

Town of Twisp

Council Minutes – 05/09/23

Mayor Ing-Moody called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm.

Council Members present: Mayor Ing-Moody
Mark Easton
Alan Caswell
Katrina Auburn
Hans Smith
Aaron Studen

Council Members absent: none

Pledge of Allegiance

Council Member Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Request for Additions or Deletions to the Agenda

- Discussion/Action: Resolution #23-707 – Aviation Grant Match
- Discussion/Action: TranGo Ground Lease

Public Comment Period: Up to Three Minutes

Paula Mackrow:

Commented on the matter of short-term rentals. She believes that the Housing Action Plan (HAP) was supposed to address nightly rentals but is now understanding that the consultant is not focusing on this item. She believes this is a required element of the grant that has not been addressed and is wondering what staff or committee is managing this grant/project. She also feels that the “unhoused” in the Methow valley are not being given adequate opportunities to participate in the HAP.

Isabelle Spohn:

Believes that the public participation portions of the HAP, specifically the survey, should include both Carlton and Methow zip codes. She referenced a document she requested be sent to the council with Commerce guidance to develop anti-displacement strategies. She continued that it has been a year since the public asked council to create a “board” to deal with the “housing crisis” and urged the council to not waste time to accept offers of help. She feels the Town is overloaded and understaffed and needs to find funding for a full-time planner.

Barry Stromberger:

Commented that he had submitted a volunteer application to the Town and shared some of the items from his cover letter. He encouraged the council to pass a motion to create a citizen’s committee or “citizen’s focus group” per HAP guidance language. This group would help in whatever town deems as urgent areas of concern. He thanked Council for their time and devotion to the Town.

Mayor Ing-Moody noted that the Town has committees in place; and that they are fully staffed at this time. She suggested that if the Commission would like to further engage volunteers that this could be done in a more timely manner by creating a short-term special task force to address the particular issue instead of developing a new committee.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Ing-Moody reported that the Town and Okanogan County Sheriff's Office has approved an agreement for police coverage in Twisp. In the interim, the town continues to seek viable candidates for the Police Chief position and has spoken to a number of Police Chiefs to seek their guidance in attracting an appropriate candidate.

Staff Reports

Clerk Kilmer reported that it may be necessary to hold a special meeting the following week to approve an ordinance to finalize the Civic Building interim financing. He has worked with USDA and North Cascades bank to find an agreeable solution in closing the interim financing after the set maturity date; he will work to set up a special meeting next week, if needed.

Sheriff Budrow reported that the Okanogan County Sheriff's Office (OCSO) is in an unprecedented rebuilding phase both with officers and corrections staff. He reported that Twisp calls will be handled by a call-by-call basis, and residents are directed to call 911 for emergencies, and the OCSO non-emergency line for any other needs. OCSO and Twisp have been working together to work out logistics for this interim period.

Director Denham reported that subsequent funding for the Collection Systems Improvement project through USDA appears to be very favorable. Twisp staff are working with USDA to provide anything they might need to complete the funding application. He had spent quite a bit of time last week dealing with the high water in the Twisp and Methow rivers, preparing a flood prevention operation staged on Maygers street to protect the mobile home park if flooding were to have begun. Pool repairs are being completed by public works staff. New Pool Manager, Thor Tyson, is doing an excellent job and working with the Friends of the Pool to get the lifeguard staff ready for pool opening. Public works staff will begin work with Winthrop public works on the joint chip seal project starting next week. The chipping drive was a huge success with more volume and participation than in previous years. Given this large turnout, public works staff will allot more time for next year's drive.

Commission/Committee/Board Reports

Council Member Caswell reported that Planning Commission Chair, John Battle, was present to give an update to the council on Planning Commission progress and priorities.

Council Member Caswell reported that he had attended OCOG's meeting where countywide flooding was discussed as well as progress on the regional transportation plan.

Council Member Auburn thanked Sheriff Budrow for attending the meeting and for OCSO's quick work to aid Twisp. She attended the Twisp Airport Advisory Board (TAAB) meeting wherein, runway chip sealing, snowblower repairs, and the pancake fly in breakfast scheduled for 07/09/23 were discussed.

Public Hearings

Ordinance #799 – Milltown LLC Annexation

Mayor Ing- Moody opened the public hearing at 6:10pm to discuss Ordinance #799 Milltown Annexation.

Mayor Ing-Moody requested any comments or discussion from the Town Council

Council Member Smith reported that the Finance Committee had discussed the ordinance in their meeting today and that they had concerns it did not correctly reference what was agreed to in the executed pre-annexation agreement. They directed legal counsel to investigate it and make any changes as needed. For that reason, he requested the council not take action on this item tonight and bring it back at a subsequent meeting.

Mayor Ing-Moody asked if anyone from the public would like to provide comment.

Ellen Aagaard provided the following comment in writing in advance of the meeting:
Hello Mayor Moody and Twisp Town Council,

The following is a brief summary of my comments regarding the proposed Milltown Annexation:

I am in favor of approving this annexation request for the following reasons:

1. The proposed Milltown development has genuine potential to help meet genuine housing needs in Twisp (and for Methow Valley residents more generally) because it:

- Prioritizes building market-rate, long-term rental units, with a focus on one-bedrooms, which is currently the greatest housing need in the Methow Valley (and in Okanogan County more generally)
- Will be built by a single developer, allowing for greater affordability due to economies of scale
- Includes cost-saving measures such as partial off-site manufacturing and energy efficient building materials, allowing for greater affordability of the end product.

2. The proposed Milltown annexation is appropriately zoned R-3 because it:

- Is in alignment with adjacent properties also zoned R-3
- Allows for some (potentially) more affordable "middle housing" options such as duplexes and triplexes
- Allows for services, such as child care and assisted living, that can be beneficially integrated with other housing needs, such as senior housing and housing for young families
- Allows for multi-family dwellings, which can provide more flexible housing options for seniors, seasonal workers, and new residents

And I have the following concern about this annexation request:

The proposed Milltown development is dense, and would be on the edge (or future edge) of town, further away from services such as the library, post office, community center, Room One, Twisp Works. Milltown would also be further away from most parks and public green spaces in Twisp; access to parks and green spaces is particularly important for denser developments.

Currently, most neighborhoods in Twisp are within a half mile of some park, trail or green space such as Twisp Park, Twisp Commons Park, or the Salmon Rearing Ponds. The one exception to this is the Burton-Riverside neighborhood, which is almost exactly a mile from Twisp Park, via Burton Street, Highway 20, and Canyon Street; this is also a very pleasant walk due to a good crossing at Highway 20 and low-traffic neighborhood streets.

The nearest existing park facility to the proposed Milltown development, the Sportsfield Complex, is almost exactly a mile away, but it can only (currently) be accessed via Airport Road, which is not a pleasant road for walking.

In order to ensure that future Milltown Residents also have access to parks and green spaces, and pleasant places to walk and bike, I urge you to consider the following:

1. Prioritize new park facilities that will serve neighborhoods at the south end of town, including the Burton-Riverside neighborhood and the potential Milltown development. One such opportunity that exists right now, and could be developed using town funds, is the Burton Street End River Access Point. Please include development of the Burton Street End River Access Point as a near-term (2023/24) priority in the updated Facilities Plan.
2. Make sure that the park facilities and green spaces included in the Milltown development proposal are truly usable and maintainable, whether they are held within the development or dedicated to the Town of Twisp.
3. If a trail connecting the end of Riverside to the Sportsfield complex is not a realistic project, logistically and/or financially, explore the possibility of making Airport Road a safer and more comfortable place to walk and bike through the addition of wider graveled shoulders, or dedicated bike lanes.
4. Reduce speed limits within the Town of Twisp to 25 mph for all areas, increasing safety for all users and making it more pleasant and comfortable to walk and bike on all streets.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my public comments, and, as always, for your thoughtful and forward-looking decision making.

Best,

Ellen Aagaard
1 Isabella (in Twisp)
206-375-9083

After everyone had apparently been heard, mayor Ing-Moody closed the public hearing at 6:14 PM.

Ordinance #800 – Renewal Nightly Rental Moratorium

Mayor Ing- Moody opened the public hearing at 6:15pm to discuss Ordinance #800 Renewal Nightly Rental Moratorium.

Mayor Ing-Moody requested any comments or discussion from the Town Council.

There being no comments from the Council, Mayor Ing-Moody opened the hearing to the public for comments.

Paula Mackrow commented that Planner Danison's report on current permits and status was very helpful, but she was unclear on what was being suggested or proposed in the redlines in that report. She hopes the council is not adopting anything implied in that report and that the Planning Commission does not use it as a starting point. She is concerned with generalized zoning overlays for nightly rental zoning. She is willing to volunteer to assist in researching this issue.

Barry Stromberger is concerned that it's been a year since the moratorium was put into place and nothing has happened. He said that he has stepped forward to make himself available as a volunteer to aid the Planning Commission. He feels the info is out there and that they don't need to "reinvent the wheel". He is concerned that six months is not enough time to adequately address the issue.

Isabelle Spohn expressed that she is frustrated that the community has offered their volunteer assistance but has not been taken up on their offer. She had been told that the Housing Action Plan will address the nightly rental issues but has since learned that the Housing Action Plan will not specifically address this matter. She feels there is no other option but to extend the moratorium to give time for appropriate policies to be adopted. She hopes the Council has heard the public offers to assist and looks forward to future discussions and public input.

After all commenters had apparently been heard, Mayor Ing-Moody requested for a council motion.

Council Member Easton motioned to approve Ordinance #800 – Renewal Nightly Rental Moratorium. The Motion was seconded by Council Member Caswell and passed unanimously.

Mayor Ing-Moody closed the public hearing at 6:24 PM

Resolution #23-705 – 2024-29 Capital Facilities Plan

Mayor Ing- Moody opened the public hearing at 6:24pm to discuss Resolution #23-705 – 2024-29 Capital Facilities Plan.

Mayor Ing-Moody requested any comments or discussion from the Town Council.

There being no comments from the Council, Mayor Ing-Moody opened the hearing to the public for comments.

Paula Mackrow asked Director Denham to clarify the population assumptions for the Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion.

Director Denham explained that it's not designed to an exact number, but rather estimated to consider a 20-year buildout at 2.5% annual population increase. He stated that in reality the population growth has been slower than that, so the facility will likely outlive 20-year growth projections.

After all commenters had apparently been heard, Mayor Ing-Moody requested for a council motion.

Council Member Smith motioned to approve Resolution #23-705 – 2024-29 Capital Facilities Plan. The Motion was seconded by Council Member Studen and passed unanimously.

Mayor Ing-Moody closed the public hearing at 6:28 PM.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS

Discussion/Action: Planning Commission Update – John Battle, Planning Commission Chairman

The Council invited Planning Commission (PC) Chairman John Battle to give an update on PC progress and priorities.

Chairman Battle related that the PC's priorities are to evaluate permits that require public process. The PC is aware of some projects to be submitted that will require their attention and has been working on the Orchard Hills Planned Development for some time. These items are difficult to plan for and have regulated timelines once they are submitted. When completed, the PC will return to their work on the Shoreline Master Program update to comply with State regulations. This is due by the end of June in order to remain in compliance. The next task would be to work on the Land Use Element of the Comprehensive Plan. Chairman Battle made it clear that the PC had NOT been asked by the council to look at the nightly rental topic but would be willing to if requested.

Council Member Smith referenced his notes from the last PC check in to the council about six months prior. He noted that at that time the PC and Town Council were getting numerous comments on the nightly rental topic, and that the PC might be asked to assist with the wider housing topic. At that time the Council had requested the PC might assist with the revision of the Twisp PDA overlay but did not suggest where that might land on the priority list. He mentioned the proposed sign code revisions but noted that this matter was in the Council's court at this time. He continued that there had been multiple calls for an ad hoc group to aid the planning department, and that ad hoc committees can be useful, but there needs to be unity with the Council and PC on proposed code changes to avoid creating more confusion.

Chairman Battle responded that for the housing issues, starting with the Land Use element of the Comp Plan makes the most sense. He stated that the PC was given the impression that the nightly rental issue would be addressed by the Housing Action Plan (HAP), but now understands that may not be the case. He is open to the idea of an additional committee or task force to assist the PC especially in gathering information on how other Towns have addressed these issues.

Council Member Smith responded that the HAP's relevance is still forthcoming for the Town's housing and planning needs, and that it is not yet a complete product until the public participation portions are completed. He is hopeful that it has merit for Town planning purposes.

Council Member Easton echoed the comments of Council Member Smith and added that he'd like to see a sub-committee work on the nightly rental issue, especially given that there are capable and willing volunteers available. He'd like to have PC concentrate on other issues and use a subcommittee to assist them. He'd like to see a solution in the next six months, and not "kick the can" again.

Mayor Ing-Moody posited that it will be important to ensure diversity within any subcommittee and to get balanced and diverse representation reflective of the whole Town. She cautioned that it is often easy to get passionate and vocal community members to participate, but a group formed just of such individuals would not be representative of the community as a whole. She continued that if this is the direction the council wants to proceed that she could direct staff to do some research on guidelines for ad hoc committees and task forces. She asked if the Council would like to see this as a future agenda item for further discussion.

Council Member Smith responded that conceptually this could be useful in aiding the PC. He'd like the PC to have support to address current issues and not to restack the priorities given the time constraints of some of the items.

Chairman Battle requested that next steps/priorities be laid out for the PC beyond the obvious priorities of the Orchard Hills PD and the SMP update. He questions if the TwispWorks Master Plan/Overlay would be next.

Council Member Smith responded that he'd put that item at the bottom of the list given that TwispWorks staff had reported it was in progress and a priority of theirs.

Mayor Ing-Moody requested that Clerk Kilmer reach out to TwispWorks for a status update on the project. She also noted that the Sign Code is currently being looked at by TERC and awaiting their feedback.

Chairman Battle offered that a planning commissioner would be willing to join TERC and present their work on the Sign code in order to help accelerate learning/education to bring the matter to conclusion.

Mayor Ing-Moody provided a summary of the Planning Commission priorities.:

1. Shoreline Master Plan Update
2. Comprehensive Plan – Land Use, Housing Component
3. Sign Code
4. Nightly Rentals
5. TwispWorks Overlay and Masterplan

Council Member Smith noted that in the future he'd like to see the PC undertake code review on wildfire prevention as it relates to zoning and building standards.

The Council thanked Chairman Battle and all the PC Commissioners, noting that the job they do is largely thankless but that the Town council appreciates the time and effort they put into it and the quality work they produce.

Discussion/Action: Public Event Application – Spring Art Walk

Council Member Smith motioned to the Spring Art Walk Public Event application as presented with the modifications submitted by Director Denham. The Motion was seconded by Council Member Easton and passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: Resolution #23-706 – Salary Scale

Council Member Smith reported that thus far the Town has had no success in recruiting a Police Chief at the currently advertised salary range and have received feedback that the pay range is an issue. The finance committee looked at pay scales in similar positions around the state and put forward an adjustment to the Salary Scale to attract qualified applicants. He noted that with no current police chief or officers, the wages allocated for a three-person department in 2023 might be reallocated to cover the increase in the PD Chief range. The concept would ideally result in the hire of a Chief first, and then one officer. An additional officer can be looked at in the 2024 budget.

Council Member Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution #23-706 as presented. The Motion was seconded by Council Member Easton and passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: Resolution #23-707 – Aviation Grant Match

Council Member Smith motioned to adopt Resolution #23-707 as presented. The Motion was seconded by Council Member Easton and passed unanimously.

Discussion/Action: TranGo Ground Lease

Mayor Ing-Moody gave an overview of the lease, noting that it has been in existence since 2016 and the rate has not been updated since its inception.

Council Member Smith gave rationale for the increase, noting increased needs in the Town’s transportation fund, and considerations for that land as it can be used for Town snow storage. The Town has been offered a lease with a private citizen to store snow on a similar sized lot for \$1,000 per month, so offering the lot to TranGo for \$500 a month is very fair.

Council Member Caswell motioned to approve the TranGo Ground Lease as presented. The Motion was seconded by Council Member Auburn and passed unanimously.

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 25th day of April 2023.

Accounts Payable	EFT Trans 855	\$57.78	05/09/23
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Accounts Payable	Checks #37806-37835	\$95,857.57	05/09/23
Payroll	EFT Trans 890-1, 896-912, 934-36, CK #37805	\$68,966.18	05/09/23

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

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Council, Mayor Ing-Moody adjourned the meeting at 7:18 pm.

APPROVED:



Mayor Soo Ing-Moody

ATTEST:



Clerk/Treasurer Randy Kilmer