



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 5, 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 Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, Chief Alan Lowrey and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Rev. Davis.

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

Approval of Minutes.

Minutes of the July 15, 2024 meeting.

Upon motion by Rev. Davis seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, minutes of the July 15, 2024 meeting were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Cook.

Mayor Cook reminded everyone that tomorrow evening is National Night Out. She stated there is dinner and the pool is open. The mill and overlay is done.

Mayor Cook thanked the Finance Department at the town office as they are busy with tax bills coming in.

She congratulated the Parks & Recreation Department as they have received a Community Parks and Playground grant for Golton Park in the amount of \$155,901 to update their equipment. She stated that the Parks and Recreation Director recently attended a luncheon for the summer youth employment program which is run with Ms. Deshields. She stated the crews are in multiple counties and the partnership worked well and they are looking to come back next year.

Mayor Cook stated EEDC has a Dogs of Easton coloring book. She stated it has information on the dark park.

Secretary Day will be here on Thursday to attend the Affordable Housing Task Force. She stated he will make a presentation to the members present.

Mayor Cook asked for a closed session for personnel after the regular meeting.

Items by Town Manager

Approval of bid for New Way Sidewinder XTR Automated Side Load Refuse Body Mounted on a Peterbilt 520 Single Axle Chassis in the amount of \$424,735.67.

Mayor Cook asked for approval for the sidewinder for public works in the amount of \$424,735.67. She stated it is over budget but the remaining balance will be in the FY2025 budget as it will not be built until July 2025.

Upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, approval for the bid for the Sidewinder XTR Automated Side Load Refuse Body in the amount of \$424,735.67 was approved to order.

Approval for Public Assembly Event: Delmarva Pride Center - June 14, 2025 11am - 4pm.

Chief Lowrey asked that the Public Assembly Event be withdrawn until the event is closer. He stated he has talked with the organizer and seek approval when the event is within six

months.

Items by Town Attorney.

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

Introduction of Kurt Fuchs, Easton Utilities Manager of External Affairs.

Kelley Simonsen, Director of Corporate Communications for Easton Utilities, introduced Kurt Fuchs. She stated Mr. Fuchs is a native of Eastern Shore, a graduate of McDaniel with a degree in Political Science. He will focus on public policy issues. Ms. Simonsen stated that prior to joining Easton Utilities, Kurt served as the Director of Government Affairs for Farm Credit and spent nine years prior to that with the Farm Bureau.

Mr. Fuchs was present and stated that he is excited to join the team and is looking forward to working with everyone. He stated he will be reaching out to schedule time on the councilmembers' calendar. Rev. Davis thanked Easton Utilities. He stated he is excited about the opportunity for you. Rev. Davis stated it is for the betterment of Easton Utilities.

Ms. Curry congratulated Ms. Simonsen on her recent promotion to Director of Communications.

Fire Board.

Sonny Jones was present and presented the Fire Board report for May thru July and detailed their activity. He stated the department has responded to 540 calls. He stressed that the department is an all-volunteer organization. Chief Jones stated that Mondays after 3:00 p.m. seem to be when the department has the most calls.

Mr. Montgomery asked about the amount of false alarms. Chief Jones stated that they are working to decrease the amount of false alarms.

Chief Jones updated on the training facility. He stated that the construction has been awarded to Willow Construction. He stated that they have raised 3.2 million dollars to date. He stated that the facility will be used by all volunteer firefighters and first responders across the counties.

Public Hearing.

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 Unit Planned Unit Development (PUD) - Infill. The property is located at 139 N Washington Street.

At 5:44 p.m., President Gunsallus opened the continued public hearing.

President Gunsallus asked for public comment. There was none.

At 5:46 p.m. upon motion by President Gunsallus, seconded by Mr. Montgomery, President Gunsallus closed the public hearing.

Mr. Abbatiello stated that he would like to see that the developer contribute \$10,000 to the Affordable Housing; \$5,000 when the building permit is issued, \$5,000 at the issuance of the Certificate of Occupancy.

It was the consensus of the council to approve the PUD application with the caveat for a \$10,000 contribution to the Affordable Housing fund.

President Gunsallus thanked the applicant for taking an interest in Easton.

The Town Attorney stated that she will prepare the Findings of Facts.

Review of Invoices.

Invoices totaling \$2,400,512.88.

Mr. Abbatiello asked that a total paid to Lombardo & Ayers be submitted to the council as well as the report associated with their findings.

Ms. Curry asked for clarification regarding payments and asked for a scope of work for those services for Planning and Zoning.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Rev Davis, the invoices were approved.

Public Participation/Comments.

Mr. Landy Hartman, Columbia, Maryland addressed the council regarding the EV charging stations. He stated he has been driving an electric car for over 10 years and found they are non-operational. He stated he likes to park there and take advantage of that amenity and uses it to visit Easton. He stated he hopes the Mayor and Council make an effort to get the EV charging stations fixed.

Mr. Robert Korkaski, Frederick County, addressed the council regarding the charging stations. He stated he has concerns regarding EZ Volt. He stated he wonders if this is the right product for the town. He suggested getting another bid or product.

Items by Members of the Council:

Ms. Curry asked that it be put on the record that there is a problem with parking in this town. She

stated she is offering to help in whatever capacity. Ms. Curry stated there are complaints from visitors regarding the kiosks. Ms. Curry stated we should look at a parking garage. She stated she also has major concerns regarding the homeless population in Easton.

Mr. Abbatiello had a great meeting with Ward 1 and Ward 2 involving parks in town. He stated they talked about safety on rails-to-trails, especially the use of scooters and e-bikes. It was suggested to look at putting ballads back in place on the crosswalks.

Mr. Montgomery discussed the Park Board meeting for Wards 3 and 4. He stated there was a unanimous request that we do better to provide access on the website regarding activities and parks. He stated there is a lot of concern about what is going on with the potential with Harris Teeter. Mr. Montgomery stated that the sale of Harris Teeter is being challenged by the Federal Trade Commission. Mr. Montgomery stated that the town should consider sending a letter on behalf of the town regarding the contribution Harris Teeter makes to the town. He discussed a letter he has written explaining what is going on.

Rev. Davis discussed the meeting held with Ward 3 and Ward 4. He stated they listened to their constituents. Rev. Davis stated there are parking spaces available. He stated when it comes to rails-to-trails, everyone needs to feel safe and there are things we can do as a town. Rev. Davis stated he believes Easton is the most resilient town on eastern shore. He thanked everyone for their work.

Ms. Curry people echoed what Mr. Montgomery said about the parks and a way to access information regarding the parks. She stated she has been asked about a QR code to obtain information.

Mr. Montgomery stated that this is great to have everyone here this evening. He thanked everyone for attending.

President Gunsallus announced improvements to Airport Road.

Pres. Gunsallus stated he would take a motion to move into closed session.

Mr. Terrence Bailey, was present and discussed a museum going in downtown and how his family does not support it.

At 6:14 p.m., upon unanimous consensus, President Gunsallus moved into closed session.

At 6:31 p.m., upon motion by President Gunsallus, seconded by Rev. Davis, President Gunsallus closed the Executive Session and moved into Open Session.

At 6:32 p.m. President Gunsallus moved into Open Session.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, Chief Lowrey was appointed and confirmed as the Interim Town Manager.

Adjournment.

At 6:33 p.m., upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, President Gunsallus adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk (approved 8/19/24)