



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, April 15, 2024 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

4:30 PM Council Workshop with Park Board.

Mayor Megan JM Cook
Council President Frank Gunsallus
Mr. Don Abbatiello
Mr. David Montgomery
Rev. Elmer Davis

Ms. Curry was excused

Present from the Park Board were:

Mr. Michael Weise - Chairman
Mr. Thomas Klein
Mr. Otis Sampson
Mr. Michael Brophy
Mr. Ken McFadden
Mr. James Perry (alternate)

Also present was the Town Manager Mr. Don Richardson, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf, Town Engineer and Director of Parks and Recreation Mrs. Lorraine Gould.

At 4:30 p.m., President Gunsallus called the meeting to order.

Mr. Weise, Chairman, the Park Board discussed reservations and light usage fee for the fields. He stated many times, fields are reserved but teams do not show up. Mr. Weise stated that what is proposed is that the local rec teams will not be charged but the travel teams will be charged \$35 per hour. He stated they would like to monitor charging teams for a year.

Mr. Klein stated that the fees are not unusual. He stated that fees for teams outside of the high school as well as Talbot County charge for their fields.

Mr. Klein discussed fees for not showing. He satiated charging the fee will make teams more conscious.

Rev. Davis concurred that the fields should have a fee and be monitored for at least six months. He discussed the Town having to maintain the fields and the teams making money.

Mr. Abbatiello asked if the fee is proposed just for travel teams.

Mr. McFadden stated the fee would be for the field, regardless if it is for practice or a game.

Mr. Klein asked if Ms. Gould could track field usage. She stated it would be hard for her to monitor other parks other than North Easton Park as they are not reserved with permits.

Rev. Davis suggested the Board help out watching neighborhood fields.

Mr. Montgomery asked how teams are defined as travel teams.

Discussion occurred regarding the expenses that are incurred for the fields.

Mr. Brophy discussed implementation in the fall.

Mr. Klein stated that it should be defined as travel and recreation.

Mayor Cook stated that lighting fees can be considered.

Mr. Brophy discussed legislation already established.

Mr. Klein discussed the Annual Plan and a community park on the east side of Route 50. He stated that Planning and Zoning stated that 37% of the residents of Easton are on the east side of Route 50. He suggested that developers contribute to a new park. He suggested taking an established park and updating the amenities, such as Matthewstown Park. He stated they are in the process of collecting data. Mr. Klein stated they would like to have a plan in place should money become available.

Rev. Davis stated there needs to be programs in the park. He stated the possibilities are unlimited.

Ms. Gould stated the Park Board the Town has now can work with suggesting programs.

President Gunsallus asked that the eyesores in John Ford Park be addressed. He discussed rails-to-trails mile markers.

At 5:06 p.m., President Gunsallus thanked the Park Board for addressing their concerns regarding establishing fees. The workshop adjourned.

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

At 5:30 p.m., President Gunsallus called the meeting to order.

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Abbatiello.

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

Approval of Minutes.

Minutes of the April 1, 2024 meetings.

Upon motion by Rev. Davis seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, minutes of the April 1, 2024 meeting were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Cook.

Mayor Cook thanked the department heads for the collaboration during the budget workshops. She stated that on May 20, there would be a Budget Public Hearing.

Mayor Cook stated that April 3 is Arbor Day. She thanked Public Works for the Arbor Day recognition and planting a tree at Idlewild Park.

On April 5, Mayor Cook and Don Richardson attended training at Easton Volunteer Fire Department for AED, CPR and Stop the Bleed. She thanked Talbot County and the HR Department for arranging the town's participation.

Public Works is working to restore and cleanup ponds maintained by Town of Easton.

Saturday is EENA cleanup. Mayor Cook advised that EENA received a grant for their Community Garden.

Mayor Cook attended the recent Habitat dedication on Locust Street on Saturday. She offered congratulations to Easton Little League and the Softball League for their Opening Day this past weekend.

Proclamation for Years of Service to Clarence A. Gould.

Mr. Clarence Gould was present to receive a Proclamation of Service for his 50 years of employment with the Town of Easton.

Mr. Gould offered remarks. He stated he has been the ambassador for the Town of Easton.

Items by Town Manager

Mr. Richardson stated he has nothing at this time however he reminded the community that Parks and Recreation Department has sign-ups on the website for soccer and baseball.

Items by Town Attorney.

The Town Attorney, Mrs. VanEmburch asked that a public hearing be scheduled for the Code Revisions for the Building Department. She stated there will be seven ordinances.

The public hearing was scheduled for May 6 at 5:40 p.m.

Police Board.

Chief Lowrey and Capt. Wright were present. He stated 15 Community members have been attending the Community Police Academy. Officers Brad Hughes and Gordon Lee recently retired. Chief Lowrey discussed promotions.

Chief Lowrey stated that there has been a missing persons case that has resulted in an indictment. The missing person was killed in Dorchester County. The evidence had been identified and the suspect was tracked.

Chief Lowrey reported that the fatal shooting on Blake Street, resulted in a guilty plea.

Chief Lowrey stated that the recruitment efforts have resulted in 73 resumes, of which they have interviewed 12 applicants. He stated one applicant is slated for the Academy. He discussed an advertisement for Evidence Collection personnel.

Discussion occurred regarding the longest outstanding grant, MSP License Plate Reader Grant. He discussed the two units attached to vehicles that indicate if anything has been stolen.

Public Hearing.

(cont'd.) PUBLIC HEARING to solicit public comment on Ord. 809, which proposes amendment to Chapter 28 of the Town Code (Zoning). The purpose of the proposed amendments is to revise the Code to regulate cannabis-related uses in light of the State of Maryland's approval of various recreational cannabis uses.

At 5:47 p.m., President Gunsallus opened the continued public hearing.

President Gunsallus stated the public hearing was to hear comments on Ordinance No. 809. Miguel Salinas, Planning Director, was present to summarize the incorporation of language for amendment to the Town Code regarding the regulation of cannabis-related uses. He asked if there are any questions.

Mr. Abbatiello asked that growing and processing be considered a special waiver.

Mr. Montgomery questioned smoking in public ways. He stated that smoking cannot go outside the dispensary and must occur on private property.
Revisions in state legislation has passed house and senate but have not been signed by Governor Moore.
The consensus of the council was to support Mr. Abbatiello's concerns.
President Gunsallus stated that the next round of licenses will occur in June.
President Gunsallus asked for public comment. There was none.
Upon motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, President Gunsallus closed the public hearing,

Legislation.

Amended Ord. 809, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING CHAPTER 28 OF THE TOWN CODE (ZONING).

Upon motion by President Gunsallus seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, Ord. 809 as amended changing industrial zoning for growing and processing to a special exception, was approved following a roll call vote of the councilmembers present.

Ord. 819, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE PURCHASING POLICY OF THE TOWN CONTAINED IN CHAPTER 2 OF THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO ADDRESS FEDERAL GRANTS."

President Gunsallus brought Ordinance No. 819 to the floor for a first reading.

Mr. Richardson, Town Manager, discussed Ordinance No. 819. He stated tonight is for introduction. Mr. Richardson stated that this modifies our current policy as recommended by our auditors.

President Gunsallus asked for questions. There were none.

President Gunsallus scheduled a public hearing for Ordinance No. 819 for May 6 at 5:45 p.m.

Review of Invoices.

Invoices from 2/29/24 - 3/27/24 totaling \$1,683,524.67.

Mr. Abbatiello thanked Mr. Richardson for clarifying some of the invoices.

President Gunsallus asked for clarification for invoices listed for consulting, accounting and auditing, park access, leases for vehicles, multiple PA systems, cornhole boards and stump grinding services.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, invoices totaling \$1,683,524.67 were approved.

Public Participation/Comments.

President Gunsallus asked for public comments.

Stephen Mangassarian, South Aurora Street discussed his concerns with the intersection of Glebe and Washington Street. He asked if improvements are being considered.

Mr. VanEmburch discussed ARPA funding for the upgrade of the intersection at Washington and Glebe. He stated the plan is to put cameras for traffic at that intersection. He stated they will be working with the vendor.

Rev. Davis asked about the timetable.

Mr. VanEmburch stated it would be the next calendar year. He stated he could look, do project research and move forward with that.

Mr. Montgomery thanked Mr. Mangassarian for bringing his concerns to the council.

Mr. VanEmburch stated they can look at the code that governs traffic to see if gets incorporated in s

Items by Members of the Council:

Mr. Abbatiello thanked Mr. Thomas and Mr. Salinas and the Town Attorney for their work on Ordinance No. 809 so the council could make a decision.

Mr. Montgomery seconded Mr. Abbatiello's comments.

Rev. Davis thanked the Park Board for the good workshop and stated that Saturday, the dedication of trucks will occur at Easton Volunteer Fire Department at 11:00 a.m.

President Gunsallus added congratulations to Clarence Gould for 50 years of Service.

Adjournment.

At 6:10 p.m. upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, President Gunsallus adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk

7:00 PM Town Council/Town Planning Commission Workshop with Talbot County Council/Talbot County Planning Commission regarding Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement (DRRA) with Shore Health Systems, Inc.

Mayor Megan JM Cook
Council President Frank Gunsallus
Mr. Don Abbatiello
Mr. David Montgomery
Rev. Elmer Davis

Ms. Curry was excused.

Town of Easton Planning and Zoning:
Miguel Salinas, Director of Planning and Zoning

Planning Commission Members:
Philip Toussant, Vice Chairperson
William Ryall, Chair Pro Tem
Victoria McAndrews
Thomas Klein
Michael Ports, Alternate

Present from Talbot County Council:
Chuck Callahan, Council President
Keasha Haythe
Pete Leshner
Lynn Mielke

Talbot County Planning and Zoning:
Brennan Tarleton, Planning Officer
Patrick Thomas, County Attorney
Clay Stamp, County Manager
Jessica Morris, Assistant County Manager
Cassandra VanHooser, Talbot County Economic Development
Ray Clark, County Engineer
Susan Moran, Administrative Assistant
Ryan Showalter on behalf of UMMS Shore Health

Talbot County Planning and Zoning Commission:
Michael Strannahan, Chairman
Chip Councell, Vice Chairman
William C. Boicourt
Paul Spies
James Corson

Also present was the Town Manager Mr. Don Richardson, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf. Mr. John Horner, Chief Operating Officer was present from Easton Utilities as well as Town Engineer Rick VanEmburch

Mr. Ken Kozel, President and CEO was present from UM Shore Regional Health.

At 7:00 p.m., President Gunsallus called the meeting to order.
There were introductions of those present.

Mr. Ken Kozel stated everyone plays a critical role in building a new regional medical center. He discussed getting from vision to reality and stated he is grateful for time and talents. Mr. Kozel stated they are extremely close to getting approvals to proceed. He thanked everyone for everything being done.

The Town Attorney discussed how we got to where we are today and briefed on the history of the proposed new hospital. She stated that the process started in 2007 when Shore Health announced

they wanted to relocate out of town. She stated that then, the property was not in town of Easton so the first agreement drafted was a Memo of Understanding (MOU). She discussed the legislation that preceded. She stated at that time, they contemplated a DRRA when the annexation process started of 276 acres. She stated that the property encompassed the Shore Health site as well as Talbot County property. The negotiations that resulted in the DRRA were approved and signed in 2014. She discussed what a Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement (DRRA) is. She stated that the process to approve a DRRA is the same processes for both jurisdictions. The DRRA has to go to Planning Commission, both councils have to have a public hearing and both councils have to have a resolution. She discussed the benefits for the developer and local government. Ms. VanEmburch discussed what is detailed in the DRRA for parties involved.

The Town Attorney discussed the trigger dates and stated the DRRA will need to be amended to make some things more realistic as well as housekeeping updates. The process for amendment is the same process as adoption for both councils. She stated there will also be some additional approvals necessary. She discussed things that may be necessary moving forward.

Ryan Showalter, representing Shore Health System, stated everyone is here this evening to ensure that everyone hears the same thing; where we are and where we are going. Mr. Showalter stated he would entertain questions. He stated they anticipate having a draft DRRA in the near future with a final form late May early June. Mr. Showalter stated they will have a separate Public Works Agreement. He stated the DRRA runs with the property, as well as water and sewer and infrastructure responsibilities.

Mr. Leshner asked about timelines in the DRRA that need to be shifted.

Mr. Showalter discussed how it relates to construction timelines. He stated they hope to have a draft in the next several weeks. He stated he is accessible for questions but they can get bodies together again.

Mr. Abbatiello discussed the earlier version of the DRRA that had consideration for fire apparatus that might meet the needs of a new hospital. He asked if those provisions could be reinstated. Mr. Abbatiello asked if there may be consideration for an aerial tower for the Easton Volunteer Fire Department.

Mr. Showalter stated it is not in the agreement but he has made a note of the request.

Mr. Abbatiello asked if and when the current tower truck needs to be replaced, would the hospital support replacement.

Mr. Montgomery asked when Shore Health would irrevocably commit to the new hospital.

Mr. Showalter stated they Savannahian hope to begin construction this year.

At 7:26 p.m., President Gunsallus adjourned the workshop.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk