

# Town of Twisp

## Council Minutes – 03/28/23

Mayor Pro Tem Smith called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

Council Members present:     Aaron Studen  
  Alan Caswell - Remote  
  Katrina Auburn  
  Hans Smith  
  Mark Easton

Council Member absent:       Mayor Ing-Moody

### **Pledge of Allegiance**

Council Member Studen led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Request for Additions or Deletions to the Agenda**

Council Member Studen requested to add the Friends of the Pool Letter to the agenda.

### **Public Comment Period: Up to Three Minutes**

#### **Virtual Comments:**

#### **Isabelle Spohn-**

Isabelle thanked the council for their decision against leasing water rights. She commented on addressing overnight rentals, adding additional members to the Planning Commission, doing a community survey and if that will include owners and tenants, traffic and speeding, affordable housing, rising taxes, rising costs, planned developments, and wildfire. She urged the Council to be active on all these problems, mainly future developments being made in Town. She stated that the Town needs to add more hours for our planner with all the work happening right now. Isabelle also stated that the Town does not have Firewise rated benefits and that Twisp has no Firewise communities within the town border. She would like the Town to rejoin the Conservation District and become Firewise rated again.

#### **In Person Comments:**

#### **Susan Spear-**

Mrs. Spear commented that as a community there is a concern about fire danger. Her and her husband have been caught in many fires over the years and they worry about it. With the amount of development going on everything needs to be very thought out. She stated that adding houses and no egress is not acceptable. She is aware the Town is working hard but believes four hours a week is not enough time for our planner. Mrs. Spear stated a full-time planner is essential.

#### **Mark Edson-**

Mr. Edson questioned the public comment length of time, asking to increase it to up to four minutes instead of three. He presented a study he did concerning the water rights. According to his study the Town would have made \$28,500 a year from leasing the water rights and after counting how many water users the Town has it came out to only \$.015 per user. He read an article about Seattle and their planning, stating that they banned selling ammunition and in result are now losing revenue. He stated that the end result is not always what the plan was at the beginning. Mr. Edson also stated that the idea of selling water rights was not thought up overnight and would like to know where the idea came from.

**Leone Edson-**

Mrs. Edson commented on the Planning commission member applications. She stated that she has concerns for both applicants. Her concerns for Mr. Matsui's application are, despite his good qualities, whether he has a feel for our area yet. She stated that Mr. Matsui wants to refine the Town Code to balance recreation, culture, and housing, while Mrs. Edson believes that the priority is housing and business. Her concern for both applicants is that they both live on the hill near the proposed Orchard Hills PD. Because of this she believes they will have to recuse themselves from the Orchard Hills PD topic. Mrs. Edson also stated that next year for council retreat the Council should have it here at Town Hall instead of Sun Mountain Lodge.

**Staff Report:**

**Public Works -** Director Denham reported that in two weeks' time the Department of Ecology was able to raise their grant amount from \$5 Million to \$12 Million for funding the new Wastewater Treatment Plant which is rated to take us into the next twenty years. Director Denham also stated that the town was successful is gaining TIB funding to help with crack sealing throughout town. The work will be self-performed, but TIB will be paying for it all including materials, equipment, and labor. The work will start in Winthrop as this was a group funding effort, then move to the town of Twisp. The work is expected to start mid-May to mid-June. He asked everyone to watch out for town workers doing the crack sealing on town streets. Director Denham also stated that bids open Thursday March 20<sup>th</sup> for the Wastewater Collection System improvements project. Subsequent funding for the project will be through the USDA.

**Committee/Commission/Board Reports:**

**Council Member Auburn-** reported on the Chamber meeting. They are looking for a new marketing director. OK Co Economic Alliance was present and they have many things to offer local businesses such as loans and grants. The Chamber has decided to take on the Spring Art Walk this year

**Council Member Studen-** reported that the Housing action plan is on its way to completion and the committee met with Beckwith Consultants last week to go over data they have collected so far. The next step is to have the Town Council review it before approval. There is a special Council Meeting Monday April 10<sup>th</sup> to present the collected data to the Council, and to discuss the project timeline. The full plan won't be finished until May or June. Before the full plan is done there will be a workshop and a community survey. Once those things are complete there will be a public meeting where comments can be taken.

**Presentation by Jim Flott- Urban Forestry & Tree Board Report:**

Jim Flott gave a presentation on Urban Forest Planting Plan. Tree Board Chair Dwight Filer was present to introduce Mr. Flott and to help answer questions.

After the presentation Council Member Auburn asked where the DNR grant money went for the Urban Forest Planting Plan. Mr. Flott stated it went towards inventory, data collection, and production of the plan.

Council Member Easton asked if the recommended planting sites are on public or private property, how many trees we can plant and maintain, what role Public Works has, and are there any grants in the foreseeable future. Mr. Flott stated that all planting sites are on public property. He said that we can plant and maintain seven this year then after do four or five a year. Mr. Flott and Mr. Filer have come up with a strategic planting plan. They do worry about root invasion into sewer lines so Director Denham will be the final decider on where trees get planted. For the grant there is one in the works that will pay to remove and replace bad trees.

Council Member Studen asked if the trees that are in front of houses and yards, do the owners of those properties have any say on where they go and if so is there anyone working with them. Mr. Flott answered that it is critical to work with the adjacent property owners, and if they do not want a tree planted then a tree should not get planted. He state that to be successful in urban forestry you always want to work with the adjacent landowners even if it is in a public right-of-way.

Council Member Caswell stated that in the presentation Mr. Flott stated that trees can reduce crime and asked how that is possible, he also asked how the 2004 plan compares to now. Mr. Flott stated that research was done in other parts of the country in urban, run down neighborhoods. Once they started rebuilding and planting trees the crime rate dropped. Comparing the 2004 plan to now, there are older mature trees now that haven't had a lot of care which could be why there has been some loss of trees. The younger trees are in good shape though.

### **Discussion/Action: Planning Commissioner Interview/Appointment (Position #3 – IN TOWN) – Arthur Tasker, Tim Matsui**

#### **Arthur Tasker-**

Mr. Tasker introduced himself stating he lives in Twisp, and has worked for the DNR for thirty-four years. Before that he worked for the Forest Service and would love to use that experience to help the Town with planning into the future. He stated that it is important to him to help the Town when there is an opportunity.

Council Member Studen- What do you think are the most important issues the PC needs to address in the near future and what changes can be made?

Mr. Tasker answered that the current rapid growth potential and PD effects on the Town as a whole. Some changes should include the Town Code as it looks as though the Code is not strong or broad enough to cover the kind of growth being proposed and that would be a place that the PC can provide recommendations to the council.

Council Member Easton- How do you plan to stay informed about current issues related to land use and development in Twisp and what steps will you take to educate yourself? How do you plan to balance the needs of property owners and developers with the broader community members?

Mr. Tasker answered that he plans to go to all council meetings as a start, reading news, connections in other places, and see what resources are needed to stay current on all the issues. He can

also learn from members that are on the board. It is important to have development but it should be well planned and forecasted into the future.

Council Member Auburn- What are your goals for the PC? How will you handle whether there is a conflict of interest pertaining to the Orchard Hills PD? Did you ever help with drafting or creating ordinances?

Mr. Tasker answered his goals are make it function as well as possible and consider as many things as possible before making a recommendation on anything. As he lives on Isabella Lane, he feels it could be improper to vote on the Orchard Hills PD, but if legal opinion is that he does not have to recuse himself, then he would vote. He also stated that he has worked in varying degrees with ordinances and regulations. He has written regulations for WAC and was the key person to coordinate working with attorneys for the State of Washington.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith- Can you comment on your understanding of the PC meeting schedule and availability to regularly attend? What are your thoughts on the relevance of the current Comprehensive Plan?

Mr. Tasker answered that there is one PC meeting a month and two council meetings a month. He understands that he can call or do video conferencing. Being retired he feels there should not be any schedule conflicts at all. As for the comprehensive plan, he does not know much right now other than it should be guiding decisions and if it is not that it will need to be corrected. You have to have a plan to work from or else it's a case by case basis.

Council Member Caswell- Do we need a full-time planner? Do you think that Twisp is prepared for the growth that is happening and planned to happen?

Mr. Tasker answered that we need more hours than we have right now. Maybe not full time but, there are things that should have been looked at more closely, and you need more time to get those things done. From what he has seen Twisp is not well prepared for the growth.

### **Tim Matsui-**

Mr. Matsui introduced himself stating that he moved to Town before the Covid-19 pandemic and built a new house in town. He wants to focus on the density in Town.

Council Member Easton- How do you plan to stay informed about current issues related to land use and development in Twisp and what steps will you take to educate yourself? How do you plan to balance the needs of property owners and developers with the broader community members?

Mr. Matsui answered that planning is not his background but journalism is, so he asks a lot of questions to get informed. Looking at backgrounds and how they affect people getting housing will direct us in the best direction as well as listening to the people and what they want. Equity is very impactful as well. He stated that the codes we have to abide by are the framework, if we are going to change them it needs to come from the community with as many voices as possible.

Council Member Auburn- What are your goals for the PC? How will you handle the conflict of interest pertaining to the Orchard Hills PD? Did you ever help with ordinances?

Mr. Matsui answered he wants to do something that helps the community. There are many opposing viewpoints that need to be looked at. What are we going to do with all of the new people coming into the valley and how can we appreciate what that looks like over the next decade. This is my attempt to be involved in the community in more than an observational way to ensure greater equity. For the conflict of interest he stated that he does not have an official stance on it, but as a citizen it is fair to be able to talk about it. He said he does not have experience with ordinances but he would do a lot of homework if appointed.

Council Member Caswell- Do we need a full-time planner? Do you think that Twisp is prepared for the growth that is happening and planned to happen?

Mr. Matsui answered that it might be good to have full time planner but is unsure of the financial aspect of it. Twisp is not ready for the forecasted growth and neither are the codes.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith- Can you expand on your understanding of the meeting schedule? What are your thoughts on the relevance of the Comprehensive Plan?

Mr. Matsui answered that he would not have any issues attending the meetings. He would have a lot of homework to do if appointed, lots of reading and tapping into knowledge and talking to people being affected by decisions being made. He doesn't feel like there is clear guidance for the Town as a whole and there too much vagueness in the codes.

Council Member Caswell moved to nominate Art Tasker; Council Member Studen seconded. Council Member Auburn and Easton opposed. Mayor Pro Tem Smith broke the tie voting for Art Tasker.

All Council Members voiced their appreciation for the applications from both candidates and stated that both would be great additions to the Planning Commission.

### **Friends of the Pool letter:**

Jen Ramsey presented a letter submitted to the council for a plan on opening and operating the pool this summer. Based on FOP research the idea of FOP doing a concessionaire agreement for the coming season was unlikely. FOP wanted to see if there was a way FOP could do the hiring and help with pool management, but have the town do payroll and handle expenses. Mayor Pro Tem Smith asked for clarification whether the employees hired will be town employees. Jen answered that FOP would take on the responsibility of hiring staff and is just wanting the administrative aspects such as payroll to be through town. Clerk Kilmer asked if FOP has any ideas on the financials/funds available for employees. Jen responded that Kevin Coleman is the financial person but from what she knows they will use the revenue from the pool and any shortfall would come directly from FOP as they are anticipating raising enough funds.

Council Member Auburn asked what exactly the Town would be responsible for. Clerk Kilmer answered that FOP would do everything that the Town has done before.

Council Member Easton asked if Director Denham has looked at the letter and does he have an opinion on this. Clerk Kilmer stated that he was not sure on Director Denham's opinion.

The Council decided to schedule a meeting with FOP and PW along with the Mayor before making a final decision on how or if the pool would operate in 2023.

### **Consent Agenda**

- Accounts Payable/Payroll
- Minutes –

Vouchers audited and certified by the auditing officer as required by RCW 42.24.080, and those expense reimbursement claims certified as required by RCW 42.24.090, have been recorded on a listing, which has been made available to the Town Council. The following voucher/checks are approved for payment by a majority vote on this 28<sup>th</sup> day of March 2023.


Accounts Payable	Checks #37708-37741	\$77,812.30	03/28/23
Payroll	EFT Trans 549-557	\$11,178.47	03/28/23
Accounts Payable	EFT Trans 598-599	\$4,437.10	03/28/23

Council Member Studen moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Council Member Easton and passed unanimously.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Pro Tem Smith adjourned the meeting at 7:53 pm.

**APPROVED:**

  
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 Mayor Pro Tem Hans Smith

**ATTEST:**

  
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 Clerk/Treasurer Randy Kilmer