

**NOTICE OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL
March 16, 2020**

Councilmembers present: Vice Mayor Allen, Councilman Rapier, Councilman Bryce, Councilwoman Smith, Councilwoman Howard

Councilmembers absent: Mayor Rivera, Councilman Welker

Staff present: Town Manager Heath Brown, Town Engineer Tom Palmer, Police Chief Shaffen Woods, Deputy Clerk Michelle Mortensen

Visitors: Barbara Stailey, Ward Weaver, John Howard, Lance Henrie, Ben Allred

AGENDA

Welcome and Call Meeting to Order by Vice Mayor Allen at 6:30. He called the meeting to order and stated that we do have a quorum.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilwoman Smith.

Roll Call.

PUBLIC HEARING:

- A. Zoning Change Request – Parcel #104-23-008K & #104-23-008I, located on the west side of Reay Lane and north of the Highline Canal in Thatcher. The current zoning of this parcel is C-2 (Highway Commercial). The applicant is requesting that the parcels be zoned R1-10 (Residential, 10,000 SF minimum lot size).

Mr. Brown explained that we have the request to change the zoning on this piece of property from commercial C-2 to single family residential and this is the public hearing part of that. If anyone has any comments, they are welcome to be heard.

OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC:

Barbara Stailey stood and stated that she had a suggestion that we put In God We Trust on the other side of the Welcome to Thatcher sign to show allegiance to our country. Vice Mayor Allen stated that we are remodeling our sign right now and will take that into consideration.

Ward Weaver stood and stated that I really like the roundabout that was put in on Church Street and it works very well.

PUBLIC APPEARANCES:

None

CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Approve minutes of the February 24, 2020 Regular Council Meeting.
- B. Planning and Zoning Monthly Report.
- C. Police Monthly Report.
- D. Approval of Invoices.
- E. Financial Reports.

Councilman Rapier made the motion to approve the consent agenda and was seconded by Councilwoman Smith. Motion carries unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **ORDINANCE NO. 185-2020:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, ARIZONA, AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP FOR THE TOWN OF THATCHER, ARIZONA PURSUANT ARTICLE 3, SECTION 3.3 REZONING REQUESTS AND ZONING TEXT AMENDMENTS, OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER ZONING ORDINANCE BY CHANGING THE ZONING DISTRICT CLASSIFICATION FOR APPROXIMATELY 15 ACRES LOCATED ON THE WEST SIDE OF REAY LANE AND NORTH OF THE HIGHLINE CANAL, IN THATCHER, PARCELS #104-23-008K & #104-23-008I, FROM "C-2" TO "R1-10". (CASE #Z 20-02).

Councilman Rapier stated that I don't have a problem with the rezone, my only concern is that everyone understands that if we have any expansion for high density residential housing that it will be around this sub-division. Having said that if everyone understands that, then I'm good with it. Vice Mayor Allen stated that I talked with some people who work over at the College and there has been some talk about putting in a CDL training track and when that goes in, people across the way aren't going to like it, so I think it is good to have this on the record. Councilwoman Howard stated I don't see high residential density housing on the map. Mr. Palmer stated that it is medium density right now and is the general plan, not the official zoning map. When we say high density, we just mean higher than what is proposed in this development. On the east side it is currently zoned R-3 which is multi-family and C2. Councilwoman Howard stated that when this is developed as a subdivision then it would follow our subdivision ordinance. Mr. Palmer answered absolutely assuming it is developed as a subdivision. Mr. Brown mentioned that we do have a small subdivision ordinance, which I have talked to Ben Allred about,

which if you have fifteen houses or less then then road requirements are not the normal 50 foot wide. Councilman Rapier made the motion to accept Ordinance 185-2020 and it was seconded by Councilwoman Smith. Motion carries unanimously.

- B. **RESOLUTION NO. 685-2020:** A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, GRAHAM COUNTY, ARIZONA, TO SUPPORT THE 2020 CENSUS, TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2020 CENSUS COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE, AND TO ENCOURAGE EVERY PERSON TO BE COUNTED.

Mr. Brown explained that this is to make one more effort to get the word out there because the census is important. Motion was made by Councilwoman Smith to approve Resolution 685-2020 and was seconded by Councilman Bryce. Motion carries unanimously.

- C. Transfer of Funds for Census Activities, including a Potential Utility Bill Rebate to Thatcher Residents for Completing their Census Survey.

Mr. Brown mentioned that we did not include any funds in the budget for the census and since we are spending money and to follow good accounting practices I suggest that we use \$20,000 from the sewer account for machinery and equipment to put towards the census. I don't think we will need that much, but if other things come up then we won't have to come back and do this again. Other options would be to nickel and dime money from other accounts or we could take it from the contingency fund. Councilwoman Howard asked if we can transfer money to the general fund. Mr. Brown stated that if council approves it then we can.

Vice Mayor Allen asked what the rebate is. Mr. Brown stated that Horatio mentioned giving residents of Thatcher a \$5 rebate on their utility bill if they show proof of doing their census. He is taking that to the Safford Council. Councilman Rapier stated that I think it would be more effective if we gave a \$20 rebate instead of \$5. Councilwoman Smith mentioned that we are going to be doing some drawings to provide incentive as well. Mr. Brown suggested that we don't do the rebate and put that money towards better prizes. Councilman Rapier stated that I motion that we move \$20,000 out of the sewer enterprise fund to put towards the census and was seconded by Councilwoman Smith. Motion carries unanimously.

- D. Award of Bid for Thatcher Paving Project #20-001, Change Order for 3rd Avenue Paving.

Mr. Brown explained that we bid out our paving project which includes 8th Ave., 4th Street, and Stadium Ave. We have a budget of \$290,000 for paving and the low bid came in at \$264,000 so I recommend awarding that bid to CKC. What I would also like you to consider is now that the Church Street project and roundabout are done, we have had a lot of construction traffic going from Red Lamp to Church Street and 3rd Avenue is in pretty bad shape. I am suggesting that we overlay the area from the highway to the

roundabout. We don't have enough HURF funds to cover that, so we would need another \$40-58,000. We do think we will save a little money on chip sealing. Vice Mayor Allen stated that I think any chance we get to eliminate dirt shoulders then I say we do it. Councilwoman Smith agreed. Vice Mayor Allen asked if the paving on Stadium included in front of the college maintenance shop and Mr. Palmer answered it would be from Speedway up to the railroad tracks. Councilwoman Howard motioned that we award the bid to CKC for the Thatcher Paving Project for \$264,731.63 and include the transfer of funds out of the contingency account up to \$60,000 for 3rd Avenue. Motion was seconded by Councilman Bryce. Motion carries unanimously.

E. City of Safford / Graham County Co-op, Water System Service Area Adjustment - Impact on Thatcher Residents.

Mr. Brown stated that Graham County Utilities and City of Safford are looking at swapping the water in Central. City of Safford is stating that it makes more sense to put Palmer Lane on the Pima water system because of the configuration of the lines. I don't know that I care if we are on split water systems. I just want to make sure council doesn't have an issue with dividing that water system. Councilman Bryce asked if it would change our water agreement with Safford and Mr. Brown answered no. One concern would be that we have no agreement with the Co-op protecting our rates. Councilwoman Howard stated that if it does happen that they are governed by the corporation commission. If it does happen, then there is a process where the people affected by this have the opportunity to give input as to if they want this or not. The consensus was that Council was fine with the split water system.

F. Employee Sick Leave Emergency Policy

Mr. Brown stated that Councilwoman Howard brought up the concern, what if we have employees with a prolonged quarantine time with low hours and we are forcing them to stay home. This morning I met with the other managers and this is what we are all proposing, if you are sick and need to be off work, you are required to use your leave time. If you run out of time and still need to be away from work, then the Town will give them paid time off. Councilman Rapier asked if one person gets quarantined from another employee, then are we going to make them use their leave time for that. Mr. Brown mentioned that I hadn't even considered it. I know an Arizona College has automatically granted every employee an extra two weeks to deal with this. Councilman Bryce mentioned that if an employee gets sick from a co-worker and your employer is responsible for not infecting anyone else then it is a worker's comp issue. Councilwoman Smith asked how this affects us financially. Mr. Brown stated that it isn't any cash out of our pocket, but worst-case scenario is we may have to call in substitutes. Vice Mayor Allen suggested that how about we give Mr. Brown the authority to handle this on a case to case basis. Councilman Rapier stated that I make the motion to allow Mr. Brown the authority to approve any sick leave emergency policy that he deems necessary and fair during this time of

COVID-19 and was seconded by councilwoman Smith. Motion carries unanimously.

- G. **RESOLUTION NO. 686-2020:** A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, GRAHAM COUNTY, ARIZONA, TO DECLARE A STATE OF EMERGENCY DUE TO THE CORONA VIRUS PANDEMIC.

Mr. Brown stated that the State has done this, the County is about to do this, Pima is doing this tomorrow night, and Safford is asking for an electronic copy of this. We don't want to be the Town that didn't declare an emergency and end up not getting any money if we need it. I see no downside in doing this. Motion was made by Councilwoman Smith to approve Resolution 686-2020 as stated and was seconded by Councilwoman Howard. Motion carries unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

A. Town Manager's Report

- Public Works Projects – Recreation Complex, Church Street, Church Street High School Ave. Storm Drain,
- General Plan Community Meeting
- Thatcher/ADOT Meeting Report
- Transportation Funding, Legislature Contact
- Census Status
- Town Council Election Packets Available, Due April 6
- Website Status
- Welcome to Thatcher Sign Status
- EAC - Four-Year Degree Bill Status
- Budget Workshop - March 30, 6:30

Mr. Brown mentioned that he will send out an email summarizing the things on this list tomorrow, but I just want to mention a few things related to the Coronavirus. First, we have locked down Town Hall. We will be taking calls, and taking electronic payments, as well as through the drive thru. We have cancelled fire department meetings. I met with the Court today, and they are under a Superior Court order that they must stay open. We did discuss limiting the face to face as much as possible and things they could do regarding their seating and taking payments over the phone.

B. Fire Department Report

- Central/Jackson Heights District Board Meeting, Gila River Corridor Fire Management
- Training – House Burn
- Ft. Thomas Fire
- Fire Station Tours

- C. Police Department Report
 - Alice Training
 - Roundabout Report
 - General Operations

- D. Council Reports

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS & POTENTIAL QUORUM'S

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilwoman Smith at 7:26 and was seconded by Councilwoman Howard. Motion carries unanimously.

APPROVED:

Michelle Mortensen, Deputy Clerk

Bob Rivera, Mayor

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the regular meeting of the Town Council of the Town of Thatcher held on this 16th day of March. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Michelle Mortensen, Deputy Clerk