

**TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP, VIRGINIA
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING**

**COUNCIL CHAMBERS
505 E 5TH STREET S
BIG STONE GAP, VA**

February 03, 2026

6:30 PM

AGENDA ITEM 1

Call to Order and Roll Call

Vice-Mayor Gilley called the meeting to order:

Council Present: Hon. Kent Gilley, Vice-Mayor
 Hon. Robert Bloomer, Councilman
 Hon. Adam Harris, Councilman
 Hon. W. Turk Hollinger, Councilman
 Hon. Crystal Lyke, Councilwoman

Council Absent: Hon. Gary Johnson, Mayor
 Hon. Tyler Hughes, Councilman

Staff Present: Mr. Stephen Lawson, Town Manager
 Ms. Amanda Hawkins, Town Clerk/Treasurer
 Mr. Matt Russell, Chief of Police

Staff Absent: Mr. Charles Bledsoe, Town Attorney

Planning Commission Present: Ms. Amy Hubbard –Chairwoman
 Mr. Greg Kress – Vice-Chair
 Mr. Kent Gilley – Council Rep.
 Mr. Brian Jones, Member *
 Mr. Adam Harris - Member
 Mr. Tyler McFarland - Member
 Mr. Lorenzo Rodriquez – Member
 Mr. Matthew Bright, Administrator

*Arrived at 6:37 PM

Planning Commission Absent: Mrs. Freda Bishop – Member
 Mr. John Morrissey – Member

Vice-Mayor Gilley recessed the Council Workshop Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 2**JOINT PUBLIC HEARING – Site Plan Review 1710 Shawnee Avenue East**

Vice-Mayor Gilley opened the Joint Public Hearing – Site Plan Review 1710 Shawnee Avenue East and called for comments from the public.

Dennis Shular, 1704 Shawnee Avenue East – stated he is lifelong resident of Big Stone Gap and has lived at 1704 Shawnee Avenue East for 45 years. He said his neighborhood is called Intermont Heights and they have ordinances on how things should be built. He said the residents shared a petition with Council and the Planning Commission that stated they want what is in accordance with zoning ordinances and that the ordinances and the proposed construction be harmonious with our Community. He said they feel if this goes forward as presented it will create an effect on home values and the overall look of the neighborhood.

Margaret Wilson, 1726 Shawnee Avenue East, stated she bought her house in 2022 and said she was excited to find a house in a neighborhood where the homes were well maintained, yards were mowed, there were not a lot of extra buildings, fences, etc. in the front yards. She feels that if a homeowner comes in and has several vehicles in their front yard and builds large out buildings and has large privacy fences it will have an effect on our property values. She said this is not harmonious and does match the vibe of the neighborhood.

A letter was read letter from Mike Allen regarding his mother's property, Dorothy Allen, who resides at 1720 Shawnee Avenue East. The letter stated they are not in agreement with the large garage being built and this is not harmonious with neighborhood.

Catherine McNutt – stated they were issued a permit for an attached garage and had no request for site plan due to the size of the garage. The garage attached to the house became unreasonably expensive so they asked for the permit to be modified to say a detached garage which they were told would be approved but was never given the permit. She said they are proposing constructing a one story 30 ft x 20 ft two door garage, with the garage doors facing the driveway that is connected to the house, with a breezeway with a 4 12 pitch roof on a masonry brick foundation with cream siding and a shingled roof. She said they are also reroofing and residing the house to match the garage. She said the proposed garage does not violate any setback requirements or any other provisions of the zoning ordinance and said there are examples all over town with garages in front yards which are in concurrence with the current zoning ordinance. She said according to the ordinance private garages are specifically permitted in the R1zone where their house is located.

Vice-Mayor Gilley closed the Joint Public Hearing – Site Plan Review 1710 Shawnee Avenue East.

AGENDA ITEM 3**JOINT PUBLIC HEARING – Ordinance 06-2026 Camping and Sleeping in Public**

Vice-Mayor Gilley opened the Joint Public Hearing for Ordinance 06-2026 Camping and Sleeping in Public and called for comments from the public.

No comments from the public were made.

Vice-Mayor Gilley closed the Joint Public Hearing Ordinance 06-2026 for Camping and Sleeping in Public and reconvened the Council Workshop Meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 4 - REVIEW OF DRAFT MINUTES

Review of draft of minutes of the Council Workshop of January 6, 2026 and the Regular Council Meeting of January 13, 2026.

AGENDA ITEM 5 - TOWN ENGINEER'S REPORT

No Report.

AGENDA ITEM 6**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT****a. Ordinance 06-2026 – Camping and Sleeping in Public**

Mr. Lawson said this was an Ordinance to maintain the safe and intended use of public parks, sidewalks, streets and other public spaces for the general public.

b. Resolution 08-2026 – Reappoint Greg Kress – BSG Housing Authority

Mr. Lawson said this was a resolution reappointing Greg Kress to a four-year term on the Big Stone Gap Housing Authority to expire on February 28, 2030.

c. Resolution 08-2026 – Reappoint Brian Jones – Planning Commission

Mr. Lawson said this was a resolution reappointing Brian Jones to a four-year term on the Big Stone Gap Planning Commission to expire on February 28, 2030.

d. Projects Update

Mr. Lawson gave the following updates:

- Council was reminded of the open position on the Planning Commission and there are three interested parties. Would like to get that appointment done at next week's meeting.
- Public Works has been pushing snow for the last ten days, working 12 plus hour shifts and we are very proud of the work they have done. The process is to scrape, salt, and then wait for the salt to work. The trucks start on Dogwood, then Hospital Hill, then emergency routes, then the high traffic areas. The Town only has four trucks, so it is easy to get behind. The Town has 75 tons of salt, used 40 ton, another load has been ordered.
- There was a main line leak in Back Valley that was reported after finishing the leak repair in front of the old Pizza Hut building.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilwoman Lyke summarized the Public Safety Committee Meeting held on January 28, 2026 and read the recommendations.

Councilman Gilley said the Planning Commission met on January 29th. He said the Commission was waiting on a Site Plan for the McNutt property. Matthew Bright said the Planning Commission asked for an elevation mockup and all restrictions or requests must be reasonable to all parties.

Stephen Lawson said we need to go back to the beginning, and no permit was obtained for anything they have. He said Jimmy McElrath is the official with the authority and needs to give an opinion and explanation to the Planning Commission. Mr. Lawson said there needs to be a meeting set up with himself, Matthew Bright and Jimmy McElrath to get details of the plans to move forward.

AGENDA ITEM 8 - COUNCIL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Councilman Harris said Happy Black History Month. He said WJHL was at Town Hall this week and met with Pastor Sandra Jones, Ruth Hoskins, Mr. Shorter and Alberta Mitchell and done a beautiful segment about the Bland School.

Councilman Hollinger said he agrees with Mr. Lawson, and we need to go back to the beginning and get documents from the building official.

Vice-Mayor Gilley thanked everyone for coming.

AGENDA ITEM 9

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned 7:28 pm.

Minutes Recorded & Transcribed by
Amanda L. Hawkins – Town Clerk/Treasurer