



# TOWN OF HARRISBURG COMMUNICATIONS

## **Town Council meeting**

**Dec. 12, 2011**

The December meeting of Harrisburg's Town Council was one highlighted by change as four incumbents stepped down from their posts and new members accepted the Oath of Office, officially beginning their four-year terms.

The evening's meeting would be the last for Council members Rhonda Poppen, Jeffrey Redfern, Bob Scaggs and Bill Williams, who moved into the audience following several agenda items, including public comment, old business and three public hearings.

The first and second public hearing asked Council to consider two voluntary annexation requests – one contiguous, one non-contiguous -- for Rocky River Presbyterian Church. The first sought to annex a small parcel of land, .12 acres, in the middle of Pharr Mill Road Park into the Town of Harrisburg. The second request asked Council to annex approximately 45 acres of land at the intersection of Rocky River Road and Lower Rocky River Road into the Town's municipal limits.

Explained Planning and Zoning Director Josh Watkins about the non-contiguous 45-acre request, "(The Church) wants to do some expansion in the area and it is more favorable to do that within our jurisdiction rather than the county's." He noted that staff recommended approval of both annexation requests.

Neither hearing received commentary speaking for or against the requests. Council unanimously approved both annexations.

Watkins noted that the final public hearing was a rezoning of the newly-annexed Rocky River Presbyterian Church land, including land housing the church and its cemetery, to OI, or office-institutional district. Watkins said OI is the "zoning that we give all our religious institutions, schools, government buildings, things of that nature" and this rezoning would make the property consistent with the Town's land-use plan.

Speaking in favor of the rezoning was Glen Moses, a Rocky River Presbyterian Church member who worked closely with the Planning and Zoning staff during the annexation process. "You guys have unbelievable staff," said Moses. "They educated us about what needs to be done and made this happen."



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Hearing no remarks speaking against the rezoning, Council unanimously voted to approve the OI designation.

Following additional discussion among Town Council, departing Council members Poppen, Redfern, Scaggs and Williams shared a few final comments with each other and the audience.

“I feel honored and privileged to represent the citizens in Harrisburg and to work with you guys, even though we haven't seen eye to eye on every single issue,” said Redfern. “You are appreciated, much appreciated.”

Echoing his comments, Poppen added, “I've enjoyed it a lot. I've learned a lot. We haven't always agreed, but being the only girl in the crowd, I've tried to keep the peace.”

She continued, “My son is here tonight. If there's one thing I want my kids to say about me is when I had a passion about something I didn't just sit around, I went to bat for what I thought was right. I've enjoyed serving and I've enjoyed you all allowing me to serve.”

Scaggs, who prepared a short speech for the evening, individually addressed his fellow Council members, noting what he has learned from each of them during his four years.

“The last four years have by no means been easy,” he said, mentioning challenges they encountered “that many will go a lifetime without having to face. I've enjoyed partnering with you all through these challenges ... God bless you all and God bless Harrisburg.”

The last to comment was Williams, ending 20 years of service to the Town of Harrisburg. “I thank the citizens for voting me in. I thank the employees for supporting me. It's been a wonderful time to be with you.”

Mentioning many of the decisions and events he feels privileged to be part of throughout his tenure, Williams added, “There's no way that anything can get accomplished by one person. It's just been a pleasure and I thank all of you. All of you are my dear friends.”

Following applause from the audience, each outgoing Council members was then honored by the Town and Mayor Tim Hagler with a few words and a plaque before relocating to the audience for the remainder of the meeting.



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With four vacant seats at the front of Council Chambers, newly elected Council members Rick Russo, Phil Cowherd, David Isaacs and Brian Leopard were sworn into office.

Also at Monday's meeting, Town Council:

- Discussed the Morehead Road sidewalk project. Responding to remarks from the public comment portion of the meeting, Public Works Director Todd Taylor noted that the condemnation of property within the right-of-way was necessary in order to complete the project within the time frame designated by the state grant awarded for the project. "The timetable is something we're up against. With the grant money, we only had so much time ... Half of the property owners, we had donations from," he explained. "We had a number of property owners we couldn't get in touch with (and) a number held by other entities. There were some difficulties." With these factors in mind, Town Council approved the condemnation at a previous meeting. Following discussion about the concerns residents have regarding the future sidewalk, Council decided to push forward with the approved condemnation. Said Councilman Scaggs, "It's gonna be hard for me to not support sidewalks anywhere in the town."
- Received a report from the town's waste company, Republic Services, which included a request for a contract extension as well as replacing garbage bins and implementing new recycling containers throughout Harrisburg.
- Appointed top vote-getter Rick Russo the Mayor Pro-Tem.

Following a brief closed session, old and new Council members as well as some staff and residents enjoyed an informal, late-evening reception in the Town's Municipal Complex.

DVDs of each Town Council meeting are available. For more information, contact Harrisburg Town Hall at 704-455-5614. Meeting minutes will be available online, [www.harrisburgnc.org](http://www.harrisburgnc.org), following Council approval at the next monthly meeting, scheduled for Monday, Jan. 9 at 7 p.m.

**Melinda Skutnick, Communications Specialist**  
*Town of Harrisburg, 4100 Main Street, Harrisburg, NC 28075*  
704.455.5614 | [mskutnick@harrisburgnc.org](mailto:mskutnick@harrisburgnc.org)

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