

MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 24, 2022
SEWANEE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

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

Members present: Scott Wilson, Nancy Berner, John Solomon, June Weber, Lynn Stubblefield, Marilyn Phelps, Sallie Green, Spike Hosch, Pam Byerly, Kate Reed, Phil White, Bill Harper, and Eric Keen

Members via Zoom: Shirley Taylor

Absent: Bruce Manuel, Anna Palmer, Sean McEwen, and Grace Storelli

Minutes taken by: Carey Fulmer

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

(1) Approval of the September Minutes

September 12, 2022 minutes were approved as circulated.

(2) Community Council Constitution Revision 1st Reading (attached) – Scott Wilson

Request for a Community Council Constitution Revision (1st reading) to clarify Section 2. Qualifications:

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.
- (b) Appointed and student Council members shall be at least 18 years of age. (c) Beginning in 2022, an elected representative completing a full term is not eligible to run for an immediately succeeding term in the same type of position (elected or at-large).

This revision will require a second reading.

(3) Parks Committee Chair Introduction and Update – Spike Hosch

Charles Whitmer introduced himself to the Community Council as the new Parks Committee Chair. Sallie Green thanked him for agreeing to serve in this capacity.

(4) Lease Fees Spending – Spike Hosch

Sallie Green, Superintendent of Leases and Community Relations presented the following information in response to Spike Hosch's request for information on how lease fees are spent.

Lease fees are composed of 2 parts: the ground rent fee and municipal services fee.

The ground rent portion of the lease fees are part of the University operating revenue. It helps pay salaries, benefits, scholarships, etc. We anticipate collecting around \$500,000 in ground rent fees this year.

The municipal services portion of lease fees are the fees collected for fire, police and basic community services, which include, but are not limited to upkeep and maintenance of community parks and common community areas. Electricity for neighborhood street lights, community funding projects and special projects like the recent fiber project. These fees are determined based on the total expenditures in the prior fiscal year. In 2021-2022 the University spent around \$2.2 million dollars for municipal services. 69% was police, 25% was fire, and 6% was community services. Leaseholders are responsible for paying 18% of the \$2.2 million, which means we should collect around \$400,000.

The Council asked if it was a possibility to get more street lights installed in the downtown area as well as a few key places on campus. Sallie confirmed she would check with Duck River Electric to find out more information on the process of obtaining more lighting.

(5) Bike Lanes – Sallie Green

Nancy Berner opened the discussion regarding bike lanes on campus and thanked Sallie Green for requesting this agenda item. Sallie introduced Captain Dylan McClure to represent the Sewanee Police Department to answer questions about bike lanes and state laws regarding bike lanes.

Statements regarding bike lanes provided to the Council:

- Bike lanes follow the flow of traffic
- University Avenue is a county road
- It is illegal per state law to park in a bike lane except to unload passengers while the vehicle is running and attended
- There are 900 registered student vehicles on campus
- Staffing issues and police call volume prohibit constant policing of illegal parking in bike lanes
- Writing tickets take time and manpower to correctly identify vehicle owners and verify information; even more time if vehicles are not registered or correctly identified with up-to-date parking stickers
- Franklin County will need to provide guidance on any changes to the road markings

Issues Presented as:

- Non-enforcement of bike lanes by the University of the South as outlined by state law

- Current bike lanes are unsafe to any riders, but particularly children.
- The bike lane parking is not enforced and is particularly problematic from Georgia Avenue to TN Avenue.
- Bikers riding on sidewalk since biking lane is not properly enforced
- Biking on sidewalks between Georgia Avenue to Tennessee Avenue is dangerous as well as there are a lot of road crossings. Child was almost struck by a car crossing the road at a street crossing/road crossing from the sidewalk (even after stopping).
- Speeding through campus especially when bikers are present
- Students parking in front of McClurg
- Improper parking is overlooked for summer programs as well as the grace period allowed for incoming classes at the beginning of the semester sets the scene for illegal parking in bike lanes.
- Limited sighting when pulling out on South Carolina and other key spots due to illegal parking reducing the ability to see students walking and biking especially when not crossing the street in the crosswalks.

Possible solutions presented as:

- A long-term solution could be a multi-purpose trail going the entire length of University Avenue
- Reduce speeding on University Avenue
- Increasing ticketing for cars parking illegally in bike lanes
- Students receiving communications from the University that cars cannot park in bike lanes unless posted for specific events
- Utilizing traffic cones to indicate no parking
- Instead of ticketing, provide information and campaign with active officers communicating with those parking in bike lanes that they cannot—warnings as the individuals are parking
- Can the University (VC) speak with the Athletic Director and Greek Life Director to request they speak with students about not parking in bike lanes

Nancy Berner explained that parking in front of McClurg became the norm through the pandemic when students picked up meals and seating inside McClurg was reduced. There were also less vehicles on campus during this time and students were driving more rather than following the policy that students are not supposed to drive and park on central campus from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. Nancy confirmed she would continue to discuss this issue and keep it as a high priority in order to find creative solutions to resolve this issue.

Marilyn Phelps asked to be on record stating that parents are fearing for their children's lives in order for students/drivers to have convenient parking. Students riding bikes at a high rate of speed on the sidewalks is a hazard to community members walking on the sidewalk with their pets. Hitting a pedestrian this way could cause serious bodily harm.

(6) Update on Lifelong Learning Academy – John Solomon

John Solomon asked Acting Vice-Chancellor Nancy Berner for an update on resuming the Lifelong Learning Academy. This is a program enjoyed by the community and there is a lot of

enthusiasm for this program. There is not currently a director, but the University is looking for a way to continue this program hopefully in the next semester, per Acting Provost Scott Wilson.

(7) Gravel Walking Path Consideration – John Solomon

John Solomon brought a request to the Council's attention that a gravel walking path is needed extending beyond where the Breakfield Road walking path ends. John stated that the sun is blinding in the evenings and presents a safety hazard as drivers along Breakfield Road may not see pedestrians, bikers, or people on horseback. John reached out to Nate Wilson, Domain Manager, to inquire if a gravel path could be installed that runs from the Equestrian Center to Lake Cheston Drive through the wooded area. It appears that adequate room along the county right-of-way (20' from center line of Breakfield Road) for a gravel path to be installed. Nate Wilson has spoken with Scott Wilson and included Facilities Management in the conversations. John requests that the University administration to consider this need and request.

Community member and general manager for Sewanee Utility District, Ben Beavers reminded the Community Council that he was serving as a Community Council member when the sidewalk on Breakfield Road was installed and at that time the University of the South assured the Council that they would continue to install sidewalks to encourage walking on campus and to address safety concerns on the domain. Nancy Berner thanked Ben for this information and confirmed she would not have known that history without his insight.

(8) Request for Additional Representation on Sewanee Village Ventures Board – John Solomon

John Solomon presented the last agenda item with a question of why the community does not have more direct representation and requesting additional representation from the community to serve on the board of Sewanee Village Ventures, LLC.

David Shipps, President of Sewanee Village Ventures, LLC, and University Vice President for Economic Development and Community Relations spoke to the Council and explained the current diversity of the SVV board and proposed that an advisory board could be formed in order to obtain the input of faculty, staff, business owners, and community council members. The Council suggested that Sewanee business owners and members of the Roberson Project and St. Mark's Community Center would be a good option to serve on this advisory board.

(9) Announcements and/or Questions

Stephen Burnett, previous chair of the Park's Committee offered his congratulations to Charles Whitmer who is serving as the new chair on this committee. Stephen also asked Superintendent of Leases and Community Relations, Sallie Green on how the reassessment numbers relate to previous year. Sallie confirmed that some residents lease fees went up but some did not. Assessments are completed by Franklin County Property Assessor and these numbers drive the amount of lease fees.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carey Fulmer