



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, July 18, 2022 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

4:30 PM Workshop to discuss Ord. 784, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON PROHIBITING RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE TOWN FROM PROVIDING CUSTOMERS WITH SINGLE USE DISPOSABLE PLASTIC BAGS AND PROVIDING FOR EXEMPTIONS FROM THE PROHIBITION AND PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS."

4:30 President Cook opened the scheduled workshop with the following members present:

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 VanEmburch, and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

President Cook stated that the workshop is necessary to give the Town Attorney direction to help with the ordinance. She stated that Amy Kreiner from the Chamber, Holly Dekarske from EEDC, Plastic Free Easton, Mr. Melvin Thompson from the Restaurant Association and Mrs. Price from Maryland Retailers had been invited although Mrs. Price is not able to attend, but will watch the meeting online and get back with comments. President Cook stated that attendees are here as resources as this is a meeting of discussion amongst council members. President Cook stated that she would like to discuss the definition of reusable bags, compliance or enforcement, and if there needs to be a charge for paper bags, restaurant use and a timeline if the ordinance should pass.

The Town Attorney stated that the prohibition is on the store providing. She stated that customers can bring in their own plastic bags.

Mr. Silverstein stated that Wal-Mart is looking at paper bags. He also stated that due to COVID, we did a lot for the restaurant business. They should be exempt from not using plastic bags. He stated he would like to exempt delivery of food and beverages.

President Cook stated there are restaurants that already use paper bags.

Mr. Engle and Mr. Abbatiello agreed that restaurants should be exempt.

Discussion occurred about how convenience stores and take-out restaurants would be considered. Definitions were discussed.

Rev. Davis stated he thinks restaurants should be exempt and those other entities with food products.

Mr. Abbatiello stated he doesn't want to see loopholes in the legislation.

Mr. Engle stated it is not the government's role to mandate charging for paper bags.

Mr. Abbatiello stated that we should be trying to limit paper bags as well.

Rev. Davis stated that it is not the police department's responsibility to enforce businesses using paper bags.

Mr. Silverstein stated the government should not mandate businesses to charge for bags. It is up to business.

Rev. Davis stated that the onerous should be on the business. He questioned how it will be enforced.

Mr. Silverstein stated that consideration should be given to all consumers.

Rev. Davis discussed an educational component to educate consumers.

The timeline decided on was six months from the date of signing; March 1.

Rev. Davis stated that partnership and education are key.

President Cook discussed compliance. It was the consensus to consider compliance from a complaint. Rev. Davis suggested Plastic Free Easton keep the Town informed when businesses are not compliant.

The Town Manager stated a complaint base system would be the best option.

Mayor Willey stated that Code Enforcement already can't keep up with inspections now.

Mr. Abbatiello asked that the exemptions be made easier to understand.

At 5:08 p.m., President Cook adjourned the workshop until the regularly scheduled 5:30 p.m. meeting.

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

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 VanEmburch, and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Silverstein.

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

Approval of Minutes.

Meeting minutes from 7/5/22.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, minutes of the July 5, 2022 meeting were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Willey.

Discussion of Memo of Understanding between the Town of Easton Maryland and Easton Village on the Tred Avon Community Association

Mayor Willey introduced Patrolman Corey Schuch. He stated that Patrolman Tyquan Wesley Beckett, a recent graduate, was not on duty but would be present at a later time.

Mayor Willey stated that September 24 is Frederick Douglass Day with a parade commencing at 10:00 a.m.

Mayor Willey discussed the MOUs with EVFD and Easton Village that are being drafted. He stated that the Town does not have the staff or resources to take on another park which is proposed for Easton Village so we are asking them to monitor the facility for approximately five years when an agreement is proposed.

Mayor Willey discussed a Girl Scout project the Park Board has approved that will be coming before the council.

Discussion of Memorandum of Understanding - Easton Volunteer Fire Department (EVFD) Training Facility and Operations at Easton Airport

Items by Town Manager.

Approval to accept bid for new Brush Chipper through SourceWell in the amount of \$75,179.96.

Upon motion by Mr. Engle seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, approval was granted to accept the bid for the new Brush Chipper in the amount of \$75,179.96. He stated there is \$76,000 allocated in the budget for this purchase.

Approval to accept bid for a new Altoz Track Mower from SourceWell in the amount of \$21,577.05.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, approval

was granted to accept the bid for a new Altoz Track Mower in the amount of \$21,577.05. He stated there is \$25,000 in the budget allocated for this purchase.

Public Assembly Event: BAAM Block Party - 8/28

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, the Public Assembly Event: BAAM Block Party on August 28 was approved.

Public Assembly Event: Carols by Candlelight - 11/26

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, Public Assembly Event: Carols by Candlelight on November 26 was approved with local food trucks. It was the consensus of the Council to approve Plan B.

Approval to secure USI Benefits Compensation to complete salary survey

Upon motion by Mr. Engle, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, the Council approved the recommendation of Rick Farr, Chief Human Resource Officer, to secure USI Benefits Compensation to complete a salary survey.

Approval to accept recommendation for Edmunds Software System

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, the recommendation of Assistant Finance Officer, Charles C. Connolly, III to accept the bid for Edmunds Software System was approved.

Discussion of Rural Economic Development Fund Application

Town Manager Don Richardson discussed applying for the Rural Economic Development Fund Application to fund the Port Street infrastructure project and the trail, which is a \$2.1 million project. Mr. Richardson stated the Town has asked for a \$1 million match. He stated the recommendation would be forwarded to Talbot County Council at their July 27 meeting.

Items by Town Attorney.

Comprehensive Review of Critical Area Program Ordinance No. 767 (*to set Public Hearing*).

The Town Attorney stated she has two items to bring before the Council. She discussed passing the updated Zoning Ordinance which was recently passed by the Council. She stated that the Critical Area Commission has asked that their revisions be incorporated into our Zoning Ordinance. Mrs. VanEmburch asked that a Public Hearing be set for August 15 at 5:35 p.m. President Cook confirmed the date and time.

Mrs. VanEmburch discussed the ESDR meeting scheduled for July 27. She stated that the meeting is open to the public but public comments will not be entertained. The items for discussion include the Poplar Hill Growth Allocation and PUD, Maryland Health Club and Four Seasons on Dutchman's Lane. She discussed the process for review and stated the meeting will be live streamed on the Town's website.

Mr. Silverstein asked for an update regarding Gannon's PUD which is being discussed at the County Council.

The Town Attorney stated the Town Council reviewed and approved the project. She stated that property did not have W1-S1 which would require an amendment to extend water and sewer to the property. The County would have to amend the Comprehensive Water and Sewer Plan and scheduled a subsequent public hearing.

Public Hearings.

cont'd. "ORDINANCE NO. 784, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON PROHIBITING RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE TOWN FROM PROVIDING CUSTOMERS WITH SINGLE USE DISPOSABLE PLASTIC BAGS AND PROVIDING FOR EXEMPTIONS FROM THE PROHIBITION AND PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS."

At 5:57 p.m., President Cook opened the continued public hearing. She stated we had workshop prior to this meeting regarding revisions to the Ordinance. President Cook asked for comments.

Mr. Richard Potter, 6077 Landing Neck Road, stated that NAACP stands with Easton Free Easton to ban plastic bags. He stated it is a moral obligation to keep the Chesapeake Bay free of microplastics. He discussed health issues and the challenge of plastic waste and microplastics. Mr. Potter stated he was glad to hear the discussion at the work session.

Ms. Mary Yancey, 333 N Washington Street, thanked the council for the work session. She stated she is concerned that the council is considering exempting businesses that sell prepared and deli foods especially convenience stores. Ms. Yancey asked if the council would consider an additional exemption for prepared and deli foods.

Ms. Marian Arnold, Ward 1, acknowledged PFE members. The main goal is eliminating as many plastic bags as possible. The goal is to reduce the impact of plastic bags. Ms. Arnold asked that the council think about convenience stores as small grocery stores.

President Cook stated the public hearing would be kept open thru to the next meeting.

5:35 PM PUBLIC HEARING, Ordinance No. 789, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF EASTON TO CREATE A RESIDENTIAL PARKING DISTRICT ALONG A PORTION OF HAMMOND STREET IN FRONT OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES AND FLOYD LANE, SOUTH SIDE IN FRONT OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES."

At 6:08 p.m., President Cook opened the public hearing regarding a residential parking district on a portion of Hammond Street.
President Cook asked for comments.

Town Manager, Mr. Richardson stated that the residential parking district had been modified due to comments at the last meeting. He stated these revisions have been reviewed by the dentist's office that was present previously.

Ms. Cecilia Potter, 318 Floyd Lane, asked for clarification.

Mr. Richardson discussed what a parking district is and what the legislation does for the residents.

Mayor Willey stated this really needs to be looked at, especially for visitors.

Rev. Davis stated this is a good ordinance for this neighborhood.

Ms. Potter discussed signage for one-way streets.
At 6:16 p.m., President Cook closed public the hearing.
eligible for vote.

Upon motion by Rev. Davis, seconded by Mr. Silverstein and carried unanimously, Ordinance No. 789 was approved.

Public Participation/Comments.

There were none.

Items by Members of the Council:

Mr. Silverstein discussed bike and pedestrian safety especially on rails-to-trails.

Mr. Abbatiello discussed the progress on rails-to-trails and community rails-to-trails linking to the downtown area. He discussed a safe means of getting around town without driving.

Mr. Engle discussed Seattle, which has bike lanes and pedestrian lanes. He stated that Plein Air had their opening this past weekend.

Rev. Davis likes the development that is coming but stated that the Town needs to improve the current rails-to-trails. Rev. Davis asked that everyone use due caution and be safe. Rev. Davis stated there are a lot of events and suggested looking at the website. He asked the community to contact councilmembers to provide assistance.

Adjournment.

At 6:21 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, President Cook adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk