



These minutes are from the meetings of the Public Committees on February 6, 2018. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper called the meeting to order. The Mayor Pro Tem reviewed meeting procedures.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS: Mayor Lemons announced his mayoral candidacy. The Mayor noted that it is his desire to complete several projects currently underway.

GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE: Alderman Berrigan moved to open the Governmental Committee Meeting and to accept the January 2018 minutes, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper.

1. Alderman Berrigan opened a discussion of firearms on town property. Mayor Lemons asked Chairman Berrigan for permission to comment on the topic. The Chairman yielded to the Mayor. The Mayor stated that he has not commented nor has he been privy to all of the meetings regarding the subject of firearm possession. He expressed his position that he does not support an ordinance to restrict the right to keep and bear arms. The Mayor communicated his opinion relative to state law regarding the prohibition on the carry of firearms within 1000 feet of a school, the concealed carry law, and the preemption law which does not allow local governing authorities to enact laws more restrictive than state law. Mayor Lemons strongly discouraged any effort to enact a law to limit firearms on the town property adding that he is unclear as to "what needs to be fixed." Alderman Curtis referenced efforts to get an opinion from the Louisiana Attorney General. Alderman Murphy voiced his understanding of intent, that being the administration's responsibility or liability for actions of those employed by the town. The Alderman went on to state that it is not the intent of the Board to take away anyone's rights. Clarifying discussion of a proposed ordinance, Alderman Curtis explained that no ordinance has yet been proposed, adding that he and Town Attorney Edward Deano have been working to draft language for an ordinance. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper addressed meeting visitors. The Mayor Pro Tem presented her observations related to the Farmer's Market, the scope of the Board's qualifications, and how and to what extent the Aldermen participate in town governance. Further explanation involved discussion among the Mayor, the Board, the Town Attorney and the Farmer's Market Manager as to who has and has not received a copy of the draft ordinance. Aldermen Berrigan, Kilpatrick-Harper, Murphy, and Blitch Welliver advised that they were not in possession of the document. The Aldermen requested that the document be made available to them. Public comment included the following: condemnation of "inhumane" facebook posts, the lack of cooperation and dysfunction of town government, interpretation of state law, the need for independent contractors to be self-insured, the town's liability for acts of those under their employ, and a need to consider the safety and well-being of all who use the park.

2. Discussion of INSTRUMENT 2018-001 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE ABITA SPRINGS CODE OF ORDINANCES SECTION 2-102(B) TO PROVIDE FOR RULES TO STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN AND TO PROVIDE FOR RELATED MATTERS followed. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper reported that the amendment corrected misspellings in the original code and allowed the Mayor Pro Tem to appoint a replacement (from the Mayor or another Alderman) for an absent committee member. Alderman Berrigan offered a motion to move the instrument favorably to the upcoming council meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper.

3. A discussion of the Abita Oaks Subdivision parking requirements and Planning & Zoning Commission recommendations was the next item on the agenda. Town Attorney Edward Deano explained that there is a desire by involved parties to reduce the number of required parking spaces. He went on to say that it is possible with a reduction in the number of structures, to amend the existing developmental agreement. Recommendations to amend the agreement would originate with the Planning and Zoning Commission. Interested parties and Abita Oaks residents expressed their desire to see a resolution allowing for the build-out of the subdivision. Frustration was expressed over delays and perceived inconsistencies in the application of the requirements. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper summarized comments and directed the Town Attorney to meet with the Planning and Zoning Director to determine the appropriate course in moving forward.

4. Section 7-406 of the Abita Springs Code of Ordinances regarding the sale, purchase, and discharge of fireworks in the Town of Abita Springs was the next item for discussion. Mayor Lemons stated that he was unaware of the prohibition as outlined in the code adding that it would be difficult for the town to enforce. Several residents voiced their support of the law. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper expressed her concern that a repeal of the law could adversely affect the town's Property Insurance Association of Louisiana (PIAL) classification. Fire Commission Chairman Jay Hawkins was in attendance. A request was made by Alderman Curtis that Mr. Hawkins investigate potential impacts to the classification.

5. The final discussion of the Governmental Committee provided an update of activities associated with the replacement of the Town Center sign. Mayor Lemons began by providing an estimated construction completion date of April 15, 2018. The Board communicated their concerns related to several aspects of the process. The Board reported that they were dissatisfied with the following: the failure to obtain Historic Commission approval, design changes (such as backlighting), a lack of inclusion of the Board in the bid process, the advertising agreement between the vendor and Citizens Bank & Trust Co., and an overall lack of clarity regarding the purchase agreement and funding. The Alderman requested sign construction be immediately halted and asked Mr. Deano to investigate the legality of the process and agreements. Local residents expressed dismay and confusion as to why the vendor was allowed to enter into an agreement with the advertiser. Mayor Lemons answered that the original agreement was extended as this was necessary to fully fund the replacement of the sign. Residents were surprised to learn that the person liable for the damage to the sign would not be fully responsible for its replacement. Alderman Blitch Welliver concluded by emphasizing the importance of compliance with the requirement for Historic Commission approval. Alderman Berrigan moved to close the meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper.

INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE:

Alderman Murphy moved to open the Infrastructure Committee Meeting and to accept the January 2018 minutes, seconded by Alderman Berrigan. With no new business to discuss Alderman Murphy moved to close the committee meeting, seconded by Alderman Berrigan.

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Alderman Blitch Welliver moved to open the Finance Committee Meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper. Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper moved to accept the January 2018 minutes, seconded by Alderman Blitch Welliver. Mayor Lemons advised that the millage election notice of intent announcement would be made at the February 20, 2018 Town Council Meeting. Town Clerk Kathy Armand presented the timetable of activities associated with millage announcements, hearings, and the election. A request was made by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper to include herself and Alderman Blitch Welliver in millage related communications. Alderman Blitch Welliver moved to close the meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Kilpatrick-Harper.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

Alderman Curtis moved to open the Economic Development Committee Meeting and to accept the January 2018 minutes, seconded by Alderman Murphy. With no new business to discuss Alderman Curtis moved to close the meeting, seconded by Alderman Murphy.

Closing public comment included an admonition to refrain from disparaging comments regarding open dialogue on social media platforms. Additionally, a resident addressed the town's ordinances involving the "Tree Plan" and urban forester.

Alderman Curtis moved to close the meeting of the Public Committees, seconded by Alderman Murphy.

MEETING ADJOURNED
RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED THIS 6th DAY OF FEBRUARY 2018.

Kathy Armand, Town Clerk

Greg Lemons, Mayor