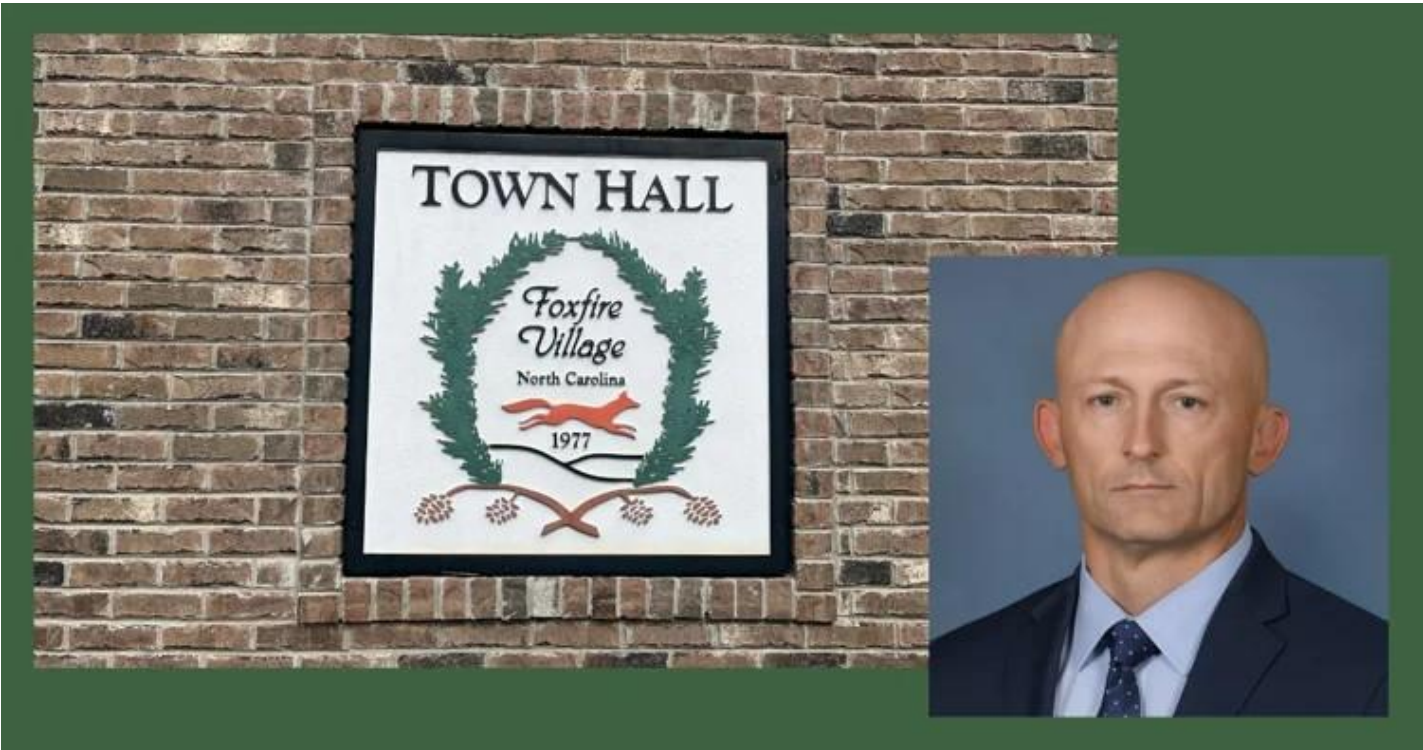


Foxfire Council Member Resigns

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Foxfire Councilman Kevin Robbins resigned from his position on July 31.

CONTRIBUTED

A member of the Foxfire Village Council, Kevin J. Robbins, has resigned from his elected position, citing ongoing tension while trying to serve the community.

Robbins’ resignation letter, dated July 31 and effective that day, came one day after the council’s July work session. The letter states his decision to resign did not stem from a single moment but a result of the last year serving as a council member. He was sworn into office last December.

“I have spent countless hours working tirelessly and selflessly on behalf of this village, asking difficult questions, developing sound solutions to solve and prevent real problems and advocating for the residents who elected me,” Robbins said in the letter.

“Unfortunately, I have spent far too much time defending my assessments, opinions, motives, core values, and actions instead of focusing on the work I was elected to do and truly hoped would have been treated as valued contributions to this village.”

The remaining council met on Tuesday, Aug. 4, to accept the resignation and share that it is working to assemble an application for residents to apply for the open seat. Per village codes, the council has 30 days to appoint someone to the position.

Mayor Janice Gregorich, after the meeting, said a statement about the resignation would be posted on the Foxfire website. That statement, posted Wednesday morning, read: “I would like to thank

Kevin for his willingness to serve and for his contributions to the community. Serving on the Village Council requires a significant commitment of time and dedication, and I appreciate the efforts he made during his time in office.”

In a follow-up interview with The Pilot, Robbins expanded on his resignation decision. He is set to retire from the Army as a Sergeant Major after 24 years. He has lived in Foxfire for about six years and been in Moore County more than double that.

“It was my assessment that public service here in the community should have been — and should always remain — centered around the needs of the community and prioritize toward solving problems and preventing problems,” Robbins said.

But that, he said, is not what he experienced. He said most of his focus was not on the job, but rather, defending his position regarding what he saw as community priorities. His election platform was based on transparency and accountability.

His letter states his ethics, integrity and motives were questioned repeatedly and in an adversarial manner. Robbins said he was not willing to accept that as part of his public service.

“I believe disagreements and differing viewpoints are healthy and necessary, but personal attacks and efforts to undermine someone’s character, competence or commitment are not,” Robbins wrote.

Two of his highest priorities were regarding Foxfire’s water and public safety, with Robbins saying he wanted to ensure fiscal responsibility with taxpayer dollars. Robbins said he did not feel like he had a voice, noting his positions seemed to resonate with the community but not with fellow council members or staff. He said that’s where disagreements arose in public meetings, which are recorded by a resident and uploaded to YouTube.

“I was getting more and more and more frustrated as each meeting went on,” Robbins said. He called the continued arguments “distracting and taking away from the solutions the community needed.”

Much of Robbins’ work the last several months revolved around the community pool, which had been closed for two years. When sworn in, he was appointed to oversee Foxfire’s streets and park.

Robbins, as he said at meetings, said his onboarding did not include a handoff of information about the pool project. He did a deep dive on the work, submitting several detailed reports about money spent for incomplete repairs and the amenity’s greater structural deficiencies. He said providing those facts generated a lot of feelings across the community and council.

His final report noted that pursuing the work would not be financially responsible for the village, especially with ongoing operating costs. In May, the pool discussion was resolved with a plan to remove the pool and pursue alternative recreational activities in its place.

Near the end of his letter, Robbins thanks the village members who supported him.

“I am sorry that I was unable to accomplish the changes that I hoped to bring to this community and that many of you were counting on,” Robbins wrote.

“I will always care deeply about Foxfire Village. I sincerely hope that one day transparency, accountability, competence and respectful leadership can become standard and can deliver what our beloved residents expect and rightfully deserve.”

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