



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 20, 2025 - 4:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

4:30 PM Complete Streets Workshop.

Mayor Megan JM Cook
President Don Abbatiello
Ms. Maureen Curry
Mr. Robert Rankin
Dr. David Montgomery
Rev. Elmer Davis

Also present was the Town Manager, Mr. Andy Kitzrow; Town Attorney, Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch; Chief of Police, Alan Lowrey; Town Engineer Mr. Rick VanEmburch, Director of Engineering, Mr. Kody Cario, Director of Planning and Zoning Mr. Miguel Salinas, Town Planner Mr. Lynn Thomas and Town Clerk, Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

At 4:30 p.m., Town Engineer Rick VanEmburch was present and introduced Larry Marcus from Wallace Montgomery to discuss Complete Streets. Complete Streets provides a one-stop guide for designing new streets and reconstructing or retrofitting existing streets following certain principles. Complete Streets are roadways that are designed and operated to provide safe, accessible and healthy travel for all users. Efforts center around pedestrian and bike safety, including a comprehensive study on the town's road and streets. Mr. VanEmburch stated they are reaching out to stakeholders, the police, Talbot Thrive, Talbot County Public Schools, BAM, EVFD and others. Vision, Policies, Guidance, Priorities, and Performance were discussed. The study aims to create a manual for Easton while establishing which types of roads and streets prioritize certain modes of transportation such as walking, biking or driving.

Mr. Marcus discussed special considerations such as school zones, historic districts, emergency routes, etc. Mr. Marcus stated that the overview of the new guidance would consider street types, special considerations, street cross-section, streetscape, intersection toolbox, speed management and monitoring progress.

Mr. VanEmburch stated they intend to have a draft form after meeting with stakeholders then update development review and planning procedures. He added that the manual will make it easier for the town to require certain road safety steps when residential or commercial developers apply for site plan approval. Dr. Montgomery stated this really won't help his ward as most residents have to drive into town. Heather Grant, Executive Director of Talbot Thrive stated that residents who don't want to drive deserve equal access to safe infrastructure.

Mr. Abbatiello thanked Mr. Marcus and Mr. VanEmburch for the presentation.

Mr. Marcus exited the meeting at 5:21 p.m.

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

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

Closed Session Statement.

President Abbatiello read the Closed Session Statement from the Closed Meeting held October 2, 2025.

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Dr. Montgomery.

Dr. Montgomery gave opening remarks and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes.

Meeting minutes from 10/06/25 meeting.

Upon motion by Dr. Montgomery, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, minutes of the October 2, 2025 meeting were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Cook.

Mayor Cook reminded those present that Saturday, October 25 is the Easton Volunteer Fire Department Ribbon Cutting for the new Training Facility. She stated that the last day for the Wednesday night walk/run group is October 29. Upcoming events include the Zoning text amendment workshop which will occur on November 3 and the TOE Joint Annual Meeting which will be held at the EVFD on November 5. The Housing Taskforce will present their report on November 17, the downtown parking workshop will occur December 1 and the Planning Commission's public hearing on the Comprehensive Plan is scheduled for December 9. Mayor Cook stated the town of Easton looked beautiful at the recent Main Street Maryland Conference. Mayor Cook discussed all the activities around town this past weekend. Mayor Cook discussed the emergency training exercise hosted by Talbot County Emergency Services. She stated there were a lot of participating entities that did a great job. Mayor Cook stated that the Town of Easton is slowly rebranding with a new vehicle logo. She thanked a council member for this suggestion. Mayor Cook stated it will be a slow roll-out. Mayor Cook thanked the Town Council and the County Council for their letters of support for Vetagro. She reported that the town has completed 1,900 feet of the 2,100 feet of the East Ave storm drain upgrade with a completion date of around the first of the year.

Appointment of Susie Hayward to the Housing Commission of Talbot.

Upon motion by Ms Curry, seconded by Mr. Rankin and carried unanimously, Susie Hayward's appointment to the Housing Commission of Talbot County was approved. The appointment is for the remainder of a 5-year term expiring June 15, 2027.

Items by Town Manager

Public Assembly Event: Easton Holiday Parade - 12/6/25

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Rankin and carried unanimously, the Public Assembly Event for the Easton Holiday parade was approved.

Items by Town Attorney.

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

Presentations.

Police Board.

Chief Lowrey was present to discuss the Easton Police Department third quarter activities. He stated they have given extra attention to SSPP Elementary School and High School at the request of the schools.

Chief Lowrey stated EPD had participated in a lot of community engagement programs this summer. The department is down six employees with the departure of several officers. EPD has three applicants that they hope will be in the December class as well as a police cadet. He discussed grants and donations received.

Rev. Davis asked if there is something he would like to make the community aware of during the holidays. Chief Lowrey discussed packages on the steps, locking cars and traffic concerns. He stated vehicles need to slow down and make way for pedestrians and bicyclists. Chief Lowrey discussed CRASE training for the community, which prepares for survival in crisis situations. He stated these are things you see in police response.

Mr. Rankin discussed e-bikes and how they can be addressed. Chief Lowrey stated he has assigned the matter to an officer to look in to. He stated they will be working with Engineering and Talbot Thrive. He stated mobility devices may be considered for legislation.

Mr. Abbatiello asked the chief to share what can be done with cars parked on public streets. Chief Lowrey stated that residents are allowed to park on public streets if the vehicles are operational and properly registered.

President Abbatiello asked if there were any issues with the protest on Saturday. Chief Lowrey stated that there was one person opposite of the tone of the protest, as well as one merchant upset with participants taking up their parking lot. He stated the protests have been very manageable and peaceful. He stated they may look at rewording in the Public Assembly Event permit application with a level of accountability.

Dr. Montgomery thanked EPD for their efforts Saturday. He asked for clarification regarding the cadet program.

Mr. Jim Bent, Affordable Housing Chair to update on Affordable Housing Program.

Mr. Jim Bent was present to discuss the Affordable Housing program. He stated they are still trying to find a buyer for the Locust Street property as some that are interested have credit issues. Mr. Bent discussed the renovation application log. He stated there have been 55

renovations completed in town, three applications under consideration, and three are being reviewed with a total of \$438,000 in renovations, and 45 grants which are repaid if the house is sold.

Mr. Bent stated there are 14 lots at Chapel Farms which could be considered for workforce housing.

He discussed the \$6000 grant for down payment for a first home purchase in Easton for EVFD, EU and Town of Easton employees.

Public Hearing.

5:35PM - PUBLIC HEARING to obtain the views of citizens regarding Ord. 846, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO CARRY FORWARD CERTAIN CAPITAL FUND EXPENDITURES INTO FISCAL YEAR 2026."

At 6:12 p.m., Pres. Abbatiello opened the 5:35 p.m., scheduled public hearing.

Mr. Kitzrow discussed the carry forward transfer.

There were no comments.

At 6:14 p.m., Pres. Abbatiello closed the public hearing.

Legislation.

Ord. 845, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO AMEND THE TOWN OF EASTON CODE CHAPTER 17, ARTICLE X, SCHOOL ZONES, TO ESTABLISH A SCHOOL ZONE FOR ST. PETER AND PAUL HIGH SCHOOL WITHIN THE TOWN AND TO AMEND ARTICLE XI, SPEED MONITORING SYSTEMS, TO IMPLEMENT TIERED FINES IN ACCORDANCE WITH 2025 MARYLAND HOUSE BILL 182."

Pres. Abbatiello brought Ord. 845 to the floor for a first reading. The Town Attorney discussed the draft legislation. Pres. Abbatiello set the Public Hearing for October 20, 2025 at 5:35 p.m.

Ord. 846, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO CARRY FORWARD CERTAIN CAPITAL FUND EXPENDITURES INTO FISCAL YEAR 2026."

Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, Ord. 846 was approved.

Review of Invoices.

Review of invoices from September 2025 totaling \$1,996,697.10.

Upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, invoices totaling \$1,996,697.10 were approved.

Public Participation/Comments.

Ms. Erin Dawson, lives in Talbot County and stated she cares very deeply about the town's political climate. She said she perceives it as very hostile. Ms. Dawson stated she is here out of love for our community. She asked the town to stand in solidarity with Chicago and assist those facing specific challenges like immigration raids.

Committee Reports by Members of the Council.

Ms. Curry echoed Mayor Cook's kudos to EEDC for hosting the MD Main Street Conference. She offered thanks to everyone.

Dr. Montgomery was an advisory committee member for the Mid-Shore Agricultural Extension 4-H Program. He stated he was delighted to see archery and shooting programs kids can get involved in as well as other programs.

Items by Members of the Council.

Ms. Curry thanked the residents at Easton Village for attending a meeting in which they discussed updates for the Town of Easton. She stated her Ward's Town Hall meeting at EVFD in one week, October 27 at 7:00 p.m.

Mr. Rankin thanked Ms. Dawson for presenting her comments. He stated at the last meeting we heard about Engage Easton. Last week it launched, and now the public can access it. He thanked Dr.

Montgomery for the town table at the Prayer Breakfast. Mr. Rankin stated he had the pleasure of attending the library's centennial gala celebration.

Dr. Montgomery was very grateful to attend the Community Prayer Breakfast. He stated that this year they added more seating. Dr. Montgomery stated it was good fellowship and an inspiring program.

Rev. Davis stated that on October 23, at 7 p.m., he will host his Ward's Town Hall meeting. He thanked Ms. Dawson for her comments. Rev. Davis stated that on October 25, the ribbon cutting for EVFD's training facility will take place. He stated there is so many good things going on. He encouraged citizens to come out to the town's events and participate. Dec 6 is Easton's Christmas Parade and Santa Claus is coming to town!

Pres. Abbatiello thanked Dr. Montgomery for the invitation to the Prayer Breakfast. He thanked Ms. Dawson for her comments and urged the community to help those in need.

President Abbatiello stated that Halloween is October 31, 6–8 p.m.

Adjournment.

At 6:38 p.m., upon motion by Rev. Davis seconded by Mr. Rankin and carried unanimously, President Abbatiello adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk