



SURFSIDE BEACH TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBERS
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TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, July 15, 2021, • 3:00 pm

1. CALL TO ORDER. Mayor Bob Hellyer

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS

a. Bill Kinken, 1312 North Dogwood. We're not looking at the best solution to repair the existing building. You got three different buildings, and you can do them one at a time. A lot of us do not like the location that is under consideration. It is not a good solution. We can only use half of the building. We have to build another building to make it work. We're dealing with mold, not dealing with nuclear waste. It can be handled. Take each one of the buildings and gut it back to the studs. You've got structural issues. You do that at the same time. It can be done. I've seen it done. Each building can be done as a separate project. This cost can be spread out over 1 to 1-1/2 years. The employees are our number one concern. This is not a problem that just started, and it's been going on evidently for years. We could do a few things, see if there's space available in either the police department or the fire department. Let those that can work from home do so. I think we did this during the pandemic. It's important to keep exposure to a minimum. If there's an empty building that can be rented for 6 to 8 months while they take the first building and rehab it, then they can return to the same building in a safe manner. If we have to rent a trailer for 6 to 8 months, I guess we'll have to do it; I'm not in favor of that. All of our buildings should have dehumidifiers. That's why you have a mold problem. You've got moisture. Put an RFQ out to companies that have done buildings like this. Let's let them bid on it. I think we can do a better job. Because a lot of us do not like the options that we're looking at. Thank you.

b. Judy, Henion, 11th Avenue North. I have a point of question, please. I'm sure that the administrator has reported earlier the cost of remediation of the buildings and the cost to repair the buildings to get them up to standard code, and remind the public and those listening online. If he can do it now, the numbers would be great if you would allow a point of question to occur. I don't think it's a matter of being on this side of 17 or the other side of 17. I believe it is common sense, and it is a matter of sound financial management. Because of the overwhelming cost to do again, what was done before, the buildings have been remediated of the mold. In the past, the buildings were proclaimed that they had removed the mold. The problem was, the previous administrations failed to do what they were told to do whenever they left to repair the roof leak and fix the moisture source. So that happened way back then. We can't point fingers anymore. We have to face the problems we now have and face those problems by throwing money into trailers or rent. Or we can go ahead and invest in the building, move everybody out of harm's way, and then do what we need to do to these buildings in due time. It doesn't mean that you have to keep it forever and always; it's not going to depreciate when you buy that building. It will only appreciate. So if you don't like it once or over there, sell it later. What is the problem? It's an investment. If you would indulge the community here and allow the administrator to do that, I'd appreciate it. It also keeps us out of debt for now because I guess that we're not going to have enough money to pay for everything without going into debt after hearing those numbers. Am I right or wrong? Thank you.

c. Patricia Magliette, 104 Harbor Lights Drive. I want to summarize what I said previously; we are in the middle of really high energy costs, including gasoline for shipping things. If you think it's cheap to ship lumber from Point A to point B, I'm sorry, you are sadly mistaken. We are in a phase with fewer workers throughout the past year or two, and we are also in a stage where we don't have enough product to buy, which also goes into the building production field. So, therefore, prices will be impacted by two different reasons: the cost of shipping to get them here to Surfside and the possible unavailability. That's just common sense that everybody can understand in this room. You don't have to be a financial person to get that message. The third thing I bring up is that many people cannot get enough workers due to various reasons. If you start a big project like that, and they're short of a workforce, it's either going to take a lot longer than they say for the completion date, or they're going to put it up with whoever they have, and it may not be a good build. As the former woman said, if we buy that building, we do not, in any way, shape,

or form need to keep that building. And that will most likely appreciate, and so we'll make a little bit of a profit off of that building when we sell it. But there's no way to predict how a new build will go on at this time in Town with what I've just said. We don't need to take on a second big project, where costs could go up in at least two areas unexpectedly, and delays could be because of a worker shortage. Thank you for listening, and have a blessed day

d. Chris Stamey, 715 Cedar Ave. I hope you considered some other alternatives. We need to keep the buildings on this side of the road, but that's my opinion. I asked a question to everyone on Council the same question. And I got four responses back out of the six, and everyone gave me a different opinion. All four of you that responded had a different story to be told. So it tells me upfront that somebody is not communicating with each other. But you're deciding on certain people's agenda to move this across the street. I hope you listen. I hope you do what's right for this Town. We've figured it out so far that you have two big projects, both that were supposed to be done, come to find out ain't. I don't know why; I don't know if it's communication between you folks. I hope you keep our business, our government business, on this side of 17. I know it's going to cost a little bit more, but in the future, I think that's a better decision in the longer run. Look at what the future of this Town is. Is it because we're going to move across 17? Are we going to try to stay in the exact location that the Town was built on to start? Like I said earlier, I don't know what decision has been made, but think about it before you do it. Thanks.

e. John Gilchrist, 314 Melody Lane, I have been a builder all my life. Economics tells me that if we can buy this building and renovate it and set it up and work on this problem over here with mold, which we all know mold, it is highly detrimental to anybody close to it. The damage that is caused by these buildings. You're probably going to have to level them to the ground and completely redo them. And if we can do this and save the town money, we should go forward with it. And as several people have already said that, building over there can always be sold at a later time.

f. Colette Phillips, 3rd Avenue North. I have a couple of questions. First, I'd like to know if the other side of the street, Highway 17, is still considered part of Surfside Beach because I think it's an insult to suggest that people don't want to cross Highway 17 to attend Council meetings. That's implying that the people that live on the other side of the street don't ever come up this way. And that's just ridiculous. Number two, find me a resident within Surfside Beach on either side of the street that is not crossed over to go to the Post Office or go to any of the restaurants or to the shops. So again, the idea that people won't be crossing 17 because the building is over there and they don't want to cross 17 that's just ridiculous. Lastly, to talk about the numbers and suggest that there are alternatives. Perhaps there are. I'm not a builder. I'm not in construction. I don't know anything about it. But I do know numbers, and I do know math. And if you're going to talk about alternatives, talk about numbers, don't just give an opinion that we can put up another building someplace else. Or we can lease a location, put numbers to it. Mr. Shanahan put numbers to all of his equations so we have numbers that we can look at, not just somebody's opinion of what we could do. And as Judy said before, I think we need to put out to the people what those numbers are so that people can act on facts, not just opinions. Thank you.

g. Harry Kohlman, 10th Avenue North. Here's what we've been told. Say round it off \$2M to buy that building and renovate. To take down these buildings and rebuild will cost us \$3M more. We're not talking about \$300,000, but \$3 million. And just like the young lady said, just before me, it's ridiculous to say people can't cross 17. You have to go to Piggly Wiggly, the Post Office, Restaurants, Waterpark. This isn't a gated community that is part of Surfside Beach. So if that's what you're thinking, is that stay here for an extra \$3M, you're going to tell the people in this Town that taxes are going up. Seriously, Folks, is that what you're saying? It would be nice to keep it close. Now I get it. You'll want to be close. Have everything, in the same area, \$3 million. We have somebody on the panel willing to vote, yes, for its purchase, but we thought we could get it for cheap. So we're just talking about \$150,000 maybe or spend \$3 million more. This Town doesn't have \$3 million more. It's a retirement community. Where are people on a fixed income. Think about this no one has come up here and told you they could do it cheaper. Because believe me, if somebody could do it cheaper, they'd be standing here right now telling, you know what? I could make an offer for \$2.5M. No one here is telling you that. Thank you.

3. BUSINESS

A. Building Remediation – Bill Shanahan

Councilmember Pellegrino made a motion to reconsider the vote to purchase the old Coldwell Banker building and re-vote. Councilmember Drake second.

Councilmember Pellegrino stated, I've been on Council for eight years, and this is probably one of the most challenging votes in my years. People who have lived here for a long time, they had town hall here a long time. I went and spoke to Tyler Servant today. I've spoken to people in the county to see if they could help us with temporary places. But doing something temporarily, putting people, in trailers is just putting off the inevitable. We're going to have a permanent solution. And I think Mr. Kohlman stated it best; it's \$3 million more, and I don't want to have to vote for a tax increase. We talked to some of the citizens today, and they mentioned repairing it. That's still more expensive than purchasing the other building and renovating it. There are so many unknowns once they start to down that building. That price can go up even higher. It's a no-brainer. I voted against it the other day because I was hoping we could get the price down some more. But that didn't work out. Regardless, even a million dollars, which I'm not happy with for the Town, it's a much better investment.

Mr. Shanahan stated up until this morning, we talked with folks to see what we could do to lower the price, and the owners will stay with the million dollars because they've reduced the price for us for \$200,000, but that's the bottom line, and they're not going to change.

Councilmember Keating stated I want to make one comment, that we are on a critical path, and we're at a very critical point. The agreement we signed with the property owners clearly states that any action of the Council that does not approve the purchase may be considered a cause of termination of the agreement. So, we're skating thin ice at this point. By their gracious goodness of taking care of the Town of Surfside, they are allowing us this one last chance. Suppose we don't agree to this today. In that case, we're all on the hook for the additional \$3 million because there is no other plan that anyone has presented to solve this problem immediately. As Mr. Pellegrino stated, Tyler Servant has reached out to probably all of us, I would guess, because I spoke with him this morning as well. He is offering us county facilities to temporarily house our workers, which, I think, is a very generous offer on his part. Now, that does not mean they're going to be close by. The nearest office is probably down on Scipio Lane, possibly the property over the library area or the senior center. There might be space there. But that's an alternative if we need temporary space. But if we can do the right thing today, we're not going to need temporary space because all we have to do is wait until that transaction can close and that facility is move-in ready. It comes with all the office furniture, and it comes with all the facilities already ready to go. Thank you.

Councilmember Drake, We do not want a new building just because we want a new building or a nicer building. We're doing this for the safety of the employees. We're only 1.9 miles long, and we want to keep town hall in the town jurisdiction. So it's the only one. We've looked. This is all that is available, and it's a great price. It's got \$50,000 plus of furniture in it. It comes with the building is a plus. So it's a great decision going forward. I made an oath that I would not raise taxes as long as I sit on this board. And I'm not. I'd like to see us cut some more because I think we overspent on things. But I believe that we can, it can be done, and I think we can do all this without a tax increase. That's where I plan to vote.

Mayor Hellyer, I'm just letting everybody know that the county significantly raised their millage this year, which will affect our taxes. So you can expect, even though we just voted a couple of weeks ago not to raise our millage, your tax rate is going to go up. We have to consider these things on this property across the street; we've done a lot of due diligence on it. Eric has given us a presentation on what has been done. They've already told us that they're willing to fix anything wrong with the building. So we've had an inspection on it. We know there's no mold. We know that there aren't critical issues with it, and we know that it's in good shape as it stands right now. We have options, but we're doing what we're doing right now if we vote on this and don't take it. We're limiting our choices, and it's going to cost us more money. So that's, that's why I am for the purchase of this property.

Mayor Hellyer, Councilmembers Drake, Pellegrino and Keating voted in favor. Mayor Pro Tempore Scoles and Councilmember Holder voted against. **Motion carried.**

4. ADJOURNMENT.

Councilmember Keating made a motion to adjourn at 3:28 pm. Councilmember Pellegrino second. All voted in favor. **Motion carried.**

Surfside Beach Town Council

Robert Hellyer, Mayor

David L. Pellegrino

Bruce H. Dietrich, Town Council

Cindy Keating, Town Council

Michael Drake, Town Council

Debbie Scoles, Mayor Pro Tempore

Paul Holder, Town Council

Attest: _____
Sheri L Medina
Town Clerk

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