

Fairfax Town Council Minutes
Special Meeting
Fairfax Women's Club
Tuesday, March 17, 2020

Mayor Goddard called the Special Meeting to order at 4:16 p.m.

Call to Order/Roll Call/Pledge of Allegiance:

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Bruce Ackerman, Vice Mayor
Barbara Coler
Renee Goddard, Mayor
Stephanie Hellman
John Reed

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Garrett Toy, Town Manager
Michele Gardner, Town Clerk
Chris Morin, Police Chief

1.42 Approval of Meeting Agenda and Affidavit of Posting

M/S, Ackerman/Reed, Motion to approve the Agenda and the Affidavit of Posting.
AYES: Ackerman, Coler, Hellman, Reed, Mayor Goddard

Mayor Goddard noted the special protocols in place due to the coronavirus and the shelter in place order. No more than ten people will be allowed in the Women's Club at a time. Seating was arranged to allow for at least six feet between individuals. Public comments could be emailed during the meeting to the Town Clerk, who will read them into the record when the Mayor opened public comment time.

Regular Agenda

1. Discuss/consider the adoption of a Resolution Ratifying and Modifying the Proclamation of the Existence of a Local Emergency due to Coronavirus (Covid-19) and direct staff as appropriate- Town Manager

Town Manager Toy presented the staff report. He noted he is also the Town's Director of Emergency Services and in that capacity he had declared a local emergency, which requires ratification by the Town Council. A state of emergency gives staff flexibility in dealing with the Town Code and could help with eligibility for funding. He asked the Council to discuss rescheduling the Council Retreat scheduled for March 20, and for direction on how to handle the Town Council regular meeting on April 1, 2020.

Councilmember Coler referred to a possible County-wide ordinance prohibiting evictions during the crisis, and stated the Governor's Executive Order gave local jurisdictions the authority to enact protections against evictions for renters and foreclosures for homeowners during a certain period. Town Manager Toy noted he had received an email about the County ordinance an hour prior to the meeting.

Councilmember Hellman asked if the County intended to apply this to commercial properties. Town Manager Toy stated he would need to check on that.

Councilmember Reed suggested the Town explore whether the Executive Order removes the State law barrier to regulating commercial leases, to protect local businesses from eviction during the current state of emergency.

Mayor Goddard stated the Executive Order also protected against utility shut offs for residents affected by the virus.

Police Chief Morin gave a brief report. Police Department staff will continue to speak to residents either by telephone or on his or her property (outside the house if possible). He confirmed that PG&E would not be enacting shut offs during the crisis.

Councilmember Coler asked how the department would encourage people not to congregate in the streets, now that it was a misdemeanor. Police Chief Morin stated he did not anticipate issuing citations; they would take more of an education approach.

Mayor Goddard asked where emergency alerts would be posted.

Police Chief Morin stated there were several avenues for local information: the Town website, Twitter, and Nixle. Nixle provides alerts, through emails or texts, or advisories through emails only.

Mayor Goddard encouraged people to sign up for "Alert Marin".

Councilmember Hellman asked if the Proclamation would automatically free up emergency funds. Town Manager Toy stated it did not help with immediate funding but could make the Town eligible for funds down the line. It gave flexibility to the Town Manager for actions such as waiving the bidding requirements and allowing for the cancellation of public meetings.

Mayor Goddard opened the meeting to public comments.

Janet Fitzgerald, Fairfax resident, asked for information about the exact terms of the Town's state of emergency.

Mr. David Smadback, President of the Chamber of Commerce, stated they were expanding their website to include a list of those businesses in Town that remain open, hours of operation, protocols, and services. He encouraged everyone to support local businesses.

Councilmember Hellman asked if the Town could assist retailers in transitioning to an e-commerce platform. Mr. Smadback stated he was open to ideas and assistance.

Mayor Goddard opened the meeting to public comments and asked Town Clerk Gardner to read aloud any emails she received as public comments. Town Clerk Gardner stated she had not received any.

Mayor Goddard closed the meeting to public comments.

Councilmember Coler stated April 7th is the end of the Shelter-in-Place Order but it could be extended. The April 1st Council meeting could be rescheduled for April 15th.

It was the consensus of the Council to move the April 1st Council meeting to April 15th.

Councilmember Hellman stated she had held a conference call with community members that included the idea of matching volunteers with people in need through the Fairfax Volunteers,

Good Fairies, Marin Villages, and the Firewise groups. She would like a process in place using available staff to assist in helping the community. She noted there were many volunteers.

Councilmember Coler stated she contacted a representative of Mercy Housing, the organization that administers Bennett House, and learned they are doing extra cleaning, wellness checks, and delivering packaged food. She reported that Phyllis Gould (Rosie the Riveter) was doing great!

M/S, Coler/Reed, Motion to adopt Resolution No. 20-04, a Resolution of the Town Council of the Town of Fairfax Ratifying the Town Manager/Director's Proclamation of the Existence of a Local Emergency due to Coronavirus (Covid-19).

AYES: Ackerman, Coler, Hellman, Reed, Mayor Goddard

Mayor Goddard read the Resolution.

M/S, Reed/Ackerman, Motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

AYES: Ackerman, Coler, Hellman, Reed, Mayor Goddard

Respectfully submitted,

Toni DeFrancis
Recording Secretary