



*Town council meeting  
Dec. 2, 2024*

Present: Mayor Chris Lelle; Councilmen, Tommy Buchanan, Eric Dailey, Sally Brown, Doug Koestel and Sharon Johnson; Clerk, Kathy Bridges, Attorney, Jack Samuels

Visitors: Beth Buchanan, Jerry Johnson, Scott Morgan, Larry and Wendy McElahannon; Amanda Wilson, Deborah and Mike Wilson; Frank Bernat, Amber Wigley, Rebecca Whiddon, Sandy McNab, Morgan Ervin with the Barrow Journal, Matthew Reynolds, Brian McKay, Mike Camp

The meeting began at 7:02 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor opened the public hearing on the Rezone: BE02001 & 06001, 0 Manger Ave., a request to change the future land use map to mixed use neighborhood. The area is about 55.37 acres, and the change is from agricultural and low use density to R3 the high use density with a special use request for mixed master plan development of residential and commercial uses.

The developer presented the plans for the development and said the land use/zoning change in the county portion had been approved by the county. The 55 acres in the city would have a commercial portion off Highway 11 in the city limits and house 161 homes-2.9 per acre.

The landowner, Matthew Reynolds, the grandson of Bobbie Reynolds (daughter of Harold Harrison) spoke in favor of the development as did Frank Bernat, the pastor of Bethlehem First United Methodist Church.

Residents on Manger Avenue including Brian McKay, Wendy McElhannon, Mike Wilson and Mike Camp had traffic concerns saying getting out of Manger onto Highway 11 was already difficult. Citizen Scott Morgan also voiced traffic concerns and Mike Camp pointed out the school system would be overburdened.

The prices of the homes would be mid \$400s to \$500s and square footage would be 1600 up to 3500.

The Mayor closed the public hearing at 7:35 and asked for a motion on the previous meeting minutes. Sally Brown made the motion to approve the Nov. 4 minutes and with a second by Sharon Johnson the motion passed unanimously. Sharon Johnson made the motion to approve the Nov. 5 minutes and with a second by Eric Dailey the motion passed with Sally Brown abstaining from voting since she was not present at the meeting.

In new business the council discussed the rezone/special use request. Sally Brown made a motion to approve with the conditions voiced by the Mayor-adding the staff proffered conditions and changing the cap from 7 to 5 % rentals, adding conditions of no pawn shops, no loan services, no gas stations, no smoke or vape shops, no drive-throughs, also adding the condition of the facades on the commercial premises more in line with the comp plan examples 1,2 and 5 and the proffered conditions from the county referencing garages.

Sharon Johnson seconded, Eric Dailey voted yes, and Doug Koestel and Tommy Buchanan voted against. The motion passed 3-2.

The budget resolution was next on the agenda. Eric Dailey made the motion to approve the resolution, Sally Brown seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Employee Christmas bonuses were next on the agenda. The Mayor recommended a \$500 bonus for both employees and a 4 percent pay raise effective in 2025. Doug Koestel recommended the bonus be a part of the annual compensation and pay increases would be voted on annually and in the future an employee must work 3 months to earn the bonus. He made the motion to approve, Sally Brown seconded, and the vote was unanimous.

The termination agreement for planning service through Barrow County was next on the agenda. The county would finish the inspections for Shepherd's walk. Eric made the motion to approve the resolution, Sharon Johnson seconded, Doug Koestel and Sally Brown voted yes, and Tommy Buchanan voted no. The motion passed 4-1.

The road improvements pricing review was discussed. The Mayor had prices from Ohmshiv Construction for the Joseph Street stormwater improvement at \$99,983.02; McElannon Crossing stormwater project at \$47,568.64; and the four-way stop at East Star and Harrison Mill Road at \$21,492. He said the projects would move forward with rescue funds monies.

Tree trimming bids were up next on the agenda. Sharon Johnson had a list of bids for doing tree work. They were all certified arborists except Scarborough who had been certified in the past but not kept up with the certification. She noted his father had worked for Bethlehem in the past. Tommy Buchanan said they did good work. Doug Koestel made the motion to approve the Scarborough bid which totaled \$24,150. Sally Brown seconded the motion and the vote was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25.