, when no other reasonable alternative is available.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

Mayor Mattox thanked Ms. Williams for her hard work and due diligence in regard to the four public hearings that evening.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale informed Council the town’s internet connection was not working at that time. He stated Mrs. Shelton was working to fix the issue.

7. New Business

A. SCADA Term Services and Firm Pre-qualification

Background:

The Town of Altavista’s water & wastewater facilities have SCADA Systems within each plant; to better control the operations and maintenance of the facilities. In calendar year 2016, the Altavista contracted Woodard & Curran to install and perform the town’s SCADA services. However, since the COVID-19 outbreak, Woodard & Curran’s ability to service the town’s SCADA System has not been occurring.

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Altavista Utilities Director Tom Fore stated Town Staff believed, by having multiple firms available to staff during times the SCADA System needed updates or repairs, gives staff the ability to call for assistance immediately, ensuring the continued reliability of the SCADA Systems.

Mr. Fore stated, at that time, staff was requesting Town Council consider allowing the Town Manager to sign “Term Services Agreements” with four firms: Altavista Instruments and Controls, Lord and Company, Sunapsys, and Valley Automation; and accept the firms as “prequalified” and listed as town-approved SCADA Control Firms to bid directly on existing, ongoing, and future town capital improvement projects.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions or concerns in regard to staff’s request, to which there were none.

Councilman Higginbotham made a motion, seconded by Councilman Emerson, to approve

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

B. Town of Altavista FY2021 CIP – Springs SCADA Project

Background:

The FAIP (Facility Assessment and Improvement Plan), previously conducted by Woodard & Curran, for Altavista’s Water and Wastewater Facilities recommended the SCADA Improvements to the town’s water resource springs and the pump stations. The “Springs SCADA Project”, was approved by Town Council with the FY2021 CIP Budget. However, Town Staff deferred this project until the VDEM Generator Project began.

Altavista Utilities Director Tom Fore stated, once the VDEM Project was underway, staff was recommending tying in the new generators, as well as other controls at the springs, to the Springs SCADA Project.

Mr. Fore stated Town Staff was also seeking to add the Staunton River and Bedford Pump Stations to this project as added “alternates” in the bid documents. He stated, based on the engineer’s estimate, the initial budget would cover the request.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions in regard to staff’s recommendation/request.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if the project revision meant having SCADA on the generators for all four of the town’s pump stations.

Mr. Fore confirmed the project would include SCADA for all four pump station generators. He stated the revised plan also included “pump controls” at the four pump stations, which would allow plant operators to have more critical information than they currently had.

Councilman Emerson made a motion, seconded by Councilman Higginbotham, to approve Town Staff’s request to move forward with the Spring SCADA Project, with the addition of the Staunton River and Bedford Pump Stations as presented.

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Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

C. Public Nuisance Hearing – 1004 10th Street

Background:

The town has had multiple violations of Town Code at 1004 10th Street, Altavista. On July 14, 2020, Town Council declared this property as a “public nuisance” and ordered the violation be abated. Shortly thereafter, the property owner died, and the town attempted to work with the heirs to gain compliance, which did not occur until December 21, 2020

Altavista Community Development Director Sharon D. Williams informed Council, due to another complaint, a recent inspection of the property revealed an accumulation of rubbish (trash and other debris) on the side porch and around the property. She shared a photo with Council for visual reference of the current rubbish on the property.

Ms. Williams stated that staff has brought the issue in front of Council with the intent to be “proactive”, and not let the issue linger, as it did in the past.

Ms. Williams requested Town Council consider, once again, declaring the property a public nuisance, per Town Code and give the property owner/heirs 15 days to abate the violation. She stated, if the rubbish has not been removed within the allotted timeframe, she asked that Council direct staff to have the materials removed, with the cost of the removal, plus a \$75 Administrative Fee, be billed to the estate.

Councilman George stated he felt there were multiple other properties in town that could also be declared as such. He asked if the town would be taking action on those as well.

Ms. Williams stated, at that time, staff was only pursuing complaints in regard to derelict properties. She stated “active code enforcement” would be a decision for Town Council.

Councilman Higginbotham made a motion, seconded by Councilman Emerson, to approve Town Staff’s request and declare the property at 1004 10th Street, Altavista, a public nuisance. The motion included giving the property owner/heirs fifteen (15) days from that evening (April 13th) to comply with Town Code, or the trash in violation would be removed for them, and the cost to do so would be billed to the property/estate, along with an additional \$75 Administration Fee.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

D. Requested Use of English Park for Cruise-In Events

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale informed Town Council of a recent request by Backwoods Rod & Custom to utilize a portion of English Park for their “Cruise-In” Car Show events. He stated the Altavista Band Boosters opted not to include the events in their 2021 summer schedule for the Altavista Trade Lot.

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Mr. Coggsdale stated the area of request was the location behind the English Park entrance sign, across from the Booker Building. He stated the event request included the months of May through October, on the first Saturday of each of those months.

Councilman George asked for clarification of the requested area.

Mr. Coggsdale shared a photo, for Council's reference, that outlined the area of the park being requested for the Cruise-In events.

Councilman Mitchell asked if this event would compete with the Trade Lot Cruise-Ins, if the band boosters ever decided to resume the event.

Mr. Coggsdale informed Council the organization hosting the event, potentially at English Park, was the same group that hosted the Trade Lot events. He stated, with the band boosters opting out, the group was looking for a new location to continue the Cruise-Ins.

Councilman Higginbotham asked, if approved, was Town Staff ok with the requested area.

Mr. Coggsdale stated staff did not foresee any issues with the requested area of the park at that time. He stated the town could choose to agree to the request for this calendar year, and re-evaluate the situation for the potential request for future years.

Mayor Mattox asked if the event would potentially effect or interrupt any activity at the English Park boat ramp/river entrance.

Mr. Coggsdale stated it would not. He stated the event may affect the amount of parking available in that area during the Cruise-In, but would depend on the attendance at the event.

Councilman George asked the dates and time of the proposed events.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, if approved, the Cruise-In events would be once a month, on the first Saturday of each fore-mentioned month. He stated the event time was 4-8PM.

Mayor Mattox asked if Cruise-In events were allowable by the Governor's guidelines in regard to COVID-19 restrictions.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, to his knowledge, there was no restriction for holding a car show. He informed Council there were other surrounding communities holding the events.

There were no additional questions or comments from Council in regard to this item.

Councilman Higginbotham made a motion, seconded by Councilman Emerson, to approve the request by Backwoods Rod & Custom to utilize English Park (in requested area) for a Cruise-In Car Show on the first Saturday of May through October, 2021, from 4-8PM.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

E. John H. Mosley Resolution

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale addressed Council in regard to this item.

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Mr. Coggsdale stated this item was being presented to Town Council for their consideration of adopting a resolution in regard to Mr. John H. Mosley.

Mayor Mattox read the proposed resolution aloud.

Town of Altavista Proclamation

WHEREAS, there are individuals who have made profound and lasting impacts on the Town Of Altavista, and these individuals deserve special recognition; and

WHEREAS, John Henry Mosley, born on April 15, 1877 was a key figure in Altavista's origins and the African American community; and

WHEREAS, He was known for his commitment to helping others and urging people to locate to Altavista and open businesses, some of which are still in operation today; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Mosley constructed the African American neighborhood known as Mosley Heights and helped to build the First Baptist Church on Twelfth Street; and

WHEREAS, the now decommissioned Mosley Heights Elementary School was also named in his honor for his contributions to the town; and

WHEREAS, John Henry Mosley dedicated himself to building for the future: the people and the places and his legacy should be celebrated by all citizens of Altavista, Virginia.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Michael Mattox, Mayor of the Town of Altavista, Virginia on behalf of the entire Town Council, do proclaim that each year, the Sunday on or following his birthdate of April 15, shall be known as:

JOHN HENRY MOSLEY MEMORIAL DAY

in the Town of Altavista, and urge citizens and visitors to acknowledge this day in remembrance of his contributions to our Town.

This the 18th day of April 2021.

Councilman Higginbotham made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett, to adopt the resolution as presented; declaring from that day forward, that each year, the Sunday on, or following his birthdate of April 15, shall be known as John H. Mosley Memorial Day in the Town of Altavista.

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

The Town Manager stated he would have the proclamation framed, so it could be presented by Council to Mr. Mosley's family on Sunday April 18th, the day Avondale Park was scheduled to be renamed the John H. Mosley Memorial Park, in his honor.

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8. Unfinished Business

A. VDEM Generator Project – Consideration of Bid Award

Mayor Mattox reminded everyone this item was removed from the regular agenda schedule, to be discussed/considered during Town Council’s Closed Session that evening.

B. McMinnis Spring Waterline Project – Consideration of Bid Award

Background:

Hurt & Proffitt designed the McMinnis Water Line Replacement Project, which consists of replacing approximately 17,500 feet of 8” water line between McMinnis Spring and the Bedford Avenue Tank. In January 2021, Town Council allowed staff to move forward with the bid process for the McMinnis Water line Replacement Project. The bids have been received and the engineers have made their recommendation to award the bid.

Altavista Utilities Director Tom Fore requested Council’s consideration to allow staff to hire Hurt & Proffitt and have their inspector onsite at the project 4hrs per day. He stated this cost was provided by Hurt & Proffitt in their original proposal, at a cost of \$47,460 for “Inspection Services”; and would be covered by the project’s initial estimated budget.

At that time, Bif Johnson, Hurt and Proffitt, addressed Council in regard to this item. He stated Hurt & Proffitt prepared bid documents for the McMinnis Waterline Replacement Project and the project was advertised on February 28, 2021.

Mr. Johnson informed Council that a public bid opening was held at Town Hall on March 30, 2021, and seven bids were received, opened, and read aloud. He shared with Council a summary of the engineer estimate and submitted bids.

<u>Contractor</u>	<u>Base Bid</u>	<u>Responsive</u>
Counts & Dobyns	\$4,025,912	Yes
Concrete Foundations	\$2,320,975	Yes
Mendon Pipeline	\$1,566,030	Yes
E.C. Pace	\$2,068,941	Yes
Valley Contracting	Bid Not Read	No
Haymes Brothers	\$2,444,300	Yes
Prillaman & Pace	\$1,571,930	Yes
Engineer Estimate	\$2,180,420.00	

Mr. Johnson stated, as noted above, one of the bids was considered nonresponsive, due to the omission of required bid documentation. He stated there were also discrepancies with two bidders, but the discrepancies did not affect the lowest bidder, Mendon Pipeline.

Mr. Johnson stated it was Hurt & Proffitt’s recommendation the project be awarded to the low bidder, Mendon Pipeline, for the total of the base bid, \$1,566,030.

Mr. Fore referenced the engineer’s presented estimate of \$2,180,420. He reminded Council the initial estimate was closer to \$1,883,000, but stated it was revised due to the recent fluctuation in the market for material cost.

Councilman Higginbotham asked Mr. Johnson if Hurt & Proffitt had any previous experience with Mendon Pipeline.

Mr. Johnson stated they did. He stated Mendon was out of Pennsylvania, but was working extensively in Roanoke and Blacksburg. He stated the company had done three or four of Hurt & Proffitt’s projects in the Blacksburg area with great success.

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Councilman Mitchell asked if Mendon Pipeline's bid was "a firm, not-to-exceed" price.

Mr. Johnson stated it was taken as a "unit price" bid. He stated the project had line items for different items and allowances.

Councilman Higginbotham asked Mr. Johnson what he felt would be the town's "biggest risk" associated with this project.

Mr. Johnson stated the biggest risk was possibly encountering rock while excavating. He stated, however, the new line was being laid beside the existing line, so there would be no interruption in service, if that occurred.

Mr. Johnson stated there was no pre-investigation for rock done on this project, but there was an allowance of \$120,000 allocated in the budget/estimate for rock excavation.

Mayor Mattox asked if Council had any additional questions or concerns in regard to this project, to which there were none.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, if Council approved staff's request for an onsite inspector for this project, the motion would need to include that approval.

Councilman Higginbotham made a motion, seconded by Councilman Emerson, to accept Hurt & Proffitt's recommendation to award the McMinnis Waterline Replacement Project to Mendon Pipeline for the bid of \$1,566,030; and to approve Town Staff's request to allow an inspector from Hurt & Proffitt to be onsite of the project, four hours per day, until the project was completed, for a cost of \$47,460 (included in the initial budget).

Motion carried.

Vote:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

C. Melinda HPZ Project – Request to Switch Engineer

Background:

This project is part of the Altavista's Facility Assessment & Improvement Program (FAIP) for the town's Utilities System. Its intent is to provide higher water pressure to homes in the Melinda Drive and Avondale Drive area of town. In December 2020, Town Council approved Town Staff to move forward with "re-bidding" the Melinda HPZ Project.

Altavista Utilities Director Tom Fore stated he contacted Woodard & Curran, who had been the town's consulting/engineering firm for this project. He informed Council that Woodard and Curran no longer had a "local presence" (engineer in the area).

Mr. Fore stated, due to that reason, and unless Council thought otherwise, he felt it would be best to "switch" engineers for this project. He informed Council that he had inquired with Mattern & Craig Engineering, Roanoke, for their potential to take over.

Mr. Fore informed Council that Mattern & Craig was available to take over the engineering services for the Melinda HPZ Project, at a lower cost than budgeted.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if their cost was less than Woodard & Curran, to which Mr. Fore confirmed it was.

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Mr. Fore stated, at that time, staff was making Council aware of the change, before proceeding to bid the project. He stated he wanted to confirm approval with Council.

All Council members were in consensus to allow Mr. Fore to move forward.

Mayor Mattox stated he appreciated Mr. Fore's due diligence in this matter, and thanked him for the good work he was doing on this project and for the town.

At this time, Town Council paused discussion of the agenda and went into Closed Session.

Vice Mayor Bennett opened the Closed Session meeting.

I move the Altavista Town Council convene in closed session in accordance with the provisions set out in the *Code of Virginia*, 1950, as amended,

Section 2.2-3711 (A)(3) regarding discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

Section 2.2-3711 (A)(5) regarding discussion concerning a prospective business or industry, or the expansion of an existing industry, where no previous announcement has been made of the business' or industry's interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the community.

Section 2.2-3711 (A)(7) Consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provisions of legal advice by such counsel.

The motion was made by Vice Mayor Bennett, and seconded by Councilman Emerson.

Motion carried.

VOTE:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

Council went into Closed Session at 7:26 PM.

Councilman Higginbotham did not attend the April 13th Closed Session, due to potential conflict in regard to an item to be discussed during the session.

Town Council was back in regular session at 8:02 PM.

FOLLOWING CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made by Vice Mayor Bennett, seconded by Councilman Mitchell, to adopt the certification of a closed meeting.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the town council has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the town council that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the town council hereby certifies, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the town council.

VOTE:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	(Absent during this vote)
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

Mayor Mattox called for regular session to resume at 8:04PM, and to continue discussion of the April 13th meeting agenda.

Councilman Higginbotham returned to the meeting at this time as well.

Councilman Mitchell referenced Section #8A. Consideration of VDEM Generator Project Bid Award, previously removed from this agenda for Council to discuss during Closed Session.

Mr. Mitchell motioned, seconded by Councilman Emerson, for the Town of Altavista to reject the existing bid in regard to the town's VDEM Generator Project, and move forward with rebidding the project.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions, to which there were none.

Motion carried.

VOTE:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

Councilman Mitchell motioned, seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett, for the Town of Altavista to move forward with the purchase of four generators for the town's VDEM Generator Project.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions or concerns, to which there were none.

Motion carried.

VOTE:	Mr. Timothy George	Yes
	Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
	Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
	Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
	Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
	Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

There were no additional comments from Town Council in regard to this item.

D. FY2022 Budget and FY2022-2026 CIP – Schedule Public Hearings

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale addressed Council in regard to this item.

Mr. Coggsdale stated there were a few items previously mentioned by Council that needed to be addressed, however, the budget discussion was not limited to that list.

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Mr. Coggsdale stated the goal that evening was to finalize any items of concern in order for Town Staff to have the final draft ready for a public hearing.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, once all concerns were addressed, staff was seeking authorization to schedule a public hearing for May 11th, during Town Council's Regular Meeting, in regard to the FY2022 Budget, FY2022-2026 CIP, and FY2022 utility rate increases, to be implemented December 1, 2021.

- 5% Wage Increase for Altavista's Hourly Employees (suggested by Council member)

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, included in the FY2022 Draft Budget, there were funds (\$78,400) allocated for the "employee merit pool" consistent with previous years for all town employees. He stated employee merit raises were based on annual evaluations, with a potential of zero to three percent.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the suggested 5% raise for hourly employees would impact the budget totaling \$163,570, a difference of \$85,170 from the current budgeted amount.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had comments, or concerns in regard to this item.

Councilman George stated, with the Town of Altavista's recent multiple turnovers of police officers and other town employees, he felt the town needed to be "more competitive" with their wages.

Mr. George stated, in the past ten years or so, the Town of Altavista had finished each fiscal year with a "surplus" of funds. He stated he felt all employees were important, and he considered the raise to be "an investment" towards retaining good employees.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he did not feel that previous employees left the town due to low pay. He referenced the town's multiple CIP projects that still needed funding, and stated he felt the \$85,170 should be utilized for those projects.

Mayor Mattox referenced the FY2022 Draft Budget and CIP. He reminded Council the town would already need to utilize half of its designated reserve funds to balance the budget, if all proposed CIP items were implemented.

Mayor Mattox referenced the employees that recently left the Town of Altavista to go to work for the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), due to VDOT paying their drivers with a CDL license more money. He stated, therefore, the town was currently looking at better ways to compensate and retain their CDL Drivers.

Mayor Mattox stated he also felt the employees leaving the town most recently were "entry level" employees that felt they had nowhere to move up to. He stated he would like to see the town create an "employee tier" for growth as a town employee.

Vice Mayor Bennett thanked all of the employees that work for the Town of Altavista. He stated he felt all town employees did a "marvelous job" and work hard every day. He stated they should be fairly compensated for the jobs they do.

Mr. Bennett requested the town conduct a "wage and benefit compensation survey", in order to assure town employees were being compensated fairly; and comparable to surrounding localities.

Mr. Bennett also shared his favor with the Mayor's suggestion for the town to create a program enabling employee growth. He stated, an employee that starts working for the town by mowing/weed eating grass, he felt should have an opportunity to do something else within that department if they desired to 5-10 years down the road.

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Mr. Bennett also suggested the town conduct an “anonymous survey”, to inquire if employees had any suggestions to improve their jobs/positions with the town.

Councilman Emerson informed Town Council that Campbell County recently approved a 5% wage increase for every “county employee”, including officers, teachers, maintenance workers, purchasing/administration. He stated the town was competing with, not only the county, but he felt everyone that offered better wages.

Mr. Emerson stated it was “a struggle” for everyone to retain good employees. He referenced the Altavista Police Department (APD). He stated there was always the concern of losing an officer to the county or state due to higher pay and the APD not offering take-home vehicles.

Mr. Emerson stated, in two years the economy may not be as good as it had been and the town may not be able to justify implementing a wage increase. He stated, at that time, the town did have the funds available and he was in favor of the suggested 5% wage increase for all hourly town employees.

Councilman Mitchell shared his appreciation for the work every staff member and town employee did for the Town of Altavista.

Mr. Mitchell stated he did not know what Campbell County’s policies were, but he did not want the Town of Altavista to implement a wage increase just because the county does it.

Mr. Mitchell stated he felt a 5% wage increase across the board was “heavy handed” and he was not in favor of the wage increase as suggested. He shared his favor with Town Staff/Personnel continuing to find ways to attract and retain good employees.

Councilman Emerson stated Campbell County had not given more than a 2% raise in years. He informed Council the State Police Department had also been recently approved for a wage increase (theirs being 8%), a bonus for “years of service”, and also included a take-home vehicle.

Mr. Emerson reminded Council the APD lost a couple of their officers over the past year to the Campbell County Sheriff’s Office due to higher pay and vehicles.

Mr. Mitchell stated the Town of Altavista could not compete with take-home vehicles.

Councilman George asked the Town Manager if the town’s Public Works and Utilities Department Directors had indicated why the town was losing employees.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale confirmed the Town of Altavista had recently lost four to five employees that went to work for VDOT due to the additional pay VDOT offers to its CDL drivers.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, with input from Public Works Director David Garrett, there was an item on the agenda that would address the issue. He stated the proposal was not a full solution, but offered a step in the right direction.

Councilman Emerson asked if the proposal offered an annual stipend for employees that held a CDL license.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the plan, if approved, would increase an employee’s hourly rate after a CDL license was earned. He reminded Council the Altavista Water Treatment Facility already had a similar program allowing their town employees the opportunity to increase their pay when a Class I and/or Class II license is acquired.

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Councilman Mitchell asked if the town helped its employees achieve these goals, to which Mr. Coggsdale stated they do.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, when considering whether or not to implement the suggested 5% wage increase for all town hourly employees, he suggested Council consider whether the issue of retaining town employees had been identified as “all employees”, or only for CDL drivers.

Vice Mayor Bennett reminded Council of his suggestion to conduct an employee survey. He stated he would like to know why employees were leaving, or thinking about leaving; was it their pay or something else. He stated he felt, in order to create a solution, there were still questions that needed to be answered.

Councilman Emerson asked if the town conducted “exit interviews”.

Mr. Coggsdale confirmed the town does conduct exit interviews when an employee decides to leave their position with the town.

Mr. Bennett stated he felt an employee survey would be beneficial to the town by learning why an employee may be considering leaving, and potentially retaining the employee, if the issue could be addressed and resolved. He stated the issue could be something other than pay.

Mr. Coggsdale stated he would be happy to conduct an employee survey under Council’s direction, if they so desired.

Mayor Mattox asked if there were any further comments from Council in regard to the suggested 5% wage increase to town hourly employees.

There was a consensus of Council not to implement a town wage increase at that time.

Councilman Mitchell shared his favor with the Vice Mayor’s suggestion for the town to start the process of evaluating whether the Town of Altavista’s pay and benefit compensation was currently up-to-date and in line with surrounding localities.

Mr. Mitchell also suggested the town evaluate whether or not to increase its maximum “merit” compensation from 2% to 5% in future budgets.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, if Council desired, Town Staff would begin the process of gathering such data for Council’s consideration and use in determining the matter of town wages for future town budgets.

All Council members were in consensus to allow Town Staff to do so.

- Consideration to Increase CDL Compensation Plan for Town Employees

Background:

The Town of Altavista has jobs/duties that require having a CDL License to operate certain equipment and vehicles. In an effort to attract and retain qualified workers with various CDL classifications for the Town of Altavista, a plan has been developed to provide equivocal compensation under the town’s existing rate structure.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale informed Council the proposed plan was compiled by input from Altavista’s Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens, Utilities Director Tom Fore, and Public Works Director David Garrett.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, in the proposed plan, an employee’s pay rate would increase by \$1 when they acquired a Class B CDL License, by another \$1 when a Class A License was acquired, and fifty cents (.50) for a Tanker Endorsement.

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Mr. Coggsdale stated, if approved, the FY2022 Draft Budget would be affected by \$27,000 with this plan.

Councilman Higginbotham asked, if a current town employee already had their CDL License, would they also receive a raise/pay increase.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, if the plan was approved, staff would look back in the employee's records to see if they received a pay raise when the license was initially acquired, and if not, a raise would be given accordingly.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, although the plan was directed towards "new hires", he felt the town owed it to existing employees to do so.

Town Council was in consensus to leave the proposed wage increase plan for CDL License accomplishments in the FY2022 Draft Budget for potential approval.

- English Park Entrance Improvements

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale referenced an item in the FY2022 Draft CIP related to the modification of English Park's entrance from Pittsylvania Avenue. He stated the item included extending the existing sidewalk to go under the railroad trestle to Third Street, potentially with a flashing light for pedestrians.

Mr. Coggsdale stated there was a similar CIP project listed in the draft, totaling \$60,000, for a walking/biking connection trail to Lane Access Road, crossing Pittsylvania Avenue, over to the English Park entrance. He stated the project could be modified to fit the town's needs.

Councilman George referenced the "connection trail" CIP project, stating the project was initially mentioned in Altavista's Parks and Recreation Master Plan by LPDA. He stated, with the \$600,000 English Park Entrance Improvement Project no longer in the FY2022 CIP Budget, he felt the town may want to consider this less costly item.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the project was intended to connect Third Street to Lane Access Road (where the existing sidewalk ends), so individuals could extend their bike ride.

Councilman Emerson stated he agreed the town did not need to spend \$600,000 for the fore-mentioned entrance improvement project. He stated, however, he did feel that entrance to the park needed to be cleaned up/improve). He shared his favor in the proposed Walk/bike Trail Extension CIP Project for that area.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, with a definitive plan, there was no assurance the \$60,000 would be enough to complete the project, but that amount was allocated in the draft budget for this project.

Mr. George referenced the English Park sign, across from the Booker Building. He stated he felt the sign and landscape around it also needed to be updated.

Mr. Coggsdale reminded Council there were no funds allocated in the draft budget for the suggested project.

Councilman Mitchell stated he did not feel the English Park sign/sign area was in that bad of shape. He suggested, since there were no funds currently allocated for the project, to postpone the sign improvement area until later.

Mr. Coggsdale stated there may be improvements that could be done through "maintenance" by the Public Works Department to improve the esthetics of the sign.

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Councilman Higginbotham suggested the sign improvement project be considered for a Boy Scout/Eagle Scout project.

There were no further comments from Council in regard to this item.

Mr. Coggsdale reminded Council there was \$1.4 million currently in the town's Reserve Fund. He stated, if the FY2022 Draft Budget and CIP were approved as it was at that time, the town would need to transfer \$737,830 from the Reserve Fund to balance the proposed budget.

Mr. George asked if that figure included 500,000 for the theatre restoration project.

Mr. Coggsdale confirmed it did. He stated the draft budget at that time included every action taken by Council to that date.

Mayor Mattox asked for confirmation, if Council approved the draft budget to that point, there would be approximately \$700,000 remaining in the town's Reserve Fund.

Mr. Coggsdale confirmed the Mayor was correct.

- English Park – Additional Restrooms

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale reminded Council this project was also in the FY2022 Draft Budget/CIP. He stated the restrooms were proposed for the newer section of English Park, beyond the Rt.29 Business Bridge.

Councilman Emerson stated, with the recent and ongoing improvements the town was making to that area of the park, he felt the restrooms would also be a nice addition.

Councilman George stated he felt the restrooms would be a “good fit” for that section of the park, as well as an asset for any future plans, such as relocating the practice fields from the front of English park to the back, newer section of the park.

Mayor Mattox asked for Council's input on whether or not to keep the proposed restrooms in the draft budget.

Councilman Mitchell referenced the \$124,000 estimated cost for the new restrooms. He stated he hoped the project would come in under that budget.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if there was electricity already available in the area proposed for the new restrooms.

Mr. George stated there was existing electricity and sewer availability, but no water.

Mr. Mitchell asked if the town had estimates for running water to the restrooms, to which Mr. Coggsdale stated they did.

All Council members were in consensus to leave the English Park Additional Restrooms Project in the FY2022 CIP Budget.

- English Park Practice Fields Modification Project

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale referenced this CIP project and reminded Council there was \$25,000 in FY2022 allocated for the plan and design phase of the project; as well as, \$1.4 million allocated in FY2024 for implementing/completing it.

Mr. Coggsdale asked for Council's input and direction on whether the plan would stay the same and the project would remain in the draft budget, or if Council desired any changes to the proposed project.

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Councilman George informed Council, when the LPDA originally proposed the plan with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, the project consisted of a “clover leaf” design for ball fields, with lights and tons of extra “bells and whistles”.

Mr. George stated he did not feel that Altavista had a need for such an elaborate plan. He informed Council the fields had already been graded and were “in good shape”. He stated drainage issues were corrected by the previous owners (Campbell County).

Mr. George stated any additional work that needed to be done to the fields, such as mowing the grass and adding dirt here and there, would be considerably less than the original budget of \$1.4 million.

Councilman Mitchell suggested removing the \$1.4 million from the FY2024 CIP Budget for this project. He also referenced the \$25,000, initially allocated for the plan and design of the project’s larger scope of work. He suggested utilizing the \$25,000 for completion of constructing the fields for use as “practice fields”.

Councilman Higginbotham shared his favor with both of Councilman Mitchell’s suggestions. He stated he felt the Altavista area was only in need of practice fields.

All Town Council members (present) were in unanimous consensus to remove the \$1.4 million, initially allocated in the FY2024 Draft CIP Budget for construction of baseball/softball fields in the back section of English Park.

Town Council was also in consensus to re-allocate the \$25,000 in the FY2022 CIP Budget, originally allocated for plan/design of the fore-mentioned project, or use on completing the construction of “practice fields” in the back section of English Park.

Mayor Mattox referenced the hour of evening being close to 9PM. He asked Council if they wished to continue, or come back and complete their budget discussion on another day.

Councilman Higginbotham asked how many more items were there to be discussed.

Mr. Coggsdale stated he only had one more item for consideration, unless Council had additional items they wished to discuss or address.

Council was in consensus to continue their budget discussion that evening.

- English Park – Dog Park Project Consideration

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale referenced the Dog Park Project. He stated, with Council’s recent discussion of moving the project from FY2026 to FY2022 in the Draft CIP, he asked for clarification/confirmation on whether or not Council was definite on that decision.

Councilman Mitchell stated he did not feel the Town of Altavista needed a dog park. He suggested “tagging” certain areas in the park, allowing dogs not to require a leash.

Mr. Mitchell also referenced the \$70,000 estimated cost for the project. He stated he did not feel that a dog park should cost that amount of money.

Councilman Higginbotham referenced a dog park he was involved with building in Warrenton, VA. He stated the town spent \$65,000 completing an elaborate dog park.

Mr. Higginbotham stated he also agreed that amount of money was too much to spend on a dog park for such a small town as Altavista. He suggested the town consider a smaller version of the plan for the proposed dog park.

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Councilman George referenced the dog park located in Chatham, VA. He stated he did not ever see anyone using the dog park when he passed by.

Mayor Mattox stated he knew of someone that passed the Chatham Dog Park every day in traveling to and from work, and they also stated that dog park was barely used.

Vice Mayor Bennett stated the dog park in Chatham was near the highway, not near a neighborhood that may utilize the dog park. He stated he knew of other, well populated areas that have dog parks, and they were used regularly.

Mr. Bennett reminded Council the Town of Altavista had restrictions for dogs in the park where they were unable to “run free” and get adequate exercise. He stated he felt the restriction, and not having a dog park, may deter citizens from visiting the park.

Mr. Bennett stated he did agree the estimated (\$70,000) cost for the dog park was too much. He suggested the town get quotes for a “chain-linked fence” that may cost less.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale reminded Council that he lives inside town limits. He informed Council that he had to build a fenced-in area in his own backyard so his dog would have somewhere to run and get the exercise he needed.

Mayor Mattox asked Council for their decision on whether or not to leave or remove the dog park from the proposed CIP.

Mr. Coggsdale reminded Council the 4’tall by 20’length chain-linked fence installed on a recent town project cost the town \$5,500.

Councilman George stated, as a member of Altavista’s Parks & Recreation Committee, he would discuss the project with the committee, and gather additional information for where the dog park may be placed and determine a more detailed cost estimate for Council’s consideration.

Mr. Coggsdale suggested Council remove the dog park project from the current draft CIP (FY2022), in order to allow Town Staff to investigate if there may be a grant available to help fund the project.

Town Council was in consensus to remove the English Park Dog Park Project from FY2022’s CIP Draft Budget; and place the item in the FY2023 CIP.

There was also a consensus of Council to allow Town Staff to investigate if there were grants available to help fund the English Park Dog Park Project.

- Councilman Higginbotham referenced the Vista Theatre Revitalization Project, listed in the FY2022 Draft CIP. He suggested Council consider raising the funds allocated for this project in the FY2022 Draft Budget, from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, whether the amount was raised this year, or the amount was separated over a couple of years, the funds would still come from the town’s Reserve Fund.

Councilman Mitchell agreed the cost to renovate the old theatre would cost more than \$500,000. He suggested allocating \$500,000 in FY2022’s budget, and subsequently in FY2023, FY2024, and FY2025, making it a four year project.

Mayor Mattox reminded Council that any grant approval consideration was dependent upon the town’s ability to show they had the funds to “match” the grant. He stated this was the reason the initial \$200,000 budget was raised to the current \$500,000.

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Councilman Emerson stated he was not in favor of this project being deferred over four years.

Mr. Coggsdale reminded Council of another town project. He stated, if a grant was received for that project, the town would need to have \$400,000 available as a match.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, at that time, Town Council needed to take into consideration all of the current projects being proposed and “prioritize” which projects they wished to move forward for the FY2022 Draft Budget and CIP.

Vice Mayor Bennett referenced the Academy of Fine Arts in Lynchburg, VA. He stated the revitalization project relied heavily on “private funding”. He stated the town may have to consider doing the same for the Vista Theatre Revitalization Project.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the town may need to get creative with funding this project, such as considering the possibility of borrowing funds to complete the project.

Mr. Coggsdale reminded Council there was also the possibility of the town’s 2021 fiscal year ending with a surplus of funds. He stated the amount would not be clear until the end of the fiscal year (June 30th).

Town Council was in consensus to raise the allocated funds in the FY2022 CIP Budget from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

There were no additional comments from Council at that time in regard to the FY2022 Draft Budget and FY2022-2026 Draft CIP.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, at that time, Town Staff was requesting authorization from Council to schedule public hearings, in regard to the draft budget, draft CIP, and utility rate increase for FY2022.

Councilman Higginbotham made a motion, seconded by Councilman George, to approve Town Staff’s request and authorize the Town Manager to schedule the necessary public hearings during Council’s next regular meeting, Tuesday, May 11th, in regard to the FY2022 Budget, the FY2022-2026 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and the FY2022 Utility Rate Change/Increase.

The Town Manager asked for Council’s input on whether to keep the public hearing’s starting time at 6PM, or change the starting time to 6:30PM. He stated public hearings have previously been advertised for six o’clock, but due to agenda protocol, they rarely start at six o’clock.

All Council members were in consensus to change public hearing starting times to 6:30PM.

Councilman Higginbotham amended his motion to include changing the start time for future Town of Altavista Public Hearings to 6:30PM, during Regular Council Meetings.

Motion carried.

VOTE:

Mr. Timothy George	Yes
Mr. Jay Higginbotham	Yes
Mayor Mike Mattox	Yes
Vice Mayor Reggie Bennett	Yes
Mr. Tracy Emerson	Yes
Mr. Wayne Mitchell	Yes

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9. Reports and Communication

- A. Town Manager's Report
- B. Departmental Reports
- C. Council Monthly Calendars

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated the Town Manager Report, Departmental Reports, and Council Calendars were delivered to Town Council at an earlier date with their April Council Meeting Pre-Packet.

Mr. Coggsdale stated he and Town Staff would be happy to answer any questions Council may have in regard to the monthly reports, to which there were none.

10. Matters from Council

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any additional concerns or items for discussion.

- Vice Mayor Bennett asked if Council needed to return on the upcoming Thursday to continue the budget discussion.

Mayor Mattox stated all matters had been discussed; and with Council's last "motion" to authorize the necessary public hearings, indicated Council agreed to move forward. He stated Council did not have to return for discussion until the next scheduled meeting on May 11th.

11. Closed Session

This item was conducted earlier in the meeting.

12. Adjournment

Mayor Mattox asked if there was anything else to bring before Council or any additional comments or concerns from Council, to which there were none.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05PM.

Michael Mattox, Mayor

J. Waverly Coggsdale III, Clerk