



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, October 18, 2021 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

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

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

Roll Call.

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

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

Councilmember Abbatiello was excused.

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilmember Al Silverstein.

Mr. Silverstein gave opening remarks and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Cook read a statement regarding the Closed Session held at the October 4, 2021 meeting regarding 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 public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals. Present at the Closed Session was Mayor Robert C. Willey, Town Manager Mr. Donald Richardson, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, Council President Mrs. Megan Cook, Council members Mr. Al Silverstein, Mr. Donald Abbatiello, Mr. Ron Engle and Rev. Elmer Davis and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy Ruf.

Approval of Minutes.

Approval of minutes from October 4, 2021 meetings.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, minutes of the October 4, 2021 meeting were approved as written.

Approval of minutes for October 11, 2021 meeting.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, minutes of the October 4, 2021 meetings were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Mayor:

Discussion of Police Cadet Program.

Mayor Willey discussed Maryland Department of Transportation approval for another portion of the rails-to-trails.

Mayor Willey stated that there were 20 applications for officers and seven new Easton Police Department recruits that showed up for final testing.

Mayor Willey discussed the draft cadet policy. He stated that a budget appropriation would need to be considered and legislation drafted for the amended budget. He suggested hiring one cadet to get the program started.

Mayor Willey stated that Governor Hogan was in town today to view the Frederick Douglass Mural on the rails-to-trails.

Town Manager:

Proposed Dog Park

Mr. Richardson, Town Manager, discussed a recommendation from the Park Board regarding

the dog park to be located at Brewer's Lane. He stated they recommended a park of approximately 100' x 60' in the location at Brewer's Lane at a cost of \$200,000 split in 3 ways; Town of Easton, grant sources and donations. He stated that the recommendation is for the park to be open until 8:00 p.m. One park Board member rescinded his vote but there is still a majority in favor. Discussion occurred regarding staff. President Cook stated there would be no staff at the park. Mr. Richardson stated that the money should be held at the Town of Easton and not at MSCF. Mr. Silverstein agreed. Discussion occurred regarding liability and maintenance. Mr. Silverstein stated that it should be understood that the town is taking on the liability and maintenance. Mr. Silverstein discussed the possibility of having an additional dog park at the Popular Hill development.

Upon motion by Mr. Engle, seconded by President Cook and carried unanimously, the recommendation from the Park Board was approved.

Mr. Richardson stated he has two capital projects he'd like to make the council aware of. The purchase will be for two vehicles; Escapes, from Hertrich Ford. They will be for the Building and Facilities and one for Code Enforcement in the amounts of \$34,327, \$31,747.

Mr. Richardson discussed the Easton Paving Schedule. He stated that the schedule is ambitious and asked the citizens to be patient as the streets are improved. Mr. Richardson stated that the Public Works crew is in leaf season collection.

President Cook reminded residents not to rake their leaves in the streets.

Town Attorney:

Mrs. VanEmburch stated she will have information regarding redistricting for the next meeting.

Old Business

Approval of 2021 Waterfowl Festival Transportation Plan.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously the 2021 Waterfowl Festival Transportation Plan as recommended by the Easton Police Department was approved.

Approval of Waterfowl Festival Food Vendors.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, the Food Vendors for the Waterfowl Festival was approved.

Ordinance No. 770, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF EASTON TO ACCEPT FLOOD AVENUE FROM TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND."

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, Ordinance No. 770, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF EASTON TO ACCEPT FLOOD AVENUE FROM TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND" was approved.

Airport Obstruction Removal Program and Request regarding Forest Conservation Ordinance.

Mr. Micah Risher, Easton Airport Manager, stated he is present to move the ball a little down the field on the project. He discussed keeping the clearing of obstruction project moving forward. Mr. Risher stated they were prepared to pay fee in lieu but the Code will not allow that. He stated that the clearing is mandated by the Federal Government for safety requirements. Mr. Risher asked that the Code be amended and remove four words. He stated that Easton is the only airport in the state to collect fees. He discussed the county council's request to have the Code amended. Mr. Risher stated that the trees to be removed are not on the Airport property.

President Cook asked for further clarification.

Mr. Risher stated that in the Code if more than 40,000 sq. feet area is to be disturbed, the Airport is required to mitigate. He discussed getting funding from the state and not moving forward. He discussed the possibility of emergencies and the necessity of fixing this issue. President Cook stated that the Town is not diminishing the problem. She discussed the responsibility to the citizens.

Mr. Risher discussed economic impacts.

Mr. Silverstein asked if there is an exemption process and if we have accepted fee in lieu in the past.

The Town Attorney discussed the timeline for the approvals. She discussed the requirements for the town and the hierarchy for planting trees.

Town Manager Mr. Richardson discussed the options.

Mr. Silverstein made a motion to accept a fee in lieu for this portion of the project; just the

Commerce Park portion, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously. President Cook asked if the governing body can be updated, and informed down the pike, the fees paid and the grading permit issued. President Cook asked Mr. Risher to let the community and residents know when the changes will occur to their neighborhood. He discussed Phase 3. Mr. Silverstein would like a dialogue with the county regarding land to plant the trees. Rev. Davis agreed that the county needs to be partakers in responsibility with everyone on board.

New Business

Ordinance No. 769, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING PORTIONS OF ARTICLE II OF CHAPTER 2 REGARDING THE POLICE BOARD."

President Cook brought Ord. 769 to the floor for a first reading. She stated this legislation changes the meeting times and changes the pronouns.

Mr. Silverstein clarified the changes in the ordinance.

President Cook set the public hearing for November 1.

Ordinance No. 771, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF EASTON TO ACCEPT A 60 FEET WIDE RIGHT-OF-WAY THAT IS CALVERT STREET EXTENDED AND 75 FEET WIDE RIGHT-OF-WAY EXTENDING FROM U.S. ROUTE 50 FROM THE ESTATE OF NORRIS E. TAYLOR."

President Cook brought Ordinance No. 771 to the floor for a first reading.

President Cook set the Public Hearing for October 25, at 5:30 p.m.

Resolution No. 6145, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON FOR THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT AND RESPONDING TO NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS - FUTURE DISTRIBUTIONS."

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6145, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF was approved.

Public Participation/Comments.

There were no comments.

Items by Members of the Council:

Mr. Silverstein stated he recently had an opportunity to attend Habitat for Humanity ribbon cutting.

Adjournment.

At 6:18 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by President Cook and carried unanimously, President Cook adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk