



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 7, 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 Interim Town Manager Mr. Alan Lowrey, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

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

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

President Gunsallus read a Closed Session Statement regarding the September 16, 2024 meeting.

Approval of Minutes.

Meeting minutes of September 16, 2024.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, minutes of the September 16, 2024 were approved with corrections. Mr. Abbatiello asked that Rev. Davis be added as being present.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Cook.

Mayor Cook reminded those present that Saturday, there will be walk-a-bout for the East End Small Area Plan. It begins at Rude Burger at 9am.
Leaf collection begins next week, and we are asking that leaves not be raked into the streets.
Mayor Cook asked those listening to stop this week at North Easton Park and see the new entrance wall that Public Works is building with bond project funds. The holiday parade is filled and EDC has reported that they had a successful fall kickoff over the weekend.
The Parks and Recreation is partnering with Talbot Thrive for the Rolling Rodeo, which will be held at Easton Elementary on October 19 at 10am.
October 19 Parks & Rec Talbot Thrive Rolling Rodeo basic bike riding skills.
Mayor Cook asked for a Closed Session for Personnel. She reminded the public that the Town is closed on Monday for Columbus Day and Canadian Thanksgiving.
Mayor Cook stated that Interim Town Manager Alan Lowrey is not present this evening so she will bring the Public Assembly Events forward for approval.

Items by Interim Town Manager

- Public Assembly Event: Easton High School Homecoming Parade - October 11, 2024 3:15PM

Upon motion by Mr. Montgomery seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, Public Assembly Event: Easton High School Homecoming was approved.

- Public Assembly Event: Winton Ave Block Party - October 26, 2024 4PM

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously,

Public Assembly Event: Winton Ave Block Party was approved.

Items by Town Attorney.

- Planning & Zoning Recommendation for Zoning Amendment - Somerset Well Drilling Co., Inc.

President Gunsallus set the Public Hearing for November 4.

- Planning & Zoning Recommendation for Zoning Text Amendment for Seafood Processing.

President Gunsallus set the Public Hearing for November 4.

Presentations.

Ms. Marilyn Neal, Neighborhood Service Center Executive Director to discuss programs in place.

Ms. Neal was present to discuss the programs the Neighborhood Service Center is facing. Maryland Energy Assistance Director/EUSP Director Cardeaner Robinson was also present. Ms. Neal discussed the programs NSC provides; Emergency Assistance Program, Medical Support for Seniors, Career Pathways, Mobile and emergency food pantry. She stated that they also have programs for seniors, residents with disabilities, responsible fathers and youth programs. She stated they have emergency services, which work with eviction prevention. Ms. Neal stated that it may be a crisis for individuals to keep warm this winter. She discussed a decrease in funding. She stated there is a drastic change in funding.

Mr. Abbatiello asked if the state had given their reasoning for the increase in applicants.

Ms. Neal stated that the governor wanted to see more people use the program. Anyone that goes to DSS is asked if they are interested in applying for the Emergency Assistance Program. She stated that the largest amount of clients are in Easton.

Rev. Davis asked what NSC's request is.

Ms. Neal stated that they would like to ask for \$40,000 to \$50,000. She stated that they are reaching out for support at this time.

Mr. Montgomery asked for the percentage of clientele to see what percentage goes to the town. Ms. Neal was asked if she has reached out to the county. She stated that the county does support NSC.

Mr. Abbatiello asked what the bulk of the programs are. Ms. Neal stated propane. She stated they also have people coming in that have been disconnected. She discussed working with the homeless to move them from being homeless to being in stabilized housing.

Ms. Neal stated she would like to have assistance of \$50,000 to help.

Mr. Abbatiello and Mr. Montgomery asked where the money would be taken from in the budget.

Legislation.

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

President Gunsallus introduced Ord. No. 831 for a first reading.

Town Attorney Ms. VanEmburch stated this is to provide that in the Easton High School residential Parking District, there would be no two-hour. That time frame is only for residents.

Mr. Abbatiello said residents would appreciate it being cut off at 4pm.

Res. 6198, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A LICENSE AGREEMENT TO ALLOW AN ENCROACHMENT INTO THE WASHINGTON STREET RIGHT OF WAY FOR 123 S. WASHINGTON STREET IN THE TOWN OF EASTON."

The Town Attorney stated we have had a number of these over the years. Sometimes their stairs are in the right of way or driveway, or where The Tidewater expanded their patio. This one is a little bit different because it's up above, it's not actually on ground level because the property is right on the property line, everything that overhangs is in the right-of-way. Brendan Mullaney, present on behalf of the applicant stated this is an existing building that's being

rehabilitated. The existing building is just north of the hospital and is one-story. It is right up against the town's right-of-way as it exists. The improvements that are proposed for the project have a second story balcony which hangs approximately 15' above the sidewalk. The request is that this license be granted consistent with what's been approved by the Planning Commission and the Historic District Commission, who love the project. Ms. VanEmburch stated that the approval tonight is just for the balconies only, not approving the structure. Approval will allow this encroachment into the right-of-way.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, Res. 6198 was approved following a roll call vote.

Res. 6199 Authorizing Abatement of Real Property Taxes for Habitat for Humanity.

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, Res. 6199 Authorizing Abatement of Real Property Taxes was approved.

Review of Invoices.

Invoices from 9/4/24 - 9/25/24 totaling \$1,425,430.61.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello seconded Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, invoices totaling \$1,425,430.61 were approved.

Public Participation/Comments.

Daniel McDermott, Sr., 810 Arcadia Street, Ward 4 ask that have people that speak give their name and address. He said he would like to know if people that speak are in town or not in town. The second issue is that if there are rules, they should be read before speakers address council, before a public hearing and before your public comment period.

Items by Members of the Council:

Ms. Curry apologized to constituents for not getting back to them. She stated she has had health issues and will be reaching out to her constituents. Ms. Curry stated she was very proud of fellow council members at the Frederick Douglass ceremony and Pres. Gunsallus for gathering supplies to help people who are victims of hurricane Helene.

Mr. Abbatiello stated he was proud of fellow community members that raised supplies for victims of Hurricane Helene.

Dr. Montgomery mentioned that his hope was that we remember the atrocities that were perpetuated on the 2000 people living in the state of Israel and that we will not hesitate in stating and expressing our solidarity with both the people and the state of Israel.

Rev. Davis thanked Planning & Zoning for addressing the seafood processing facilities. Please be safe in the community. There is a lot of traffic. He reminded the community not to blow leaves in the streets.

Rev. Davis thanked everyone that has contributed to disaster relief.

President Gunsallus thanked those that have contributed to disaster relief and stated he will be going again and taking an all-terrain vehicle donated by Dave Wilson. He urged everyone to look at their situation and ask yourself if you can survive for 72 to 96 hours on your own. He urged everyone to devise a plan. Pres. Gunsallus urged everyone to keep the victims in prayer and consider supporting those in need.

Closed Session.

At 6:26 p.m., upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, President Gunsallus moved in to Closed Session to discuss General Provisions Article Section 3-305(b)(1).

At 6:45 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, President Gunsallus moved out of Closed Session and back into the regular meeting.

Adjournment.

At 6:46 p.m., upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, President Gunsallus adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting. Curry, Abbatiello

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk