

**NOTICE OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
THATCHER TOWN COUNCIL  
July 26, 2021**

Councilmembers present: Mayor Bryce, Vice Mayor Smith, Councilman Rapier, Councilman Welker, Councilwoman Howard, Councilman Vining, Councilman Carlton

Staff present: Town Manger Heath Brown, Town Attorney Matt Clifford, Town Engineer Tom Palmer, Fire Chief Mike Payne, Deputy Clerk Michelle Mortensen, Public Works Director Tommy Nicholas, Engineer Tech Gary Allred

Visitors: Debbie Turley, Julie Cook, John Howard, Dennis Delaney, Ron Curtis, Jay Williamson

**AGENDA**

Welcome and Call Meeting to Order at 6:30 by Mayor Bryce and he stated that this a public meeting of the Thatcher Town Council. He stated that we do have a quorum.

Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Carlton.

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

- A. Zoning Text Amendments – To consider the matter of amending the Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Thatcher

Mr. Brown mentioned that U-Haul has expressed interest in a facility which would include mini-storage on a property which is in a C-2 zone. The way our code reads, that is not allowed in this zone. It seemed like it should be to staff. We have a proposed amendment that allows mini storage with some conditions. Mr. Palmer mentioned that every mini-storage like this is currently in a C-2 zone, so this didn't make sense. There are also a few clean up items that are listed as conditional uses that should be administrative uses. The emphasis behind this change is allowing a mini storage in the C-2 zone.

**OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC:**

Julie Cook and Debbie Turley stood and thanked the council for the pickleball courts. We would like to push for the lights. We are getting to meet lots of new people and would love more courts, but we are grateful for the ones we have.

Barbara Stailey stated that I loved having the flags up for three days for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Next time you have an event it would be nice if you let more of the community know so we could be more involved.

Gary Allred stood and read a letter on behalf of Emily McIntyre who is interested in purchasing a park bench with a plaque attached for a community member who has

passed away. Mr. Brown explained that maybe we should come up with a policy to consider these kinds of things.

**PUBLIC APPEARANCES:**

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** Pursuant to A.R.S. Section 38-431.02 (A)(1)(7) the Council may go into Executive Session for discussion and to consult with the Town Attorney for legal advice on the following matters:

Motion was made to go into executive session by Councilman Carlton and seconded by Vice Mayor Smith at 7:33. Motion was made to go back into regular session at 8:36 by Councilman Rapier and was seconded by Vice Mayor Smith.

- A. Potential Red Lamp Prospect
- B. Potential Real Property Purchases within the Electric Department

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Action Item

- A. Approve minutes of the June 21, 2021 Regular Council Meeting
- B. Planning and Zoning Monthly Report.
- C. Police Monthly Report.
- D. Approval of Invoices.
- E. Financial Reports.

Motion was made by Councilwoman Howard to approve the consent agenda and was seconded by Vice Mayor Smith. Motion carries unanimously.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. **ORDINANCE 191-2021:** AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF THATCHER, ARIZONA, AMENDING THE ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE THATCHER TOWN CODE BY AMENDING PORTIONS OF SECTIONS 7.2, 7.3, 7.4 AND 13.8 THEREOF AND ADOPTING BY REFERENCE PURSUANT TO A.R.S. §9-802, THESE AMENDMENTS WHICH ARE FULLY DESCRIBED IN "EXHIBIT A" ATTACHED HERETO.

Mr. Brown stated that we just discussed the changes to the C-2 zone and the administrative uses. Mayor Bryce stated that I looked at them and they seem appropriate. I like that you delineated certain roadside events. Councilwoman Howard asked if you are going to have a design standard for the cargo containers. Mr. Brown explained that we tried to be specific enough so that they know they can't just place a cargo container there. It says it must appear as a single cohesive building, painted, resurfaced, architecturally modified to appear more conventional. We would ask someone who wants to do this to submit the plan to us and then based on the criteria we will let them know if it meets our standard. Mayor Bryce explained that he liked the P&Z discussion about leaving the modified and more conventional language which gives administration some leeway or opportunity to accommodate. Mr. Palmer mentioned that it is very odd that we don't allow cargo containers to be used as mini-storage, which they are almost custom made to do, when you can use them as a dwelling and most other structures. We tried to give ourselves enough that we can cut out the riff raff without being so specific as to getting ourselves into trouble. Vice Mayor Smith made the motion to approve Ordinance 191-2021 and was seconded by Councilwoman Howard. Motion carries unanimously.

C. Liquor License for 7-11 (Speedway transfer)

Mr. Brown explained that this is transferring the liquor license from Speedway to 7-11. Staff would recommend accepting this. Councilman Rapier made the motion to approve the liquor license for 7-11 and was seconded by Vice Mayor Smith. Motion carries unanimously.

D. Movie Night / Mobile Vendor Event

Mr. Brown stated that this is leading from a discussion that Mr. Palmer and I had. The idea would be to use the Red Lamp area or the parking lot between the Reay Lane Park and the soccer field and have mobile vendors could come set up along with a free movie night in the park. It shouldn't be a lot of work to coordinate that. Mr. Palmer also suggested a live band would also be an idea instead of having a movie. There are lots of families who might be looking for something family friendly to do on a weekend.

E. Recreation Complex Playground Options

Mr. Brown mentioned that this idea originated from Vice Mayor Smith. There are two reasons to consider a change; one, the location we have for the playground at the rec complex might be too close to Reay Lane, and two, maybe we aren't thinking in grand enough terms of what the playground area could be. On our trip we went to a park in Eagle Mountain, Utah and one of the features that was really neat, and that

we could do, are hill slides. Basically, a path with ADA access up to the top of the slides, built into a hill, so someone in a wheelchair could go up the hill and slide down.

The idea we are talking about is moving the playground from near the pickleball courts to where the dog park was going to be. Then we could use the hill from the amphitheater or the dam for the hill slides. We always talked about doing a rope climber and small zip lines are also an option.

There are some downfalls to this; there is infrastructure already in place at the original location. Another downside is that it is farther from the parking lots, and it is farther away from the restrooms. It is about 200 yards from the restrooms. It is also difficult to build restrooms in this area because the area is too low and sewage would need to be pumped. The plus side is that we if we eliminated the dog park, we could build two or three more pickleball courts near the existing two. Other than it being a long way from the restrooms and parking lot, I really like this idea. Councilman Vining asked about the price for this. Mr. Brown explained that we have someone coming in on Thursday to look at the site and start giving us some answers. It is a cost increase, but it isn't too bad. Councilman Carlton asked if we could put up some bushes as a buffer to put them along Reay Lane for the playground. Mr. Brown answered yes, we could solve that fairly easy. There are pros and cons on both places the playground could be. Mayor Bryce stated that he would like to see the estimate on what this would be versus what we already have planned. Councilman Carlton asked what phase this is in. Mr. Brown stated that it would be in next years budget. Councilman Rapier stated if we left the park as is, what would it take to put in pickleball courts where we had the dog park going. Mr. Palmer answered it would be easy. Mr. Brown stated the downside would be having courts in two different areas.

## **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

- A. Town Manager's Report
- Public Works Projects – Recreation Complex, Pickle Ball Courts, Quail Ridge Electric, Reay Ln Sewer Main

Mr. Brown stated that the pickleball courts look good and are being used a lot. We are currently helping the Co-op by installing the electric conduits in Quail Ridge across Quail Ridge Drive, to feed the new streets there. One crew is working on the east parking lot and the other crew is working on a walking path from the skate park down the slope to connect it to 8<sup>th</sup> Street. Most likely what we are going to do is send them to finish the conduit and then start on the sewer main on Reay Lane. The other crew will stay working on the path at the rec complex.

- Gas Pump Shade Status

Gary Allred stated that the shade will be here on Thursday. A lot of the material that we need for the roof of our maintenance building will be in this week as well. Mr. Brown explained that as soon as we get this in, we will get one of our crews on this.

- Vehicle Lease Status

Mr. Brown mentioned that our first vehicle will be here at the end of the month and the police vehicles and public works vehicles will be here between October and February.

- Recreation Center Trip / Architect Selection

The trip to visit recreation centers and meet with the owners of those facilities was very successful. Just to remind you it was myself, Mayor Bryce, Councilman Rapier, Councilman Welker, President Todd Haynie, Vice-President Susan Wood. We saw a lot of great facilities which excited us about what we could have in our Valley. We talked to towns that have partnered with local colleges. Councilman Rapier stated that the visit to the facility in Montrose was really positive because we were able to view it being used. There was a volleyball camp underway with more gym space available, swimming, wellness, just a lot going on. It is encouraging because these facilities are similar in size to ours and they are being utilized.

Mr. Brown stated that the Fruita site had two full sized courts, a wellness center, and an indoor pool and their operation budget is \$600,000 a year. I have talked to a lot of people to see what they feel would be reasonable to pay for a yearly pass. After those discussions, I am really encouraged hearing what people think about the project, and I believe we could generate significant revenue for operation and maintenance. After the trip, the project seems even more feasible.

Mayor Bryce stated that we didn't just go to see the facilities, we wanted to see how their finances work and if the communities supported them, and how they supported them. I believe that this will be supported by our community. There are not a lot of things for kids to do and this is one of the remedies for that. This is a 50–100-year facility. Councilman Welker stated that it could be a centerpiece for the town to revolve around. I was in Morenci last week and it changes the dynamic of the town. I think it would do that here as well.

- General Plan

Mr. Brown explained that staff is reviewing it and we would like you

to look at it. Within the next few weeks if you could get us any comments.

- 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration

Our 4<sup>th</sup> of July celebration went great. The Mayor had some great comments, and I heard a lot of good feedback. Thank you to everyone who helped put the event on.

- Monthly Financial Summary – Year End Summaries

Looking at the end of the year, we brought in \$1.8 million more than we spent. Some of that is the staggering of the Church Street Project reimbursement, \$650,000 for the stimulus funding, and we had more sales tax than we anticipated. We will be receiving \$1.8 million in COVID stimulus funding. We will have to be creative in spending this money as there are a lot of stipulations on how it can be spent.

B. Fire Department Report

Chief Payne stated that some of our firefighters helped with the search for Maci Reed over the weekend. It was great to see the way the community came out and helped. We have twenty guys signed up for fire school so that leaves 15 here to fight fires. We had a tabletop training last week. If they had a fire like they did in Morenci it would shut the Safford mine down. We have a mutual aid agreement with Freeport. We will be doing some follow-ups and making some changes that we think will help. Mayor Bryce said Town staff and all those involved in police and fire make the Town look good and I am very appreciative of that.

C. Police Department Report – Chief Woods Excused

D. Council Reports

None

## ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made to adjourn by Councilman Rapier and was seconded Vice Mayor 8:37. Motion carries unanimously.

APPROVED:

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Michelle Mortensen, Deputy Clerk

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Randy Bryce, 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 21st day of June. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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Michelle Mortensen, Deputy Clerk