

Intro (00:00):

Intro music

Barry Lee (00:03):

Hi Barry Lee with 92.5 WINC FM excited to host the second season of the City of Winchester's podcast, the Rouss Review. We do this twice each month. On the second and fourth Thursday, we explore City services, programs and events and we discuss information that you need to know so we hope you stay tuned. So, up first is the Council BLUF or Bottom Line Up Front recap of the May 26, 2020 Council meetings. At the regular meeting, Council adopted an ordinance to rezone over 7.5 acres at 520 Meadow Branch Avenue to increase the units allowed to 18 units per acre. The applicant wishes to rezone the vacant track to construct 135 market rate apartments as Phase II of the Meadow Branch Apartment Planned Unit Development along the east side of Meadow Branch Avenue. Council adopted an ordinance that amends the Zoning Ordinance to change the Planned Unit Development provisions to include density bonuses if proposed projects meet certain desired development criteria. Zoning staff believes that the bonus density amendment would help the City attract desirable development that includes sought-after amenities. Council also adopted an ordinance to delay the final three utility rate increases one year each due to the pandemic. In 2017, Council approved the series of five rate increases over a five year period that started on July 1, 2018. These rate increases were needed to pay for the significant amount of capital improvements that are in progress. The next rate increase, which was scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2020 is now delayed until July 1, 2021. At the Work Session, Council reviewed a proposed ordinance authorizing the issuance and sale of up to \$37 million in utility revenue bonds for ongoing utility infrastructure projects. The City has several utility infrastructure projects currently in progress. These important projects, expected to be completed within the next two years, include water and sewer main replacements on Loudoun, Wyck and Wentworth; water meter replacements throughout the city; water treatment plant and river wall repairs; two sewer pump station replacements; and the new maintenance facility at City Yards. When these projects were initiated two years ago, the City expected additional funds to be needed this year to complete the projects. This proposed ordinance will authorize a revenue bond issuance of \$33 million with a term of 30 years. For the first two years, the interest only payments will be capitalized into the loan and for the third year the payments will be interest only since the bonds are to be repaid with utility revenue. This payment structure is necessary to allow the next three water and sewer rate increases to be delayed one year each due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ordinance and associated resolution was forwarded to the June 9th regular meeting for public hearing and official vote. Council also discussed a Conditional Use Permit to allow a hookah establishment at 30 East Piccadilly Street. Since the use is only permitted through the Conditional Use Permit process, the Planning Commission has the ability to recommend the imposition of specific conditions to City Council for the operation of the use. At a previous meeting, the Planning Commission discussed the application and forwarded it to Council with a recommendation to approve the C.U.P. With 11 conditions. Council forwarded the Conditional Use Permit request to the June 9th regular meeting for a public hearing and official vote. For more information on these topics and to view the agenda packet, just visit the City of Winchester website [[www.winchesterva.gov](http://www.winchesterva.gov)] and click "Council Meeting Agendas" under the "Government" tab.

Barry Lee (03:42):

May is the International Code Council's annual building safety month and here with us today to talk about why building safety is important to public health is the City's Building Official David Parker. Welcome to the show, David.

David Parker ([03:55](#)):

Hi Barry. Thank you for having me on your show.

Barry Lee ([03:57](#)):

So before we get started, can you give us a quick overview of the role and responsibilities of a building official?

David Parker ([04:04](#)):

Sure. I interpret and enforce the building codes adopted by the state as well as other City Codes. I issue building permits, construction, trade permits, performance actions and conduct construction plan review. I also develop and implement policies and procedures as they relate to building safety, as well as investigate various citizen inquiries concerning building and safety violations.

Barry Lee ([04:33](#)):

The City, you and your team have to enforce state and federal building codes with new and existing structures. So I can imagine this is not always an easy task. So, why are these codes so important?

David Parker ([04:45](#)):

All communities need building codes to protect their citizens from everyday disasters like fires, weather related events such as floods, and structural collapse that follows deterioration over time of buildings of all kinds. Modern updated building codes and a strong system of code enforcement ensures that individuals and communities are safe in the buildings where they live, work and play.

Barry Lee ([05:15](#)):

So, building safety month helps spread awareness about the importance of these codes?

David Parker ([05:19](#)):

Yes, that's correct. Building safety month is an international celebration of all aspects of building safety that helps families, employers and leaders understand and appreciate the best practices that keeps the places where we live, work and play safe. There are four themes to this year's building safety month. One, disaster preparedness. Two, water safety and conservation. Three, resiliency, sustainability, innovation. Four, training the next generation.

Barry Lee ([05:54](#)):

Alrighty. Let's talk about each one of those. Let's start with disaster preparedness, flooding, snow storms, hurricanes, high winds. I mean we experience all or at least some effects of these natural disasters in Winchester. How do building codes and inspections help prepare in these situations?

David Parker ([06:11](#)):

Um, one of the best ways for communities to prepare for disasters is to build to the most up-to-date modern building codes. Disaster mitigation through the adoption and enforcement of building codes provide you, your family and your community protection in the event of the natural disaster. It's also very important that codes are properly upheld. Proper application requires that local building departments be sufficiently staffed with plan reviewers, inspectors, and other qualified professionals

and the building officials are trained and stay up to date with code advancements through continuing education. Studies show good code enforcement decreases losses following disasters by up to 25%.

Barry Lee ([06:57](#)):

Up next is water safety.

David Parker ([07:00](#)):

Yes, everyone needs water. Although 70% of our planet is covered with water, less than 1% is drinkable. Clean water is the world's most precious commodity. Building plumbing and green codes help guard it for future generations through proper construction, conservation, and safe disposal. Code officials are vigilant protectors of our water supply. Their dedicated service allows you to turn on the tap in your home and draw sufficient clean water.

Barry Lee ([07:31](#)):

The next theme doesn't sound like an easy one. How can codes make our community more resilient and sustainable with technology and innovation?

David Parker ([07:39](#)):

Yes. The building safety industry is on the cutting edge of technology, building science and innovation. The building code council is always testing and evaluating new building technologies and materials. For example, green buildings and sustainable construction strategies help reduce resource consumption, save money, and preserve resources during the design, construction, and operation of buildings.

Barry Lee ([08:09](#)):

So, how do you do all of this and make sure the hundreds of buildings in the city are safe?

David Parker ([08:13](#)):

We have a great staff that is dedicated to protecting the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of Winchester. Their combined total years of experience in code enforcement equal 75 years.

Barry Lee ([08:26](#)):

And what's the most important thing you want people to know about code enforcement?

David Parker ([08:31](#)):

Code enforcement helps citizens accomplish community goals such as protecting property values and improves the quality of life for our citizens and economic partners.

Barry Lee ([08:43](#)):

David, thank you very much. I'll sleep more soundly at night now knowing that you and your team are out there making sure that the buildings in the City of Winchester are safe. Thanks for all you do. It can't be easy.

David Parker ([08:54](#)):

Thank you for allowing me to talk about building safety month.

Barry Lee ([08:58](#)):

Next up is the now you know segment where we talk about interesting City of Winchester facts that you may not be aware of or important information that you need to know. This week's segment focuses on tips provided by the International Code Council to help you maintain a green and sustainable building. Heating and cooling uses more energy and drains more energy dollars than any other system in the home. Approximately 43% of utility bills cover heating and cooling. Close curtains and shades at night to keep warmth in and keep them open during the day. Try new lighting control technologies like motion sensitive or timed off switch lighting. Using these new options can reduce lighting use by 50 to 75% and save the lighting portion of energy bills that account for 11% of overall household energy consumption. And replace ordinary light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs. If every household replaced just one light bulb with a CFL bulb, America could save enough energy to light nearly 3 million homes. Install a programmable thermostat to keep your home comfortably warm in the winter and comfortably cool in the summer. Replacing windows can save between seven and 24% of the household heating and air conditioning costs. Plug home electronics such as TVs and DVD players into power strips, and then turn the power strips off when the equipment is not in use. Because, TVs and DVDs in standby mode still consume several watts of power. Choosing energy efficient products can save families approximately \$400 a year while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Choose Energy Star certified products. When you buy or replace household appliances in the workplace, buy and use Energy Star labeled office equipment and other products and be sure that the standby mode function is activated as this automatic sleep mode saves energy and money when the equipment is not in use. Very important to, on a regular basis, change the filters in the heating and cooling system of your home or office because dirty filters can cost up to \$5 a month extra that overworks the equipment and results in dirtier indoor air. Consider purchasing electrostatic filters which are washable, long lasting and provide cleaner air. Clean or change filters more often if smokers or pollution sources are present. For more building safety tips, visit the Building Safety Month section on the International Code Council's website at [iccsafe.org](http://iccsafe.org). Well if you didn't know before, now you know.

Barry Lee ([11:34](#)):

And last but not least, a few announcements to keep you informed. The outdoor pool in Jim Barnett Park will open on June 1st for lap swim and swim team practices only. Lap swim times will be limited to 10 individuals on a first-come, first-served basis and social distancing is required at all times. Check the Park's aquatics webpage [[www.winchesterva.gov/parks/aquatics](http://www.winchesterva.gov/parks/aquatics)] for the schedule. Also on June 1st, the Winchester parking authority will begin meter enforcement in Old Town Winchester. Therefore, motorist must pay to park and obey designated time limits at metered on-street and lot spaces. Meters are enforced Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM. This week, Governor Northam announced that beginning May 29th, face coverings will be required when visiting brick and mortar establishments and using public transportation. Individuals ages 10 and up are required to wear a face covering that covers the nose and mouth while entering, exiting, or spending time inside retail stores, food and drink establishments, grooming or personal care establishments, government facilities, and anywhere people congregate. There are a few exceptions, however. Face coverings will not be required while eating or drinking, while exercising, if you have trouble breathing or are unable to remove the mask without help, or if your health conditions prohibit wearing a face covering. Please remember that wearing a face covering does not take the place of other public health precautions, like maintaining six feet of physical distance between yourself and others, and proper sanitation and personal hygiene.

Barry Lee ([13:07](#)):

Well, that's it for this week's Rouss Review podcast. Thanks so much for joining us. I'm Barry Lee with 92.5 WINC FM. We'll be back on the second Thursday in June at 5:00 PM. So long for now and stay safe.