The Lyerly Town Council met for their agenda planning meeting on Tuesday, November 6, 2018 at Lyerly Town Hall. Those in attendance were:

Jim Ferguson, Mayor

Gwen Fisher

Phil Brooks

Juanita Baker

Shirley Davis

November 6, 2018

Mayor Ferguson began the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

 Mayor Ferguson said everyone should have minutes to review and approve next week. He then said that Shelly Baker is here to talk with everyone about having a story walk. Mayor Ferguson turned the floor over to her. She introduced herself and said that she is with the Chattooga County Library. She explained that they have begun a story walk that is circulating around the county. It has already been hosted in Menlo Park and Sloppy Floyd has also hosted it in their park. She said that Sloppy Floyd wants to keep it because they have so many trails but the library wants it to go around the county. She brought a board with her to show what they would like to do. She said that she knows that we have the crosses up at the park right now but maybe when those are taken down, they could start with the story walk. She said that if the council does choose to do it, she would come and put the boards in the ground around the track. It would be a Christmas story and there would be thirteen boards. They would space them out around the track and as people walk the track, they can read the story and admire the artwork. So, she said that she was just wondering if this is something that the town would be interested in hosting. Phil Brooks asked what the motivation for this is. Shelly Baker explained that it is mostly literacy but also health. They hope to help encourage families to get out and walk together and visit the park. They can get some exercise and while they are there, they can enjoy reading the story. Phil Brooks asked who was in charge of it. Shelly Baker said that the Chattooga County Library is in charge of it. This was an idea of Susan Stephens. It started in Illinois; a lady there patented it so they do have to put a small plaque on the board giving her acknowledgement and then the Tillotson grant funded it. They paid for it and the library put the work into putting them together and they are hoping that all of the parks in county will host it as the stories change. Usually there will be two stories in every park. With this one being a Christmas Story, they will probably just put it here. Shirley Davis asked how long it would stay up. Shelly Baker said thirty days, one month. Juanita Baker said that she has heard all good things about it in Menlo. Shelly Baker said that they have had all good reports especially at Sloppy Floyd. They had it on their website and they had a group put it out. At Menlo, it was really nice but the park there is so small, with twenty three signs, it was really kind of packed in there. On Menlo’s next rotation, they will choose a shorter book for their park. She added that they hope that this will be an ongoing thing. They hope to have it at least once a year in every park and maybe even twice a year. She thinks that there are six parks so that may work. She added that this has taken about three years to get this up and going due to funding and man power. It takes a long time to strip all the signs down, laminate the pages and clean them. Everyone agreed that they think it is a great idea. Shelly Baker said that she would also like to thank the Mayor and Council for their continued support for the library and funding the library. They do programming for adults and children all of the time. Thursday night at 5:30, they will be hosting a Pinterest night. It is very popular so they will have a good many adults for that. Juanita Baker said that she went to an art class up there last month and it was great. Mayor Ferguson said that our library is awesome. Shelly Baker then said that if she could have one more minute, Susan want her to see if it would be possible, closer to summer, to talk with everyone again about doing some summer story times at the Community Center. Maybe once a week, have our reader come up and have story time for the children. We would also like to eventually start a pop-up library. Juanita Baker asked what that is. Shelly Baker explained that their idea is for it to be a library. Staff would come out with a portable computer or scanner and people in the area could scan their library card or she could issue them a card and then they could choose from a selection of books that that the library staff brings. They are hoping to reach some senior adults that can’t travel well. She added that if they would, just kind of keep that in mind and feel free to give them some feedback as to what they think would or wouldn’t work for Lyerly. Mayor Ferguson said that they can’t vote on the story walk until next week but he will make sure that it is on the agenda.

 Mayor Ferguson said that while we are talking about the library, he would like to bring up increasing our yearly donation. Juanita Baker asked how much we donate now. Mayor Ferguson said $1,200 per year which is $2,000 less than what Menlo donates. Shirley Davis asked what the budget could afford. Mayor Ferguson said that we could match Menlo easily and give $3,200. Phil Brooks asked what our population comparison is to Menlo. Mayor Ferguson said that it is very close. As far as the percentage of SPLOST dollars, they get pretty much the same as we do and that is based on population. Jimmy Espy said that Lyerly is over 500 and Menlo has about 460. Mayor Ferguson said just to keep this in mind until next week.

 Mayor Ferguson said that Phil Brooks and Shirley Davis had brought up an ordinance to hold landlords responsible for tenants delinquent water bills. He has talked to some people since then that own a lot of the rental property in town and they had an excellent argument that he really didn’t have an answer for. Their argument is that we collect a water deposit. So, if we allow people to be delinquent beyond their deposit without turning them off, that’s on us. He said that it was hard for him to argue with that and on that note, he thinks it is a bad idea but he will do whatever the council wants him to do. Phil Brooks asked what the average water bill is. Mayor Ferguson said $52. Clerk Sally Kerce said that if they receive their second bill and the first one isn’t paid, they should be turned off. Phil Brooks said yes, that is how it should be. Mayor Ferguson said that in the past, we have been a little lenient and tried to work with people. We have a lot of people on fixed income and we try to be lenient but we have been bitten so many times, we have had to stop. Mayor Ferguson said that we turned twelve people off today. Jimmy Espy asked what the policy is that we will be enforcing. Sally Kerce said that all customers have a fifteen day grace period. Bills are due on the 20th and if it isn’t paid by the 5th, service will be disconnected. Jimmy Espy asked if that is already the policy and we are just enforcing it. Sally Kerce said yes, strictly enforcing it. Shirley Davis asked what the customer would have to pay if their service was disconnected. Sally Kerce said that they have to pay the balance on the account plus a $50 reconnect fee.

 Mayor Ferguson said that he is about to start on the 2019 budget. Juanita Baker said that she has a request. Mayor Ferguson said that is exactly why he brought it up. Juanita Baker said that she request that we do something about the playground at the park. They need something else to do. The civic club raised $20,000 and put the playground up there and then someone came and tore it up and they replaced it with what is up there. That is not even enough for five kids. Mayor Ferguson said that he and Juanita are thinking the same way. He has a list of ideas for the park. He was thinking about trying to find a grant at the first of the year to do a lot in the park. The track needs to be resurfaced and the playground needs attention. Phil Brooks said that the drainage needs to be upgraded. Juanita Baker said that the civic club did a 50/50 grant with Woodmen of the World for the original equipment for the playground. Shirley Davis said that she has had several compliments about our park and the activities that we have been having. Mayor Ferguson said that he has been kicking around the idea of moving the playground to the area between the big ball field outfield fence and the track to occupy that space. And then we could make the existing playground more parking. You could still pull up to the playground, you could see the kids the whole time and they are no closer to the road. Gwen Fisher said that would give us more parking for events. Juanita Baker said that we still need more playground equipment. Mayor Ferguson said that we need a basketball goal. Sally Kerce said that we used to have one at the edge of the pavement but we had to use it for parking. Mayor Ferguson added that he kicked around the idea of moving the playground to the back of the park but decided that would be too far away. Juanita Baker said that the other thing about that is that the people going down the highway can’t see that we have a playground. Phil Brooks said that unless we do get a grant, we will have to do this in phases. Juanita Baker said that would be fine. There just hasn’t been anything done in a while. Mayor Ferguson said that the green building with the restrooms in it is just ugly. Shirley Davis suggests that some of the ladies paint it white and draw some flowers or something decorative on it. Juanita Baker asked if there is any way to add stalls to the restroom. It is too big for just one toilet. Mayor Ferguson said that we would have to take the floor up. Juanita Baker asked when the boys are going to get back on the park at the railroad track. Mayor Ferguson said they will after they finish laying the water and sewer for the concession stand. Juanita Baker said that all of the bushes need to be taken care of.

 Gwen Fisher said that we need to set a date for Christmas in the Park. She also asked if there is any way to put another outlet on the other side of the stage. We need power on both sides. Another thing is that the stage is kind of far from the ground in the front and it is hard to go up and down it. She was wondering if we could get a step put there. Gwen Fisher said that she was talking to Kasia and they were thinking about December 8th for Christmas in the Park. She said that it would be great if we could order some little gifts to give the kids, like on Halloween. Juanita Baker said that all of the kids loved the glow necklaces. Sally Kerce said that she could order Christmas color glow necklaces to give out. Gwen Fisher said that we could also have a movie. Mayor Ferguson said we should watch the Grinch. Kasia Ferguson said that we will have hot chocolate, cider and cookies. Sally Kerce said that we need a lot more hot chocolate than we had at Halloween. Gwen Fisher said that we should have popcorn too. Gwen Fisher said that we have had a place for the kids to make ornaments before, if anyone wants to do that.

 Mayor Ferguson said that he has a few more things to add about the budget. Our tractor is on its death bed. Michael Cabe is getting some quotes on what we need. The plan is to buy a smaller one than what we have now so it shouldn’t be too expensive. Also, he would like to improve the interior of City Hall. Have someone come in and strip the floors and wax them again, get some pictures from Lyerly framed. We also need storage here at City Hall and at the Community Center. He would like to talk to the Tanner’s about the building beside the Community Center. As far as here, he would like to put a small metal storage building out back for all the chairs in the meeting rooms, decorations, and stuff in the shop. Shirley Davis said that before we jump into too much, we need to complete what we have started. Mayor Ferguson said that most of this is normal things that have to be done. Shirley Davis said that we could hold off on improving the interior of City Hall for several more months. She said that she doesn’t want them to look up one day and wonder how we are going to pay for everything that we have going. Mayor Ferguson said that there will be a separate line item on the budget this time for Easter, 4th of July, Down Home Day, Halloween, Christmas, movie nights, etc. all together. He said that he is going to try to come up with a number to cover all of those things for 2019. Also, there will be three budgets instead of two. There will be Water, General and Fire Department. He said that if they think of anything between now and the first of next month, let him know. He added that he would like to replace the chain link fence between the pavilion and the road with a rail fence.

There being no further business or discussion, the meeting ended at 7:53 p.m.

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 Mayor Town Clerk