

Town Council Regular Meeting March 9, 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 March 9, 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
Dr. Scott Lowman
Mayor Michael Mattox
Mr. Wayne Mitchell

Town Staff present:

Mr. J. Waverly Coggsdale III, Town Manager
Ms. Amanda Owens, Assistant 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
Mr. George Sandridge, AOT Main Street Coordinator
Mr. John Eller, Town Attorney
Mrs. Crystal Hailey, Administration

Absent: Ms. Sharon Williams, Community Development Director

Altavista Utilities Director Tom Fore gave the invocation.

Mayor Mike Mattox led the meeting in the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Agenda Adoption

Mayor Mattox informed Town Council of an addition/amendment to Section #7 "New Business" of the March 9, 2021 Regular Council Meeting Agenda.

- #7E. Approval Request for Town Council's Strategic Planning Meeting Schedule

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns in regard to the proposed March 9th, 2021 Council Meeting Agenda, to which there were none.

Councilman Mitchell made a motion, seconded by Councilman Emerson, to approve Council's March 9th Meeting Agenda as amended.

Motion carried.

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

2. Recognitions and Presentations

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale informed Council of two personnel changes since February 1st, 2021.

- New Hire: Mathew Moore Public Works Maintenance Worker 2/08/21
- Departure: Kyle Haskins Public Works Maintenance Worker 2/26/21

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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 March 9, 2021 Council Meeting Agenda.

- Ms. Bettie Moorman, 900 16th Street, came before Council with two concerns.

- (1) Ms. Moorman stated she was continuously having issues with neighborhood cats coming onto her porch and destroying her patio chair's seat cushions.

Ms. Moorman informed Council, when she called Campbell County Animal Control (CCAC) for assistance, they told her she would be responsible for catching any of the cats, if she wished to do so, which meant she would have to go to their Rustburg office and pick up a cage, and deliver the cat back to them herself.

Ms. Moorman stated she was too old to have to do such a thing. She asked if there was anything the Town of Altavista could do to help her with her situation.

Mayor Mattox asked the Town Manager to investigate this matter further by contacting the Campbell County Animal Control office for details of their rules and regulations regarding these types of situations. He informed Ms. Moorman the Town Manager would get back to her with their response.

Mayor Mattox offered Ms. Moorman the use of his cage anytime she needed it.

Councilman Emerson informed the Town Manager that the Campbell County Public Safety Department was responsible for the Animal Control Division. He stated that would be the phone number to call for information regarding their procedures.

Councilman Mitchell stated he felt Town Council had an obligation to “stand behind” staff when making such requests.

Councilman George asked Ms. Moorman if the cats she was referring to were strays, or did they belong to her neighbors.

Ms. Moorman stated a little of both. She stated one of her neighbors owned five or more cats. She stated, although she was the only person at the meeting that evening, she was not the only person in her neighborhood having trouble with this issue.

Mayor Mattox asked the Town Manager, Waverly Coggsdale, how soon he could have an answer for Ms. Moorman.

Mr. Coggsdale stated he would contact the Campbell County Public Safety Office as soon as possible in regard to understanding their protocols in these matters.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, as for Altavista's “regulations” in regard to cats, he was unaware of any, but would review Town Policy for reference to the matter and update Council at a later date.

Councilman Emerson stated, if the Town Manager received a response from Animal Control that Ms. Moorman was not satisfied with, he suggested she contact the Campbell County Administrator, Frank Rogers for further assistance.

Mayor Mattox suggested the Town Manager contact Frank Rogers for Ms. Moorman on this matter.

Mr. Coggsdale confirmed he would do so.

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- (2) Ms. Moorman stated she had another concern within her neighborhood. She stated she felt her neighborhood was beginning to have an issue with drug users. She stated when she opens her windows to get fresh air, she could smell the aroma of marijuana.

Ms. Moorman stated she knew that everyone needed a place to live, but good citizens such as herself also deserved a nice and safe place to live. She stated she had heard people coming and going all hours of the night on her street.

Ms. Moorman stated she was concerned the drug users and/or dealers would ruin her neighborhood. She asked if there was something that could be done before the situation got out of hand.

Mayor Mattox suggested to Ms. Moorman that she reach out to Altavista's Police Chief, Tommy Merricks, with her concerns on this matter. He told Ms. Moorman that she could also contact him anytime she needed to.

Ms. Moorman thanked the Mayor and Town Council for their time and consideration of her concerns.

Mayor Mattox stated he felt it was good for the community and the town to work "as a team" to address such matters.

- Mr. Louis Scicli, Wildwood Estates, Lynchburg, thanked Town Council for allowing him to formally introduce himself to the Altavista community.

Mr. Scicli informed everyone that he was running for the Delegate position of Virginia's 59th District. He stated he was raised in Lynchburg and lived in Virginia his entire life. He stated, prior to running for office, he was in law enforcement and a firefighter.

Mayor Mattox wished Mr. Scicli good luck with his candidacy and thanked him for attending the meeting that evening.

There were no other citizens to speak that evening.

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)

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

- Mr. Sandridge referenced Altavista's desire to expand their downtown district's boundary line. He informed Council the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) recently approved the town's submission for the boundary line expansion.

Mr. Sandridge stated AOT would officially complete the Altavista Downtown District boundary line expansion through their FY2021-2022 Work Plan. He informed Council the plan would be implemented within the next few months.

Mr. Sandridge stated, once complete, businesses between Pittsylvania and Charlotte Avenues would have access to more opportunities as being part of the downtown district.

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- Mr. Sandridge referenced Altavista's Downtown Business Investment Grant (formally Altavista's Pop-up Program). He stated the program seemed to be popular in recent months, so AOT decided to continue offering the program.

Mr. Sandridge stated nineteen individuals contacted him since October 2021 in regard to the program, and one business recently utilized the program as a startup resource.

Mr. Sandridge informed Council that AOT recently applied with the DHCD for a Downtown Investment Grant in the amount of \$20,000 to help fund and expand Altavista's Downtown Business Investment Grant Program.

Mr. Sandridge stated AOT would find out results of the application near June 2021.

- Mr. Sandridge concluded his updates by referencing a new mobile app for Altavista's Downtown District. He informed Council the Distrx App was part of a growing national network of Main Street communities.

Mr. Sandridge stated a flyer was recently sent by AOT to all of Altavista's downtown businesses to explain the services and advantages of them being on the mobile app. He stated the signup process was easy and free for the businesses to be a part of.

Mr. Sandridge stated the mobile app was available for both Android and Apple operating systems. He stated the app was a great way to get a business' information out to the public, and especially useful during such times as the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which implemented multiple restrictions to businesses.

Mr. Sandridge asked if Council had any questions in regard to the Distrx App.

Councilman Mitchell asked if the Distrx App was AOT centric or for the entire Town of Altavista.

Mr. Sandridge stated it was designed for use by businesses of downtown districts. He stated AOT would be managing the app for Altavista's downtown businesses.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked how a business would utilize the app.

Mr. Sandridge stated the app could be used to showcase what a business has to offer, as well as, their location, hours of operation, and website/social media page, if they have one. He stated a business could also use the app to highlight promotions and/or offer coupons.

Mr. Sandridge stated the Distrx App notifies a user when they are in a locality's downtown district and highlights the shops/businesses within that district. He reminded everyone that Distrx was a national app, and stated this was a great tool to utilize when visiting a locality for the first time.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked how to find the app to download.

Mr. Sandridge informed everyone the Distrx App could be found in the "App Store" on their mobile devices, for both Android and Apple users.

Mayor Mattox and Council thanked Mr. Sandridge for the AOT updates.

B. Altavista Area Chamber of Commerce

Mayor Mattox stated the Chamber would not be present that evening, but would be at Council's March Work Session to deliver their updates.

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5. Consent Agenda

- A. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes
 - o February 9th, 2021 Regular Meeting
 - o February 23rd, 2021 Work Session
- B. Acceptance of Monthly Financial Reports
 - o February 2021 Revenue And Expenditures
- C. Approval of Reappointment to Recreation Committee
 - o Reverend Ed Soto - three (3) year term to expire March 31, 2024

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions, comments, or concerns pertaining to the March 9th, 2021 Consent Agenda, to which there were none.

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

Motion carried.

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

6. Public Hearing(s)

There were no public hearings scheduled for the March 9th, 2021 Council Meeting.

7. New Business

A. Altavista Community Transit System (ACTS) – Trolley Bid Award Consideration

Background:

The purchase of a trolley for use by the Altavista Community Transit System (ACTS) was approved as part of the FY2021 CIP and was authorized as a replacement vehicle by the Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). There was an extensive delay in getting the approval from DRPT due to COVID-19, and the delay in approval of their six-year plan, as well as the requirement that the vehicle be classified as Altoona tested and a mini-trolley rather than a large trolley. The invitation for bids was duly advertised and one bid was received. The bidder, Double K, dba Hometown Trolley, submitted a bid of \$142,138. The bidder was able to negotiate an agreement with Sonny Merryman (local) for any future service needs. The bid package, which is over 200 pages in length, includes all the requisite federally required documentation and is available for review in the Altavista Finance Director's office.

Altavista's Finance Director Tobie Shelton and Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens updated Council in regard to this item.

Mrs. Shelton stated, typically, federal funding was 80% and local was 20%; however, due to the special request for the mini trolley, as opposed to the usual body-on-chassis (BOC), federal funding would be 80% of the usual/customary BOC style bus (\$62,080), and the remainder (\$80,058) would be funded with local funds, which was \$35,838 higher than the amount approved in the FY2021 Budget. She stated the current BOC cost was \$77,600, which would require \$15,520 of local funds.

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Mrs. Shelton stated, with the received bid from Double K of \$142,138, federal funding would be \$62,080, leaving \$80,058 as the town's (local) contribution.

Mrs. Shelton stated, at that time, staff was seeking direction from Council in regard to the bid received for the mini trolley, which was previously approved by Council and in the current FY 2021 Capital Improvement Plan.

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

Councilman Emerson asked how much money did the town initially budget for the trolley.

Mrs. Shelton stated there was \$44,220 allocated in the FY2021 Budget for this CIP item, which was estimated at \$36,000 more than its initial cost and town responsibility.

Mr. Emerson suggested the town consider purchasing a "used" trolley (if available) for trial purposes, before spending such a large amount on a new trolley.

Mrs. Shelton stated there were used full-size trolleys available for purchase, but she was unsure if there were any "used" mini trolleys available. She stated the town decided on the smaller, mini trolley so transit drivers would not be required to have a CDL license.

Mr. Emerson asked, if the town chose to purchase a used mini trolley, would the town be fully responsible for the cost of gas to run the trolley.

Mrs. Shelton stated the town would have to use a transit vehicle (bus or trolley) on the town's daily transit route in order to receive DRPT funding, including operational costs.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked, if the town continued with the purchase of a new trolley for daily transit use, could the town retain the trolley at the end of its 4 year term with the town, and be used for special events only, or would the town be obligated to return the trolley.

Mrs. Shelton stated she was unsure, but would investigate and get back with Council on the matter. She reminded Council, when a transit bus was at the end of its term with the town, the town sells the bus, but was only allowed to keep \$4,999 from the sale of the bus(s), with the remaining profit going back into the Federal DRPT Program.

Mr. Bennett shared his favor with the town moving forward with purchasing a new trolley as budgeted. He stated at the end of the trolley's daily-use term with the town, suggested the town keep the trolley for use during special events.

Mr. Bennett referenced the original discussion by Council in regard to the town purchasing a trolley for transit use during this replacement cycle over a traditional bus. He stated he was confused about the difference in the two estimated costs for a trolley.

Mrs. Shelton, confirmed by Mr. Coggsdale, stated the initial cost estimate was for a full size trolley, but due to the town only needing a 15 passenger trolley (for non-CDL drivers), the price was reduced.

Mrs. Shelton stated, no matter which transit vehicle the town chose (bus, trolley, or mini trolley) the DRPT would only contribute 80% of a BOC bus, which was \$62,080.

Mayor Mattox stated, the decision before Council was whether or not they wished to move forward with the submitted bid of \$142,138 for a new trolley, which would require a 20% town match of \$80,058; or purchase the usual BOC bus for daily transit use and consider purchasing a used mini trolley for use only during special events.

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Councilman Emerson stated, he did not know the cost range for used trolleys, but he was in favor of the town purchasing a bus, as usual. He stated he would also like for staff to investigate options for used mini trolleys and their cost, for the town to consider for use during special events.

Mr. Emerson stated he realized the town would be fully responsible for the fuel cost of a used mini trolley. He stated he felt the overall cost savings would justify “trying out” a used trolley over a new one.

Councilman Higginbotham asked Mr. Emerson what he meant by the town being responsible for fuel cost.

Mrs. Shelton stated, if the town chose to purchase a used mini trolley, which would not be through federal DRPT funding, the town would be responsible for all maintenance of the mini trolley, including the fuel cost to run it.

Mrs. Shelton stated, even though ACTS usually budgeted to replace a transit vehicle every two years, she reminded Council the DRPT had a replacement requirement that a transit vehicle needed to have at least 100,000 miles accumulated before replacement consideration. She stated there was a two year cycle between the two town-owned vehicles, with each only being considered for replacement every four years.

Mrs. Shelton stated a “new” transit vehicle normally had a four year life expectancy before it needed to be replaced, therefore, the town would own the fore-mentioned new trolley for at least four years.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he felt the Town of Altavista was on the cusp of having something different and unique. He stated, however, running a gas-powered trolley fulltime would burn more fuel than if it was diesel or natural gas. He suggested the town also consider investigating whether or not “electric” trolleys were available.

Mr. Higginbotham stated he felt a trolley would only be popular in summer months. He stated his appreciation with Mr. Emerson’s suggestion of trying out a used trolley before purchasing a new one. He shared his favor in that option as well.

Councilman George asked if the new trolley being proposed was available in diesel fuel consumption instead of gas.

Mrs. Shelton answered, stating the new mini trolley was not available as diesel powered.

Mr. Higginbotham referenced the size of the new mini trolley. He asked how many passengers the trolley would hold.

Mrs. Shelton stated, due to a larger vehicle requiring a driver to have a CDL license, the town opted to go with a “mini” trolley, which would carry up to 15 passengers.

Councilman Lowman shared his favor with the town purchasing a BOC bus and investigating the available options for a used trolley.

Mr. Lowman asked what the cost of a new BOC bus would be.

Mrs. Shelton stated the cost of a new transit bus was \$77,600, with a 20%/\$15,520 requirement from the town.

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Councilman Emerson referenced the FY2021 budgeted amount of \$106,000 for this project. He stated, if the town opted to purchase a BOC bus, there would be a significant amount of savings in the budget, which would allow for the town's consideration of purchasing a used trolley.

Mrs. Shelton stated, if Council desired, she would be happy to contact Hometown Trolley and inquire if they had any used trolleys for sale.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale asked what the expiration date was for the submitted bid by Hometown Trolley in regard to the new mini trolley.

Mrs. Shelton, confirmed by Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens, informed Council the bid from Hometown Trolley was "good" through Friday, March 26th.

Mayor Mattox stated the bid's expiration date allowed enough time for this item to be discussed further at the March 23rd Work Session, if they desired.

Mayor Mattox asked Council for their final thoughts on this item, in order to give Town Staff direction on how to move forward.

Councilman Mitchell stated his concerns with a used trolley. He stated, if used, the town would not know of any previous issues and would be entirely responsible for the maintenance of the vehicle (trolley).

Councilman Lowman stated, if purchased from a locality, he felt confident the trolley would have been well taken care of, with regular scheduled maintenance.

Mr. Mitchell shared his favor in having a "new" trolley, built to the town's specifications. He stated, after its four-year fulltime service, the town could then retain the trolley as the desired part-time option for special events.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked how much the town spends annually on fuel costs for ACTS.

Mrs. Shelton stated, with a 50/50 match with the DRPT, the town's annual cost to cover the ACTS fuel consumption was \$15,000.

Councilman Higginbotham made a motion, seconded by Councilman Emerson, for the town to purchase a BOC bus with the funds allocated in the FY2021 CIP Budget for a new transit vehicle. The motion also included Council's approval to allow Town Staff to explore the available options for a used trolley for part-time, special events use, taking into consideration the requirements and suggested amenities desired by Council.

Motion carried.

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

B. Employee Health Insurance – Consideration of Renewal

Background:

The Local Choice (TLC) health benefits program was created by the General Assembly in 1989, and has been providing health coverage to local jurisdictions since 1990.

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The program is managed by the Virginia Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM). Medical, behavioral health, dental, and routine vision benefits are covered in the plans offered, as well as, a wellness program. Annually, premiums are rated and presented to each jurisdiction for renewal consideration/approval.

Altavista Finance Director Tobie Shelton stated The Local Choice provided the Town of Altavista with its health benefits program/ health coverage for town employees.

Mrs. Shelton informed Council, for the FY2022 plan year, rates for the Town of Altavista were decreasing by .8%; a savings of almost \$4,000 compared to FY2021.

Mrs. Shelton stated the deadline for renewal was April 1st, therefore, Town Staff was requesting Council's consideration of approval to renew with The Local Choice for the FY2022 plan year, which would begin July 1st, 2021.

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

Councilman Emerson made a motion, seconded by Councilman Mitchell, to approve staff's request to renew the town's health benefits program with The Local Choice for FY2022.

Motion carried.

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

C. Discussion of Ordinance Amendment to Section 86-428 *Regulations for Signs in the DRO*

Background:

Recently, Town Staff received a request from a downtown business requesting approval to install an additional wall sign. Staff reviewed the Town Zoning Ordinance and saw that additional signage was not allowed in the Downtown Revitalization Overlay (DRO) District, as the maximum allowable square footage for signage had already been exceeded. The Altavista Planning Commission and Town Staff reviewed the existing town regulation, and regulations of other Main Street communities, and were of the opinion that additional flexibility was warranted. They were of the opinion there may be cases where additional signage might be needed, and recommend the town's ordinance include a provision which would allow a business to apply for a Special Use Permit, instead of a Variance, in order to exceed the allowable square footage allowed by the existing ordinance.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale informed Council that, in the absence of Community Development Director Sharon Williams, due to a family emergency, Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens would be presenting this item.

Ms. Owens informed Council that the Altavista Planning Commission met on Monday, March 1st, and reviewed various amendments to consider two (2) text amendments to the Town Zoning Ordinance. She stated, at that meeting, the Planning Commission voted to hold a public hearing in regard to this matter on Monday, April 5, 2021; and recommended that Town Council hold their public hearing regarding this matter on April 13, 2021.

Ms. Owens informed Council that Town Attorney John Eller was also present at the Planning Commission meeting, if they had questions about the proposed amendments.

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Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions or concerns in regard to the text amendment and public hearing request, to which there were none.

Vice Mayor Bennett made a motion, seconded by Councilman Emerson, to accept Town Staff's recommendation to advertise and schedule a public hearing for Tuesday, April 13th, in regard to approving the proposed text amendments to Town Zoning Ordinance Section 86-428 *DRO Signage*.

Motion carried.

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

Ms. Owens stated Town Staff would also like Town Council to consider amending the town's process of asking Council for permission to advertise, if a public hearing had already been held by the Planning Commission. She stated it would streamline the public hearing process by one (1) month.

Councilman Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett, to accept Town Staff's recommendation to advertise both public hearings simultaneously of the Planning Commission and Town Council, if the proposed item would be recommended by the Planning Commission to go before Council and thereafter, also needed a public hearing.

Motion carried.

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

D. Discussion of Ordinance Amendment to Authorize a "One Time per Season" Notification for Violations of Section 62-151 *Weed Control*

Background:

As Town Staff continues to improve efforts to abate violations, they discussed a provision of State Code that was not being utilized by the Town. Under Section 15.2-901 *A locality may provide for removal or disposal of trash, cutting of grass, weeds, and running bamboo; penalty in certain counties: a locality can allow one written notice to the owner of record to cover the entire growing season. That initial notice is considered a reasonable notice for the rest of the season.*

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens stated, as grass cutting season was nearing, Town Staff was expecting to see an increase in the number of violations being reported pertaining to tall grass. Ms. Owens stated staff had found, in many cases, there were maintenance violations being repeated at the same address(s).

Ms. Owens stated staff was seeking to amend Altavista's Town Code to allow one notice to cover the entire grass cutting season, as permitted by §15.2-901 of the Code of Virginia.

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Ms. Owens informed Council, in regard to this matter, Town Attorney John Eller also recommended amending Section 62-151B of Altavista's Town Code to read "occupied or vacant", in order to coincide with the Code of Virginia.

Ms. Owens stated, at that time, Town Staff was requesting Town Council consider adopting the proposed provisions to streamline the process by allowing one (1) notice to cover the entire growing season, which would allow staff to immediately abate the next violation without proving another 10-day notice.

Mayor Mattox asked if notices from the town were sent "certified", to which Ms. Owens stated they were.

Ms. Owens stated, if staff's recommendation was accepted, Council would also need to approve scheduling a public hearing for this matter/item.

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any questions or concerns in regard to the proposed text amendment and public hearing request.

Councilman Higginbotham shared his favor with a violation notice covering a 45-60 day span, instead of for an entire grass growing season. He stated this would cover occasions such as vacation, or out of town workers. He stated he would not want a good citizen to receive a fine for their grass being too tall, if they had only been out of town on vacation.

Councilman Mitchell stated he felt staff would take those instances into consideration.

Town Attorney John Eller reminded Council the violation notices were not being advertised in the local paper, but being sent certified to the homeowner. He stated, by signing to receive the certified letter/notice, the homeowner was aware of their violation.

Councilman Emerson stated the majority of the notices were being sent to repeat offenders.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated the proposed amendment was to be used by staff only if necessary. He stated staff would make every effort to contact a homeowner in regard to their violation before implementing a fine.

Councilman George asked the cost of a fine due to non-compliance with the Town Code in regard to a homeowner not keeping their grass below 12 inches.

Ms. Owens stated the fine cost varied, depending on what the contractor charged to cut the grass. She stated the charge was typically around \$85, plus a \$75 administration fee.

Mr. Emerson stated he felt the proposed amendment would simplify the process for Town Staff and not have them be redundant in sending violation notices to the same person/violator multiple times.

Mayor Mattox asked if Council had any additional questions.

Councilman Mitchell referenced the 62-151 Town Ordinance whereas the ordinance refers to vacant or occupied and developed or undeveloped. He asked if that reference included "active construction sites".

Town Attorney John Eller confirmed that it did.

Councilman Emerson made a motion, seconded by Vice Mayor Bennett, to accept staff's recommendation and schedule a public hearing for Tuesday, April 13th in regard to amending Section. 62-151 *Weed Control*, of the Town Code; allowing one violation notice to cover the entire grass-growing season.

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Motion carried.

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

E. Schedule Consideration of a Strategic Planning Session for Town Council

Mayor Mattox asked Council if they had any objection to their planning session being scheduled for Tuesday, March 30th, at 12:00 noon, to which there was none.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, if there was a consensus to accept the proposed date and time, Council would need to make a motion and vote to make the meeting official.

Councilman Higginbotham made a motion, seconded by Councilman Emerson, to approve the date, time, and location for their upcoming Town Council Strategic Planning Session; to be held at the Altavista Train Station on Tuesday, March 31st, at 12:00 noon.

Motion carried.

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

8. Unfinished Business

A. Altavista Outreach and Enrichment (AOE) – English Park “Storybook Walk” Update

Background:

At the September 22, 2020 Town Council Work Session, Council unanimously voted to approve a request by Altavista Outreach and Enrichment: that if they secured funding for the storybook walk, it could be placed in English Park. Grant funding was awarded, and the storybook frames were ordered. A proposed placement/ reading route was shared with Luann Lee. The proposed route would start near the playground and utilize the less traveled foot bridge and path through the orchard, which was away from vehicle traffic, and ending in the picnic area at the start of Eagle Trail.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens informed Council that Town Staff had been working with AOE on this project and Altavista’s Public Works Department had agreed to install the storybook frames in the park after a location within the park had been approved.

Ms. Owens stated there had been some initial consideration to place the storybook frames along the outer rim of the park’s center circle. She stated, due to that area already being constantly busy with sports and other activities, the orchard area was being proposed.

Councilman Emerson asked if the storybook walk would be “interactive”.

Ms. Owens stated it would not. She stated the idea of the storybook walk was for the children to “read” the story as they go along the designated path/reading route.

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Councilman Emerson stated he felt the storybook walk was going to be a great addition to English Park.

Councilman Higginbotham made a motion, seconded by Councilman Mitchell, to accept staff's proposal and approve the storybook walk placement location as presented.

Motion carried.

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

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 March Council Meeting Pre-Packet.

Mr. Coggsdale gave Council an update on a few of the items in his monthly manager's report.

- **Spark Innovation Center:**
Mr. Coggsdale stated he continued to meet weekly with the design team to gather progress reports. He informed Council there had been "scaling and pricing" issues the team was working through. He stated he would update Council again at their March work session.
- **Booker Building Renovation – Floor Rehabilitation:**
Mr. Coggsdale stated, with Council's approval, Public Works Director David Garrett had given the contractor the "green light" to move forward with completing the floor process.

Dalton's Landing Canoe Launch:

Mr. Coggsdale informed Council the contractor was currently completing the in-water work of this project.

Councilman Higginbotham asked if the contractor had been able to "de-water" the designated ramp area in order to complete the in-water work.

Assistant Town Manager Amie Owens stated the contractor/workers were actually in the process of doing so that afternoon.

- **Brownfields Grant Program:**
Mr. Coggsdale stated the town should be receiving a report from this project very soon. He stated he would bring the report to Council for review and discussion at their March Work Session, in preparation of submitting a remediation grant application by April 1st.

Mr. Coggsdale informed Council the town was also able to utilize the Brownfields Grant Program to investigate the possibility of hazardous material at the Spark Innovation Center. He stated, by doing so, the town was able to submit a grant application in the amount of \$50,000 for remediation of that site as well.

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Councilman Mitchell asked why the Spark remediation grant was needed.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the Spark remediation grant involved the facility's roof. He stated the building has old asbestos shingles that needed to be removed.

- Altavista Police Department – Firing Range:
Mr. Coggsdale informed Council that the utility/storage unit had recently been installed on the property, and the APD was currently awaiting the delivery of the main structure.
- Altavista Utility Account Discount Program:
Mr. Coggsdale reminded Council the program started December 1st, 2020, so the effect of the discount, for those who qualified, would be evident on their April 2021 utility bill.

Mr. Coggsdale stated there were 28 out of 35 applicants that qualified for the program. He stated the remaining 7 applicants did not submit all of the necessary paperwork to be qualified by the initial start date. He stated staff continues to work with those individuals to acquire the needed paperwork to be eligible by the next billing cycle.

Mayor Mattox asked for the amount of the utility discount.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the amount was \$5.85 per quarter, which was 30% of the base fee.

Mr. Coggsdale stated he and Town Staff would be happy to answer questions from Council in regard to any of the town's current and/or ongoing projects.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Council if they had any questions for the Town Manager or Town Staff in regard to their March reports/updates.

- Councilman Mitchell referenced the observation deck/river overlook located on Eagle Trail in English Park. He stated it looked great. He stated multiple citizens have shared with him their favor in the new overlook and the town's trail system.

Mr. Mitchell asked when the "furniture" would be ready and placed on the overlook.

Mr. Mitchell also referenced the Connection Trail between Green Hill Cemetery and Eagle Trail. He asked when trail name and directional signs would be placed on the trails.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, in regard to trail signs, the source the town was initially planning to use was no longer available. He stated he was in the process of locating a new source to complete the project.

Mr. Coggsdale stated Altavista Public Works Director David Garrett could offer information in regard to the overlook "furniture".

Mr. Garrett informed Council that two picnic tables, as previously discussed and approved, had been ordered and were in the process of being built.

Mr. Coggsdale asked Council if they had any desire for additional furniture/amenity items for the overlook.

Councilman Emerson referenced a previous discussion by Council regarding potential furniture items for the overlook. He stated he thought there had been a consensus for at least five or six Adirondack chairs to also be located on the overlook deck.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, if Council desired having the Adirondack chairs, a budget would need to be established for the additional furniture.

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Mayor Mattox asked if the chairs would be bolted to the deck.

Mr. Emerson stated the chairs were heavy and he was not concerned the chairs would be stolen or damaged very easily.

Councilman George referenced the park benches located throughout English Park that were able to be purchased in honor or memory of someone. He stated he would be interested in purchasing one for the Eagle Trail Overlook, if Council favored that type of furniture for the site.

Councilman Higginbotham reminded Council, when forming the concrete sides of the overlook, there was also a concrete bench constructed on the front side of the structure.

Mr. Higginbotham stated he felt the Adirondack chairs may be easier to move around on the deck if needed/desired.

Councilman Emerson stated he felt there was opportunities all through the trail system to place additional picnic tables, if funds allowed.

Councilman George referenced the Jenks Fund, directly designated for use in the back section of English Park, such as the Eagle Trail area. He stated, with the town receiving additional contributions to that fund recently, he suggested using it for this project.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked the estimated cost of an Adirondack chair.

Councilman Emerson stated the chairs could be made from wood or even composite decking boards. He stated the cost would be between \$250-300.

Vice Mayor Bennett asked if Council wanted to wait the length of time associated with the chairs being built, or move forward with purchasing the chairs for a quicker delivery.

All Council members were in consensus to purchase chairs already made.

Mr. Coggsdale asked if it was Council's desire to use the Jenks Fund to purchase the chairs.

Mayor Mattox shared his favor with utilizing the Jenks Fund to purchase six Adirondack chairs, and suggested Council place a "not to exceed" amount of \$3,000 on the project.

All Council members were in consensus to do so.

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

10. Matters from Council

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

- Councilman Mitchell referenced the process in which Town Staff brings an item to Council with an associated budget estimate. He stated on numerous occasions the cost of a project comes in over the initial estimate.

Mr. Mitchell suggested Council consider establishing a process for Town Staff to create a "contingency plan" for when this happens.

Mayor Mattox stated he agreed with Mr. Mitchell. He suggested staff also make Council aware of when a potential grant may require a "town match" for a project.

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Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, right now (due to rising material costs during the COVID-19 pandemic), some of the budgets from recent projects had been underestimated.

Mr. Coggsdale stated that staff would continue to analyze the situation and plan for the possibility of needing a contingency, in order to produce “better numbers”.

- Councilman Emerson stated he and Councilman George attended a recent Altavista Fire Company (AFC) meeting. He informed Council the AFC indicated they had an old fire truck, due to be taken out of service soon, that they would be happy for the town to use as a display at Altavista’s new Spark Innovation Center.

Mr. Emerson stated, rather than the town paying for an old fire truck, he suggested Council allow the Town Manager to contact AFC Chief John Tucker for more details of the fire truck and its potential for the desired use.

Mayor Mattox asked for Council’s input on Councilman Emerson’s suggestion.

All Council members were in consensus to accept Councilman Emerson’s recommendation and allow the Town Manager to contact AFC Chief Tucker.

- Councilman Emerson then went on to reference the town’s large and growing trail system. He asked Council to consider supplying directional maps at the town’s parks and trail entrances for visitors to map out their path to each location.

Mayor Mattox stated he felt having visitor maps showcasing the town and its parks and trails was a great idea.

Vice Mayor Bennett suggested having a stationary “map board” that highlighted where a person was, as well as, informing them of the other parks and trails in town.

Mr. Emerson suggested also having distance markers on the trails/trail signs.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, if Council desired, staff could work on the idea when working on the fore-mentioned trail signage, and bring the gathered information back to Council at a later meeting.

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

- Councilman Emerson also referenced the town’s recent purchase of the building formally known as the Vista Theatre. He asked how soon the town would have full possession of the building, in order for Council to take a “walk-through” of the inside.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated the town’s contract for this purchase states the town would take full possession by the end of March. He stated, at that point, the town would be able to enter the building.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, if Council desired, they could arrive an hour early for one of their meetings and take a “field trip” to the building for a walk-through.

Mr. Coggsdale informed Council that he had been in discussions with one of the town’s on-call engineers in regard to the old theatre building. He stated the firm would conduct an “assessment” of the building and give the town an estimate of what the renovation cost might be, which would help Council during the budget process.

- Vice Mayor Bennett referenced the Altavista Splash Pad located in English Park. He asked if the town would be able to open the splash pad that summer (2021).

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Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated the town was not allowed to open the splash pad until the Governor of Virginia released the restrictions to splash pads. He stated, at that time, the restrictions were still in place, therefore, the splash pad remained closed.

Mr. Bennett stated when swimming pools were allowed to open the previous year (2020), he thought that also included splash pads.

Mr. Coggsdale informed Council that splash pads were specifically named separate in the Governor's Executive Order, and were currently not allowed to open.

- At that time, Mayor Mattox, along with Council, wished the Town Manager, Waverly Coggsdale, a happy birthday.

Mr. Coggsdale thanked everyone for the well wishes.

- Mayor Mattox stated he would like for the Town of Altavista to have a "brag sheet" in regard to its housing and properties available for sale or development.

Mayor Mattox stated people were starting to leave cities and moving to small towns like Altavista in favor of increased safety and a more family friendly atmosphere. He stated he felt the town should advertise its strengths and assets in order to appeal to new comers.

Mayor Mattox asked Town Staff to work on this project (a Brag Sheet for Altavista) and send it to potential developers.

- Councilman Higginbotham referenced the town's newly acquired old theatre building, located on Main Street in Altavista. He suggested Town Staff acquire quotes from each of the town's multiple on-call firms, not from only one.

Councilman Emerson suggested staff also contact Gretchen Clarke, Pittsylvania County Historical Society, for other quote sources as well.

Town Manager Waverly Coggsdale stated, in reference to Mr. Higginbotham's suggestion, staff would asked for quotes from each on-call firm. He stated, while they all have structural expertise, one or more may have more experience with historic buildings such as the theatre, in terms of a design aspect.

Mr. Coggsdale stated, when dealing with a multifaceted project, firms tend to outsource aspects of a project they are not familiar with. He stated the project becomes a team effort.

Mr. Coggsdale stated the on-call firms would also need to have a walkthrough of the building, in order to offer the town a close estimate of what the renovation would cost.

- Councilman George referenced the Cemetery Connection Trail that runs between Green Hill Cemetery and Eagle Trail in English Park. He stated there had been some "drainage issues" realized in the past few months that may need to be addressed with additional drain pipe on the trail.

Councilman Higginbotham stated he may have a resource for some used "slope drain pipe". He asked Public Works Director David Garrett if 12" pipe would be sufficient.

Mr. George suggested the work be done while the trail was currently dry.

- Councilman Lowman referenced Eagle Trail in English Park. He stated there was a spot on the trail, near the cliffs, where an underground spring had popped up and flooded the sides of the trail. He asked staff to investigate the issue.

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Public Works Director David Garrett informed Council the location where Mr. Lowman was referring to was due to his department conducting “right-of-way” work for a sewer line, which caused the natural drainage of the area to be blocked.

Mr. Garrett stated the Public Works Department would be rerouting the drainage so that excess water would no longer be an issue.

There were no additional comments or concerns from Council.

Mayor Mattox thanked everyone for attending the March 9th Council Meeting. He also thanked the Town Manager, Assistant Town Manager, and all Town Department Directors for the work they do for the Town of Altavista, especially during the “budget process”.

11. Closed Session

Vice Mayor Bennett opened the Closed Session meeting.

DATE: Tuesday March 9, 2021

I move that 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)(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.

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

Motion carried.

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

Council went into Closed Session at 7:28 PM.

Notice was given that Council was back in regular session at 8:05 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;

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.

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

There were no actions taken during Council's March 9th Closed Session.

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 8:06 PM.

Michael Mattox, Mayor

J. Waverly Coggsdale III, Clerk