



**HERNDON TOWN COUNCIL
Work Session Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, October 3, 2023**

The Town Council held a work session meeting on Tuesday, October 3, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in the Herndon Council Chambers Building, 765 Lynn Street, Herndon, Virginia. In attendance were: Mayor Sheila Olem, Vice Mayor Clark Hedrick, and Councilmembers Naila Alam, Cesar del Aguila, Pradip Dhakal, Keven LeBlanc, and Donielle M. Scherff.

Staff present during the meeting: William H. Ashton II, Town Manager; Lesa Yeatts, Town Attorney; Kirstyn Barr Jovanovich, Town Clerk; Lisa Gilleran, Director of Community Development; Marjorie Sloan, Director of Finance; Anne Curtis, Chief Communications Officer; Cindy Roeder, Director of Parks and Recreation; John Irish, Deputy Director of Public Works; Tammy Chastain, Deputy Director of Public Works; Cynthia Hoftiezer; Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation: Dave Bracamonte, Systems Manager; and Margie Tacci, Deputy Town Clerk.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Olem called the October 3, 2023, Town Council work session to order at 7:00 p.m.

Determination of a Quorum

Mayor Olem determined there was a quorum of all Councilmembers present. Mayor Olem reminded the Council of the meeting decorum.

Mayor Announcements

Mayor Olem reminded everyone that the Town and its facilities are open on Monday, October 9, 2023, which is Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day. She stated that trash and recycling will be collected as normal.

Comments and Disclosures for the Record

Mayor Olem asked Margie Tacci, Deputy Town Clerk, if she received comments for the record or Transactional Disclosure Declarations from Council.

Ms. Tacci stated that Councilmember Alam entered a Signed Transactional Disclosure Declaration into the record on General Item 2(a), indicating that she is organizing the Yom-e-Azadi: 1st Annual Pakistan Heritage Day event. She indicated that she will recuse and disqualify herself from voting or participating in discussion on this item.

The signed disclosure statement has been entered into the record with the Town Clerk and Town Attorney.

2. GENERAL

a. Consider a request for a donation to Global Beat Foundation in support of Yom-e-Azadi: 1st Annual Pakistan Heritage Day event

Councilmember Alam left the work session at 7:04 p.m., as she provided a disclosure declaration recusing herself from the discussion on General Item 2(a).

Kirstyn Barr Jovanovich, Town Clerk, presented the staff report dated October 3, 2023. The Yom-e-Azadi: 1st Annual Pakistan Heritage Day event is being held at the Herndon Community Center on October 21, 2023. The Town received a donation request for \$3,060 to support the following: (1) \$2,015 for event logistics and (2) \$1,045 for Herndon Community Center facility rental fees. The non-profit event partner is the Global Beat Foundation, a registered 501(c)(3) organization.

Ms. Jovanovich stated that the FY 2024 Adopted Budget includes \$70,000 in appropriated funds for mini-festivals. If approved the donation will be funded from the mini-festivals account, resulting in a remaining balance of \$66,940 for FY 2024. She stated that the disbursement of the donation is at the discretion of the Town Council and requested their guidance on this request.

There was discussion among Council and staff on the funding request, which included: (1) activities occurring at the event, (2) nonprofit partner's role in the event, (3) requesting changes to the information listed on the event flyer, (4) establishing clear parameters for mini-festivals, (5) rental process for Town facilities, and (6) considering changing the facility rental fee to an in-kind donation for the event.

Responding to Councilmember del Aguila's request, William H. Ashton II, Town Manager, stated that it is possible to change the facility rental cost designation from cash to in-kind services for the event. He asked Council to consider that the Herndon Community Center facility rental policies differ from other Town facilities where in-kind services are used more frequently.

Responding to Councilmember del Aguila, Cindy Roeder, Director of Parks and Recreation, summarized how an organization can request a waiver for rental fees at the Herndon Community Center. If the Town Council wants to designate the rental fee as an in-kind donation, she asked that the amount be reflected as a revenue reduction in the department's budget.

Following discussion and by Council's consensus, the event organizer was asked to make several changes to the flyer ahead of the regular meeting agenda, which are: (1) change the Town branding to the official logo, (2) remove references to a singular

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Councilmember, (3) feature the nonprofit partner more prominently, (4) remove the age restriction, (5) remove or change the RSVP contact from a singular Councilmember, (6) clearly identify the event location, and (7) remove and replace any flyers that may have been distributed.

Following discussion and by Council's consensus, staff was also asked to revise the proposed resolution to change the facility rental fees from cash to an in-kind donation. The resolution will be updated for the next regular meeting agenda.

3. DISCUSSION

a. Community Cultural Festivals Draft Policy Statement

Mayor Olem noted that at 7:36 p.m., Councilmember Alam returned to the work session meeting.

Kirstyn Barr Jovanovich, Town Clerk, presented a PowerPoint dated October 3, 2023, along with a memorandum outlining Town events dated September 29, 2023. The draft policy statement incorporates changes the Council asked for during its discussion on this item at the September 5, 2023, work session, and it draws on Councilmember Scherff's memorandum dated September 9, 2023. The changes to the draft policy statement include the following: (1) additional language to allow events to be held on private property, (2) removal of the outdoor requirement, (3) revisions to the policy objectives, (4) revisions to the definition of "Community Cultural Festival," and (5) removal of the donation cap restriction.

Ms. Jovanovich reviewed the proposed policy parameters and funding guidelines, which were also revised following the Council's last discussion of this item. Included as part of this section is direction that while staff will administer the administrative application process, Council will take action on all donation requests.

Ms. Jovanovich stated that evening, staff is requesting Council to discuss and confirm the policy objectives. Following discussion, staff will schedule the policy statement for Council's review and action, develop administrative procedures to enact the policy directives in a consistent manner, and roll out the program.

There was discussion among Council and staff on the Community Cultural Festivals policy statement, including: (1) concern over endorsing religious or political events, and concern over hate groups hosting events in Town, (2) administration of the policy in practice, (3) information to be included on the application form, (4) how the nonprofit or not-for-profit organizations will be involved, (5) Council involvement in the events, (6) the existing Special Event Facility Rental (SEFR) process, and (7) events on public versus private property.

Councilmember Scherff read a statement into the record describing her thoughts on the Community Cultural Festivals policy, including the characteristics, type, and intent of events that could apply for funding. She also reviewed the requirements she thought should be included in the application for event funding.

Following discussion among Council and staff, Councilmember Scherff summarized the Community Cultural Festivals discussion, stating that the policy: (1) removed the outdoor requirements for events, (2) requires a non or not-for-profit partner, (3) political or religious events are not allowed, (4) event has to occur within the Town's limits, (5) administrative process, form, and list of requirements that will be streamlined across all applicants, and (6) there will be a rolling admissions process that will be available until all the allocated funds are spent.

b. Town Calendar Policy Statement

William H. Ashton II, Town Manager, began the discussion on the Town Calendar Policy Statement. He stated that the Town recently received a request to include eight additional Catholic holidays in the Town Calendar. The Town Calendar has grown over time, and there is not a current policy to determine what events are included in the calendar. Mr. Ashton stated that staff is seeking the Council's guidance on how they want to decide what events or holidays are included in the calendar.

There was discussion among Council and staff on which events and holidays to include in the Town Calendar. Following discussion, by Council consensus, staff was asked to include the standard holidays recognized by Fairfax County Public Schools.

Mr. Ashton requested guidance if the Town Council wanted to continue to list the farmers' market on Thursday in next year's Town Calendar. He stated that earlier in the day, he advised Council about an external organization that may be able to work with the Town on holding the farmers market on a different day. Staff has also talked with Fairfax County about changing the farmers market to the weekend. Fairfax County will not have the schedule for its supported farmers markets until February 2024.

There was discussion among Council and staff about whether to include or remove the farmers market in the Town Calendar, since there are ongoing conversations about which day it will be held on.

Following discussion, Anne Curtis, Chief Communications Officer, confirmed with Council that they wanted staff to remove the farmers market listing from the 2024 Town Calendar.

Responding to Councilmember Scherff, Mr. Ashton agreed that staff can promote the farmers market once the day for 2024 is finalized.

4. **ROUNDTABLE**

Councilmember Dhakal: shared that he enjoyed attending the following recent events: (1) World Culture Festival in Washington, DC, on Saturday, September 30, 2023, with Councilmember Scherff, (2) NextStop Theatre's performance of "39 Steps," which he stated is running until October 8, 2023, and (3) the Hispanic Business Reception (hosted by the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce).

Councilmember Dhakal stated that several of his neighbors were concerned about parking and driver visibility and safety on Ferndale Avenue.

William H. Ashton II, Town Manager, stated that he tries to balance parking availability with the concerns that Councilmember Dhakal mentioned. Mr. Ashton stated that enacting restrictions for large commercial vehicle parking has helped improve the sightlines on Ferndale Avenue. However, there may be additional modifications that can be made, and he will ask staff to look into it.

Councilmember Scherff: echoed Councilmember Dhakal's comments about the World Culture Festival. Following that event, she felt encouraged to remind everyone to reach out and check on their neighbors, and to remember that we are part of a small town community.

Councilmember Scherff stated that at last week's regular meeting, there were several speakers who thought that the Town is canceling Friday Night Live next year, which she did not think had been expressed. She encouraged her colleagues to, whenever possible, let citizens know that the Council is not cancelling events that they love.

Councilmember Scherff suggested that the Town could partner with either the Dulles Regional Chamber of Commerce or Friday Night Live on the Friday Night Live events. She thought that may be a good first step toward expanding and broadening these events.

Councilmember Scherff reminded those interested that there is an American Flag disposal box in front of the Herndon Moose Lodge that is available for public use.

Councilmember Scherff stated that she was glad to see that there is a sign on Herndon Parkway with an arrow toward Sunset Business Park.

Councilmember Scherff stated that a resident advised her that they called the Town about traffic stacking up at the Herndon Parkway and Spring Street intersection, and the Town told her that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is managing the project there. When the resident called VDOT, they told her the Town is managing it. She asked who is managing the project so the citizens can be informed.

Mr. Ashton stated that VDOT is managing the project and indicated that staff will contact them about the issue.

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Councilmember del Aguila: asked, with the consent of the Council, to read a proclamation recognizing Pedestrian Safety Awareness Month at next week's regular meeting.

Kirstyn Barr Jovanovich, Town Clerk, stated that she will find out and confirm if staff can draft the proclamation to be included in next week's regular meeting agenda.

Councilmember del Aguila stated that he appreciated the attendance and support from the Council at the Hispanic Business Reception. He indicated that he expected the full support of the Council to hold a Latino Festival next year.

Councilmember del Aguila advised Council that he is working with staff and Vice Mayor Hedrick on an event through a non-profit that honors members of the military, first responders, and veterans, and their families.

Councilmember LeBlanc: shared that he enjoyed attending the following recent events: (1) "39 Steps" at NextStop Theatre, (2) Showcase of Bands at Herndon High School, (3) launch of electric vehicle (EV) buses in Fairfax County, where he found out that following this launch, Fairfax County Schools will receive EV buses in the near future.

Councilmember LeBlanc stated that the Herndon Holiday Homes Tour is looking to bring back to the Cultivating Community Initiative to sponsor other events in the community throughout the year. He asked the Council if they would be all right with having a representative attend a Town Council meeting to present certificates for winners of programs like the best decorated holiday home, or the Good Neighbor Award.

Next year, the group is looking at a Town-wide Halloween decorating theme with awards.

Councilmember Alam: stated that she noticed individuals are crossing Elden Street near the H-Mart and not using the crosswalk. She asked if the Town could do anything to assist this situation.

Councilmember Alam stated that on Saturday, September 30, she enjoyed attending Senator Warner's Annual Women's Conference.

Councilmember Alam stated that she thought the individual leading a Community Festival should get the support of another Councilmember.

Vice Mayor Hedrick: shared that he enjoyed attending the following recent events: (1) Hispanic Business Reception (2) Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance event on Friday, September 29, 2023, where he appreciated discussing regional transportation issues, and (3) International Association for Spelling as Communication (I-SAC) event on Sunday, October 1, 2023. He stated that I-SAC is the group that attended the Council's recognition for Autism Acceptance Month earlier in the year.

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Mayor Olem: shared that she enjoyed attending the following recent events: (1) “39 steps” at NextStop Theatre, (2) Hispanic Business Reception, and (3) an event on Friday, September 29, 2023, for “Readers are Leaders” at the Herndon Centennial Golf Course. At the event, she presented a proclamation honoring the organization to Wendell Byrd, the group’s founder and a former teacher at Hutchison Elementary School.

William H. Ashton II, Town Manager: No comments.

5. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Olem adjourned the September 19, 2023, Town Council work session at 8:45 p.m.

Amanda E. Moraw Kertz

Amanda E.M. Kertz
Chief Deputy Town Clerk



Minutes approved by Town Council: November 14, 2023