

SPECIAL SESSION:

State of West Virginia, County of Jefferson, to-wit:

At a Special Session of the County Commission of said County and State continued and held at County Commission meeting room in the Old Charles Town Library located at 200 E. Washington Street, Charles Town, WV 25414 on October 1, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. (An audio file of the October 1, 2014 meeting is available through the Jefferson County Commission Office.)

PRESENT: Walt Pellish, President
 Dale Manuel, Commissioner
 Patsy Noland, Commissioner
 Lyn Widmyer, Commissioner
 Sandy McDonald, Deputy County Administrator
 Jennie Brockman, Director of Planning and Zoning
 Jessica Carroll, Administrative Assistant

RE: **Public Hearing on the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment regarding Mass Gatherings/Events (ZTA14-02)**

President Pellish called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. and Commissioner Widmyer led the Pledge of Allegiance. Jennie Brockman, Director of Planning and Zoning, provided the Commission and the audience with a brief summary of the history of the Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment regarding Mass Gatherings/Events. President Pellish then opened the floor for public comment, which was made by the following:

Christy Huddle, resident and Board of Zoning Appeals member – stated she’s happy to see the Commission addressing this issue as she feels it’s necessary for the County. She also stated that, as a BZA member, it’s important for the Board to have as much information as possible concerning any proposed events in order to make the most educated decision on BZA applications. Ms. Huddle also stated she believes the current ordinance needs to have more guidelines for traffic control.

Tom Trumble, resident and Chair of the Board of Health – stated he believes mass events should have a capacity limit, as population estimates determine considerations made for health hazards. Also, the Health Department only has a limited number of staff which will make it difficult to service both a mass event and the taxpayers of the County. Mr. Trumble also stated location is an important consideration in the ordinance, as mass events taking place in areas with some semi-permanent facilities such as bathrooms and open shelters are more manageable than those potentially taking place in an undesignated area.

Chris Stroech, attorney with Arnold & Bailey and counsel for the All Good applicants – stated he’s been the vice president of the Shepherdstown Street Fest Committee for the past four years, so he’s familiar with the amount of work needed to coordinate mass events; however, he believes the ordinance needs to remain flexible to suit the different needs and parameters of each potential event.

Bob Aitcheson, resident – stated he believed the ordinance isn’t worth considering as it does not provide enough protection to the County and its residents and questioned why it has taken the Commission so long to act on this item.

John Barile, resident – stated he believed the ordinance should include a maximum limit for the size/number of attendees for an event and questioned who would be responsible for assessing the impact of the event on the surrounding community with regards to fire and emergency medical services, traffic, and litter. Mr. Barile also stated the capacity of the event location should be assessed prior to ticket sales for the event.

Douglas Stolipher, resident – stated he believes its impossible to predict the number of attendees for a large mass event and questioned whether the casino or the Mountain Heritage Arts and Crafts Festival were required to have a cap on their number of attendees. Mr. Stolipher also stated he should be allowed to use his farm as he sees fit for one week out of the year, and he feels as though this ordinance is discriminatory toward his family.

David Tabb, resident – stated he believes farm owners should be allowed to use their land for mass events since many small farms in the area are struggling, and should these farms end up being sold to developers, there will be a far greater impact on the surrounding community than there would be during the days of the event.

Sheriff Pete Dougherty – stated the Commission needs to identify and assemble a team of experts to examine mass event requests to ensure all bases are covered, including but not limited to traffic control, crowd control, ambulance service, fire service, and public health. Sheriff Dougherty also stated he believes the ordinance needs to be more comprehensive for the protection of the County and its residents.

Tim Walther, owner of Walther Promotions – stated he had supplied the Commission with a folder of information on Walther Promotions and the All Good Festival and welcomed any questions the Commissioners or the public may have

There being no further comments from the public, President Pellish stated the record would remain open for two weeks to allow time for written comment. The Public Hearing was adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

WALT PELLISH, PRESIDENT

Respectfully submitted
Jessica D. Carroll
Executive Administrative Assistant