



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, July 1, 2024 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

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

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

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

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.

Discussion of Council Rules.

Resolution 6180 with Rules of the Council.

President Gunsallus reviewed the Rules of the Council and asked the audience participation be limited to three minutes to speak.

Approval of Minutes.

Minutes of the June 17, 2024 meeting.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, minutes of the June 17, 2024 meeting were approved as written.

Minutes of the June 28, 2024 workshop.

Upon motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, minutes of the June 28, 2024, workshop meeting were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Cook.

Oath of Office Administered to Mr. Ed Forte for Supervisor of Elections.

Mayor Cook congratulated Hugh E. Grunden, P.E. for his retirement and 41 years at Easton Utilities. Mayor Cook congratulated John Horner for his new position as President/CEO at Easton Utilities. Mayor Cook stated the Town of Easton and Easton Utilities has always had a great working relationship with Mr. Horner. She also congratulated them on their Customer Appreciation Day.

Mayor Cook stated that July is National Parks and Recreation Month and the Town of Easton will be highlighting our parks throughout the month. Mr. Mueller is busy working with Ms.

Gould. Mayor Cook stated that Team Work makes the dream work, and she stated that the employees printed, stuffed and mailed over 7000 tax bills FY2025 which total \$13 million in taxes, fees and recycling. She gave a huge shoutout to all that helped.

Mayor Cook invited everyone to the trail dedication on South Hanson Street for Mayor Willey on Friday, July 12 at 9:00 a.m.

Mayor Cook wished everyone Happy Canada Day. She stated there would be fireworks after

sundown on Thursday.
Mill and overlay will occur on Dutchman's Lane last week. This Next week will continue.
Mayor Cook administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Ed Forte for Supervisor of Elections.

Re-appointment of Park Advisory Board members for a term of three years expiring July 5, 2027.

Mayor Cook asked for confirmation for the Park Advisory Board's re-appointments for an additional three-year term.

Upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello, the re-appointments were confirmed. Mayor Cook stated they will be sworn at a Park Advisory Board meeting.

Items by Town Manager

Approval to accept bid from Sourcewell for a new mini-excavator and deck over trailer from Burke Equipment Company for \$129,819.77.

Upon motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, approval to accept the bid from Sourcewell for a new mini excavator and deck trailer in the amount of \$129,819.77 was approved.

Items by Town Attorney.

The Town Attorney, Ms. VanEmburch stated she had nothing at this time.

Mr. Tim McNeal to address Council regarding traffic concerns.

Mr. Tim McNeal was present and summarized the meeting that had occurred regarding the community intersection.

Mr. VanEmburch discussed Mulberry Drive and Roundhouse Circle. He stated they looked at different ideas regarding speed. He discussed speed-reducing measures.

Ms. Curry asked how many electronic speeding signs we have. Chief Lowrey stated we have two. He stated they did a directed detail in this neighborhood. Chief Lowrey stated they had 28 stops.

Mr. Abbatiello discussed speeding in neighborhoods and allowing Public Works to do their job and follow-up with monitoring.

The Town Engineer stated they will proceed with striping.

Rev. Davis discussed enforcement and stated everything has to be a combination of everything working together.

Pres. Gunsallus expressed gratitude for Mr. VanEmburch and Mr. Abbatiello taking the lead on this.

Public Hearings.

cont'd. PUBLIC HEARING (annexation request) "FOR A PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF OCEAN GATEWAY/US ROUTE 50, CONSISTING OF 17.329 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS."

At 6:03 p.m., President Gunsallus opened the continued public hearing.

Becky Allen, 7567 Ocean Gateway, discussed the annexation and the plans for this land, 240 unit complex. She asked the council to consider the full picture and if it is suitable for a massive complex that enters/exits onto Route 50. She stated that the developers have not come to any of the neighbors, even after Rev. Davis's suggestion.

President Gunsallus asked for any additional comments. There were none.

cont'd. PUBLIC HEARING to discuss and receive public comments on Ordinance No. 822, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON ADDING A NEW CHAPTER 6C OF THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO ADOPT PROVISIONS RELATED TO ILLICIT DISCHARGES."

At 6:06 p.m., President Gunsallus opened the continued public hearing and asked for public comment.

Mr. Joe Minarick, 128 S Harrison Street, on behalf of the East End Neighborhood Association, discussed Exhibit A. He stated there are parts that are deliberate acts and other acts that are acts of nature. Mr. Minarick asked how someone would know what is going in the stormdrains. He discussed the historical section of the town and what might empty by accident. He asked for clarification regarding what hazardous waste is. He discussed residents that rake their leaves in to the street. Mr. Minarick asked for guidance regarding sections that are unclear.

Mr. VanEmburch stated that only rainwater is supposed to go in to the storm drain. No other chemicals are allowed to be dumped. Regulations were written at the Federal level. One of the things we are required to do is to come up with an illicit discharge ordinance. If it is not rainwater, it should not be in the storm drains. Mr. VanEmburch stated we are looking to work

with the community, businesses and restaurants. Mr. VanEmburch stated that you have to use the best management practices.

Rev. Davis asked about residents washing their car. Mr. VanEmburch stated that the primary goal is to educate. He stated if we change the ordinance, it has to be approved by the state. He stated he has spoken to MDE.

Mr. Abbatiello asked about spraying for weeds. Mr. VanEmburch stated MDE had a model ordinance. He stated Salisbury has had an ordinance for a number of years and he has conferred with them.

cont'd. PUBLIC HEARING to discuss the request of Lane Engineering LLC (The Applicant) on behalf of NAI Saturn Eastern, LLC (The Owner) and Miller Development Corporation, for a proposed Planned Unit Development (PUD) Infill. The property is located at 139 N Washington Street.

At 6:25 p.m., the President of the Council opened the continued public hearing.

The Town Attorney administered the Oath for those present that may offer testimony as it is part of a zoning hearing.

Herman Espenhardt stated he is opposed to the development as presented for the subdivision at the Safeway property as there is no open space. He stated the council should not approve the first option for the property.

Harriet Paige, 8 Brookletts Avenue asked if this is the best thing for all of the Brooklets entire community in Easton. She stated there is no open space. She stated that better things can go there and should have been presented as a referendum to the public. Ms. Paige stated that traffic will be impossible and this is the worst idea for this site.

Helen Houseman, 118 Goldsborough Street, stated she is opposed to this development. She discussed the overflow of parking. She stated the town will be losing the heart of the town.

Edith McKendrick, 116 Goldsborough Street, stated she is opposed to the development that has no visitor parking or green space. She stated it is a bad idea and not good for Easton.

Brandy Whiting, N Washington Street, stated she has a lot of questions. She discussed parking, affordable housing and questioned what will be donated and what standards will be established. Ms. Whiting stated that construction will take some time and will affect downtown. She discussed private trash pickup.

Steve Mangassarian, S Aurora Street, discussed parking and stated there are over 500 spaces. He stated the developers are to be commended as this space has been vacant for over 15 years. Mr. Mangassarini stated that the Historic Commission even approved the infill development. He stated the developers have done whatever is asked of them.

President Gunsallus stated that Ms. Clara Kelly has submitted written comments to be added to the record.

President Gunsallus stated that the Public Hearing will be left open until August 5 at the request of the applicant's attorney.

5:35 PM Public Hearing to discuss and receive public comments on Ordinance No. 823, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO REGULATE AMPLIFIED MUSIC FROM COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS DURING NIGHTTIME HOURS."

At 6:40 p.m., President Gunsallus opened the 5:35 p.m. public hearing and asked for public comment.

Helen Houseman, 118 Goldsborough Street discussed the Tidewater Inn's events in the tents and stated it is profoundly affecting her quality of life. She stated it is all about the decibels, not the time.

Eda McKendrick, 116 Goldsborough Street, discussed noise and vibrations in the walls. She stated she would be in favor of 10:00 p.m. cutoff but stated that the decibels have to come down.

Brandy Whiting stated that cutting off the music at 10:00 p.m. is drastic.

President Gunsallus closed the public hearing.

5:40 PM PUBLIC HEARING to discuss and receive public comments on Resolution No. 6188, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON REVISING THE TOWN'S LICENSE, APPLICATION, PERMITS, INSPECTIONS, CERTIFICATE AND OTHER FEES."

At 6:43 p.m., President Gunsallus opened the 5:40 p.m. public hearing. He asked for public comments. There were none.

President Gunsallus closed the public hearing.

5:45 PM PUBLIC HEARING to discuss and receive public comments on Ordinance No. 825, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF EASTON TO SELL 123 S LOCUST LANE IN EASTON AS PART OF THE TOWN'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM."

At 6:45 p.m., President Gunsallus opened the 5:45 p.m. scheduled public hearing.

Mr. Richardson stated that Mr. Newcomb, the Project Manager, is present.

President Gunsallus asked for public comments. There were none.

At 6:47 p.m., President Gunsallus closed the public hearing.

Legislation.

Res. 6185, "A RESOLUTION TO ANNEX A PARCEL OF LAND OWNED BY CORRIGAN & TRIPPE VENTURES, LLC LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF OCEAN GATEWAY/US ROUTE 50, CONSISTING OF 17.329 ACRFES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS, INTO THE TOWN OF EASTON AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE ANNEXATION."

Not acted on at this time.

Ord. 811, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO APPLY THE R-10A RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT TO CERTAIN LOTS OR PARCELS OF LAND ANNEXED TO THE TOWN OF EASTON BY RESOLUTION NO. 6185 LOCATED TO THE EAST OF OCEAN GATEWAY/US ROUTE 50 CONSISTING OF 17.329 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS."

Not acted on at this time.

Approval of the Annexation and Public Facilities Agreement.

Not acted on at this time.

Resolution No. 6188, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON REVISING THE TOWNS LICENSE, APPLICATION, PERMITS, INSPECTIONS, CERTIFICATE AND OTHER FEES."

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6188 was approved.

Ordinance No. 822, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON ADDING A NEW CHAPTER 6C OF THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO ADOPT PROVISIONS RELATED TO ILLICIT DISCHARGES."

Ms. Curry asked that this be postponed until further information is received.

Not acted on at this time.

Ordinance No. 823, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO REGULATE AMPLIFIED MUSIC FROM COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS DURING NIGHTTIME HOURS."

Mr. Abbatiello stated that this ordinance will put the Town of Easton in compliance with what the county has.

Mr. Montgomery stated he would prefer a decibel meter but the cost is prohibitive.

Ms. Curry stated there should be a conversation with the Tidewater Inn regarding music. She asked that nighttime hours be defined. President Gunsallus stated 10 p.m. until 6 a.m.

Mr. Montgomery discussed a loophole regarding amplified outside music.

Upon motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, Ordinance No. 823 was approved.

Ordinance No. 825, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF EASTON TO SELL 123 SOUTH LOCUST LANE IN EASTON AS PART OF THE TOWN'S AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM."

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, Ordinance No. 825, was approved with Ms. Curry absent from the vote.

Review of Invoices.

Invoices from 6/1/2024 - 6/30/2024 totaling \$1,238,629.33.

Mr. Montgomery asked for clarification regarding expenditures for Lenhart Traffic consulting. Town Manager, Mr. Richardson stated that the town does traffic studies for our own purposes.

Mr. Montgomery asked about consulting for legal services. Mr. Richardson stated it is for a pension audit.

Mr. Abbatiello asked if this was close to the end. Mr. Richardson stated it is close to the end of the endeavor. Mr. Abbatiello stated he would like a final cost for that audit.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, invoices were approved.

Public Participation/Comments.

Connie Knopp, 29173 Pin Oak Way, commented about the 240 apartments and the proposed annexation. She asked how many housing units have been approved from 2022 to 2024, how many additional medical people have been added. She asked about added services for the community and discussed traffic and all the development occurring in Easton. Ms. Knopp asked what the benefit is for our community.

Richard Potter, President of NAACP addressed the council and stated they found the recent rhetoric that was said. He stated he stands in solidarity with the LGBTQ community and asked to meet with Mr. Gunsallus.

Maureen O'Toole, 12615 Peach Lane, Cordova, discussed her concerns regarding LGBTQ events and how words have an impact. She discussed her son being a gay man and his struggles. She said she had been deeply saddened by comments from members of the council and urged them to consider the actions of their words.

Max Cerna, 29555 Meadow Gate Drive, retired from the Army, stated he served for the constitution, served for the country, stated we need to be inclusive to everyone's thoughts and opinions and value everyone's even if they differ from our own. He discussed being able to stand up for what you believe in and not being able to express your opinion.

Stephanie Chester, St Michaels, stated the infrastructure of Easton is changing. She stated that the Affordable Housing is a joke and she doesn't see any middle class citizens able to get a house. She said that most that used to live here, can't even afford to buy in Easton.

Deb Dawkins, resides in Denton but is an owner of real property in Easton. She stated she is a business person, a relator that works in Easton. She discussed the Federal and State Fair Housing Laws where there are protected classes that include sex, disability, religion, color, race, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, Familia status, gender identity and source of income. She said that going back to school and learning not to discriminate might be a good thing for some of the council.

Charlotte Brown, Easton, stated there is no affordable housing in Easton. She questioned when there will be housing for elderly. She discussed Easton being overcrowded with traffic with people on top of each other. Ms. Brown suggested leaving the Safeway space a parking lot.

Francine Smooth, 9 Colonial Court, called on the members of the council to conduct themselves to be fitting of the office of which they were elected. She discussed the comments that were made in previous meetings. Ms. Smooth discussed the Rules of the Council which were adopted by the council.

Kathryn Nobles, 7310 Dale Avenue, stated she has a problem with LGBTQ stating they are coming after your children. She stated she does not think the children should be coached or groomed.

Kirstie Kingston, 418 August Street discussed her brother that is gay and lives in LA. She stated that people just need to be who they are. She stated she admires people who come out as who they are and how they feel.

Brandy Whiting, stated she was a vendor at the Pride Festival and saw so many happy families. She said that she saw resources and not the things people previously talked about.

Ivan Colon, 7401 Ocean Gateway, moved from Puerto Rico to Easton and stated he moved here and has found his family. He stated he is not here to harm. Mr. Colon stated he wants people to consider they are humans. He asked the council to be mindful of their words. He stated there has been centuries of fights for human rights.

Rudy Reyes, 29978 Dover Road, agreed with comments about affordable housing. He stated the public needs to know how much of the development in this town is going to be affordable. He stated he lives with parents as he can't afford to live on his own. On the topic of LGBTQ community, he stated he loves this town and doesn't want to live anywhere else. He suggested everyone respect each other and respect the public. He stated there are a lot of people that feel unsafe after the May 20 meeting.

Judy Isola, 29200 Holly Road, stated the whole thing is Freedom of Speech. She thanked Mr. Montgomery for his opinion and being able to express his opinion. She stated she is also afraid of being conservative.

Martha Suss, 131 S Harrison Street, asked everyone to just choose love. She discussed affordable housing. She said her son can't afford a home, not even to rent.

Ann Cerutti, 6065 Hedges Lane, stated she is a retired CPA and just looks at fiscal responsibility. She stated that everyone has been hurt and everyone should be accepted for who they are. She said everyone should have the right to say what they want.

Kyle O'Donnell, 29681 Dover Road, discussed the Freedom of Assembly and what that means. He discussed the Pride Festival and stated parents should be able to decide what their children participate in. He asked the council to vote for freedom and the public assembly for the next Pride Festival. He invited the council for further discussion.

Kristie Kingston, 418 August St, suggested the council watch their words.

Stephanie Latham, 29595 Dutchman's Lane, lived in Easton all her life and is an ally of LGBTQ community. She stated that some of the rhetoric that has been spoken is hurtful and it makes her sad that this is what the town has come to.

Brandy Whiting, N. Washington Street, asked how she gets answers to her questions. She asked for more information regarding affordable housing.

President Gunsallus discussed the Affordable Housing Board.

Mr. Abbatiello stated that the Affordable Housing Board meets tomorrow at 5:00 p.m. and Mr. Bent, Chairman will be present.

Items by Members of the Council:

Ms. Curry thanked everyone for coming this evening.
Mr. Abbatiello stated there has been discussion regarding affordable housing, traffic, and parking. He stated the council is listening and none of these are going to be solved immediately, but everyone's input matters. Mr. Abbatiello thanked everyone for their input.
Mr. Montgomery appreciates all those that have spoken on both sides.
Rev. Davis stated he is grateful for the outpouring of support from citizens of Easton. He stated that words have consequences. Rev. Davis thanked Tom Diem for enforcing rules regarding the odor at the crab picking facility.
President Gunsallus thanked everyone that has come to the council meetings to exercise their right to speak. He thanked Terrance Bailey for inviting him for Unity Day. He stated that the Town of Easton is still one town.

Adjournment.

At 8:04 p.m., upon motion by President Gunsallus, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, President Gunsallus adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk