

## Code Revision Workshop

**Date:** April 20, 2026 **Time:** 4:30 p.m. **Location:** Council Chambers, Easton Town Office, 14 S Harrison Street, Easton.

**Attendees:** Present were: Mayor Megan JM Cook, President Don Abbatiello, Councilmembers Ms. Maureen Curry, Mr. Robert Rankin, Dr. David Montgomery, and Rev. Davis. Also, present were the Town Attorney Ms. Sharon VanEmburch, Town Manager Mr. Andy Kitzrow and Town Clerk Ms. Kathy Ruf.

**Focus:** Revision of Chapters 16-21 of the Town Code.

1. Main Topics Discussed
  - Ordinance and Code Chapter Revisions
2. Action Items
3. Follow-Up Items

### 1. Overview

The Town of Easton held a workshop focused on revising several chapters of the Town Code, targeting clean-up of outdated language, improvement of enforcement clarity, and adaptation to current community needs. The regular council meeting followed, encompassing event permits, project reports, public comments, legislative actions, and an executive session to discuss significant development news.

### 2. Main Topics Discussed

#### 2.1 Ordinance and Code Chapter Revisions

Chapters Covered:

- Chapters 16 (Litter Control), 17 (Motor Vehicles and Traffic), 18 (Miscellaneous Offenses)
- Deletion of Chapter 20 and 21 (Town Code clean-up; rat control and pinball machines already covered elsewhere or obsolete)

Key Points:

#### A. Litter Control (Chapter 16)

- **Penalty Provisions Consistency:** Penalties for infractions now refer back to Section 18 for centralized fine schedule, updated by resolution not code amendment.
- **License Suspension Language Removed:** Removed obsolete/unlawful provision allowing suspension of licenses for littering violations.
- **"Pooper Scooper" Discussion:** Consideration to classify not cleaning up after dogs as "litter," possible expansion of litter definition to include animal waste; matter earmarked for further language review.
- **Jurisdiction Clarity:** Language revised to clarify that code applies to actions within town limits, not referencing county/city generically.

#### B. Motor Vehicles and Traffic (Chapter 17)

- **Definitions Updated:** Added "motor truck" definition from state code—discussion of whether towing/pulling vehicles are included; suggestion to clarify with "carry or pull property" and potential weight limit (8,000 lbs. suggested as threshold).
- **Gender-neutral & Modernized Language:** Replaced outdated terms (e.g., "policeman"), removed references to "ridden or herded animals."

- Public Notice of Regulations: Replaced print newspaper notice with mandatory website posting for new traffic regulations; explored Engage Easton and KGC as potential additional channels.
- State Law Overlap: Elimination of redundant local DUI language (state law prevails).
- Traffic Regulation Authority: Town engineer (in consultation with chief of police) given authority for routine/signage changes with council notification; significant changes (e.g., stop signs, lights) may still require council input.
- Parking Enforcement Changes:
  - Shifted decision-making for no parking zones, fire lanes, and temporary parking to town engineer/chief/code official.
  - Updated permit issuing authority to town office; council retains fee-setting authority.
  - Removed specific requirements (e.g., parking stickers, metered references).
  - Adjusted regulations for fire lanes (no longer requiring fire/police board recommendations for routine designations).
  - Snow emergency responsibility shifted to town engineer and chief/designee.
  - Snow emergency route expansion: Added Port Street from Parkway to Washington Street.
  - Deleted Nighttime Truck Regulation (Article 6) due to lack of relevance or complaints.
- Abandoned/Inoperable Vehicle Provisions: Clarified responsibility for removal; code enforcement officer now named as responsible agent; penalty and cost responsibility made explicit.
- Residential Parking Procedures: Codified process for residential permits via town office; empowered town manager to set procedures.

### C. Miscellaneous Offenses (Chapter 18)

- Outdated Prohibitions: Removed fortune telling ban as legally unenforceable; left hospital area noise regulation in place pending hospital status.
- Halloween/Masks Regulation:
  - Existing prohibition on persons over 12 in masks and over-12 trick-or-treating during Halloween observed to be rarely enforced; suggestion to clarify "mask" definition and tie trick-or-treating ban to official hours instead of age.
  - No consensus to change current language at this time; officers encouraged to use discretion.
- Other Outdated or Duplicated Sections:
  - Obscene show prohibitions retained but to be covered under Adult Business chapter.
  - Discussion on "throwing missiles" (snowballs, baseballs, etc.)—to be reconsidered in context of other relevant sections; likely to remove outdated language.
  - Shirtless in parks prohibition deleted.
- Alcohol Consumption Exception: Added provision to allow open container in public spaces with prior town approval (e.g., special events).
- Animals in Parks: Policy change—pets only allowed where signage specifically permits; town to ensure proper public notice in parks.

- Penalty References Standardized: Throughout chapters, penalty language now refers to central code section; fine amounts not embedded in ordinance text.

#### D. Other Code Topics

- Pinball Machines/Rat Control: Sections deleted and/or referenced in existing property maintenance code.
- Public Assembly Permits: No substantive changes made, but consensus to bifurcate permit types (First Amendment events vs. special commercial/community events); need for improved fee schedules and defined enforcement/ineligibility provisions flagged for follow-up work.
- Code Revisions
  - Research and draft revised definitions for "motor truck," possibly including weight thresholds and clarifying passenger/personal truck exception.
  - Include animal waste (dog droppings, etc.) in definition of "litter" for enforcement; draft language for review.
  - Standardize penalty/fine schedules and reference in all relevant code sections.
  - Update mask ordinance with clear definitions if maintained; review alignment with health protocols (post-COVID environment).

At 5:24 p.m., President Abbatiello adjourned the workshop.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk

## Town Council Meeting

Date: April 20, 2026 Time: 5:30 p.m. Location: Council Chambers, Easton Town Office, 14 S Harrison Street.

Attendees: Present were: Mayor Megan JM Cook, President Don Abbatiello, Councilmembers Ms. Maureen Curry, Mr. Robert Rankin, Dr. David Montgomery, and Rev. Elmer Davis. Also, present were the Town Attorney Ms. Sharon VanEmburch, Town Manager Mr. Andy Kitzrow, Chief of Police Alan Lowrey, Town Engineer Rick VanEmburch and Town Clerk Ms. Kathy Ruf.

### 1. Opening and Procedural Business

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

#### 1.1 Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

- Led by Councilmember Ms. Curry, expressing gratitude for the sacrifices of soldiers and reaffirmation of national values. She led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### 1.2 Approval of Minutes

- April 2, 2026 Budget Workshop and April 6, 2026 Council Meeting minutes submitted for approval.
  - Councilmember Rankin and Town Attorney VanEmburch requested to be marked as absent for the April 2 workshop.
  - Upon motion by Ms. Curry seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, minutes of the April 2 and April 6, 2026 meetings were approved as amended.

### 2. Main Topics Discussed by Mayor Cook.

#### 2.1 Community & Civic Updates

##### 2.1.1 Charrette and Comprehensive Plan Engagement

- The charrette for the hospital site redevelopment began the previous night at the Easton Church of God's Family Life Center.
  - Attendance: Estimated 60-70 participants and moderators.
  - Event ongoing nightly at 6 p.m. with "pinups"; daily work uploaded to Engage Eastern for public viewing.
  - Final presentation scheduled for Thursday evening.
- Concerns raised regarding references to Poplar Hill in the Comprehensive Plan, especially from Oxford Road residents, requesting those paragraphs be struck from the final document.

##### 2.1.2 Local Events and Initiatives

- Taste of Easton: April 26, 1–4 p.m. at the Tidewater Inn, organized by EEDC. Less than 40 tickets remaining. Marks the start of Restaurant Week (the following week).
- Talbot Day: Celebrated at the courthouse after Taste of Easton, at 4 p.m.
- Tidy Up Talbot: Successful community litter pickup with significant participation from the Country School and Shore Rivers along the Rail to Trail.
- Ward/Town Hall Meetings: Scheduled to gather input on the Comprehensive Plan, budget, and other issues.
  - May 6 (Ward 4), May 11 (Ward 1), May 12 (Mr. Rankin), May 13 (Dr. Montgomery) - all at 7 p.m. Rev. Davis and Ms. Curry committed their attendance, with promotions forthcoming via social media and press.

##### 2.1.3 Infrastructure & Public Works

- Traffic Signal Project: Upgrades underway at North Washington and Harrison, including new pedestrian signals. Project expected to last a few more weeks.
- East End Storm Drain Improvement: Partial tree planting complete; remainder scheduled in upcoming weeks. Major flooding issue addressed by this project.
- Golton Ribbon Cutting: Rescheduled event now set for May 5th at 11 a.m.

## 2.2 Approval for Public Assemblies and Permits from Town Manager Andy Kitzrow.

### 2.2.1 Multicultural Festival

- Date: May 2nd, 2026; Location: Idlewild Park.
- Estimated 500–1,000 attendees.
- No concerns or additional costs. Special request for amplified music.
- Upon motion by Dr. Montgomery, seconded by Rev. Davis, and carried unanimously, the Multicultural Festival was approved.

### 2.2.2 Parade Honoring Colonel Tench Tilghman

- Date: October 24, 2026; Time: 9–10 a.m.
- Route: Lot 3 off Washington St. → Goldsboro St. → Hanson St. → Spring Hill Cemetery.
- Traffic control and street closures requested.
- Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Dr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, the Parade Honoring Colonel Tench Tilghman was approved.

## 2.3 5:35 PM PUBLIC HEARING to receive comments on Ordinance No. 852, “AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING CHAPTER 24 OF THE TOWN OF EASTON CODE TO ADD ARTICLE V REGARDING ACCESSIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES IN THE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY.”

At 5:43 p.m., President Abbatiello opened the scheduled public hearing. The Town Attorney Ms. VanEmburch gave the history of the ordinance. At 5:44 p.m., President Abbatiello asked for Public Comments. There were none. At 5:45 p.m., President Abbatiello closed the Public Hearing.

## Legislation: Ordinances and Resolutions

### 2.3.1 Ordinance No. 852 – Accessibility Guidelines (ADA)

- Amends Town Code Chapter 24, adds Article 5: Accessibility guidelines for pedestrian facilities in the public right-of-way (per federal & state ADA requirements).
  - Applies to both private developers and town projects.
- Public hearing held; no public comments submitted.
- Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by President Abbatiello and carried unanimously, Ordinance No. 852 was approved.

### 2.3.2 Ordinance No. 853 – Lead Service Line Inventory/Loan

- Authorizes Eastern Utilities to apply for/project funding:
  - Mixed loan (10 years at 1.1% interest) and a forgivable grant.
  - Purpose: Complete federally-mandated inventory of water line materials (focus on identifying/confirming lack of lead pipes).
  - Easton records indicate no post-1972 lead pipes. Inventory will verify remaining unknown service line material—reducing invasive digging via predictive modeling.
  - Predicted verification digs: 600 out of 3,000 unverified lines.
  - Data includes customer-submitted home plumbing surveys.
- Upon motion by Mr. Montgomery, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, Ordinance No. 853 was approved.

### 2.3.3 Resolution No. 6217 – Mobile Food Truck Pilot Extension

- Extends the pilot program for mobile food truck use.
- New language EXEMPTS food trucks serving private events (e.g., catering) from standard restrictions.
- Upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Dr. Montgomery and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6217 was approved.

### 2.3.4 Resolution No. 6219 – Encroachment Agreement (521 August St.)

- Authorizes license agreement for a private parking space on public (Park St.) right-of-way for benefit of 521 August St.
  - Space already constructed; Council had opportunity to view prior to vote.
  - Addressed procedural concerns about post-construction approval.
- Upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6219 was approved.

### 2.3.5 Resolution No. 6221 – 2026 Comprehensive Plan Adoption

- Public hearing remains open; NO VOTE at this meeting.

## 2.4 Presentations

### 2.4.1 Ryder Cario – Internship with Town Engineering Dept.

- Participant: 11th grader at Easton HS, in CTE (Career & Technical Education), interested in engineering.
- Project: East Avenue Storm Drain Improvement. Involved OSHA safety, survey/design, construction logistics, runoff analysis.
- Deliverable: Produced a 12-minute educational video (summary played at meeting) explaining project conditions, flooding issues, solutions, and outcomes.
- Video available on YouTube; council praised depth and educational value.

## 2.5 Financial and Administrative

### 2.5.1 Invoice Approval

- Invoices Total: \$1,279,181.20
- Upon motion by Dr. Montgomery, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, invoices totaling \$1,279,181.20 were approved.

## 2.6 Committee and Member Reports

### 2.6.1 Ms. Curry discussed Taste of Easton & Restaurant Week

- Taste of Easton promoted as Restaurant Week kickoff. Emphasis on supporting local businesses after a challenging first quarter for downtown establishments.

### 2.6.2 Mr. Rankin discussed the Library Board/Proclamation

- Grand re-opening of St. Michael's Library recently held.
- Shauna Beulah, long-time staff member, is retiring. A proclamation to be read at Talbot County Council meeting on April 29, 2026.

### 2.6.3 Public Participation in Charrette & Comprehensive Plan

- Continued emphasis from several councilmembers on value of public comment/input for the hospital site redevelopment and Comprehensive Plan updates.
  - Engage Easton provides online written submission opportunities for those unable to attend in person.
  - Some public skepticism noted; council clarified the importance of input.

### 3. Action Items

- Comprehensive Plan: Council and staff to continue soliciting public input. Specific concerns from Oxford Road residents regarding Poplar Hill to be further discussed and resolved before plan adoption.
- Charrette Engagement: Ongoing community engagement for hospital site charrette throughout the week, with final presentation Thursday and facilitation by Engage Eastern.
- Ward Meetings: Additional promotion and scheduling of town/ward hall meetings in May for resident input on key issues.
- Tree Planting/Storm Drain Project: Complete second half of tree plantings in East End neighborhood as soon as scheduling allows.
- Public Communications: Increased outreach needed for event schedules, civic issues (social media, press releases, signage).

4. Closed Session: Held at meeting conclusion under Article 3-305B4 for pending business/industrial proposals.

### 5. Adjournment & Closed Session

- At 6:04 p.m., upon motion by Dr. Montgomery, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, President Abbatiello moved into Closed Session under General Provisions Article 3-305B4 after conclusion of public business.
- At 6:12 p.m., upon motion by Ms. Curry, seconded by Mr. Rankin and carried unanimously, President Abbatiello adjourned the Closed Session and moved back into Open Session.
- At 6:12 p.m., upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Ms. Curry and carried unanimously, President Abbatiello adjourned the Regularly Scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk