Town of North Hills

Council meeting minutes

November 9th, 2023

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Pat McDonnell at the 36th street Church of Christ building in Vienna. Present: Pat McDonnell, Cheney English, Regina Smith, Don Stemple and Fred Newberry. Absent: Rachel Hensley.

**Minutes**

Cheney English made a motion to approve the October 26th minutes, seconded by Kathrine Pittman, approved by council.

**Safety**

**How To Raise Awareness for Child Safety Protection Month**

Did you know that November is Child Safety and Protection Month? It was created to raise awareness about the potential dangers that children face each day.

Statistics from the [Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Child Injury Report](https://www.cdc.gov/safechild/child_injury_data.html) are a sobering reminder of the importance of this issue. It found that an estimated 9.2 million children annually had an initial emergency department visit for an unintentional injury. Furthermore, on average, 12,175 children 0 to 19 years of age die each year in the United States from an unintentional and often preventable injury.

**Safety Starts at Home**

However, before we look at the different ways to promote national child safety protection month within our communities, it is important to learn how to promote safety and protection in our own homes.

**Household Safety**

Thousands of children are treated or hospitalized each year because of accidental poisonings within their own homes. The CDC found that children between the ages of 1 to 4 years had the highest rates of poisoning. These tips from the American Association of Poison Control Centers can help make your home a safe environment:

* Keep cleaning supplies, medicines, garden chemicals, and toxic art supplies locked away or on a high shelf. Make sure these items are put away immediately after each use.
* Purchase over the counter and prescription medicines with childproof caps. Keep them on a high shelf or in a locked cabinet, not on your bedside table.
* Keep vitamins and minerals such as iron out of reach. They can be hazardous, even fatal to children.
* Never use food containers to store nonfood substances.
* Program the contact number for Poison Control in your phone to use in the case of accidental poisoning.

**Outdoor Safety**

Playing outside is so important, and kids love it! However, keeping children safe outdoors requires some special precautions. Here are some tips for outdoor safety and injury prevention:

* Never leave children alone outside.
* When using tricycles, bicycles, skateboards, roller skates, and ride-on toys, ensure that children of all ages are wearing a helmet to prevent head injury.
* Always use safety straps to secure children in strollers, and do not put children who cannot sit up well in wagons that have low sides.
* Teach children not to play near the street.
* Explain that children must ask for help if toys roll into the street or driveway.
* Ensure that all outdoor play areas are fenced, especially when they are near a street, parking lot, pond, well, or railroad tracks. Keep the gates closed and install childproof latches. Also, be sure that all storage sheds, barns, and garages remain locked.
* Check the outdoor play area routinely. Remove all trash, sharp objects (including branches or other foliage), tools, lawn equipment, and animal feces that could result in accidental injury.
* Surround electrical appliances in the play area, such as air conditioners, with fences so children cannot reach them. Also, remove gas grills from outdoor play areas.
* When playing at a park or playground, check to make sure that the equipment is not too wet or too hot.

**Raising Awareness in the Community**

It truly does take a village to raise a child and keeping them safe is also a team effort! Here are some ways that you can raise awareness of safety and protection in your community:

**Create a Cleaner and Safer Neighborhood**

Do what you can to control the environment in which you live in by starting at home and ensuring that both your indoor and outdoor space is clean and clutter-free. To continue the commitment and raise awareness for Child Safety Protection Month, initiate a Community Clean-Up Day! Invite your family, friends, and neighbors to join you in keeping your community clean and safe for kids to learn and play, by removing litter and other hazards!

Additionally, a well-cared-for neighborhood with mowed lawns, flowers, and freshly painted homes can help deter crime and positively affect child development. A well-kept yard also provides fewer places for suspicious people to take cover. If there is an open lot or abandoned home nearby, work together as a neighborhood to clean up the weeds, plant trees, and do a bit of fixing up on the exterior. A little truly does go a long way!

Also, working to improve the lighting on your street or in your apartment complex is so important for child safety. While advocating for more streetlights is one way to do this, you can also ask your neighbors to turn on their porch lights in the evenings or to install motion-sensor lights in the backs or sides of the house. This helps ensure that kids stay visible when they are outside at night and deters potential intruders.

**Get To Know Your Neighbors**

To promote safety within your community, it is so important to get to know the people in your neighborhood. Those living next to you can often be the best form of protection available! Going on walks with your neighbors, working in your yard, and letting your kids safely play with the kids down the street helps you learn each other’s strengths and needs.

For example, do you live next to an elderly couple, who sometimes need help? Or is there a local teenager who is learning to drive? Are there small children that play outside, that drivers and other neighbors should look out for? Are there safe individuals who your kids can carpool with, or a responsible young person who can babysit your children in a pinch? Do you have each other’s phone numbers in case there is an emergency in the neighborhood? Having a way to reach your neighbors if they are gone and something is amiss can be a tremendous asset. Organizing a neighborhood cookout, block party, or safety awareness event can encourage people to get to know one another and feel more comfortable spending time out in the neighborhood as well.

Overall, Child Safety and Protection month is a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness, both at home and in your community!

**Recorder’s report**

Shared balances with council:

 General - $ 124,975.08

 Coal - $ 3,638.69

 Stimulus - $ 20,702.75

 Parks/Rec - $ 65,749.03

 Street user fee - $ 218,697.85

 Sewer - $ 106,052.68

Paid Suttle and Stalnaker $ 7,550 for compilation of statements for 6/30/2021 audit and quarterly tax forms for 9/30/2023

Paid $ 637.50 for Porta John.

**Building permits**

Resident submitted a building permit to install a car port – council denied.

**Town business**

The town received $ 250 from Bosley for the playground.

Our lawyers informed the town that the road into Northridge housing sewer pump station system is the town’s responsibility. We will use the money in our stimulus fund to cover the cost of construction.

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Pool – Not a good year. The council will assess the results of next year’s operation to determine the next step.

Playground – there are many parts. Should finish installation on November 10th with mulch being spread later in the week.

The town received an email from the state with the following text:



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| **Kristin Miller <kmiller@wvml.org>** |

 | Mon, Nov 6, 11:47 AM |  |  |
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| to Kristin |

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**Good morning! Please see information below on “If I Were Mayor” Essay Contest!**

**You can encourage all seventh-grade teachers to have their students participate.**

**The teacher can go to the League’s website**[**Essay Contest - West Virginia Municipal League (wvml.org)**](https://www.wvml.org/essay-contest) **to upload entries for their class.**

**Two winners will be selected from across the state.**

**Entries are accepted from November 1 to December 31 of each year.**

**If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to, Kristin Miller****kmiller@wvml.org****or 304-342-5564.**

Cheney English made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:37, seconded by Fred Newberry, approved by council. The next regular scheduled meeting will be at the 36th street Church of Christ building in Vienna, December 14th at 7PM.