



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, June 5, 2023 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

5:30 PM: Call to Order by Acting President Abbatiello.

Mayor Megan JM Cook
Mr. Don Abbatiello
Ms. Maureen Curry
Mr. David Montgomery
Rev. Elmer Davis

Also present was the Town Manager Mr. Don Richardson, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

At 05:29 PM, Acting President Abbatiello called the meeting to order.

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Montgomery.

Mr. Montgomery gave opening remarks and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Abbatiello read a statement regarding a closed session that was held May 22, 2023.

Approval of Minutes.

Minutes of the May 15 Council Meeting, May 22 Budget Workshop, May 22 Closed Session and May 30 EVFD Workshop: Council Meeting.

Upon motion by Rev. Davis seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, minutes of the May 15, May 22, May 30 meetings were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Cook.

Mayor Cook reported that the town has purchased Woodland Acres Park and now has a new park in the inventory. She stated it is off Oxford Road.

Mayor Cook reported that Easton Police Department was involved in an accident where they were hit by a drunk driver. She stated there will be a new vehicle purchase for their department for a 2020 hybrid. This vehicle will replace K-9 unit and the K-9 unit will go back into patrol. The Parks & Recreation department will be purchasing a new vehicle which is under \$40,000 and is in the budget.

Mayor Cook stated there was an open position on the Library Board and Mr. Abbatiello has agreed to fulfill that position. She stated as other appointments come up, she will let the council know of their (re) appointments.

Mayor Cook stated the agenda will be posted on Civic Clerk for the council in order to review the material earlier.

Mayor Cook stated there will be a workshop June 12, 5:00 p.m. in the Council's Chambers to discuss Zoning and ARPA funding.

Mayor Cook discussed a meeting recently held with Chuck Callahan and Clay Stamp from the County and Ken Kozel, President and CEO - UM Shore Regional Health where Mr. Kozel updated on the progress of the proposed new hospital. She stated there are three hurdles they are facing right now; 1) the hospital's Certificate of Need which is expected this winter, 2) they need to make sure they get the remaining \$70 million in funding which is requested from the state. She stated they have a team working with the Governor to make sure that message is clear to him and 3) a philanthropic support of about \$50 million from the shore. She asked the council to consider that when meeting. She stated they are meeting monthly with Mr. Kozel and she will be able to update the council.

Mayor Cook stated that Easton has been chosen as a tour site with an annual conference with a tour September 11 highlighting CDBG projects. She stated they will be bringing about 180 people to tour and will focus on several projects.

DHCD representatives recently visited and closed out six revitalization grants.

Mayor Cook stated that the Dolphin at Idlewild Park in the Children's Garden had been vandalized as well as other things in the park. She stated that it has been repaired by the

Town's Maintenance Department.

The engineering stream restoration project is now complete and has been cleaned all the way behind High School to Washington Street. Pictures were displayed of ongoing projects.

Jackie Naylor, Code Enforcement Director, has recently retired from the Code Enforcement and Rental Housing Inspection. She wished her well and asked everyone to thank her for everything she has done for the town.

There is a Special Election on September 12 for President of the Council for the remainder of the term. Mayor Cook discussed the dates relative to the election.

Mr. Abbatiello thanked Mayor Cook for the detailed report of great things going on in Easton.

Mr. Richardson gave details regarding the replacement of the patrol vehicle due to the accident.

Ms. Curry asked about the \$70 million from the state for the hospital. Mayor Cook stated that the request was for \$100 million but hopefully, they will commit 70 million.

Appointment to Library Board.

Mayor Cook stated that Mr. Abbatiello will be the town's representative on the Library Board.

Items by Town Manager.

Public Assembly Event: 2023 4th of July Celebration/Carnival 6/23 - 7/4 (fireworks 7/5). And Frederick Douglas Parade 9/23.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, the Public Assembly Events: 2023 4th of July Celebration and the Frederick Douglas Parade were approved.

Port Street Park Demolition Proposal.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, the Port Street Park Demolition Proposal from Duvall Brothers in the amount of \$47,000 was approved.

Brewer's Lane Comfort Station Recommendation.

Mr. Richardson stated this model is the same footprint as the comfort station at John Ford Park.

Upon motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, the Brewer's Lane Comfort Station bid from Willow Construction in the amount of \$182,800 was approved.

These funds will come from the 2020 Bond funds. The projects must be completed by October.

Rev. Davis asked if any contracts are being awarded to minority contractors.

Mr. Richardson stated he will get that information and report back to him. They are bid out and look for responses in all spectrums.

Approval for Public Works Storage Yard Fence.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, the Public Works Storage Yard Fence bid from Brinsfield Fence in the amount of \$48,476 was approved.

Items by Town Attorney.

Ms. VanEmburch discussed the upcoming election for President of the Council which will occur September 12.

Proposed Town of Easton Sustainable Communities Boundary.

Memo from Town Planner regarding request to extend boundary of Easton's Sustainable Community to include Doverbrook.

Mr. Thomas addressed the Council regarding the Sustainable Community Boundary expansion which he stated was requested by Mr. Don Bibb of the Talbot County Housing Authority. If extended to encompass Doverbrook, it would add an additional 13 acres and a couple other properties. Mr. Thomas stated that the state considers this a minor boundary modification and a simple process. Mr. Thomas stated that approval for the extension needs to be agreed upon in a public meeting. He stated that the sustainable community boundary needs to be re-approved every five years and is up in the fall. This will enable Doverbrook and

those within the boundary to take advantage of low income state tax credits.
Mr. Thomas discussed how sustainable communities work.
Mr. Abbatiello asked if the sustainable community had been expanded previously.
Mr. Thomas stated that he does not believe it has been expanded in this format although it has been adjusted and separated the former Black & Decker plant.
Ms. Curry stated she agrees that Doverbrook should be included. Rev. Davis agreed.
Upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, the request to expand the Town of Easton Sustainable Community Boundary was approved.

Public Hearings.

(cont'd.) PUBLIC HEARING to consider the FY2023/24 Budget.

At 6:03 p.m., Acting President Abbatiello opened the continued public hearing to consider the FY2023/24 Budget and the Constant Yield Tax Rate.

Mr. Abbatiello brought Ordinance Nos. 796, 797, 798 and Resolution No. 6165 to the floor for consideration.

He asked for public comments. There were none.

At 6:05 p.m., Acting President Abbatiello closed the public hearing and stated that the legislation presented is eligible for action this evening.

Ord. 796, Budget FY2023/24.

Upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, Ord. 796, Budget FY2023/24 was approved.

Ord. 797, Taxation Ordinance.

Upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, Ord. 797, the Constant Yield Tax Rate Ordinance for FY23/24 was approved.

Ord. 798, FY2023/24 Carry Forward Ordinance.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, Ord. 798, the Carry Forwards for FY2023/24 was approved following a roll call vote.

Res. No. 6165, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON REVISING THE TOWN'S LICENSE, APPLICATION, PERMITS, INSPECTION, CERTIFICATE AND OTHER FEES."

Acting President Abbatiello stated he has a request to amend Resolution No. 6165 to delete the fee for North Easton Sports Complex, Parks and Recreation Fees. He stated that the Easton Business in Good Standing fee should be 0 dollars instead of \$25 per hour.

Ms. Curry made a motion to accept the amendment, seconded by Rev. Davis.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, Res. No. 6165, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON REVISING THE TOWN'S LICENSE APPLICATION, PERMITS, INSPECTION, CERTIFICATE AND OTHER FEES" was approved as amended.

5:35PM PUBLIC HEARING for Constant Yield Tax Rate for tax year beginning July 1, 2023.

(cont'd.) PUBLIC HEARING for annexation and zoning for two parcels of land located on the north side of Port Street at Easton Point, consisting of 4.73 acres of land and 0.156 acres of land, more or less.

At 6:10 p.m., Acting President of the Council opened the continued public hearing for the annexation and zoning of land located at Easton Point.

Letter of Recommendation in the matter of the proposed Annexation of the former Southern States Property on Easton Point.

Mr. Thomas, Town Planner, discussed the Planning and Zoning Commission's recommendation in the matter of the proposed annexation of the former Southern States Property at Easton Point. He stated the Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously voted to find that the proposed annexation is consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan, recommend that the Council approve the requested annexation and recommend that the council assign the Mixed Use Waterfront (MXW) Zoning Classification to the subject parcels upon their annexation into the town.

Res. 6161, "A RESOLUTION TO ANNEX TWO PARCELS OF LAND OWNED BY THE TOWN OF EASTON LOCATED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF PORT STREET AT EASTON

POINT, CONSISTING OF 4.743 ACRES OF LAND AND 0.156 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS, INTO THE TOWN OF EASTON AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE ANNEXATION."

Upon motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, Res. 6161, "A RESOLUTION TO ANNEX TWO PARCELS OF LAND OWNED BY THE TOWN OF EASTON LOCATED ON THE NORTH SIDE OF PORT STREET AT EASTON POINT CONSISTING OF 4.743 ACRES OF LAND AND 0.156 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS, INTO THE TOWN OF EASTON AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE ANNEXATION' was approved following a roll call vote.

Ord. 795, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO APPLY THE MIXED-USE WATERFRONT (MXW) ZONING DISTRICT TO CERTAIN LOTS OR PARCELS OF LAND ANNEXED TO THE TOWN OF EASTON BY RESOLUTION NO. 6161 LOCATED TO THE NORTH OF PORT STREET AT EASTON POINT AND CONSISTING, COLLECTIVELY, OF 4.899 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS."

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, Ord. 795, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO APPLY THE MIXED-USE WATERFRONT (MXW) ZONING DISTRICT TO CERTAIN LOTS OR PARCELS OF LAND ANNEXED TO THE TOWN OF EASTON BY RESOLUTION NO. 6161 LOCATED TO THE NORTH OF PORT STREET AND EASTON POINT AND CONSISTING, COLLECTIVELY, OF 4.899 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS," was approved following a roll call vote.

Public Participation/Comments.

Acting President Abbatiello asked for public comments. There were none.

Review of Invoices.

Invoices from 5/3 - 5/31/23 totaling \$2,301,893.01.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, invoices totaling \$2,301,893.01 were approved.

Items by Members of the Council:

Ms. Curry stated she attended the 65th Anniversary of the Academy Museum. She congratulated them on their anniversary and stated admission to the Academy is now free at all times.

Rev. Davis thanked the council for the boundary expansion for Sustainable Communities which now includes Doverbrook. He stated he thinks it is vital for affordable housing in the town of Easton.

Acting President Abbatiello reminded the listening audience that the regular meeting scheduled for Monday, June 19 will be held Tuesday, June 20 due to the observance of Juneteenth.

Acting President Abbatiello reminded anyone interested in running for Council President to get a petition turned in by August 14.

Acting President Abbatiello stated Easton High School did a great job with graduation and his son was one of the graduates.

Closed Session General Provisions Article 3-305(b)(4) to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State; and Article 3-305(b)(1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

At 6:20 p.m., upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously following a roll call vote, Acting President Abbatiello moved into Closed Session.

At 6:49 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously following a roll call vote, Acting President Abbatiello moved back into the regular meeting.

Adjournment.

At 6:50 p.m., upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, Acting President Abbatiello adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk
