

MAGNOLIA COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

February 12, 2024

MVFC

- I. Call to Order at 5:57 pm
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Roll Call – **All council members present plus Ralph and Dustan, Diane excused.**
- IV. Minutes of Last Meeting – **Reviewed and approved, Ryan motion, Susanne seconded.**
- V. Treasurer's Report
 - a. Water/Tax Bills Update
 - b. Payment of Bills – **Motion to pay the bills by Jim, second by Ryan**
- VI. Public Works/Infrastructure
 - a. Water System & Fire Hydrants

A major issue has developed with Well and Pump #2 during the rehab project. Well #2 has been down since 1/19/2024.

The alignment of the supply pipes and screens is off center about 120 feet down. An emergency fix that could be done would merely put off a full correction and probably limit the current flow even more. The problem may also be part of the water quality issues we've been experiencing. A new well seems to be the best and most reliable solution.

From the various Water Asset reports, pump life appears to be approx. 30-50 years. Pump 2 at 37 years has entered the higher end of that range. Maybe

more concerning is the fact that Well 3 dates to 1980 - even older. Worst case, we may be looking at two primary wells on the same downward curve.

Proposed:

>> Hit a temporary pause on the rehab of Pump 3 project.

>> Focus on the installation of a new well and pump at Pump 2, using our transfer tax funds or emergency funds from USDA, coupled with the ARPA money already committed.

>> After new well and Pump 2 are in place, pick up the Pump 3 rehab again.

>> After Pump 3 rehab is done, re-crunch the flow numbers to finish the Water Tower project before July 1.

Well #2 will be abandoned. New one by AC Schultes will be to the west of present well house, next to field. Jim can draft variance language, if necessary. Equipment activity may temporarily push out into field 30-40 feet; Jim will notify MVFC and Bonk Farms. We will return it to original shape if needed.

New well will be piped back into the existing chemical building. Present building to be retained for storage. Dustan recommended a lockable stainless-steel hood/dome for the new wellhead rather than fool with a new building or moving the old one. AC Schultes has agreed to a couple of cost-savings for us, one of which is using PVC pipe for some sections, saving us \$5000.

The new well would be about \$125,000 above and beyond the \$42,000 already committed to that #2 well project. There will be some other costs with piping and electric connections to the supply system, plus a structure to cover the new wellhead. Redirecting some grant and ARPA funding might be helpful, but we have almost \$160,000 in our transfer tax fund currently. Per 22 Del Code, Chapter 16, it clearly states that the funds can be used for public works and infrastructure projects.

Also, USDA may have emergency funding available to cover part or all of the expense. If our request is successful, this funding would not require repayment. (They also have traditional loan programs but they take time, paperwork, and Town meetings, whereas time is of the essence right now.) There is a strong feeling by Verdantas, USDA and the Town that nearby ground vibrations by the equipment and supplies connected to the nearly 2-year Reybold project 2021-2023 may have contributed to the failure.

Subsequent incident with MVFC drawing down tanker water during school hours. Pump 3 cannot easily handle MVFC, school and residents by itself. Agreement to coordinate drawdowns and contact Kent COMM for backup should a major fire occur.

Dustan enlisted help at locating street valve in front of Pump 2. Our iron content was a bit high. Per Ralph, the worst water currently appears to be near the intersection.

Ralph arranged to switch our gas supplier to Baker Petroleum in Milton, since he has experienced numerous customer service failures by the current vendor in recent months (e.g. no gas onsite).

b. Cross Connection Service – Plan was submitted to Office of Drinking Water before the Feb 1 deadline; no word since.

c. Lead Service Line Inventory - Jim is doing some reformatting to better enable ingestion of the TOM data by 120 Water. Due date Oct 2024.

d. Traffic Assessment – No report

e. Transportation Improvement District (TID) – No report

VII. New Business

a. Late addition of the Annual Meeting items. Blanket motion by Buck and second by Ryan to continue Mayor Frazier, Vice Mayor Fowler, and our relationships with Diane, Dustan, and Ralph plus our attorney, Barrett Edwards, Esq. Tax rates to remain the same, with an eye to what comes down the pike regarding the new KC Reassessment.

VIII. Old Business

a. Properties and Code Enforcement –
Wootten Property – no update on the proposed farmette with horses' sale.

Murray Property – Jim took his daughter’s call and reassured her that the Town is not the entity holding back a sale, but more likely DelDot and the fact that there is (as has been the case for decades) no approved way to cut through to it from West Walnut St or North Main St. The lots Mr Murray purchased on West Walnut still do not allow room for required acceleration/deacceleration lanes (for example – Hatteras Hills). Vehicle turning radiuses would also be significantly restricted. Mayor also followed up with a retired local farmer, who maintains that there is a market for a farmette property, particularly by folks in the Northeast region. A second contact – a realtor – felt that the property should be marketed as residential/agricultural rather than as development and provided the name of one of his colleagues who specializes in such properties. Information was relayed to the daughter.

Letter will be sent out regarding the sofa on the sidewalk at 7 North Main that’s been there well over a month.

The Zec property, just south of our Town boundary on Clapham Road, was successfully rezoned from Agricultural/Residential (A/R) to Neighborhood Business (oddly, BN). While the Mayor’s wife was told that nothing was planned at the moment, two other Council members have heard that it may become the site of a pizza restaurant. Stay tuned.

b. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) – it’s safe to say that the remainder of our ARPA funds beyond what we committed to the Well #2 rehab will be consumed by the new well expenses, so we’ll have that used up before the 2026 deadline.

c. Comprehensive Plan Review 2024 – Midterm review approved by DE Office of State Planning and Coordination; next activity 2028-2029.

d. Management Transition Plan - no report

Adjourned 6:30 pm – motion by Susanne, second by Buck.

Jim Frazier for Diane Cahall