



**MINUTES
WATAUGA CITY COUNCIL
WORKSHOP MEETING
CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER,
7105 WHITLEY ROAD
MONDAY NOVEMBER 13, 2023
5:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Arthur L. Miner called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The meeting convened with the following members present:

Arthur L. Miner
Jan Hill
Pat Shelbourne
Tom Snyder
Lovie Downey
Andrew Neal
Malissa Minucci
Mark Taylor

Mayor
Mayor Pro Tem/Council Member Place 7
Council Member Place 1
Council Member Place 2
Council Member Place 3
Council Member Place 4
Council Member Place 5
Council Member Place 6

and
Joshua Jones
Linda Proskey
Robert Parker
Tonya DeGrand
Madelyn Corbin

City Manager
City Secretary
Chief of Police
Animal Services Supervisor
Code Compliance Officer

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements made.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No Requests for public comment were received.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY FOR ACTION ITEMS

No Requests for public testimony were received.

PRESENTATIONS

1. **Animal Services will give a presentation and discuss an ordinance on beekeeping within residential areas.**

Mayor Miner started the discussion by commenting that there have been some reports of bee nuisances in the city with residential beekeeping, and we do not have an ordinance to address this.

Tonya DeGrand, Animal Service Supervisor, and Madelyn Corbin, Code Compliance Officer, gave the presentation. They went over the importance of bees and why they are declining, the Agriculture Code chapter 131. The importance of residential Regulation, education, and went over the proposed ordinance.

Mayor Miner asked about the proposed ordinance and the amount of water that needs to be close to the hive. He also commented about lot size and legislation coming forward from the state to reduce those.

Councilmember Taylor asked who is going to regulate the Beekeepers. Who will define an aggressive colony, will there be annual fees, and what is the violation timeline?

Tonya DeGrand said that Animal Services would be responsible for compliance and inspections and that beekeepers would not be charged a fee because she wants them to use that money to take classes and be responsible beekeepers.

Councilmember Hill wanted to know if current hives will be grandfathered in the ordinance.

Tonya DeGrand said that the current hives would not be grandfathered.

Councilmember Shelbourne wants to ensure the ordinance addresses the necessary steps for noncompliance.

Councilmember Snyder asked why there is a need for an ordinance and whether the complaints are being received just from one area.

Tonya DeGrand said they are receiving complaints mainly for one area but have had others in the past. She said the ones she is receiving for the area are that the bees are interfering with the residents' ability to utilize their backyard because of the excessive amount. She has no ordinance to be able to do anything. She does educate people about honeybees.

Madelyn Corbin, Code Compliance Officer, said she had had complaints but never had as much concern as it is now. It was mainly people questioning if bees were allowed.

Councilmember Snyder said that he has been keeping bees for about two years, has several hundred hours in instructional videos, and is working towards his certification. He stated that honeybees are nonaggressive and try not to sting because they will die. Mr. Snyder asked why only one hive was allowed and recommended at least two. Was this limited to one to try and regulate the

number of bees? He commented that the effectiveness of the fly-away barrier is still being tested. So far, they have found that they are only effective in established hives and in preventing bees that are currently going in a specific direction, to prevent them from going that way. He wonders if a barrier would work in a small backyard area. He spoke about different types of hives. He explained why there are swarms. Also, I questioned the 15 feet for water and just said the vicinity of the hive. He also wanted to know why the fence would be necessary. He wanted to know what that would look like regarding classes and certification.

Tonya DeGrand said one hive is based on the property lines. She mentioned that Cornell University is the one that suggests 15 feet. She said it was just for safety reasons. To keep people and animals out and away from the hive. Tonya addressed the need for educational classes and is looking at having the beekeeper watch an instructional video and then answer some questions; once complete, Animal Services would send out a certificate. They are currently doing something similar to permit chickens.

Mayor Miner addressed why it has progressed to this point of an ordinance being considered. He and Councilmember Snyder met with people who came to a council meeting and complained about their neighbor who has bees. The citizen said they couldn't use their yard, and bees were coming into their house. He does not want to cause a burden to the beekeepers but feels it needs to be addressed. He asked the City Manager how many people had registered with chickens.

Councilmember Neal asked if there would be an additional PPE for staff to deal with this.

Tonya DeGrand said they would just be looking around when they go out there, so unless someone is allergic to bee stings, there would not be a need. He also asked if there would be staff training for identifying infected hives. Tonya said yes, there will be some training.

Councilmember Downey asked if the Austin ordinance was the only one they looked at. She wondered about swarming and why it occurred. She asked if the hive was close to the fence and if this could cause the bees to think they were being attacked. She asked about the fencing and the type if there is one that is recommended.

Tonya DeGrand said they looked at other ordinances, but this one was the main one and was also recommended by the Texas Department of Agriculture. She went over the reason bees swarm. She said that when the bees feel the vibrations, it will cause them to feel they are being attacked, so if a hive is up against a fence, they will feel threatened. She said that the fencing needs to be a solid wall.

Councilmember Hill asked if they plan on revising the ordinance with the council's suggestions.

Tonya said they will look at revising the ordinance based on the council's comments.

Mayor Miner said he would appoint a three-member ad-hoc committee to review the ordinance and make suggestions. He also said the people receiving the complaints had moved their hive away from the fence.

Chief Parker said that this has been brought to the forefront because of the most recent complaint, but they have had others in the past, and this ordinance will give them the tools to take action. If adopted by the council, this ordinance protects both the beekeeper and the citizen.

Mayor Miner said he would appoint a committee and would like to see something on the agenda for the December meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

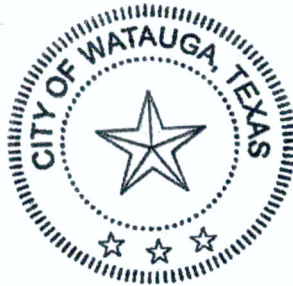
Mayor Miner adjourned the meeting at 6:39 pm and stated that the council meeting would commence at 6:50 pm.

Approved: this 11 day of December, 2023

Signed: this 13 day of December, 2023

ATTEST:

Linda Proskey /s/
Linda Proskey, City Secretary



APPROVED:

Arthur L. Miner /s/
Arthur L. Miner, Mayor

NOTE: Original Audio and Video Recording of this meeting is preserved and maintained by the City Secretary's Office