

March 11, 2015

Town Manager

The Town Council met on Monday March 9th in a regular meeting to conduct public hearings on an Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 175 regarding sandwich board signs, an Ordinance Amendment to Chapter 75 to establish Tourism Zones, an Ordinance Amendment to establish Chapter 114 to specify policy guidelines related to public private partnerships, and to set the FY2015-2016 tax rates.

The Town is considering a Code Amendment to Chapter 175 to allow one additional sandwich board sign for businesses under certain situations, as well as other minor changes to the sign regulations. These proposed changes should enhance business advertising in some locations.

The Code Amendment to Chapter 75-74 would create three Tourism Zones: Downtown Business, Entrance Corridor, and Community Business Zones. Businesses locating in these areas that provide the services identified in the Code and could qualify for incentives that include BPOL reductions, permit fee reductions, and utility connection fee payment plans.

Chapter 114 will establish the policy guidelines for the Town to receive and consider public private partnership proposals. Adoption of these guidelines is necessary for a municipality to consider these types of project proposals.

Council also conducted public hearing to set the tax rates for FY2015-2016 at \$0.13 per \$100 assessed value for Real Estate, \$0.64 per \$100 assessed value for Personal Property, \$0.64 per \$100 assessed value for Machinery and Tools, and \$0.13 per \$100 assessed value for Mobile Homes. All tax rates are at the same rate as last year. With the County's reassessment of property values, the Real Estate Tax Rate is the equivalent of a \$0.0025 per \$100 assessed value increase.

All public hearing issues require a second reading that is scheduled for Monday, March 23rd.

The next meeting for Town Council will be a work session scheduled for Monday, March 16th.

As always, please feel free to contact this office with any ideas or suggestions to improve how the Town provides service to our community.

Department Updates

Last Week:

Our Planning Department processed 2 Zoning permits, 0 sign permits, 5 Business Licenses, and 5 Code Violation actions. Staff attended a VDOT HB2 meeting, attended the Planning & Zoning Budget Review meeting, and met with citizens about development issues. The Planning Commission is reviewing streetscape enhancements to South Street and will discuss at their March 18th meeting. The Planning Commission has reviewed the 2015-2016 Capital Improvement Program and provided comments for Council's consideration, has recommended approval of a draft Ordinance Amendment for Tourism Zones, and has recommended approval to amend the Ordinance for sandwich board signs. The Town Council considered the Ordinance Amendments for the sandwich board signs and the Tourism Zones at their March 9th meeting with a second reading on March 23rd, and will continue discussion regarding the Ordinance Amendment to the Land Development & Subdivision Code, Chapter 148 at a future work session. The Planning Director will present a Grant Proposal opportunity to Town Council on March 16th. The Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee will continue discussions on the update to the Plan.

Our Police Department continued to provide patrol and enforcement within the Town. This week the Police Department received 670 calls to our Dispatch Center, our officers responded to 252 calls for service, issued 35 traffic citations, 4 DUI arrests, and 21 traffic accidents.

Our Environmental Services crews conducted maintenance on the sanitary sewer system at Ewel Street, Virginia Avenue, West 15th Street, Happy Creek Road, and as needed. Our crews also conducted maintenance on the water system on Criser Road, Blue Ridge Avenue, Stayman Street, North Marshall Street, and as needed. The Town experience 1 water break due to cold temperatures: a 2" water line on Sweetbriar Court. Our Street Maintenance crews continued snow removal activities, continued assisting the Energy Services Department with the installation of an access road at Hilda Barbour Elementary School, and installed 6 signs. The Horticulture Division began curb line cleanup and conducted horticulture maintenance throughout the Town. Our Building and Grounds Division continued work on the Planning file storage area, repaired barricades, and conducted maintenance at our Town facilities. Our Fleet Maintenance Division performed 13 preventative maintenance services, conducted 2 State inspections, conducted 2 jump starts, repaired 0 flat tires, and other unscheduled repairs to vehicles and equipment. Our Solid Waste Division collected 9 on-call collections as requested.

Crews at our Wastewater Treatment Plant plowed snow, managed high flows due snow melt and rain, and performed routine maintenance and operations. Crews at our Water Treatment Plant oversaw upgrades at the plant where the contractor poured the new floor, conducted quarterly calibrations, and performed routine maintenance and operation.

Our Energy Services Department reported 1 outage last week: a 47 minute outage on March 6th that affected 8 customers on Jamestown Road due to equipment failure. Crews continued work on the distribution lines from the Riverton Substation and continued to maintain our electrical system.

Our IT Department continued editing the video from the SBDC Workshop, deployed new MDT's to police vehicles, worked on the FY15-16 Budget, deployed thin client stations, and continued work order completion.

Our Visitor's Center cohosted Tourism Tuesday, participated in the Irish Festival, arranged an ad for Adventure Outdoors Magazine, mailed 203 information requests, continued discussion of updates to the Battle of Front Royal Driving Tour, the Visitor's Guide and the Walking Tour, met with the website host about adding the 30 second Tourism video and scrolling photos to the website, and investigated other advertising opportunities. Staff welcomed 188 visitors to the Center and had 10,491 visits to our website.

Our Finance Department processed 2,180 payment receipts, mailed 477 delinquent utility bills, processed 157 move-in/move-out work orders, disconnected 49 utility accounts, in addition to their normal work activities. We also processed 675 drive through payments, 50 Saturday drive through payments, 83 on-line utility payments, and 8 on-line tax payments.

Our Risk Management Department processed n/a employee injury claims and n/a citizen claims.

Our Human Resources Department advertised numerous positions and received applications for those already advertised. The Town currently has 6 full-time, 1 part-time open positions and 4 seasonal positions, with 2 full-time offers pending and 0 part-time offer pending.

Upcoming Week:

Our Planning Department will attend a meeting about downtown parking signage and meet with citizens with zoning questions.

Our Police Department will continue to patrol the Town.

Our Department of Environmental Services plans to conduct preventative maintenance throughout Town.

Our Department of Energy Services will hold the monthly safety meeting and conduct routine maintenance of various lines and substations throughout our service area. Crews will be working on the distribution lines from the Riverton Substation and conduct monthly substation inspections.

Our IT Department will continue routine maintenance of the Town's network and computer systems.

Our Tourism Department will continue to welcome visitors.

Our Risk Management and Human Resources Departments will continue address safety and personnel issues.

Civic Events

Samuels Public Library has numerous events scheduled throughout the week. Information can be found <http://www.samuelslibrary.net/>

The Town Council will meet at 7:00 pm on Monday, March 16th in a work session in the Council Chambers of the Town's Administration Building.