

**HAVANA TOWN COUNCIL
REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
DECEMBER 14, 2021 6 p.m.**

Member(s) Present: Eddie Bass, Mayor Pro-Tem Nick Bert, Mayor Janice Hart, Dwight Vickers, Decorkus Allen, Warkeen Jordan, and Jenny Stone

Member(s) Absent:

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Hart.

Invocation was led by Councilman Eddie Bass followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion to approve the minutes from the November 30, 2021 Regular Council Meeting was made by Mayor Pro-Tem Nick Bert and seconded by Eddie Bass. Motion carried.

VISITORS:

Ms. Terri Paul from Havana Main Street at 1st Street NW addressed the Council about new businesses purchasing property downtown and coming into to sign up for utility service if there was some type of screening taking place to ensure businesses were okay for the business district. Ms. Paul questioned new businesses coming in doing non-conforming use of the locations. The Town Manager, Mr. Howard McKinnon replied that new businesses have to complete a Zoning Application and if Ms. Paul would let him know who that is we will ensure they receive the proper paperwork. Mayor Hart suggested that a package be put together for new businesses. Mr. McKinnon agreed that there was an application process that does take place. Councilwoman Stone asked if someone comes into the town how do we notify the new business the protocol for downtown. The Town Manager replied that any new business coming in has to complete a zoning application to ensure that type of business can be operational at the location requested. The Town Manager stated the Town's responsibility is to ensure that whoever goes into a location conforms to what the town is zoned for. An example is a business owner can have a liquor store just anywhere in town. The application for zoning is done and has to be approved before utility services can be started. The Police Chief stated that Code Enforcement does get involved to enforce the Zoning Ordinances. Mayor Hart requested that we be proactive instead of reactive. The Town Manager stated that the Zoning Ordinance will be placed on the Town of Havana's website.

OLD BUSINESS:

N/A

NEW BUSINESS:

The Town Manager presented a Zoning Application to request the subdivision of property located at 111 and 113 3rd Street SW. The Town Manager stated that this address is located across from Community Cares and it will be on the eastside of 3rd Street SW. There is currently two houses there already on the same lot and they were grandfathered in. Under the current town ordinance you cannot have but one unit per lot. The owner is requesting to subdivide it, the survey does reflect a line drawn and it does comply with the zoning ordinance. Councilman Bert questioned access to the entrance for both properties. The Town Manager responded that he will make sure that there is easement for both sides. Motion to approve made by Councilman Bass and seconded by Councilman Bert. Motion carried.

A request for easement of a land extension for 17th Avenue. The Town Manager stated that at the end of this property was the Town dump. The Town does own the property at the end and there is an adjacent property owner. There has been a shared driveway and the owner of the adjacent property is requesting an easement be recorded with access to the property. This will formalize the actions that have taken place for years. Councilman Bert asked if the driveway was Town property? The Town Manager stated the driveway easement is on the edge of town property. The adjacent property owners have had a descriptive easement but nothing official. They are requesting it be made official and recorded. Motion made by Councilman Bert seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carried.

The Downtown Improvement Committee introduced New Committee Members, Ms. Natalie Roberts and Ms. Nancy Saunders. Mayor Hart thanked them for their service. Motion was made by Councilman Bert to accept new members. Seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

Ms. Terri Paul, Havana Main Street, delegates her position to Mr. Tony Lombardo. Mr. Lombardo states he would like to give a progress report of what the Main Street Association has done in the year of 2021. The Town of Havana is a major sponsor of the Havana Main Street Association. We have a mission for the revitalization of the Downtown area to accomplish that we have got to have a collective effort of the Town's government and businesses.

There are four committees that run the Havana Main Street Association, the programs are Promotion, Design, Promotion, and Economic Revitalization. Promotion is probably the most active of the four committees. This year we put on about 27 events. We probably multiply by five times what the rest of Gadsden County does. We have brought art back to downtown Havana. We have brought in a group called

AHA (Artists Helping Artists) they represent some 150 artists throughout the region. This also represents the 5% of the 15,000 that come to Havana give or take. Over 200 volunteers come from out of the community to help with these events. We lost some events this year.

In the area of design such as murals, kiosks, and Christmas décor some of that got put off. One item that did not get put off was the restoration of the Havana State Bank. To date with the contract that was just signed we have spent about \$200,000.00 for the purchase and restoration of that building. It is getting done in phases.

Marketing received cut backs and we have got caught back up with events like the Quilt show. These things have generated a lot more revenue than was anticipated. We have rebuilt our website and put the Towns ordinance on our website. We hired a part time employee to help with social media and our social media presence has tripled over the last year. Most of the merchant's downtown are upgrading their stores.

We do need your help on a couple of things. The wayfinding signs, there is some \$15,000 of carry over money from last year. That money has not been spent. We are requesting to move forward and spend that money. We asked for four different bids we have received responses from two. There have been questions about does the money automatically carry over? In years past, that's how it worked. That money comes out of the CRA and it affects the tax portion that was given to the Town to spend. We need to find out what it is going to take to get it authorized. The Town Manager said there is money in the budget, Councilman Bert stated it does rollover. The Budget is there and the main criteria for the CRA money is that it be a capital expenditure and whatever is budgeted is the authority to spend as stated by the Town Manager. The Town Manager also stated that if the budget is there and there is not enough of it, the budget can be amended. The process that was used at one time was when you had a project and you knew what it costs you would come to the Council and get approval to spend the money. The Town Manager requests that the bids be submitted as is and they can see about moving forward. Councilwoman Stone asked if the Wayfinding Signs were the ones they are talking about putting on both ends of town? She stated the ones they got to approve were giant and were going to be redone. She questioned where are we at with the new ones? Mayor Hart said they were supposed to get them resized and requoted. Nothing has been seen again. Mr. Lombardo asked if they need to take the two existing bids received and go back and redo the request for purchasing Wayfinding Signs? Councilwoman Stone said an updated proposal was to be made by the Downtown Improvement Committee. Mayor Hart understood that the Council was requesting three quotes. Mr. Lombardo stated

there was a real problem getting three quotes. Councilman Vickers gave the name of someone he knew that would do a really good job. Councilman Vickers presented Mr. Lombardo with the name Limelight Design, a gentleman named Devon who could be reached at 850-544-3040 for an additional third quote. Mr. Lombardo thanked the Council and said he hoped that the year 2022 would be even better. The Town Manager requested that as soon as it is all pulled together to please get with the staff so that he could get on the agenda to present the Wayfinding Signs new proposal. The Town Clerk recorded name of handout from Councilmen.

The Town Manager reported his last day as Interim Town Manager is January 11th. He discussed that the Town Manager position was readvertised and extended until January 3rd and an additional meeting was to be held to discuss the Managers position on January 10th. He stated that he wanted to understand what the Council would like to do after the January 10th meeting.

It was brought up by Councilman Bert about Charles Chapman, he was a Public Works Director for Gadsden County, he was the Assistant Gadsden County Manager, he left Gadsden County and became the Town Manager of Naples. He has relocated back to this area. He might be interested in interim work. The Town Manager stated the first time he spoke with him the timing was good said he could start January 14th he could serve to the middle of April. He already has a government contract with the League of Cities he would need to spend at least 20 hours a week with this job which would take priority.

Another option recommended by the Town Manager is Chief Smith could be available to serve as Interim in the short timeframe. He would be willing to do it for the same rate of pay. For this to work he would have to resign as Police Chief because under State Constitution you cannot have a Police Chief be the Town Manager and serve in both roles. Once a Town Manager is hired, Chief Smith would go back to work as Police Chief. Right now that is the only two options. Councilman Bert asked if Mr. McKinnon would be available in case we needed help until a decision was made. Mr. McKinnon agreed to be available. The Town Charter states that the acting Town Manager would recommend a Interim Police Chief and it would be presented to the Council for approval. Councilman Vickers asked if Mr. McKinnon would be available to assist with the Town Manager application process as well. Councilman Vickers stated the relationship the Chief has with everyone in the Town is the better option for the Town. Councilman Bert agreed with the decision of Chief Smith being Interim. Councilman Vickers asked if there were any new applicants on the second round of advertising. Mr. McKinnon stated there were two but he said the deadline was not until January 3rd. Councilman Allen stated that he agreed Chief Smith could do the job as long as Mr. McKinnon agreed to assist with any questions or concerns. Mr.

McKinnon stated that there would be no additional costs for a Town Manager at this time. Councilman Allen stated that is why the Council is here to be judiciary stewards of the Towns money. Mayor Hart requests a motion to be made. Councilman Bass motioned that Tracy Smith come in as Interim Town Manager upon Mr. Howard McKinnon's exit on January 11th. Motion was seconded by Councilman Bert. Motion carried. Mr. McKinnon stated that when the January 10th meeting takes place the Interim Town Manager contract would be an agenda item. Chief Smith stated he agreed to the offer and stated he does care about this Town. He also stated he just wants to serve and help in any way that he can.

A request was made to approve the Electric ROW Powerline Trimming. Quotes were made and approved. The Town Manager stated there is a limited amount of people that is eligible to do this type of work. There was money in the budget to do this. Mayor Hart stated we need to identify target areas of town. Bronson Pinson, the Electric Superintendent will identify the areas. Motion to approve was made by Councilman Bert and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

Chief Smith presented a request to approve a Special Events Permit, the Youmas Christmas Giveaway. Chief Smith stated the Youmas Christmas Giveaway has been being done for several years. This event will take place on December 24th and start at 9 a.m. and last for about four hours. The event will take place here at Town Hall out front. There will be a toy giveaway and also snacks will be handed out. Motion to approve made by Councilman Bass and seconded by Councilwoman Stone.

A request to approve Special Events Permit, Martin Luther King Day was presented by Chief Smith. A Special Event Form was turned in for the annual Martin Luther King Day parade. This event will take place on January 17th at 10 a.m. with a staging event to take place across from the Havana Ford. The parade has been approved by DOT (Department of Transportation). Chief Smith stated this is a different parade route and is being done by a different group of people this year. Motion made to approve by Councilwoman Stone and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

An approval request for Blessings of Hope to use the Hazel Baker Community Center was presented. Chief Smith informed the Council that we approve these non-profit organizations every year. Blessings of Hope wants to broaden their use of the community center to a tutoring program and more giveaways, they are now going through the Town Ordinance that was passed for non-profits to use it. Chief insured that this request would not conflict with any other non-profit organizations. Mayor Hart questioned if there was an electronic calendar for these events and if there was any way we could publish these events. The Town Manager stated we would look into

it. Chief stated there is a calendar maintained by Kerri in the Front Office of Town Hall to ensure conflicts do not arise. Motion to approve by Councilman Allen and seconded by Councilman Bass. Motion carried.

REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:

Mr. McKinnon said that Councilman Allen had mentioned earlier a request he had and wanted to know if he wanted to make that known now. Mr. McKinnon also stated that it was in his report to discuss this item as well. Councilman Allen asked if the Council would approve the Town staff to get the Christmas Eve and New Years Eve holidays? Councilman Allen stated we request this every year for our Town staff. Councilman Bert said he agreed the staff deserved it. Motion was made by Councilman Allen to approve the leave holiday requests and it was seconded by Councilman Bert. Motion carried.

The Town Manager stated that Mayor Hart had brought to his attention a citizen request. The request involves a new business going in downtown if it meets the criteria to be at the location requested. In other words, an Internet Café or a Liquor Store cannot just go anywhere downtown. Any new business that comes into town has to pay a Zoning fee that is why the question was raised is because it is \$150.00. The Town Manager is proposing to recommend for an existing location putting the same business at the location cutting the zoning fee to \$75.00 instead of the \$150.00. The reason for this it does allow us to control if a business moves out and another business moves in you need to have this in place as due process. Councilman Vickers asked if the Town would be losing money by doing this. The Town Manager stated it would be less review on the Planning Council and It would be for existing owners allowing the same type of business to go into the same location. The Town Manager also stated we recover the cost. He also stated he would make it an agenda item for the January meeting of the proposed zoning application cost decrease for existing locations.

The Town Manager reported there will be three items on the agenda for the January 10th meeting. One will be the Town Manager applications, Chief Smith's contract, and this item the Zoning Application fee for existing locations. Councilman Bert asked if we would do the Interim Chief then too. The Town Manager stated the proper protocol would be to allow the Chief to make a recommendation at the next Regular Council Meeting.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilwoman Stone asked what time on Sunday are they meeting for Toys for Tots. Chief Smith stated Sunday at 2:00 p.m. at the Thomasville Wal-Mart. She also wanted to know when the CBD meeting was? The Town Manager stated that would take place in January or February.

Councilman Vickers stated he did not have anything to add.

Councilman Bass wished everyone a safe and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

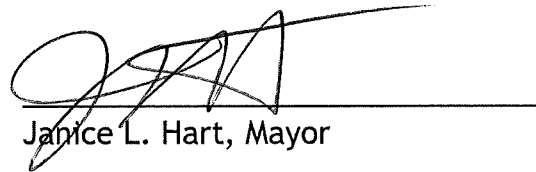
Councilman Allen stated he not have anything to add.

Councilmen Bert thanked Chief Smith for his commitment to the Town. He also wished a Merry Christmas to everyone.

Mayor Hart wished everyone a Happy, Happy Christmas celebration with your family, friends and loved ones. As the pandemic has altered many people and as we get ready to progress into a new year lets start thinking about some new things we could do to better the town. The Mayor thanked Chief Smith for stepping up and helping out.

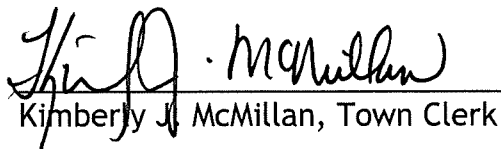
Motion to pay bills was made by Councilman Bert and seconded by Councilwoman Stone. Motion carried.

Motion to adjourn at 7:08 p.m.



Janice L. Hart, Mayor

ATTEST:



Kimberly J. McMillan, Town Clerk