

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 25, 2023
SEWANEE COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING

The Community Council meeting was held in person in September with an option to also participate online via Zoom.

Members present: Rob Pearigen, Scott Wilson, Ben Tarhan, Evelyn Patton, Ben Beavers, Laura Willis, Robert Benton, John Solomon, Michael Payne, Phil White, Marilyn Phelps, Sallie Green, and Bill Harper

Members via Zoom: June Weber

Absent: Bruce Manuel, Lynn Stubblefield, Rhea Bowden, Sean McEwen, and Margaret Crone

Minutes taken by: Carey Fulmer (attending via Zoom)

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Vice Chancellor Rob Pearigen introducing Nickie Hamilton to the Council as Special Assistant to the Vice Chancellor and Community Relations.

1) Approval of the May Minutes

The minutes for May 2023 were approved as circulated.

2) Master Planning Update

Scott Wilson provided an update to the Council regarding the master planning and confirmed the University is reengaging the strategic planning process and will pause with the master planning until this is completed. Scott stated that the dormitories and residential life for University students is of extreme importance and there are plans for renovations.

3) Bike Lane Update

Scott Wilson updated the Council on the progress made to enforce bike lane compliance. He outlined that there are University motor pool vehicles and motorized carts to assist in transporting people from Georgia Avenue parking to chapel services and special events held on campus in order to prevent vehicles from parking in the bike lanes along University Avenue. This effort assists individuals with mobility issues while allowing the bike lanes to remain in state compliance. Scott reminded the Council that blue parking spaces are available for anyone after 5 pm. It will take time and research to solidify the long-term goals regarding the bike lane and parking issue.

Michael Payne expressed concern of the yellow curb markings stating that it was not a good look for Sewanee, however, it was explained that ticketing cannot be enforced if roadways are not marked as "no parking."

Dr. Pearigen thanked the community for their input and patience with this important issue.

4) Sewanee Village Ventures Update

David Shipp, Vice President of Economic Development and Community Relations, provided an update to the Council of the progress made for the five newly constructed single-family homes built by Sewanee Village Ventures. David reported that all five homes are under contract with University employees.

New plans are in progress to provide a different type of housing by constructing a 48-unit apartment community on the 6.5 acres along 41-A. Plans to include six L-shaped buildings that blend into the Sewanee community and will include two 2-bedrooms, two studios, and four 1-bedroom units. This project will assist in providing a variety of housing needs for University employees as outlined in the recent housing study and is strategically close to the Village area while remaining walkable to the University campus. This is a prime location and topographically suitable for this project. A trail connection is underway to connect this area to the campus main trails and will also connect to the Mountain Goat Trail. Funding for this project was approved in late August by the Board of Regents.

A question was raised of whether the pricing will be considerate of employee salaries and David assured the Council that they would be priced to be affordable to employees. David stated that these apartments would not be everything to everyone, but would be many things to many individuals. A few questions were answered by William Shealy regarding stormwater studies, potential drainage issues, and traffic studies.

5) Arcadia at Sewanee Update

George Elliott gave an update on the Arcadia plans. He reported that a survey was sent to approximately 8,000 people and the results received were positive in confirming that a senior center is needed in Sewanee. The survey also showed the desire of the location of the center to be walkable to the village and campus. There were three locations outlined for possible building sites, but two of those possibilities were ruled out due to topography issues. The site location that is currently being considered is near St. Mark's Community Center. Mr. Elliott confirmed that this would not be skilled nursing, but the plan is to build and offer independent living cottages, assisted living housing, and memory care housing options.

Concerns from the Council to ensure the pricing is affordable to community residents were addressed by Mr. Elliott.

6) Community Council Float for Sewanee's Fourth of July Parade

In light of the need for more floats to be included in Sewanee's Fourth of July parade, John Solomon suggested that the Community Council enters a float in next year's parade. Mr. Solomon added that it would be good exposure in the community as well as a fun project.

7) Announcement and/or Questions

Community member, Brooks Egerton addressed the Council about parking issues and asked the University to consider clarifying the parking regulations on the University's webpages. He provided webpages that were unclear and confusing and feels it is unfair to enforce parking with tickets if individuals are confused about what is acceptable. Vice Chancellor Rob Pearigen confirmed that the University's messaging should be consistent and fair and Scott Wilson suggested more signage on campus to clarify where parking is permissible.

District 2 representative, Ben Beavers informed the Council that Tinsley is looking to purchase property in Jump Off area, apx. 6 miles from Sewanee Airport to build a sand plant. This area is in the Marion County district and there are no zoning restrictions in this area, but it is close to Sewanee and there are many concerned residents.

Community member and seminarian, Roger Speer addressed the Council with a request for funding for refurbishing Woodlands Playground. He cited several issues and offered that the School of Theology seminarians would provide "sweat equity" if the Council would grant the funding. They are requesting assistance in funding new equipment for the playground as well as building a shelter for community gatherings.

Phil White discussed concerns regarding Breakfield gate. Is not currently working and it is offensive to the sense of community in Sewanee. Scott Wilson confirmed that repairs are under way to repair the gate this week and it would be back up and operational.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Carey Fulmer