

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 23, 2023  
SEWANEE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

Community Council Meeting was held in person in January with an option to also participate online via Zoom.

Members present: Scott Wilson, Nancy Berner, Ben Tarhan, Ben Beavers, Michael Payne, Rhea Bowden, Laura Willis, Robert Benton, June Weber, Lynn Stubblefield, Marilyn Phelps, Sallie Green, Phil White, and Bill Harper

Members via Zoom: Sean McEwen and John Solomon

Absent: Bruce Manuel and Nysha Wallace

Minutes taken by: Carey Fulmer

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**(1) Approval of the October Minutes (attached)**

October 2022 minutes were approved as circulated.

**(2) Introduction of New Council Members – Scott Wilson**

Scott Wilson introduced the new council members elected for the next 4 year term to the group.

- Ben Tarhan, District 1
- Ben Beavers, District 2
- Michael Payne, District 3
- Marilyn Phelps, re-elected for full term for District 4
- Rhea Bowden, At-Large
- Laura Willis, At-Large
- Nysha Wallace, appointment by the VC for 2 year term.

**(3) Community Council Constitution Revision 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading and Vote to Approve Change – Scott Wilson (attached)**

*The proposed constitution change can be found in the October minutes or in the draft Constitution, (both attached). The proposed change seeks to clarify Section 2. (a).*

Section 2. Qualifications

(a) Elected Council members shall be registered voters in Franklin or Marion County, Tennessee with a home address within the 37375 zip code as designated by the United States Postal Service and have resided at ~~that an~~ address within the 37375 zip code for at least two years prior to election.

This proposed constitution changed was approved on the second reading.

#### **(4) Election of Council Member to the Agenda Committee – Scott Wilson**

Scott Wilson asked for any volunteers or nominations from the Council members to serve on the Agenda Committee. Laura Willis was nominated to serve on this agenda committee and she accepted.

#### **(5) Unauthorized Parking on University/Bike Lanes – Marilyn Phelps & John Solomon**

Marilyn Phelps opened the discussion for this agenda item presenting an idea that a constituent came to her with to prevent unauthorized parking on University Avenue in the bike lanes. An idea to implement towing as a deterrent to parking in bike lanes was presented to the Council. Bill Harper suggested a warning process with a notice that towing would be implemented to show the seriousness of the offense rather than towing as a first step. A question was raised on the practicality of towing. Dylan McClure, Captain for the Sewanee Police Department stated that there is not a towing service located in Sewanee, therefore by the time a vehicle was cited and the towing service was called, the likelihood of the offending vehicle still remaining in the bike lane could be slim in the 25-30 minutes it takes for a tow truck to arrive. Nancy Berner stated that this is a conversation being discussed by the Cabinet and she knew that Erica Howard, Dean of Students, is organizing a campaign led by students to deter parking on University Avenue. Lynn Stubblefield asked if one bike lane could be open in the morning and the other side open in the afternoon. This led the conversation to the next agenda item presented by Sara McIntyre for an idea/proposal of a two-way protected bike lane.

#### **(6) Idea for a Two-Way Protected Bike Lane (Sara McIntyre) – Scott Wilson**

Sara McIntyre, University Sustainability presented an idea to the Community Council to deter parking in the bike lane along University Avenue. The idea was to remove the bike lane on both sides of the road and make a two-way bike lane along the Sewanee Elementary side of University Avenue. The feasibility of this idea was addressed to Franklin County and the Road Commissioner, Johnny Hughes and the proposal would have to be officially approved by Franklin County. The proposal outlined the idea of removing the bike lane on the All Saints Chapel side of the street and construct a physical barrier to prevent parking in the bank lane while keeping all the bikers on one side of the street. This also prevents young children biking to school from the need to cross the street. The cost for this idea is unknown. To accommodate parking for special events, the grass area next to the sidewalk on the All Saints Chapel side could be turned into parking.

Sara also proposed the idea of increasing the cost of parking permits for incoming students to deter students from bringing a vehicle to campus with the potential of eventually limiting freshmen from bringing a vehicle to campus. Another idea was to consider student parking away from central campus, freeing up parking for special events. No parking in the downtown area would be eliminated. Some feedback that the Council discussed were:

- Prohibiting parking along University Avenue will cause a new issue of parking on University Avenue for special events

- Parking issues are not specific to Sewanee- experts or other universities should be consulted to provide feedback rather than attempting to re-invent the wheel
- Once the Biel Center is complete, there will be a need for more parking along or near University Avenue
- The American Disability Act requires a certain number of parking spaces to be made available to students/employees
- Removing bike lanes altogether until an approved project could be implemented
- Could University Avenue be widened by 12 feet?

A question was asked if there could just be one bike lane on one side of the road, but Sara confirmed that one bike lane would not allow safe passage of two bikes using the bike lane. Nancy Berner reminded the audience that there is ample parking for students behind Fulford Hall. Ben Beavers stated that the bottom line is that parking is illegal in biking lanes and something must be done to correct the issue. Marilyn Phelps reminded the Council that we are discussing parking convenience versus children's safety. Ben Tarhan suggested increasing police presence to deter illegal parking during the hours before school begins and again when Sewanee Elementary is dismissed in the afternoon. Scott Wilson confirmed that the master planning committee is working to address parking and bike lanes and consulting experts to assist with Sewanee's issues.

#### **(7) Sidewalks – Laura Willis and John Solomon**

John Solomon opened the discussion with a report regarding the discussion about the sidewalk proposed on Breakfield in September's meeting. John had followed up the Scott Wilson's office on the possibilities of implementing the sidewalk in the area in an effort to protect pedestrians in this hazardous area. Scott confirmed that there is a definite need for sidewalks in key areas on campus, but there would have to be funds allocated and the decision made where the greatest need for new sidewalks will be. Other Community Council members identified areas of concern as Roark's Cove Road, Lake O'Donnell Road, and along Georgia Avenue walking towards the childcare center.

#### **(8) Streetlights – Laura Willis and Phil White**

Phil White confirmed with the Council that if anyone had any issues with the new lights installed/replaced on their street, to reach out to Duck River Electric to address individual concerns. Robert Benton with Facilities Management spoke to the Council about the University's initiatives to increase lighting on campus to increase safety to students and pedestrians. It was discussed about the efficiency of the move to LED lighting. Sallie Green mentioned that the existing high-pressure sodium streetlights dim with age, and even if the street lights were replaced with the same kind of lighting, they would be much brighter with a new bulb replacement. Sallie also confirmed that Duck River can adjust the direction of the lights to a small degree, so if the new lights are pointing at an unpleasant angle toward a home, call Duck River to see how it can be adjusted. Other concerns brought to the Council:

- Lack of adequate lighting in the downtown area especially along Lake O'Donnell Road, Willie Six Road, Alabama Avenue, and in the downtown business district
- The LED's emit a harsh light that is damaging to not only human eyes, but also wildlife
- Blue lighting causes sleep disruption and other issues that are detrimental to resident's health
- Light pollution prohibits star gazing and enjoying the night sky
- Can shades be used on the new LED lighting to bring the light down instead of upwards

Nancy Berner assured the Council that work can be done to decide what type of lighting is most beneficial to light up the darker areas with more foot traffic and not be too bright in residential areas and to work together to understand what options are available through Duck River Electric.

### **(9) Sewanee Village Ventures Update from David Shipps – Scott Wilson**

David Shipps, Vice President, Economic Development & Community Relations and President of Sewanee Village Ventures provided an update to the Community Council on the up and coming housing options that are in the works. SVV is currently contracting six new home constructions on the new lots that will be sold to employees as primary residences and will be constructing more as progress allows. A question was asked from the Council of the estimated selling price point of these new homes and David confirmed they would be sold in the \$300,000 - 400,000 price point. The homes that SVV are building are between 1,400-1,800 square feet.

### **(10) Lifelong Learning Academy Update – John Solomon**

John Solomon asked for an update from Scott Wilson on the status of the Lifelong Learning Academy. Scott provided the update that they are making progress to confirm ownership of the program and more information would be forthcoming. Some of the summer programming will return this year. Susan Askew, Associate Vice President for Alumni and Parent Programs can confirm some of the lunch and learn session dates for the future.

### **(11) Community Clean-Up – Phil White**

Phil White outlined the next Community Clean-up day for Saturday, April 29. Pickup bags will be provided at the meetup at the Mountain Goat Trailhead at 9 a.m., and snacks will be served following the clean-up day.

### **(12) Announcements and/or Questions**

None.

**Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

*Carey Fulmer*