



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 2, 2023 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

4:30 PM Workshop to discuss Proposed Zoning and Subdivision Regulation Amendments.

Zoning Code Amendments and Subdivision Regulations.

President Gunsallus called the workshop to order at 4:33 p.m.

Mr. Thomas gave an overview of the amendments. He discussed the workshop, the first of which occurred in June.

He stated the first pertained to Planned Unit Developments. He discussed the proposal. Mr. Thomas discussed new language as proposed. He stated an extension can be extended by simply asking. He discussed proposed language and changes to the scenarios.

Ms. Curry stated she would love to revisit first floor retail only in the downtown business district.

Mr. Thomas stated they are proposing an update to the subdivision regulations. He discussed the proposal to change street standards. He stated that the change in every classification is to make streets wider.

Ms. Curry asked for an example for a commercial/urban street.

Mr. VanEmburch stated that Harrison Street would be.

Mr. Abbatiello asked how the Planning & Zoning Commission feels regarding an extension for the Elliott Road project. He stated he feels Ward 2 may be open to more traffic and more units.

The Town Attorney stated the next step would be to set a public hearing. She stated she would ask in Open Session if a date could be set.

At 4:58 p.m., President Gunsallus adjourned the workshop.

5:30 PM: Call to Order by Council President Frank Gunsallus.

Mayor Megan JM Cook

Council President Frank Gunsallus

Ms. Maureen Curry

Mr. Don Abbatiello

Rev. Elmer Davis

Mr. Montgomery was excused.

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

At 5:30 PM, Acting President Abbatiello called the meeting to order.

Closed Session Statement.

President Gunsallus as read a Closed Session Statement regarding the September 18, 2023 meeting held after the regular meeting.

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Rev. Davis.

Rev. Davis gave opening remarks and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes.

Minutes of the September 18, 2023 meetings.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, minutes of the September 18, 2023 meetings were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Cook.

Mayor Cook stated things are busy with a lot going on.

Mayor Cook discussed the bond projects. She stated they are circulating around the town.

Mayor Cook stated that engineering, parks and recreation, the construction crew, building and

facilities, and finance have all played a part in the bond projects and things are moving fast. She discussed Easton Point Park across from Phillips Wharf, the dog park at Brewers Lane and Fisher Range Road sidewalk with the construction aided by a local contractor. Mayor Cook discussed all that is happening at North Easton Sports Complex, including the construction of two storage buildings. She discussed the skate park adjacent to the pump track.

Mayor Cook stated lights are being erected at North Easton Park on the Acorn and Hatcher fields.

Leaf season is upon us. Mayor Cook asked that residents not rake leaves into streets due to the possibility of clogging the storm drains.

Mayor Cook asked for the approval of Maria Brophy's 3-year term renewal to the Historic District Commission.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, Ms. Brophy's re-appointment was approved.

Mayor Cook stated that the Comprehensive Plan workshop is scheduled for October 12 at 2:30 and the public is always welcome.

The East End Small Area Plan kickoff meeting is Thursday at 6:30 p.m. at the Armory.

The SHA workshop regarding the Rt. 50 plan will occur October 16 at 4:30 p.m.

Mayor Cook and Kody Cario held a meeting with Shore Rivers last week. She stated they hope to plant 200 - 250 trees. She stated that volunteers will come for two years for maintenance of the trees.

Mayor Cook reminded the council about the Joint Municipality meeting with Talbot County at 5pm at the library on October 3.

President Gunsallus asked if there are any questions for Mayor Cook?

Chief Lowrey updated on the recent event at Sidetracks Saloon. He stated shots were reported fired and further investigation found that a gentleman had been hit. Mutual aid was called in and the victim was transported and claimed deceased. Chief Lowrey stated they had cooperation from the property owner and the public. Both of the suspects were located in Cambridge and within 12 hours in custody and charged with murder and accessory after the fact. Chief Lowrey stated this is very concerning to the community. He stated that there are areas in the community that need attention. Chief Lowrey reiterated that the business owner has been very cooperative.

He stated he is open for questions.

Ms. Curry asked if there are hours of operation that are adhered to. The Town Attorney stated that in order to change their hours of operation, the request would have to go to the Liquor Board.

Rev. Davis thanked EPD for the work that was done. He stated he is grateful for the information and was made aware of what is going on.

Items by Town Manager

Public Assembly Event: EHS Homecoming Parade 10/13/23

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, public assembly event: EHS Homecoming Parade scheduled for 10/13 was unanimously approved.

Public Assembly Event: Academy Art Museum Craft Show 10/27 - 10/29/23

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, public assembly event: Academy Art Museum Craft Show scheduled for 10/27 - 10/29/23 was approved following a roll call vote.

Public Assembly Event: Winton Avenue Block Party 10/28/23

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, the public assembly event: Winton Avenue Block Party scheduled for 10/28/23 was approved.

Mr. Richardson stated that a representative from the Veteran's Administration office will be present at the next meeting on October 16 to give some statistics regarding their office in Easton.

Items by Town Attorney.

Recommendation from Planning & Zoning Commission regarding proposed Basi Brothers,

LLC Annexation

The Town Attorney asked that the Public Hearing for the Basi Brothers, LLC annexation be scheduled for November 20 at 5:35 p.m.

The public hearing for the zoning amendments is scheduled for November 6 at 5:35 p.m.

The public hearing for the subdivision regulations is scheduled for November 6 at 5:40 p.m.

The public hearing for Rise Up Coffee PUD Amendment is scheduled for November 6 at 5:45 p.m.

Mr. Abbatiello asked for clarification regarding any changes they might have.

Legislation.

Resolution No. 6172: "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE DEFERRED COMPENSATION RETIREMENT PLAN, THE TOWN OF EASTON, MD EMPLOYEES 457 PLAN."

Town Manager Mr. Richardson discussed the resolution which required changes that meet the 2020 Coronavirus Aid Relief (CARES Act) and the Secure Act Provisions of 2022.

Upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6172: "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE DEFERRED COMPENSATION RETIREMENT PLAN, THE TOWN OF EASTON, MD EMPLOYEES 457 PLAN" was approved following a roll call vote of those members present.

Public Participation/Comments.

Steven Mangassarín, discussed the Farmer's Market and some concerns businesses have regarding the expansion into the parking lot. He stated there is a true parking and vandalism problem from the vendors. He stated the businesses need the perpendicular lot and accessibility to the businesses.

Mr. Mangassarín asked that the council help the downtown merchants.

President Gunsallus thanked Mr. Mangassarín for coming to voice the concerns of the merchants.

Dudley Greer, 524 Goldsborough Street, stated he lives less than 2 blocks from the shooting site. Mr. Greer stated he does not feel safe. Mr. Greer stated that he is worried that the council does not have the same concerns. He stated he expects to hear how many violations the establishment has had and if there has been communication to the liquor board. He stated the council needs these incidents or keep the business owner in compliance. Mr. Greer stated that Side Tracks actually looks abandoned and does not enhance the neighborhood. He asked the town officials to be more involved in finding solutions.

Ms. Curry stated that she shares the same sentiments.

Rev. Davis stated a lot of questions have been answered. He stated he hears his concerns and he wants every person in this town to feel safe. Rev. Davis reminded everyone that this is an ongoing investigation.

Mr. Abbatiello stated he appreciates Mr. Greer's concerns and thanked him for coming to the meeting.

Review of Invoices.

Invoices 9/6/23 - 9/27/23 totaling \$3,168,059.20.

Mr. Abbatiello thanked Mr. Richardson for answering questions regarding accounts payable invoices.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, invoices totaling \$3,168,059.20 were approved.

Items by Members of the Council:

Ms. Curry welcomed President Gunsallus.

She stated she had the pleasure of attending the EEDC meeting as the Town's liaison. She thanked Holly DeKarske for being present. Ms. Curry discussed the Fall kickoff for downtown Easton on October 6 and October 7 and Shop Local. Ms. Curry stated that the downtown merchants need support as business is down.

Mr. Abbatiello thanked Easton EPD, Talbot EMS and Chief and Assistant Chief of EVFD for working to save someone's life in the recent incident.

Rev. Davis reiterated Mr. Abbatiello's sentiments and thanked Mayor Cook for listening and doing what she says she will do. Rev. Davis stated he is concerned with safety but trusts the Easton Police Department.

President Gunsallus thanked EPD for their long hours and hard work.

President Gunsallus stated that he has looked into Talbot County Detention Center and the living conditions are satisfactory.

Adjournment.

At 6:15 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, President Gunsallus adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk