The Lyerly Town Council met for a called meeting on Tuesday, June 29, 2021 at Lyerly Town Hall. Those in attendance were:

Mayor James Ferguson

Phil Brooks

Juanita Baker

Shirley Davis

Jim Gilliland

June 29, 2021

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Ferguson at 12:00pm.

Mayor Ferguson said that the reason for this meeting is to discuss an acre of land next to the Holland/Chattoogaville kayak launch. There has always been a problem down there with nowhere to turn around. It is just the driveway to get in and that’s it. This acre is located right next to the driveway. It has around 200 feet of road frontage at a better spot. Where the driveway is now is steep and at a terrible angle and on a main road. We would be able to put a driveway on Price Bridge Road and make everything easier. It is more accessible and easier to see from. We could clear the acre off and have an area for picnic tables or whatever else to make it more family friendly. The land belongs to Joyce Cook. We have been trying to get this since we started the kayak launches but it wasn’t for sale. Now she is willing to sell it to us for $6,500. Mayor Ferguson added that he thinks that is reasonable. Shirley Davis asked if we would have to redo the launch. Mayor Ferguson said no. Everything will stay the same; we will just have additional parking. As the council looked at a map of the property, Mayor Ferguson explained where we could put the new driveway and there would be more parking and also a place to turn around. Mayor Ferguson said that right now, people leave their vehicles there while they float the river and they park on the side of Holland/Chattoogaville Road and it’s a mess. Shirley Davis asked where the money for this would come from. Mayor Ferguson said that we will just use the General Fund. Jim Gilliland said that is a pretty steep price for that. Mayor Ferguson said that it isn’t with river frontage. Jim Gilliland said that is a ridiculous price for an acre of land no matter where it is. If it is going to benefit everyone in Lyerly and not just a select few, then he could see it. He then asked but how is it going to benefit the rest of the people in Lyerly that don’t kayak. Mayor Ferguson said that it will attract more people to use the river for recreational use who come from out of town and then they spend money here which in turn benefits Lyerly. Jim Gilliland said that he doesn’t agree with that. He asked how many people know about it. Mayor Ferguson said lots of people. If we don’t encourage tourism on our river in every way that we can, we are shorting ourselves on something that is a pretty important resource that we have. Jim Gilliland said that doesn’t make the price any less. He said that he has been down there and there is no turn around. Shirley Davis asked what the value of the land is. Mayor Ferguson said that he was hoping to get it for $4,000 so it is a little high. Shirley Davis said but Joyce owns it and if we want it, then we will have to pay what she wants. Mayor Ferguson said that it isn’t like we are buying ten acres at $6,500 per acre, we are buying one. Jim Gilliland said that it isn’t like we are buying land that anyone else would want either. Clerk Sally Kerce said that the guy that has opened the kayak shuttle service “Tooga” in Cedar Bluff wants to buy it and he could make it private if he wanted to. Shirley Davis said that he can’t use our dock if he makes it private, can he. Mayor Ferguson said that anyone can use our dock. He added that she won’t have any trouble selling it for what she’s asking for it. Jim Gilliland said that doesn’t change his opinion. Michal Cabe added that the guy who owns “Tooga” has tried to buy it but Joyce offered it to us first because if he buys it, he could stop us from having access to it and she wants it to be open to the public for anyone to use. Jim Gilliland asked how he could do that. Michael Cabe said that we only have access to the right of way and that only goes to where the bathroom sits, so you wouldn’t be able to drive around it to get to the launch. Shirley Davis said that it will still bring people to it whether we own it or not. Mayor Ferguson said that he thinks if the price is high, it’s only a couple of thousand dollars high. Shirley Davis said that it says on the paper that it is valued at $3,900. Mayor Ferguson said that if we are going to split hairs over $2,000, he thinks that the benefit outweighs us paying too much. Jim Gilliland said that he is looking at does it benefit everyone in Lyerly. Mayor Ferguson said yes. Juanita Baker said that it will for anyone that wants to use it. Jim Gilliland said yeah, anyone that has a kayak. Phil Brooks said that it will bring people going through and buying beer and stuff like that. Mayor Ferguson said that people will buy beer, liquor, go to the drive thru, go to the dollar store, etc.

Shirley Davis asked if we can spend $6,500 on this, why we can’t buy paint to paint the old Ragland building. Mayor Ferguson said that he never said that we couldn’t buy paint for that building. Shirley Davis said that she has asked for it for four years and it hasn’t happened yet. Juanita Baker said that she has asked to have it white washed. Shirley Davis said that building is an eye sore and if we are going to spend any extra money, it should be to do something to that building or sell it. Mayor Ferguson said that it’s up to the council. Shirley Davis said that two people have wanted to buy it. She said that Eric Brown said that Mayor Ferguson said that we could lease it to them. Mayor Ferguson said that he told them we could auction the lease out for it. We can’t pick and choose who we lease it to. We would have to offer it up to public bid. Shirley Davis said that the Brown’s would like to make a cabinet shop and she thought that maybe the church wanted to make a fellowship hall out of it. If we are not going to do something with it, we need to get rid of it. Jim Gilliland asked what the stipulations on it were when they donated it to the Town. Shirley Davis said that she called Mrs. Ragland and there were no stipulations. She said that is just her opinion about spending this $6,500. She has been asking to do something with that building since she has been on the council. Mayor Ferguson said that one has nothing to do with the other. Shirley Davis said that it’s spending money and if we don’t have money for the building then we don’t have money for the property. Mayor Ferguson said that he never said that we didn’t have the money to paint the building. Juanita Baker made a motion to purchase the property from Joyce Cook for $6,500 and then the next thing we do is to fix up that building or sell it. Jim Gilliland said that Juanita Baker needs to make her motion and then Shirley Davis can make her motion. Juanita Baker said that she is doing it. Phil Brooks seconded. Juanita was in favor, Jim Gilliland opposed. Motion carries.

Phil Brooks asked Michael Cabe if they can paint that building. Michael Cabe said that they could. Mayor Ferguson said that he would hate to paint it without replacing the doors and windows. Shirley Davis asked what it would cost to put cheap windows in it, a new door on the front and just dress it. She said that is all that she has asked for all along. Mayor Ferguson said that he can find out. Shirley Davis added that if we aren’t going to use it for anything, and someone wants to buy it and use it, she thinks that we need to let someone use it. It is going to fall in just sitting there. Mayor Ferguson said that they need to keep in mind that we won’t have any control over who buys it and what they use it for. Jim Gilliland said put it up for auction and sell it. Mayor Ferguson said that he would like for the situation to come along so we could partner with a private business that we wanted in there and they would refurbish the building and use it for something productive. Phil Brooks asked if we can get a rough estimate for the cost to paint it and maybe put plywood over the door. Shirley Davis said that we need to at least put a door on it. Sally Kerce said that all the windows are broken out. It needs windows too. Shirley Davis said that we could cover all the windows and just make the front look good. Mayor Ferguson said that we can get a price. Sally Kerce said that Carlos could come give us a quote to paint it. Mayor Ferguson said that if it doesn’t get done this year, we can do it next year.

Mayor Ferguson said that he thought 4th of July was really cool. Juanita Baker said that she hated that there weren’t more people there. Mayor Ferguson said that everyone is still kind of afraid. Juanita Baker said that all four of the council sat at the BINGO table and they did well, we just didn’t make any money. Mayor Ferguson said that he thinks BINGO will be big at Down Home Day. Jim Gilliland said that he would like to thank Kasia, the mayor’s wife. She did great. Everyone agreed. Jim Gilliland said that she worked really hard the whole time she was there and the guys did a great job too.

Juanita Baker asked when the pavement would be put down. Sally Kerce said that they are paving Mahan Road right now and he said he would get to it as soon as he can. She said that she will call him and ask about it. Juanita Baker asked about the new parking lot. She said that she walked across it and it is hard to walk on. Mayor Ferguson said that we are going to do the walkway from the track to that parking lot but not the parking lot anytime soon. That would be pricey. Mayor Ferguson said jokingly “Juanita that was the next thing that I was going to do but now I have to paint this building across the street.” Everyone laughed. Shirley Davis said that she is going to start bringing a pocket of rocks. Juanita Baker asked Michael Cabe if he measured that walkway. Michael Cabe said that he did and it was around 780 square feet and it comes out to a little less than $1,600. Shirley Davis asked what they approved on all of that. Sally Kerce said that it was $62,000 and then add the $1,600 for the walkway makes it around $63,600 and the council approved up to $65,000.

Jim Gilliland said that he was wondering why we can’t incorporate with the Parker’s for Lyerly’s fireworks. Shirley Davis said that he shots his off every Sunday before the 4th. It is for his employees and friends. Jim Gilliland said that he sets off the ones for Summerville. Mayor Ferguson said that he did talk with him about doing fireworks for us but anything worthwhile is going to cost about $15,000. Jim Gilliland said that he isn’t talking about paying; he is talking about him setting his off in Lyerly. Mayor Ferguson said that is a private event that he has for his employees and their families, he isn’t going to change that. Jim Gilliland said with that being a private enterprise, then we wouldn’t be able to do this over at the old Ragland building because that would be a private enterprise too. Mayor Ferguson asked what he means. Jim Gilliland said the government and a private enterprise so that doesn’t make a lot of sense. Mayor Ferguson said that he still doesn’t understand what he’s talking about. Jim Gilliland said that the mayor just made the statement that he would like to have a private enterprise in the building. Mayor Ferguson said that we would still have to bid it out. What it would come down to is if we found someone to go into business with the town, we would still have to offer to the public for someone to come up with something else that we could do. We don’t have to take it but we would have to take whatever would benefit the town the most, no matter what it is. If we ended up with competing enterprises, we would have to bring in Chrysan Thomas and say that we need a bottom line form an accountant on what is the best thing for the Town of Lyerly and that is what we would have to take. But we could go through this whole song and dance with a private company that we want to bring into that building but it still has to go into the paper and we still have to have to be competitive. If a satanic church comes in and is willing to pay more, we have to let them have it. Jim Gilliland said that what he was saying was, if Parker would do it, we could use him as a contractor. We could advertise for firework contractors. Sally Kerce said that she thinks the mayor was saying that Parker wouldn’t do it because it’s his private event not that we wouldn’t let him. Mayor Ferguson said yes. He was saying that he doesn’t think that Parker would move his private event that he has at his house every year to our park as a public event. He said that he wouldn’t feel right asking him to do that. That is his thing that he does for his people. Juanita Baker said that the mayor has already contacted him about fireworks. Mayor Ferguson said that he approached him about putting on a fireworks display for the Town of Lyerly and he said that he would need to know a good 12 months in advance and anything worthwhile would cost between $10,000 and $15,000. Shirley Davis said that we can hire him. Mayor Ferguson said that we would still have to bid it out. He doesn’t think that anyone else would bid on it.

Juanita Baker said that she doesn’t think that the park is big enough to shoot fireworks. Mayor Ferguson said that he thinks that we would have to launch them from somewhere not in the park, perhaps the cemetery. Jim Gilliland said that is never going to happen. Mayor Ferguson said that he was just using that as an example of somewhere outside of the park. Jim Gilliland said that where they do it in Summerville is no bigger than our park. Juanita Baker said that when they had it at Dowdy Park, they shot from the school and now that they have it at the Ag Center, they shoot them from behind Jarrett’s. We don’t have a place big enough like that. What if we shot it off and it caught a house on fire. Our community isn’t big enough. Shirley Davis agreed. She added that there are a lot of people that don’t want fireworks in the middle of their town. Mayor Ferguson said that he would love for us to do it. It would be really neat. Shirley Davis said that we could rent the 50 acres that if for sale up the road from the park. Mayor Ferguson said that we could probably borrow it just to shoot fireworks. There is plenty of places close enough to the park to launch them from. Jim Gilliland said that some people don’t enjoy fireworks. Mayor Ferguson said that the park is too small. It needs to be a certain distance from the spectators. He said that we own the property on Reece Hill by the water tank. We could shoot them from up there. People live up there so we’d have to talk to them first. Jim Gilliland said that is a big appeal for the public. Mayor Ferguson said that it’s up to the council. Shirley Davis said that we voted on the property so what else do we have. Mayor Ferguson said that there isn’t anything else. The only reason for the meeting was the property by the kayak launch. He doesn’t think that we should vote on the fireworks at this meeting since this isn’t a regularly scheduled meeting.

Juanita Baker said that on the agenda it says addition to town hall. Mayor Ferguson said that sometime next year, he would like to enclose the covered part out back so we have room to store a lot of stuff that we have in the shop that we don’t really have room for. There is a lot of medium sized equipment that the guys use occasionally. They use It often enough to not take it off site to store it but they don’t use it often enough to warrant sitting in the shop taking up space. He said that he would like to enclose the covered part out back in metal siding and put a door in. Juanita Baker asked how much money we are looking at. Mayor Ferguson said that we haven’t priced it out; he just wanted to let the council know about it. Jim Gilliland said that we need that and he would vote for that if we get an inventory of our equipment. If there is no inventory of our equipment, how do we know what we have? Michael Cabe said that he turned in an inventory list to Sally Kerce. Jim Gilliland said good deal. Michael Cabe said that it may need to be updated some but there is a list. Juanita Baker asked if he could get a price now and it be good next year. Mayor Ferguson said that he could get a ball park and it should be close. He showed the council a drawing of the plans. Juanita Baker asked if out back is fenced in. Mayor Ferguson said yes. He said that right now, there is just a slant metal roof. Jim Gilliland asked if we have any kind of cost idea. Michael Cabe said that we just got the drawing and we were going to get Wayne Pace to give us an estimate on it.

Shirley Davis said that she feels like the mayor put her on the spot about painting the building because he didn’t say it would be done this year. She said that she would like a time frame on that. Sally Kerce said that she would call Carlos and get a quote. Mayor Ferguson said that he cannot promise that it will happen this year but we will do it next year. Shirley Davis said that she’d going to run for council just to see if he does. Juanita Baker said that she is going to run too. Sally Kerce asked the mayor if he was going to run again. Mayor Ferguson jokingly replied “I don’t know after today.” He then said he is just kidding, yes, he is going to run for mayor again.

Phil Brooks made the motion to adjourn. Juanita Baker seconded. All in favor.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm.

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Mayor Town Clerk