



TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

21 Main Street

Tuesday, April 24, 2024 at 6:30 PM

MINUTES

AN OPEN MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF WARRENTON, VIRGINIA, WAS HELD ON APRIL 24, 2024, AT 6:30 PM

Work Session

PRESENT

Mr. Carter Nevill, Mayor; Ms. Heather Sutphin; Mr. William Semple; Mr. Brett Hamby; Mr. James Hartman, Vice Mayor; Mr. Paul Mooney; Mr. David McGuire; Mr. Eric Gagnon; Mr. Frank Cassidy, Town Manager; Mr. Stephen Clough, Town Clerk; Mr. Martin Crim, Town Attorney.

ABSENT

Regular Meeting

PRESENT

Mr. Carter Nevill, Mayor; Ms. Heather Sutphin; Mr. William Semple; Mr. Brett Hamby; Mr. James Hartman, Vice Mayor; Mr. Paul Mooney; Mr. David McGuire; Mr. Eric Gagnon; Mr. Frank Cassidy, Town Manager; Mr. Stephen Clough, Town Clerk; Mr. Martin Crim, Town Attorney.

ABSENT

I. WORK SESSION – 6:30 PM

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. A quorum was present, and business could be conducted.

Mayor Nevill sought a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion put forth by Vice Mayor Hartman was to approve the agenda.

Seconded by Councilmember Sutphin.

Motion put forth by Councilmember Semple was to amend the agenda to include a presentation from Councilmember Gagnon and a discussion on the noise and redaction concerns under Unfinished Business.

Seconded by Councilmember Mooney.

Councilmember Gagnon said that the discussion would be illustrative of citizen concerns related to data centers.

The vote was as follows on the motion to amend the agenda:

Ayes: Mr. William Semple; Mr. Paul Mooney; Mr. Eric Gagnon

Nays: Ms. Heather Sutphin; Mr. Brett Hamby; Mr. James Hartman, Vice Mayor; Mr. David McGuire

Abstention:

Absent:

The motion failed; the agenda was not amended.

The vote was as follows on the motion to approve the agenda as presented:

Ayes: Ms. Heather Sutphin; Mr. Brett Hamby; Mr. James Hartman, Vice Mayor; Mr. David McGuire

Nays: Mr. William Semple; Mr. Paul Mooney; Mr. Eric Gagnon

Abstention:

Absent:

The motion passed 4:3; the agenda was approved as presented.

A. NEW BUSINESS

1. Dominion Energy Presentation and Questions from Council

Representatives from Dominion Energy, including Steve Precker, Electric Transmission Communications consultant, Dan Cocchiola, Senior Economic Development Market Specialist, and Genie Underwood, External Affairs Representative for the Piedmont Region, were present to provide information to the Council.

Mr. Precker introduced the topic.

Mr. Kociola presented to the Council regarding underground power distribution infrastructure.

A discussion followed where councilmembers clarified the technicalities of power transmission and distribution.

Mayor Nevill asked how power would be delivered to a site prior to the construction of the distribution lines.

Mr. Kociola explained that Dominion offered what was called a “bridging service”, which was a way to provide electricity to customers prior to the construction of additional infrastructure. He said that they typically upgraded existing local infrastructure to deliver electricity to a site, and that infrastructure remained even after a permanent power delivery solution was constructed. He noted that the cost for these upgrades did not fall on the rate payers.

Councilmember Mooney asked when the data center would require the new distribution lines.

Mr. Cocchiola said that the applicant had not provided specific dates, but there were some estimations based on when permits would be granted. He said that the bridging option could bring the data center online in 12 months.

Councilmember McGuire asked if Dominion would use eminent domain to obtain right-of-way.

Mr. Cocchiola stated that Dominion did not use eminent domain for distribution infrastructure.

Mr. Precker explained that any new energy infrastructure would benefit the community as a whole.

B. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Councilmember Resolutions

Town Attorney Martin Crim introduced the topic.

Councilmember Gagnon provided a brief summary of the resolutions.

Rob Walton, Director of Community Development, clarified the noise requirements for the Amazon data center SUP.

A discussion followed where the Council considered the necessity of additional sound study requirements. They discussed the appropriateness of the proposed resolutions in relation to the Town's existing noise ordinance requirements.

Councilmember Gagnon expressed concerns that there would be no way to address noise issues once the data center was built.

Mayor Nevill asked whether the applicant had demonstrated legal compliance with state and Town ordinances, including noise ordinances.

Town Manager Frank Cassidy confirmed that they had. He explained that every phase of the data center project required a noise study, and a noise study was required every year of operation to determine that it was still in compliance.

Councilmember Gagnon expressed concerns over sound and vibration issues. He stated that they needed to conduct a sound model study to determine the impacts and necessary mitigation measures.

Mr. Crim suggested that the last two paragraphs of the resolution dated April 20, 2024 be stricken since the Town would have to undergo an RFP process to select a third-party sound model study provider. He also suggested that "actual noise abating equipment" be substituted

with “proposed noise abating equipment” since the equipment could change in the time it takes to build the data center. He noted that there would be no enforcement of the noise ordinance until there was noise, and the simulation noise study would only serve as a guide for the Town to impose any other necessary noise mitigation measures.

Motion put forth by Councilmember Mooney was to approve the noise study resolution dated April 20, 2024, striking the last two paragraphs and substituting “actual noise abating equipment” for “proposed noise abating equipment”.

Seconded by Councilmember Semple.

Councilmember McGuire stated that he did not have enough information to vote on the matter.

The vote was as follows:

Ayes: Mr. William Semple; Mr. Paul Mooney; Mr. Eric Gagnon

Nays: Ms. Heather Sutphin; Mr. Brett Hamby; Mr. James Hartman, Vice Mayor; Mr. Carter Nevill, Mayor

Abstention: Mr. David McGuire

Absent:

The motion failed 3:4:1; the noise study was not approved.

C. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, this meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM on Wednesday, April 24th, 2024.

I hereby certify that this is a true and exact record of actions taken by the Town Council of the Town of Warrenton on April 24th, 2024.

Stephen M. Clough
Town Recorder

Attachments:

1) None