Town Council
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, October 4, 2021 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

4:30 PM WORKSHOP: Zoning Ordinance and Map.

Mayor Robert C. Willey
Mr. Al Silverstein
Mr. Don Abbatiello
Mr. Ron Engle
Rev. Elmer Davis
President Megan Cook

Also present was the Town Manager Mr. Don Richardson, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburgh, and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

At 4:30 p.m., President Cook called the workshop meeting to order.
Mr. Thomas discussed changes proposed from the current Zoning Ordinance; 2 in Sign Chapter and 2 in Administration.
Ms. Kelly Pezor, Chair of Easton Historic District, stated they are not looking to dictate what people put in their windows but have con concerns about the amount put in the windows and the lights. She stated they are looking to keep the complimentary flow in the window.
It was discussed how to limit or measure the brightness.
Ms. Pezor asked if she could do some work on this topic.
Mr. Thomas discussed the proposal under 11-11 one specific scenario where multiple businesses occupy one building.
Reasonable limits on free speech signs was discussed. The Town Attorney stated that there can be limits.
Mr. Thomas brought Article 12, 13 and 14 to the floor. He stated that Article 12 has no substantive changes. Article 13 discussed the appeal process relative to the Board of Appeals. The Town Attorney stated that the change would be based on the record before the Historic District Commission.
The Board of Appeals process was discussed. It was the consensus that if there is new evidence, it should be disclosed to the Board of Appeals.
Mayor Willey asked that something be in the Zoning Ordinance regarding developers' contributions for affordable/moderate housing.
Mr. Thomas discussed moving forward with the changes the council is proposing to make. He stated he could relay the proposed revised documents then schedule a hearing.
President Cook proposed taking out the three-day time limit for flags and bunting.
President Cook scheduled the subsequent workshop for November 1 at 5:45 p.m.
At 5:29 p.m., President Cook adjourned the workshop meeting.

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

At 05:30 PM, President Cook called the meeting to order.
President Cook stated that the council met earlier today prior to the regular meeting in a workshop to discuss the Zoning Ordinance.

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

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

Approval of Minutes of September 20, 2021 meetings.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, minutes of the September 20, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

Items by the Mayor.

Mayor Willey stated that the Mayor's Prayer breakfast tickets are available.
Mayor Willey stated that Councilmember Rev. Davis has submitted a policy for recruits for the police department.

Items by the Town Manager.

Res. No. 6144

Mr. Richardson discussed Newport's request for updates for regulatory and legislative requirements from the IRS for cycle 3 updates for the Town's Defined Contribution 451 Plan.

Public Assembly Permits

50th Annual Waterfowl Festival: 11/11 - 11/14, 10AM - 5PM

Mr. Richardson discussed WFF's Premier Night November 11 4-9pm.
Mayor Willey stated that a letter was sent responding to the open container request. He stated that the letter had stated that the town was not interested in this request.
Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, the Public Assembly Event was approved.

Items by the Town Attorney.

The Town Attorney stated she had nothing at this time. There were no questions for Mrs. VanEmburgh.

5:35 PM PUBLIC HEARING to obtain the views of citizens on community, economic development, and housing needs and the improvement to the Doverbrook Apartments and the addition to the existing community building. This will be part demolition and part new construction. The grant application to be considered for submission is to the Maryland Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG).

At 5:39 p.m., President Cook opened the Public Hearing.
Mr. Donald Bibb, Executive Director, was present to ask for support for the Doverbrook project. He stated they have been working on the proposal for some time. He stated the project includes demolition as well as 64 units.
Mr. Patrick Bateman, Developer, Pennrose LLC, present this evening, stated that the funding will be used for the full renovation of the project and the community room.
Mr. Bateman stated the project will be sustainable and certified under energy star. Mr. Bateman stated they are very excited to work with the team and reiterated that they have been working on this for a long time. He discussed the schedule as well as the timeline and stated that they project completion May 2023
Mr. Bateman asked for comments.
Mr. Silverstein discussed being handicapped accessible.
Mr. Bibb discussed relocation costs which have been budgeted in the proposal.
Mr. Bateman stated that having to relocate everyone is a challenge in this rental market.
Mr. Bibb discussed a tenant protected voucher and discussions with HUD. He stated the vouchers are portable.
Rev. Davis asked if Mr. Bibb would come back and update on relocations of residents.
The local limited rental stock was discussed.
President Cook asked for public comments. There were none.
At 5:56 p.m., President Cook closed the 5:35 p.m. scheduled public hearing.

Res. No. 6142 authorizing the execution of any and all documents required for the submission of any CDBG applications.

Upon motion by Mr. Abbatiello seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, Res. No. 6142 authorizing the execution of any and all documents required for the submission of any CDBG applications was approved following a roll call vote.

Res. No. 6143 authorizing the submittal of an application for Community Development Block Grant funds in the amount of $800,000.

Upon motion by Mr. Engle seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, Res. No. 6143 authorizing the submittal of an application for CDBG funds in the amount of $800,000 was approved.

2021 Waterfowl Festival.

Ms. Margaret Enloe-North to address council requesting approval of Food Vendors and Transportation Plan.

Ms. Enloe-North was present and discussed the 50th Waterfowl Festival transportation plan and the food vendors. She stated that there are not as many food vendors as usual but there has not been much change since 2019. Ms. Enloe-North stated that they believe they have really good coverage and it's pretty much business as usual on the transportation plan and food vendors.
Mr. Silverstein asked if Premier Night will be held at the Tidewater this year.
President Cook discussed No Parking constraints. Ms. Enloe-North discussed going door-to-door to residents.
Ms. Enloe-North stated that WFF understands the open container regulations.

Mr. Silverstein thanked Ms. Enloe-North and asked her to have a great Waterfowl.

Police Board.

Mr. Silverstein discussed a motion he brought forth nominating Rev. Davis for the Chair of the Police Board under the current ordinance. He stated he would like to put that back on the floor and make that nomination again.
President Cook stated she is not against that but Ordinance No. 769 is forthcoming.
Mr. Silverstein stated that his motion supersedes and he is absolutely not going to support the next Ordinance. He stated he is still looking at Resolution No. 6005 where the council is the Police Board.
Mr. Abbatiello stated he supports Rev. Davis as Chair of the Police Board and has questions regarding Ordinance No. 769.
Rev. Davis seconded Mr. Silverstein's motion for the appointment of Chair of the Police Board.
The motion was moved and seconded and unanimously passed.

Ordinance No. 769,

The President of the Council stated that the idea of creating Ordinance No. 769 was to move the Police Board away from the Council meetings and create a board much like the other Boards and Commissions. President Cook stated there is a lot coming down from the state and federal level and the chief can come quarterly and address the council.
Mr. Silverstein discussed the changes that would occur with the proposed legislation. He stated that he does not want to take power away from the council as there is great expertise on the council. He stated he would not vote in favor of Ordinance No. 769.
Rev. Davis stated that there needs to be accountability across the board and people need to see that the council is moving forward. He stated he was not involved in all these different resolutions and it's not his problem that the Ordinance has not changed and they should use what's on the table and not take the power away from the council. He stated he felt he was the problem and was told he couldn't do certain things. Rev. Davis stated that the community needs to see that they are supportive. He discussed Mayor Willey requesting an actuarial study for retirement. He stated that the police department needs to be equipped with the best that we have and this is an opportunity for citizens to be a part of hiring. Rev. Davis stated that now is the time for change and some people here send him rules and regulations and don't want change and that is frustrating, He discussed the knowledge of the council. He stated that he believes that the council can give and equip the police officers with the best tools that we have. Rev. Davis stated that now is the time for change as it's for the betterment of the agency.
President Cook stated that the Police Board would be citizens who report to the council.
Mr.Abbatiello asked what changes there are for the council.
The Town Attorney stated that the change would be there would be four citizens as the board and one councilmember as the chair similar to the other boards which are made of citizens which are what most other jurisdictions do for the police board.
Mr. Engle stated he recently forwarded a proposal regarding the Board. He stated he is opposed to a police board of citizens and one councilmember. He thinks it is deluding the police board and the council needs to have a say. Mr. Engle stated that the police department is loosing employees that are going to other departments. He wants to be able to bring things up and address concerns.
Mr. Abbatiello stated the council is accountable to the voters.
Rev. Davis discussed how black and brown people are being treated and stated that he is committed to enhancing the quality of life that every person the police come in contact with. He stated that this is a proactive approach for the betterment of the community.
Mr. Silverstein stated that the council has a fiduciary responsibility to ensure the funds are being spent wisely.
The Town Attorney stated Ordinance No. 769 is not eligible for a vote.
Discussion occurred regarding an updated ordinance.

Ordinance No. 770,

President Cook brought Ordinance No. 770 to the floor for introduction.

Resolution No. 6144

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6144 was approved following a roll call vote.

Review of invoices totaling $1,032,018.40.

Upon motion by Mr. Engle seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, review of invoices totaling $1,032,018.40 was approved.

Public Comments.

There were no public comments.
Mayor Willey stated that the contract for the new EVFD pumper was signed last week and should be

here the end of next year.
Mayor Willey discussed the letter from the state regarding the loan for the BAMM organization for $500,000.
Mayor Willey stated the gathering at the mural was very well done.
Mr. Silverstein asked for an update from BAMM regarding their CDBG loan.

Items by Members of the Council:

Mr. Silverstein volunteered at the Beer Fest. It stated it was well done and he congratulated the EVFD.
Mr. Abbatiello stated that EVFD buried Rose Miles, one of the first women in EVFD to become a life member which means she served 20 years as an active responder to the community and as a great testament to her, there are currently 10 members in EVFD that hold positions and committee chairs.

CLOSED SESSION: General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(1)

At 6:34 p.m. upon motion from Mr. Silverstein seconded by Mr. Enbgvleand carried unanimously, President Cook convened into Closed Session for General Provisions Article 3-305(b) (1); to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

At 6:40 p.m., upon unanimous consensus, President Cook re-convened into Open Session.

Adjournment.

At 6:41 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, President Cook adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk