

**Town of Urbanna
Town Council
Work Session
Council Chambers-390 Virginia St. Suite B
March 9, 2023**

CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Members of Council

Present

Mayor Bill Goldsmith
Marjorie Austin
Larry Chowning
Alana Courtney
Merri Hanson-via zoom-joined at 7:20pm
Beth Justice
Sandy Sturgill

Others Present

Garth Wheeler-Town Administrator
Roy Kime-Zoning Administrator
Martha Rodenburg-Town Clerk
Michele Hutton-Town Treasurer
Andrea Erard-via zoom
Tom Chillemi-Southside Sentinel-via zoom
Members of the public

Mayor Goldsmith called the meeting to order at 6:59pm
All present said the Pledge of Allegiance

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilmember Austin made a motion to approve the agenda as presented

Councilmember Sturgill seconded

Austin, Chowning, Courtney, Justice, Sturgill, and Goldsmith voted yes

Motion passed 6-0

PUBLIC COMMENT & PUBLIC COMMENT RESPONSE

- Suzanne Caciola-Spoke regarding the feral cat problem in Urbanna. She is a member of the Urbanna Cat Project and spoke to how the organization works to “Trap, Neuter, and Release” (TNR) the feral cats in Urbanna. The group is volunteer only and in need of volunteers.
- Susan Smith-Disagreed with past public comments regarding damaged caused by feral cats, and gave suggestions on how property owners can legally mitigate problems caused by feral cats. Spoke about the efforts of the Urbanna Cat Project
- Bill Smith-Commented to say the problems regarding animals should be referred to the Middlesex County Sherriff’s Department (Animal Control), not to Town Council and Staff.
- Jimmy Pickett-Spoke to damage to his property by cats at his business, Urbanna Boatworks, and showed pictures of damage.

- Matt Gobush-Spoke as a business owner and the negative financial impact that could occur if the feral cat problem is not handled properly
- Lisa Powers-Spoke about the continuing drainage problems on Colorado Avenue and asked Council and staff to advocate for the residents with VDOT

Mayor Goldsmith commented the items brought up during Public Comment would be addressed under Matters of Town Council

Garth Wheeler spoke with VDOT representative regarding drainage issues in the Kent/Colorado area. VDOT says it's a property owner issue. Documentation shows it is a VDOT issue. Staff will draft a resolution to submit to VDOT.

Mayor Goldsmith suggested drafting a resolution to VDH (Virginia Department of Health), as well as contact Delegate Keith Hodges for assistance.

Councilmember Hanson requested to join the meeting electronically, due to travel to Richmond, Virginia to assist with taking care of a sick grandchild

Councilmember Chowning made a motion to allow Councilmember Hanson to participate remotely.

Councilmember Courtney seconded

Austin, Chowning, Courtney, Justice, Sturgill, and Goldsmith voted yes

Motion passed 6-0

MATTERS OF TOWN COUNCIL

Drainage Issues-Colorado & Kent Streets

Discussion took place regarding the continuing problems with drainage along Colorado & Kent Streets, and adjacent properties. It was agreed that it is a VDOT responsibility, and Town staff was directed by Council to craft a resolution for Council approval to send to VDOT, as well as asking Delegate Keith Hodges for assistance.

Feral Cats

Mayor Goldsmith has reached out to the State Veterinarian, as well as researched State and Town Code to find out what the Town can and cannot do in regards to feral cats.

Garth Wheeler has scheduled a meeting for March 10, with the key parties involved in the issue to collaborate in finding a solution.

Garth Wheeler stated legally this is not considered a Town issue, but it was in the best interest of the residents for the Town Council to be a part of solving the problem.

Additional discussion took place to include:

- Information on the Urbanna Cat Project
 - Volunteers needed
 - Financial assistance welcome
 - Fosters needed to assist with cats post-spay/neuter surgery
- Suzanne Caciola of the Urbanna Cat Project addressed Council to inform them of current action being taken
 - Volunteers from Gloucester will be assisting in the area at the end of Watling by setting up a large number of traps
 - Appointments are being given to schedule spay/neuter surgeries
- Councilmember Hanson spoke to say there is momentum to solve the problem in a humane way and mentioned the "Neuter Scooter", a for hire mobile service out of Virginia Beach.

ACTION ITEMS

Minutes

Councilmember Austin made a motion to approve the January 26, 2023 minutes as presented

Councilmember Sturgill seconded

Austin, Chowning, Courtney, Hanson, Justice, Sturgill, and Goldsmith voted yes

Motion passed 7-0

Code of Ethics-Resolution 2023-RES-003

Mayor Goldsmith introduced the proposed Code of Ethics resolution

- Based on the Middlesex County Code of Ethics
- Revised by Council in October 2021, but was not voted on

Councilmember Austin made a motion to approve Resolution 2023-RES-003, adopting the Code of Ethics as presented

Councilmember Courtney seconded

Councilmember Chowning said the he did not like it, but would rather have one he didn't like than none at all. Both he and Councilmember Justice prefer the County's code.

Austin, Chowning, Courtney, Hanson, Justice, Sturgill, and Goldsmith voted yes

Motion passed 7-0



RESOLUTION 2023-RES-003

WHEREAS, a professional code of ethics offers a set of guidelines for Town Council to use to make good decisions in the performance of their duties, and

WHEREAS, it allows it serves as a baseline expectation for what is socially acceptable and how to approach issues, and

WHEREAS, a professional code of ethics sets the standard to work honestly and with integrity, which can help create a healthier work environment and serves as a baseline for effectively dealing with issues, and

WHEREAS, a professional code of ethics is designed to ensure Council members are behaving in a manner that is socially acceptable and respectful of one another, and,

WHEREAS, these principles outline the mission and values of the Town of Urbana, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Urbana Town Council votes to adopt the attached Code of Ethics for the Town of Urbana Council that shall serve as a guide for best practices and proper decision making during their tenure on Town Council.

Adopted the 9th day of March, 2023

A Copy Teste:

Martha J Rodenburg
Town Clerk



Code of Ethics

Town of Urbanna Town Council

Recognizing that persons holding a position of public trust are under constant observation by the media and interested town residents, and recognizing that maintaining the integrity and dignity of the public office is essential for maintaining high levels of public confidence in our institutions of government, every member of the governing body should adhere to the following Standards of Conduct.

1. Avoid the use of abusive, threatening or intimidating language or gestures directed at colleagues, citizens, or personnel during public meetings and during the performance of public duties.
2. Act in a financially responsible manner to ensure public trust and set a high standard of integrity, paying government bills on a local, state and federal level.
3. Show impartiality, integrity, and ethical behavior during Town Council meetings and in their conduct with citizens and colleagues.
4. Make a conscientious effort to be well prepared for each meeting.
5. Avoid offering public criticism of colleagues or town employees, recognizing the dignity of each individual.
6. Work to create a positive environment in public meetings where citizens will feel comfortable in their roles as observers or participants.
7. Maintain an attitude of courtesy and consideration toward all colleagues and staff during all discussions and deliberations.
8. Be tolerant. Allow citizens, employees, or colleagues sufficient opportunity to present their views.
9. Be respectful and attentive. Avoid comments, body language or distracting activity that conveys a message of disrespect for the presentations from citizens, personnel or colleagues.
10. Be concise. Avoid the practice of taking more time to address an issue before the body than is necessary and essential for an adequate consideration of those matters being discussed.
11. Communicate directly with the Town Administrator, Town Attorney, and the Mayor on Town matters to enhance communication between staff and the Town Council.
12. Avoid the use of electronic devices during meetings to communicate with others regarding town business.

CLOSED MEETING

Councilmember Austin made a motion to go into Closed Meeting, pursuant to Virginia Code section 2.2-3711(A)(29) for discussion of the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidders or offerors, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body-sale contract for 45 Cross Street-Old Town Hall.

Councilmember Sturgill seconded

Austin, Chowning, Courtney, Hanson, Justice, Sturgill, and Goldsmith voted yes

Motion passed 7-0

OPEN MEETING

Councilmember Austin made a motion to reconvene in open meeting and to certify that only the matters that were identified in the motion to go into closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered.

Councilmember Sturgill seconded

Austin, Chowning, Courtney, Hanson, Justice, Sturgill, and Goldsmith voted yes

Motion passed 7-0

Councilmember Austin made a motion to authorize a public hearing for March 23rd for the sale of old Town Hall

Councilmember Courtney seconded

Austin, Chowning, Courtney, Hanson, Justice, Sturgill, and Goldsmith voted yes

Motion passed 7-0

ADJOURN

Councilmember Austin made a motion to adjourn

Councilmember Sturgill seconded

Austin, Chowning, Courtney, Hanson, Justice, Sturgill, and Goldsmith voted yes

Motion passed 7-0

Meeting adjourned at 7:57pm

Submitted by:



Martha J. Rodenburg

Town Clerk

Approved by Town Council

04/27/2023