

Upland Town Council Minutes: March 7, 2023

- ❖ **Ron Sutherland-** Congratulations to Kent Cocking on making his 3000th run as an EMT. Thank you for his service to our community and to all of our volunteer ambulance crew.

ADA/Title 6 Concerns: Nothing to report

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm

The next regular Council Meeting will be held March 21, 2023 at 7:00pm at Upland Town Hall.

ATTEST:  SIGNED: 
Mary Fletcher (Clerk Treasurer) COUNCIL PRESIDENT

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- This abatement allows the capital needed for Caleb Crandall to do the infrastructure needed for the project instead of the town. This includes roads, sewer and water infrastructure.
 - We would abate the tax revenue but the town would still realize the income from utility tap fees and utility usage.
- Dianne Hovermale asked what type of properties will be built? Caleb Crandall responded that they will be one story apartments with either a garage or carport.
 - Cheryl Liston, 1312 S. Main St., asked how this project would work with the sewer system. Jonathan Perez responded that when the north lift station is upgraded then our sewer system will be able to handle growth on the north side of town.
 - Chip Long asked if the town was back on the sewer ban. Ron Sutherland confirmed with Jeremy Harding if the sewer ban was ever lifted. According to Jeremy, they could find no record of the ban ever being lifted.
 - Louis Jones asked why we would consider a tax abatement when we are raising costs on utilities for the residents. Jonathan Perez clarified that property taxes are not income to the utilities. We would realize utility income as soon as residents move into the building.
 - Warren Ross asked what the rent price would be for the apartments. Caleb Crandall answered that the rent would be \$750-1050 depending on size. What is the tentative completion date? The goal is to start in May.
- **Motion to approve the 2nd reading of Resolution 1-2023**, Voluntary Annexation of property. 1st- Matt Voss, 2nd- Warren Ross, Approved by 5-0 vote. Final reading will be March 21, 2023
 - **Motion to approve the 2nd reading of Resolution 2-2023**, Tax abatement for Upland Apartments, LLC. 1st- Matt Voss, 2nd- Ron Sutherland, Approved by a 4-1 Vote with Warren Ross voting no.

Council Reports:

- ❖ **Brian Hunt-** Nothing to report
- ❖ **Matt Voss-** The Park Board is looking for additional members to add to their board. The Park Board will be meeting on March 14, 2023.
- ❖ **Heath Slain** – Nothing to report
- ❖ **Warren Ross** -
 - Mr. Ross attended the Fire Department meeting and Tim Mannix asked about coding the locks in our buildings.
 - Reminder that the Fireman's dinner is April 22 at 6pm and council members are invited.
 - Our Town Upland committee met last week and is working on planning the Blooms-N-Berries Festival. He will keep the council informed on those plans as they develop.

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➤ Vote on Sewer Rate Ordinance 2-2023

Motion was made to approve the Sewer Rate Ordinance 2-2023 as presented.
1st- Matt Voss, 2nd- Brian Hunt, Approved 5-0 Vote.

❖ **2nd Reading and Public Hearing on Resolution 1-2023- Voluntary Annexation of property and Resolution 2-2023 - Tax Abatement request by Upland Apartments, LLC**

➤ Public Comments:

- Dianne Hovermale, 8199 E. 600 S.
 - Does the town have a policy for abatements? Councilman Sutherland responded that this is the first abatement request the Town of Upland has received. Mrs. Hovermale encouraged the council to come up with a matrix for awarding tax abatements.
 - Does this request meet the State of Indiana's definition of an Economic Revitalization Area? In her option, the proposed area does not meet the criteria.
 - What infrastructure costs would be the responsibility of the Town of Upland? No, Upland Apartments, LLC will be including infrastructure costs for roads and utilities in their construction costs.
 - What happens if, at the end of the abatement period, the homes are sold off as individual residences?
 - Will providing this abatement serve to benefit long-term economic growth and development in Upland?
- Kevin Crawford, 1477 S. Valhalla Drive
 - He has been a business owner and landlord for 30 years and he has never had to ask for assistance or tax abatement.
 - Why would the town government want to become a landlord indirectly through a subsidy?
- Matt Price, Attorney for Caleb Crandall
 - Mr. Crandall received a favorable recommendation from the county to go forward with their request for tax abatement.
 - This would be the single biggest private investment in the Town of Upland in many years, if ever. They are seeking to meet a housing need for the community.
 - The building project has intense upfront costs for Mr. Crandall and the tax abatement would help offset those costs. If the tax abatement is not approved, the project will not move forward.
 - The addition of housing would add additional rate payers for the utilities.
- Jonathan Perez, Town Manager
 - This is a Grant County Growth Council project and this project has met their standards for tax abatement.
 - This would be the first market rate housing project done in Grant County in at least three decades.

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- Jeremy Harding, Commonwealth Engineer, handed out a report detailing the progress of town projects (see attached report).
Jeremy reported that we did receive the \$700K OCRA grant to help with the replacement of the north lift station

Public Comments:

General concerns:

- ❖ Cole Chandler, 8729 E 750 S, On behalf of the Ballpark Board, is asking for permission from the Town of Upland to replace the current storage sheds around the ballpark with a 25x18 storage building on a concrete slab. It would be placed behind Diamond 2 where the dumpsters are currently sitting. Councilman Voss said that he would work with the Park Board to get this approved as soon as possible. The council is on board with moving forward if the Park Board approves.
- ❖ Louis Jones, Owner of the Upland Laundry Mat, expressed her concerns about the approval of AirBnB properties. This was spoken about at the Area Plan meeting on Monday evening. Councilman Hunt responded that he is evaluating other towns policies concerning AirBnb properties.

Action Items:

- ❖ Sewer Rate Ordinance 2-2023

- Public Comments:

- Tina Rumble, 985-B Hope Drive, expressed her concern with how the increase will affect residents on a fixed income. How are residents supposed to pay for a 100% increase in their bill? Has anything else been discussed other than a 100% increase? Councilman Sutherland explained that the council and town manager have been working with a financial advisor to come up with the minimum increase possible to make the sewer fund balanced and to pay the state back for the much needed Sewer project. Have Grants been explored to help with cost? We did receive the OCRA Grant and we continue to look for resources to help with costs.
Is there any way to raise a smaller amount? Mary Fletcher responded that the current sewer fund is in the negative and that there has not been an increase in the sewer rates in 28 years to cover increasing operating costs so the increase is needed even if the sewer project was not needed.
- Louis Jones, Owner of the Upland Village Laudromat, asked how we selected the contractor for the sewer project. Councilman Sutherland explained that the town used the State of Indiana approved process to choose a contractor.
What assurance does the public have that an increase such as this does not happen again? Councilman Sutherland responded that we will be reviewing the sewer fund annually and make adjustments as needed so that this does not happen again.

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Opening Remarks:

The Town Council of the Town of Upland met in a regular session on the above date. The meeting was called to order at 7:10PM by Ron Sutherland following the Unsafe Building Meeting.

In attendance were Ron Sutherland, Warren Ross, Heath Slain, Matt Voss and Brian Hunt.

Meeting minutes from February 21, 2023 were approved. 1st- Heath Slain, 2nd- Warren Ross; 4-0 Approval Vote with Matt Voss abstaining.

Department Reports:

❖ Upland Police Department, Marshal Andy Cassidy

- Marshal Cassidy reported that new tires were purchased for the 2013 Ford Taurus that Officer Conner drives and an updated decal will be installed in the next week.
- The February call list was distributed to the council for review. (See attached report)
- He also reported that he has been in discussions with the principal of Eastbrook South about adjusting the pickup/ drop off route for next school year to alleviate the traffic congestion on 2nd street.
- Councilman Sutherland asked if there had been any progress made on monitoring the speeding through town. Marshal Cassidy said that they have been running radar and the night shift officers have done a good job trying to curtail speeding especially on Main Street. Councilman Sutherland asked if we could look into radar signs.

❖ Upland Volunteer Fire Department- Not Present

❖ Upland Town Attorney, Adrienne Hammond - Nothing to report

❖ Upland Clerk-Treasurer, Mary Fletcher

- Mrs. Fletcher reported that she will be setting up a new checking account with Star Financial Bank to deposit Sewage funds into as required by SRF.

❖ Upland Town Manager, Jonathan Perez

- Mr. Perez reported that Shannon Clark, Utility Clerk, will be attending an Economic Development Course in May.
- He is currently working on putting together a plan to remodel the bathroom at the park that was vandalized.
- We have been working with Verizon to get the phones and internet operating. We are looking into a different provider.
- The Jefferson Street Stormwater Project has commenced.
- Mr. Perez has been working with INDOT to get the SR22 Project started.