



# Town of HOLLY RIDGE

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## HOLLY RIDGE TOWN COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 6:00 P.M.

Mayor Jeff Wenzel called the Regular Meeting of the Holly Ridge Town Council to order at 6:02 p.m. at the Holly Ridge Town Hall. Council members present were Councilman Misciagno, Mayor Pro-Tem Patti, Councilman Hines, Councilwoman Stanley, and Councilman Ritter. Also, present were the Town Manager, Heather Reynolds, Deputy Clerk, Tracy Martin, Chief Sorg and Major T.J. Waddell.

### *Invocation and Pledge*

**Councilman Hines** gave the Invocation and Mayor Wenzel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### *Adoption of Agenda*

A motion was made by **Mayor Pro-Tem Patti** and seconded by **Councilman Ritter** to adopt the agenda as presented. *All Agreed.*

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he felt like it was his duty to explain why he called a Special Meeting. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said last week there was some procedural confusion in the vote about the Bee Festival location. Councilman Ritter needed some clarification explanation on the procedural possibilities of gaining appropriate permission to make an informed decision.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said it was his understanding Councilman Ritter was looking for a safety plan or some type of traffic plan and one was not available. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said at that point a pending vote should have happened. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he felt the duty to call for a Special meeting not only for Councilman Ritter but for all Town Council members to have all the information they need to make an informed decision. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said the issue is time sensitive and the police department needs to apply for all the transportation permits if the event is going to be on Sound Road.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said making suggestions and asking questions is what we are supposed to do. It is never a waste of time, and it is good democracy to make sure that we get all the information.

### *Persons Wishing to Address the Council*

**Ken Bradshaw – 134 Beacon Woods Dr** said he is a member of the Bee Committee, and he is here to speak on behalf of the Bee Committee. Mr. Bradshaw said he is also a proud resident of downtown Holly Ridge. Mr. Bradshaw said the Bee Committee voted on the location for the street festival and there were some lines crossed at the last meeting. Mr. Bradshaw said he just wants to show his support for the Bee Festival. Mr. Bradshaw said emails are coming in from everywhere about people wanting to be involved. Mr. Bradshaw said he would like the festival to be in the street.

**Dawneva Evans – 302 E. Ocean Rd** said she was one of the organizers of the Camp Davis Festival and it is like the part of the road that we are going to cut off. There will be vendors and it went smoothly. Ms. Evans said one of the things that she thought was most important for this committee is the Bee Festival is a new festival and exposure is the best thing to get people to come. Ms. Evans said this is for such a great cause and it will educate people on what kind of plants to plant for the bees. Ms. Evans said Sound Road would be the best location to hold the Bee Festival.

**Tony Rydzynski – 445 Belvedere Drive** said he is here not only as the co-chair for the committee but also as a bee advocate. Mr. Rydzynski said it has been the vision for the Bee Committee from the start to offer experience from the committee to raise awareness for our pollinator friends. Mr. Rydzynski emphasized awareness of pollinators because this is one of the many commitments we have made to be branded as Bee USA.

Mr. Rydzynski said he frequently drives around town and from his perspective the proposed spot on Sound Road provides a unique gathering location that could be a Hallmark tradition for generations, but we also need to follow Town Council direction, so a clear definitive plan is needed for our committee to best execute this festival.

Mr. Rydzynski said he would also like to acknowledge our Town Park as a great outdoor resource. The future of the park has not gone unnoticed. Mr. Rydzynski said he would like to offer a few fun facts about Bee awareness.

- 85% of the flowering plants need a pollinator to reproduce.
- Bees have a wing in agriculture accounting for the pollination of over two thirds of crops.
- The Honeybee is the only insect that produces food for humans.
- A pound of honey is made from 2 million flower visits with the average bee visiting 50 to 100 flowers on a single trip.

Mr. Rydzynski said on behalf of the Bee Committee, we would like to thank you for your time tonight.

**Derrick Sholar – 417 S. Hines Street** said he is not against the Bee Committee, and he thinks it is a great thing. Mr. Sholar said as we open this up, he hears you say that nothing is a waste of time. Mr. Sholar said we have already discussed this, and this is the third time it has been discussed. Mr. Sholar said it is a waste of taxpayer's money as well as everyone else's.

Mr. Sholar said as Councilman Misciagno said at the last meeting, it is done, it has been voted on. Mr. Sholar said if you do not have clarification on what you are voting on, do not vote. It could be more than just a simple Bee Committee that we are voting on. It could be dealing with people's lives, properties, or anything else. If you do not know don't vote, it is as simple as that. Mr. Sholar said ask for more guidance, you don't call for a Special Meeting.

Mr. Sholar said as Mr. Sholar starts digging through this whole ordeal, he found that last year Councilwoman Bragg recued herself from a vote because she worked for the pie plant and the Town was dealing with that property. Mr. Sholar said he has found out that Mayor Pro-Tem Patti works for Dorothy Royal. He writes a paper and whether he gets money or not he works for Dorothy Royal, and it is a conflict of interest for this whole deal. Mr. Sholar said he is asking Mayor Pro-Tem Patti to recuse his vote from this.

Mr. Sholar asked what makes Sound Road better than Holly Ridge Fire Department and all that property. There are more power outlets which is where all the Christmas stuff is every year. There is a whole inside and a lot more exposure than would ever be on Sound Road. Mr. Sholar said we know there is a drug problem in the whole world and what if the cops were chasing somebody and they turned down Sound Road. Mr. Sholar said this has happened.

Mr. Sholar said he was informed that the Bee Committee Chairperson said if the festival was not held on Sound Road she was going to do away with the whole deal. Mr. Sholar said she cannot because she does not have that kind of power but regardless, she threw a temper tantrum. Mr. Sholar asked if this is what we want our kids to see, if we don't get our way, we throw a temper tantrum until we do get our way.

Mr. Sholar said he is curious as a taxpayer is this going to be a common practice of everything if it does not go our way.

**Maxton Sholar – 111 Wilmington Highway 17** said the last meeting he spoke on this subject and he was not going to speak but he wanted to bring it to everyone's attention that years ago we had events at the fire department. There is plenty of room at the fire department and it is not a main thoroughfare for people to be traveling. Mr. Sholar said there is more room for vendors to set up at the fire department and it is a better situation. Mr. Sholar said there is a lot more visibility at the fire department. Mr. Sholar said if you want to have it on the street, he understands that, but the fire department is the better place to have it because there is more room.

Mr. Sholar said somebody posted on that site and it looks like Holly Ridge's Town Council is in it for themselves. Mr. Sholar said he has delt with Holly Ridge since 1976, and Mr. Sholar has never seen a Councilman try to gain from being a Councilman. Mr. Sholar said Mayor Pro-Tem Patti, you are the first one I have ever seen do this. Mr. Sholar said Mayor Pro-Tem Patti did this to gain for himself. Mr. Sholar said in his opinion he thinks Mayor Pro-Tem Patti over a couple of beers discussed this again with Councilman Ritter. Mr. Sholar said he does

not think that Councilman Ritter did this on his own. Mr. Sholar said in two meetings he has seen enough to know that Mayor Pro-Tem Patti is in this for himself.

Mr. Sholar said this event needs to be held at the municipal park where children can play and have a good time and not have to worry about if a drunk driver or someone high on drugs turns the corner running from the law, they are going to be in the middle of everybody. Mr. Sholar said it could be on your conscience that you tried to move the festival to Sound Road and killed somebody's child. Mr. Sholar said it might be one of yours. Think about that before you do it.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he does not work for Dorothy Royal. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he has been an educator for over 20 years, and he had an opportunity to write an article about principles of good government and that was purely on Mayor Pro-Tem Patti's own time. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said this is purely voluntary and on his own time. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he has seven kids and multiple jobs and contracts that he works on, and he does not work for the newspaper. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said there is no conflict of interest there.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said there is no personal gain or political agenda that he has whatsoever. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said if you could be more specific besides the newspaper thing that would be very helpful, and he does not understand what political agenda he has. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he has always said he is a dad of seven who wants to get involved in the community and do the best thing he can do for Holly Ridge. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he has had upward of thirty people reach out to him stressing and saying they want a street festival because it is a good idea. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he is just listening to the will of the people and that is it.

### **Discussion of the Bee Festival**

Mayor Wenzel said he has heard a couple of options for locations for the street festival. Mayor Wenzel asked Chief Longo if anyone had approached him to see if the Fire Department was available. Chief Longo said just in passing and the Fire Department is willing to support and help in any way. Mayor Wenzel asked if power would be available. Chief Longo said we put a post in the front yard for the Christmas lights and we can run a single line out to whatever we need to.

Councilman Misciagno asked Mr. Rydzynski regarding the Fire Department with Chief Longo, have you guys ever approached him that this is an opportunity or is this news to you. Mr. Rydzynski said it is a new idea and we have a Bee Committee this upcoming Thursday and the last one was before the last vote. Mr. Rydzynski said we have not met as a committee to discuss the Fire Department. Mr. Rydzynski said he is not opposed to it, but parking might be his only question or concern.

Councilman Hines said Chief Longo could inform us about the parking because his mother held an event at the Fire Department a few years ago. Chief Longo said it is no different than

the fireworks when people flood the area to park. Chief Longo said on Highway 50 there is open asphalt on the side of the white line where people park. There is also available parking at the back side of Lloyd Street where there are no houses. Chief Longo said it has never been a problem when we have held other events there.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti asked if there would be any issues if a fire call came in. Chief Longo said they would move the trucks out of the building and there should not be any kind of problem.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti asked where the vendors would go. It is supposed to be a street festival because this is bigger than a pancake breakfast. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he is trying to picture where all the tents will be located, where vendors will go, how people will get in and out and we will have people coming in and out and crossing that street constantly.

Chief Longo said they would not cross the street. We would shut down Flag Street with the fire engines so we could get to any fire calls that might come in. Chief Longo said before, vendors have on either side of the road from stop sign to stop sign and in front of the fire station.

Mayor Wenzel asked how much linear footage that would be. Chief Longo said around two blocks worth.

Councilman Ritter asked how many vendors have signed up. Rachel Greene said there are eighteen currently and six food trucks. Councilman Ritter said the fire department would be ideal because of traffic but Councilman Ritter's concern is the space.

Councilman Ritter asked about parking on Sound Road. Audrey Madia said from a safety standpoint the Parks and Recreation and the Police Department met yesterday and discussed vendor parking, contacting different businesses and we have not complete approval. Major Waddell can speak more to that.

Major Waddell said what we came up with if the event is not held on Sound Road. Major Waddell said the dentist office gave approval for EMS to park at their location. This way if anything does happen, EMS has accessibility to Highway 17. Major Waddell said we were having an issue with parking for the vendors. Major Waddell said he tried to contact Wilmington Health, but their building is shut down. We were looking at having vendors park their cars there. Parking for pedestrians, we were looking at having some of the pedestrian's park here, but they would have to cross the street and walk up the sidewalk. Major Waddell looked at handicapped parking by the vape shop. Major Waddell said in the past with the Liberty Festival handicapped parking fills up quickly.

Major Waddell said parking as it is now where the Vape shop is located and some parking by the Town Hall. Vendors will park at the Wilmington Health building and the only other place is beside the Police Department where the slab is located on the empty lot.

Councilwoman Stanley said she spoke with the owner of the Vape Shop, and she did not like people parking at her business. Major Waddell said we would not do that due to the fire truck now being able to get out. Major Waddell said he is trying to get in contact with the person that owns the car wash. If we could park behind the car wash where the vacuum cleaners are that would be ideal.

Chief Sorg said the parking will more than likely be like Liberty Festival where there is a lot of parking all along the side streets. We will probably block off Cole Street and Furney's alley.

Chief Longo said at the last event at the Fire Department, there were 65 vendors and cars lined up on Holly Street and in front of the fire station.

Councilman Hines said if there is no more discussion, he is going to try and compromise and go to the Fire Department. Councilman Hines said a few of the reasons are there have been events held at the Fire Department before. There is electricity and facilities there along with the best visibility for people to see. Councilman Hines said the Spot Festival puts a fence up every year when they hold their event, and it is also located right on Highway 17.

A motion was made by Councilman Hines and seconded by Councilwoman Stanley to direct staff to set up a plan to have this event at the Fire Department.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said the Bee Committee that was appointed by the Town Council, you unanimously voted to have it on the street and now the Town Council for obvious reasons has authority to overturn it for safety reasons or whatever. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he is not hearing from the professionals that this is not a possibility that there is a plan in place. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said the will of the committee is going to be undermined because that is what we have tasked them to do. It seems like a few do not want to have the festival on that street. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he is hearing let's have it anywhere but that spot for some reason. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said he thinks he knows the reason and we can ponder that for a little bit.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said this is a good opportunity to show the community that we can have a main street with street festivals, car shows, farmers market things of that nature. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said the Bee Festival is going to be awesome and he is very excited for this festival. Mayor Patti said he thinks the festival needs to be on Sound Road.

Councilman Hines said he is not sure who gave our staff the authority to draw up the plan to have the festival on Sound Road because we voted it down twice. Councilman Hines said he understands the Department of Transportation was notified by Ms. Royal that they wanted to close the street down after the Town Council voted no. Councilman Hines asked who gave Ms. Royal the authority to even go to the Department of Transportation.

Councilman Hines said we can't get in the practice of every time a vote does not go somebody's way, we call for a Special Meeting, especially after two times. It looks like we do not know what we are doing.

Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said Councilman Ritter asked for clarification and that is where the plan came from and if we do not keep discussing and keep asking questions and say well it was voted on and who cares now, that is the point of democracy.

Councilman Hines said if he does not understand something, he will not vote in favor of it and then change my vote. Mayor Pro-Tem Patti said hence that is why there was a procedural confusion.

Councilman Ritter said he felt like if it's presented to the Town Council, it should be presentation of what your plan is not we are going to have this festival at this place. There should be a plan of how this is going to be implemented and how it is going to be carried out, what is going to be used to mitigate all of these, what ifs. Councilman Ritter said he was not privy or on the Town Council for the meeting before that to decide about the park. Councilman Ritter said he wanted to give the benefit of the doubt before he presented the case. Councilman Ritter said he is not sure if the Town put together this plan with no direction from him or anyone else on the Town Council to Ms. Royal, but Councilman Ritter did not have any communication with her afterwards. Councilman Ritter said he did not have all the details and he could not decide. Councilman Ritter voted last time based on the details that were given.

Councilman Hines said if you did not understand, you should have asked for this to be continued and clarified. Councilman Hines said this makes you look bad that you voted yes on something, and you did not know what you were voting on. Councilman Hines repeated it is ridiculous to vote on something and then change it at another meeting because somebody didn't like the way it was.

A motion was made by **Councilman Hines** and seconded by **Councilwoman Stanley** to direct staff to set up a plan to have this event at the Fire Department.

Councilman Misciagno said he is listening to his follow compadres, and he can empathies with Mayor Pro-Tem Patti regarding what the committee wants but Tony Rydzynski said something critical and that was this was not entertained however, you would entertain it. Councilman Misciagno said he understands the will of the Bee people regardless of the chair of your committee that might have poisoned the wealth a little bit which is the reason why we're this impasse. Councilman Misciagno said he could appreciate the Sholars making a voice for themselves but Derrick Sholar the same passion you had and the professionalism at this podium is the same thing we take issue with that other individuals who do not. Councilman Misciagno said please do not go down that same path. Councilman Misciagno said he is not saying Mr. Sholar did anything wrong or negative, but for Councilman Misciagno as a professional in this environment as a fifty-year-old man standing up here

trying to make change and difference knowing that no one is in my mind he is making an informed decision. Professionalism will always win. Regardless of the democracy pieces, whether we like it or not, some will always be in favor and some will not. Councilman Misciagno said when a decision is made, Councilman Misciagno understands the dilemma from the last meeting has caused us a pickle and it is unfortunate for round two for us as members.

Councilman Misciagno said the vote is on him and he already knows how it is going to go on both sides. Councilman Misciagno said he wants to support the Bee Committee and when this is discussed for next year, he highly recommends considering the Fire Department. Councilman Misciagno said the Bee Committee has put a lot of effort in the last four or five months and this really needs to happen. Councilman Misciagno said he is a no for the Fire Department.

*Voting was as follows:*

*Councilman Hines – Yes*

*Councilman Misciagno – No*

*Mayor Pro-Tem Patti – No*

*Councilwoman Stanley – Yes*

*Councilman Ritter - No*

#### **Motion Fails.**

Councilman Hines asked if he could make a motion that this item not be brought back up for six months. Mayor Wenzel said only after an affirmative vote.

A motion was made by *Mayor Pro-Tem Patti* and seconded by *Councilman Misciagno* to move the Bee Festival to Sound Road.

*Voting was as follows:*

*Councilman Hines – No*

*Councilman Misciagno – Yes*

*Mayor Pro-Tem Patti – Yes*

*Councilwoman Stanley- No*

*Councilman Ritter- Yes*

#### **Motion Passes.**

A motion was made by *Councilman Hines* and seconded by *Councilman Ritter* that this item is not brought back up for six months. *All Agreed.*

Mayor Wenzel said he looked this up and it says this motion may be used to prevent the reintroduction of a failed substantial motion for a time, but it is an order only when made immediately following substantial motions to defeat.

Manager Reynolds said just for clarification, she had staff move forward with the safety plan because Councilman Ritter has requested that. Manager Reynolds said to be prepared, Manager Reynolds felt like we should present something since the Town Council requested something.

**Adjournment**

A motion was made by *Councilman Hines* and seconded by *Councilwoman Stanley* to adjourn at 6:42 p.m. *All Agreed.*

*Attest:*

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*Jeff Wenzel, Mayor*

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*Tracy Martin, Deputy Clerk*

*These minutes were recorded and prepared by Deputy Town Clerk, Tracy Martin.*