

Town of Seven Devils
Regular Town Council Meeting
February 12, 2019
5:30pm

The Seven Devils Town Council met for a Regular Meeting at 5:30pm at Town Hall. Present were Mayor Larry Fontaine, Mayor Pro Tem Brad Lambert, Council Members Tina Bailey, David Ehmig, Kay Ehlinger, Town Attorney Rob Angle, Town Manager Debbie Powers. A quorum was met. Also present were Kelly Coffey, High Country Council of Governments (HCCOG), Eric Hiegl, Blue Ridge Conservancy, Charlie Brady, Blue Ridge Conservancy, James Tomberlin, North Carolina Wildlife Commission and Phillip Barrier, Avery County Manager. The minutes were recorded by interim Town Clerk Emma Wynn.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Fontaine called the meeting to order at 5:48pm

PRAYER/INVOCATION

Mayor Pro Tem Lambert gave the Prayer/Invocation for tonight's meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council members and citizens recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADOPT AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Lambert made a motion to adopt the agenda; Member Ehlinger seconded the motion. The members agreed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

ADOPT MINUTES OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETING – January 8, 2019

Member Ehmig made a motion to adopt the Consent Agenda; Member Bailey seconded the motion. The members agreed unanimously.

CITIZENS COMMENTS

Kay Lambert reminded the group about the upcoming Arbor Day Celebration on Friday, April 26th beginning at 11:30am. She stated the Safety Fest will be held on July 6th.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE

Manager Powers provided the following update:

Reminder – Closed on Monday, February 18th for President's Day. Police are on duty 24/7.

Cederberg – 4 lots in Blair Mountain – refund new construction fees. Mr. Cederberg has requested a refund of his construction fees due to health reasons. There are now 3 new constructions in Blair Mountain.

Tree City USA - The Town has received the designation of Tree City USA. The Arbor Day invitation will be sent out with the March water bills. Arbor Day Invite2019

2019 Election info & deadlines – Filing dates begin on July 5th and goes through July 19th. Manager Powers contacted Matt Snyder, Watauga County Election Board and he stated voting can be done at Seven Devils Town Hall. He suggested that one (1) of the two (2) counties administer the election rather than both. This will save money.

Hillary attending Clerk Certification school – week 1 of 4 – Hillary is attending the first of four (4) trainings to obtain her Municipal Clerk Certification.

Remodel project – compliments of TDA – Thanks to the TDA for funding the remodeling work to the Town Hall. Manager Powers read a Thank-You card from a resident complimenting the work done.

Updated Tax Collections and Past due accounts for advertisement – Manager Powers distributed the list of delinquent taxes for 2018 prepared by Helga Sappington, Finance Officer. The next step will be advertising the delinquent taxes in the newspaper. Ms. Sappington’s tax collection rate is currently 97.48%.

Upcoming PARTF Public Hearing – The Public Hearing will be held on Thursday, February 14th, at 11:00am

Updates for Tree Permits-0, Projects-2, Fence Permit-0, Complaints-6, Real Estate Closings-2

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

RESOLUTION #2019-01 – RECREATIONAL TRAIL PROGRAMS (RTP) GRANT

Mayor Fontaine read the proposed resolution to the group. Mayor Pro Tem Lambert made a motion to approve the resolution, Member Ehlinger seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The members agreed unanimously. ~CLOSED~

BUDGET CALENDAR FY20

Mayor Fontaine reviewed the proposed Budget Calendar for FY 2019-2020. He stated the first meeting will be the Annual Budget Workshop to be held on March 27, 2019 from 10am until 2pm. The workshop scheduled for April 24th was changed to May 1st due to member’s conflict. There may be another conflict with the May 29th workshop. Mayor Fontaine asked that the member let him know as soon as possible if a change in the May 29th date is needed. All other dates were agreeable. Mayor Pro Tem Lambert made a motion to approve

the calendar with the noted changes; Member Ehlinger seconded the motion. The members agreed unanimously. ~CLOSED~

NC WILDLIFE COMMISSION – JAMES TOMBERLIN

Mayor Fontaine introduced James Tomberlin from the North Carolina Wildlife Commission. He is here to talk to the group about coyotes. Manager Powers reminded the group that Mr. Tomberlin was here a few years ago to talk about the Town's deer population.

Mr. Tomberlin stated that North Carolina is divided into 9 districts. He is from District 7 which covers 11 counties. He gave a presentation on the history, biology and management of the coyote population. He noted the top four (4) concerns expressed are: 1) presence in the area; 2) impact on other wildlife species; 3) livestock damage and 4) crop damage.

History: The coyotes are not native to North Carolina. They are native to the short-grass prairie west of the Mississippi prior to European settlers arriving. As roads were built and lands developed and the coyotes' natural predators (wolves & cougars) were eradicated, it allowed the coyotes to proliferate and move across the lands in a short period of time. They now inhabit all states in the USA.

Biology: The coyote is very adaptable to the landscape and the environment. A mature coyote is about two (2) feet tall at the shoulder, three (3) to four (4) feet in length and typically weighs between 25 and 40 pounds, varying in color from blonde to black with shades in between. They generally mate for life and actively defend the territory where they have their offspring. Mating season is generally from January to March with a gestation period of about 60-63 days. An average of 4 to 6 pups per litter are born from April to June and emerge from the den around 3 weeks of age and are weaned from 5 to 7 weeks. Most of the young will eventually disperse, leaving the area of their birth.

Studies have been done to track the coyote's natural movements. One reason coyotes are successful is they are omnivore – eat anything available – plant material, feral or domestic animals, produce, insects, trash, pet food left outside, bird seed, etc.

Humans and disease (rabies or canine distemper) cause most coyote deaths. A decrease in competition for available resources allows the healthy coyotes left to thrive. Litter sizes increase and pup survival goes up. The ability of the coyote to fluctuate is a reason they are successful. Data was reviewed of coyotes tagged with GPS tracking showing they can transverse hundreds of miles in a few months. It will be virtually impossible to eradicate the coyote. It would require 70% of the population to be killed annually.

Management: There are three (3) things to help manage the coyote population: 1) how coyotes impact other wildlife; 2) how they interact with humans and 3) how they interact with livestock.

Wildlife: The coyote impact will vary across the landscapes. The red wolves and cougars, the coyote's natural predator out west, were killed off due to land development, etc. There are no natural predators for the coyote in this area. They do play an ecological role providing some balance by catching feral cats, small rodents, insects, etc. They mainly hunt from dusk to dawn but can be seen during the day. Coyotes can climb trees.

Humans & Livestock: Three (3) areas are looked at: disease; safety and degradation or damage.

Statistics from 1990 to 2015 show that positive rabies cases were mainly from racoons, skunks and possums. There have been 14 documented rabies in coyotes in the last 25 years. Most calls from people about coyote sightings is because food has been left out – pet food, garbage, etc. It is recommended to minimize attracting wildlife to your property that you keep pet food indoors, keep bird feeders clean and purchase feeders that keep seeds off the ground, pick up fallen fruit from trees, keeping pets on a leash and cats indoors.

Lethal tools include trapping, hunting and degradation permits. A degradation permit gives you the legal ability to remove the animal out-of-season when there is damage to property. Coyotes are not regulated as a game animal since they are not native here. From a hunting standpoint, you can shoot them year-round, at night with no limit. Trapping is the only regulation in place for coyotes in order to protect the native creatures. The season for trapping coyotes goes from November 1st to February 28th.

Mr. Tomberlin stated that other information is available by visiting the website: www.ncwildlife.org or calling the NC Wildlife Helpline at 866-318-2401. Also, informational handouts are available at Town Hall. Mayor Fontaine thanked Mr. Tomberlin for the presentation. **No Action Taken**

AVERY COUNTY MANAGER – PHILLIP BARRIER

Mayor Fontaine introduced Phillip Barrier, Avery County Manager. Mr. Barrier complimented the Town Council and the Town Manager, Debbie Powers, for the great job done in serving their citizens. He congratulated the Town on receiving the Tree City USA designation.

Mr. Barrier requested help in developing the Avery County Strategic Plan by identifying some goals and how to achieve these goals and develop a vision statement for Avery County. He invited all to call or text with any comments or questions or visit the website www.averycountync.gov to complete the form. **No Action Taken**

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE APPLICATION

Mayor Fontaine stated that an application was received from Faye Brock to fill the vacancy on the Parks & Recreation Committee. Mayor Pro Tem made a motion to approve the application, seconded by Member Ehlinger. The members agreed unanimously. ~CLOSED~

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Board of Adjustment - No meeting**
- Planning Board - No meeting**
- Public Works - No meeting**
- Public Safety Commission - No meeting**
- Parks & Recreation Commission - No meeting**
- TDA - January Minutes attached**
- ABC Board - December minutes attached**
- Tree Committee - No meeting**
- Public Safety Department**
 - Police Report**
 - Fire Report**
- Financial Report**

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Fontaine thanked Kay Lambert and Diane Asbill and anyone else involved for the huge task of re-shelving the library books. Mayor Pro Tem Lambert thanked the TDA for funding the remodel project.

ADIJOURN

Mayor Pro Tem Lambert made a motion to adjourn; Member Ehlinger seconded the motion. The members agreed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:00pm.



Larry Fontaine, Mayor



Debbie Powers, Town Manager