



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 21, 2024 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

4:30 PM Workshop: Public Works MOU.

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

Also present was the Interim Town Manager Mr. Alan Lowrey, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, Finance Officer Carol Callahan, Town Engineer Mr. Rick VanEmburch, Director of Engineering Mr. Kody Cario and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

Councilmember Rev. Elmer Davis was excused.

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

Mr. Lowrey, Interim Town Manager, discussed the reason for tonight's workshop. Town Attorney, Ms. VanEmburch stated that ARPA funds need to be obligated by December 2024 and spent by 2026. Federal guidelines state that we can have a MOU for funds left over. Tonight we are asking for the introduction of this ordinance. These numbers may change.

The Interim Town Manager discussed the projects.

Town Engineer Rick VanEmburch discussed the proposed projects and the costs.

Mr. Lowrey, Interim Town Manager, discussed infrastructure improvements within the town.

Ms. Curry asked the Town Engineer and Director of Engineering if they were comfortable with this timeline. They answered that these projects can be accomplished, although they will need to get easements.

Mr. Cario discussed the project area and flooding areas on East Avenue, August Street and Dover Road.

Mr. Cario discussed the flooding on Harrison Street that runs to Brewer's Lane. He stated the proposed project will add capacity to the storm drains.

Mr. Montgomery asked how the bidding was accomplished. He stated he assumed the contractors did not know the amount of money they had to spend.

At 4:55 p.m., President Gunsallus adjourned the workshop and stated the regular meeting would resume at 5:30 p.m.

5:00 PM Police Board.

Police Board Report 2024 - Quarter 3.

The Police Board meeting will be tabled until November 4 due to Capt. Wright's illness and Rev. Elmer Davis's excused absence.

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

At 05:30 PM, President Gunsallus called the meeting to order.

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Curry.

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

President Gunsallus read the Closed Session statement into the record regarding the October 7 meeting.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Cook.

Recommendation to Appoint Aaron Cooper as Assistant Town Attorney.

Mayor Cook stated the groundbreaking for Shore Regional Medical Center was this afternoon with Governor Moore present. She gave a shout-out to Talbot County and all they did to help get this project to the finish line.

Mayor Cook thanked Easton Club East for allowing them to meet with them to present the K Hovnanian Development project last week.

Mayor Cook reminded citizens to rake leaves and leave the pile between the sidewalk and the road.

Mayor Cook discussed the ADA team and recent construction improvements. She discussed the Easton Charette that will take place October 24 thru October 28 at Easton Church of God with the closing ceremonies on Monday night at 7:30 p.m. She encouraged the council and the community to stop by.

Water fountains have been installed, North Easton Park entrance. She discussed Veterans Day Banners that will be installed in November.

Mr. Abbatiello thanked Mayor Cook for the Veterans' Day banners.

Mayor Cook asked for the approval for the recommendation to appoint Aaron Cooper as Assistant Town Attorney. Upon motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, the recommendation was approved.

Items by Interim Town Manager.

Approval for Traffic Signal Conversion and Upgrade.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, approval for Traffic Signal Conversion and Upgrade was approved.

Approval for Harrison Street and East Avenue Storm drain Project.

The Town Engineer Rick VanEmburch stated that the Retallack bid was the low bid He stated that the proposed improvements with the storm drain project will alleviate flooding in the east end and redirect water to the area near the dog park.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, the East Avenue Storm drain project was approved.

Public Assembly Event: Academy Art Museum Craft Show, October 25–October 27.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, the Public Assembly as recommended by staff for the Academy Art Museum Craft Show was approved.

Items by Town Attorney.

Legislation.

Easton Utilities present for Res. 6200, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF THE MARYLAND MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC UTILITY ALLIANCE FOR THE EASTON UTILITIES COMMISSION."

Mr. Hines discussed the Electric Utility Alliance with the five bodies in Maryland. He stated it is a voluntary organization and there will be no cost to Easton Utilities.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, Res. 6200 was approved.

Easton Utilities present for Res. 6201, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE EASTON UTILITIES COMMISSION TO MAKE AN EXTENSION OF UTILITY SERVICE IN EXCESS OF TWO MILLION DOLLARS (\$2,000,000) TO SERVE THE NEW SHORE REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER."

Mr. Hines stated that Easton Utilities is required to come before the council for any gross expenditure of more than 2 million dollars.

Upon motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6201 was approved.

Ord. 831, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF EASTON TO REVISE RESIDENTIAL PARKING DISTRICT NO. 2 NEAR EASTON HIGH SCHOOL."

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, Ord. 831 was approved following a roll call vote.

Ord. 832, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING CHAPTER 2 ARTICLE VI OF THE TOWN OF EASTON CODE TO UPDATE THE TOWN'S ETHICS PROVISIONS."

President Gunsallus introduced Ord. 832 for a first reading.

The Town Attorney stated that this is the town's attempt to bring us into compliance.

President Gunsallus stated it will be put on the agenda for a vote November 4.

Ord. 833, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING CHAPTER 6 BUILDING CODES OF THE TOWN OF EASTON CODE TO ADOPT THE INTERNATIONAL SWIMMING POOL AND SPA CODE AND AMENDMENTS THERETO."

President Gunsallus introduced Ord. 833 for a first reading.

The Town Attorney stated that the state has adopted these amendments and the Town is required to adopt them within a certain time frame as well.

Mayor Cook stated that the Building Department has been using the 2015 Code.

President Gunsallus set the Public Hearing for November 18.

Ord. 834, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE ARPA BUDGET AND OBLIGATING ARPA FUNDS BY APPROVING A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT."

President Gunsallus introduced Ord. 834 for a first reading.

The Town Attorney stated this was the subject of the workshop this evening. She stated it is a memorandum of understanding with the Public Works Department and a way for the Town to obligate funds in compliance with the ARPA requirements by December 2024.

The Town Attorney stated there will be a Public Hearing at the next Council meeting.

Ord. 835, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING CHAPTER 28 OF THE TOWN CODE (ZONING) TO ESTABLISH A SEAFOOD PROCESSING USE AND SUPPLEMENTAL STANDARDS PERTAINING TO THE USE."

President Gunsallus introduced Ord. 835 for a first reading.

The Town Attorney stated that the Public Hearing will be held at the next meeting as legally required..

The Town Attorney stated that the Planning and Zoning Commission had submitted a recommendation at the last council meeting related to this amendment.

Public Participation/Comments.

No one was present for public comment.

Items by Members of the Council:

Mr. Lowrey, Interim Town Manager, stated that the Public Assembly Event from Academy Museum was processed as soon as it was received.

Ms. Curry thanked Engineering for their presentation at the workshop this evening. She gave a shoutout to the Public Works Department for their trash pickup in her neighborhood.

Mr. Abbatiello stated he will be participating in the National Fallen Fighter's Stair Climb in Ocean City which is 110 floors which is accomplished by climbing the condo stairs six times. He stated that the donations will be for firefighters lost in the line of duty.

Dr. Montgomery thanked residents of Easton Club Easton for meeting with him and Mayor Cook last week. He stated the meeting was productive.

Pres. Gunsallus stated he attended the groundbreaking for the new hospital today. He stated it was a good time with the Governor. He stated it was also a privilege to speak at the Prayer Breakfast last week.

Adjournment.

At 6:08 p.m., upon motion by Pres. Gunsallus, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, President Gunsallus adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk