



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, September 6, 2022 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

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.

At 05:30 PM, President Cook called the meeting to order.

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 of August 15, 2022.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, minutes of the August 15, 2022 meeting were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Willey.

Mayor Willey stated that a letter had been received by Talbot County Council in regards to the establishment of the Talbot County Police Accountability Board and Administrative Charging Committee. The letter also listed the members of the Talbot County Police Accountability Board.

Mayor Willey suggested a workshop prior to the next scheduled meeting and stated that during the MML Legislative Committee meeting, they decided they should direct their focus on the Police Accountability Board, combining police aid, Program Open Space, and federal and state shared funding.

Items by Town Manager.

Recommendation from Town Engineer for improvements to Kelly Gibson Street.

Mr. Richardson outlined the suggestions received from the Town Engineer which include removing the ballards and making a one-way street. Rev. Davis asked that the matter be tabled and revisited in six months. He asked for more enforcement and police checks in the area.

Items by Town Attorney.

Town Attorney, Mrs. VanEmburch stated she has nothing for this evening.

Presentations.

Ms. Geneva Schaffle, Emergency Management Coordinator, Talbot County Department of Emergency Services, to present Talbot County Hazard Mitigation and Community Resilience Plan.

Ms. Schaffle discussed the Talbot County Hazard Mitigation and Community Resilience Plan. She stated the plan is a federally mandated plan from FEMA that has to be updated and adopted every five years. She discussed the plan components. Ms. Schaffle stated they added new threats. Ms. Schaffle discussed the community engagement and the two-year planning process.

Mr. Richardson stated that participating in the Hazard Mitigation and Community Resilience Plan helps with grants and funding. He stated that Resolution No. 6156 is on the agenda later to enact the formal adoption of the plan.

Public Hearings.

5:35 PM PUBLIC HEARING: Proposed Amendments to Section 28-312 of the Easton Town Code (Zoning - MXW)

The purpose of this hearing is to solicit public comment on proposed amendments to Section 28-312 of the Town Code. Specifically, three amendments are proposed to the MXW provisions as contained in the Town of Easton Zoning Code (Chapter 28 of the Easton Town Code).

At 5:47 p.m., President Cook opened the 5:35 p.m. scheduled Public Hearing.

Mr. Thomas, Town Planner, was present to discuss the proposed amendments. He stated this is the first of two sets of amendments.

The first issue is the location of parking. He stated the issue arrives on corner lots.

The second issue is an oversight from the November update. Add the use back to the MXW Use Table.

He stated that the MXW stands for mixed-use waterfront and is close to the Port Street waterfront, covering anything from single-family houses multi-family houses, duplexes and more.

The final issue is that it is necessary to create some types of setbacks for Port Street subdistrict.

President Cook asked for public comments.

Mr. Johnathan Rondeau, President and CEO ARC Central Region discussed Port Street Commons and asked for support for the recommendations as brought forward.

Mr. Engle asked for clarification regarding the drawing. Mr. Rondeau discussed the side-yard parking.

Mr. Derick Daly, owner of property on the corner of Tile Lane and Clay Street, fronting Port Street, stated he is 100% in favor of this change.

President Cook stated that the public hearing will be kept open until September 19.

Public Participation/Comments.

Legislation.

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."

Mr. Abbatiello discussed his position on the plastic bag ordinance. He stated it is the overall goal to reduce plastic bag waste in the communities and waterways. Mr. Abbatiello discussed the fee which will be kept by the businesses and will incentivize consumers to bring their own bags.

Rev. Davis discussed turning from our ways and doing what is right.

Mr. Engle stated this initiative started over a year ago and has come a long way. He stated he is fully behind this.

Mr. Silverstein thanked the five ladies that took action and the people they put on the board. He stated he is glad to be part of the process.

Mrs. Cook thanked everyone that put a lot of time in this.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, Ordinance No. 784 was approved following a roll call vote.

Resolution No. 6155, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON SETTING THE FINE AMOUNT FOR VIOLATION OF THE PROHIBITION ON RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS PROVIDING CUSTOMERS WITH SINGLE USE DISPOSABLE PLASTIC BAGS."

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6155, was unanimously approved following a roll call vote.

Resolution No. 6156, "A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF EASTON ADOPTING THE 2022 TALBOT COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION & COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PLAN AS THE TOWN 2022 HAZARD MITIGATION & COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PLAN."

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6156 was unanimously approved following a roll call vote.

Resolution No. 6157, Abatement of Real Property Taxes owned by tax-exempt charitable organizations.

Mr. Richardson, Town Manager, stated that this is a request from Habitat for properties they own throughout Easton. Mr. Richardson stated that Hillcrest Cemetery has been added to the abatement resolution as well.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6157, Abatement of Real Property Taxes was approved following a roll call vote.

Ordinance No. 790, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON BY REPEALING AND REENACTING ARTICLE IV CRITICAL AREA OF CHAPTER 28 ZONING."

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, Ordinance No. 790 was approved following a roll call vote.

Ordinance No. 791, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AMENDING THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON BY REVISING PORTIONS OF ARTICLE III, SECTION 28-312 MIXED USE WATERFRONT DISTRICT OF CHAPTER 28 ZONING.

President Cook brought Ordinance No. 791 to the floor for a first reading.

Items by Members of the Council:

Marian Arnold, heartfelt thank you for passing the Plastic Bag Ordinance and thanks also from Ms. Tama.

Thanks to Mayor Willey, President Cook and members of the council for their diligence.

Mr. Silverstein discussed rails-to-trails. He stated electric or gas vehicles are not allowed on the trail. He asked everyone to follow the rules.

Mr. Abbatiello discussed the meeting tomorrow with SHA. He stated bike and pedestrian safety is a concern with the State of Maryland and he is hoping a trail on Rt. 328 from Rt. 50 to Black Dog Alley would be a great asset to residents in that area.

Mr. Engle stated that on October 4, from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., there will be a Comprehensive Plan town meeting which will outline where the town is going in the future.

Mr. Engle suggested the council invite the community.

Rev. Davis thanked Plastic Free Easton for their diligence and persistence to enhance the quality of life in the Town of Easton.

Rev. Davis reminded everyone about paving of the roads and asked for the community to use due caution and stay focus on the road.

Rev. Davis discussed entertainment in the Town.

President Cook asked everyone to stay mindful of the children that have gone back to school.

Closed Session General Provisions Article 3-305(b)(3) To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto.

At 6:22 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, President Cook moved into Closed Session.

At 6:34 p.m. upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, President Cook moved out of Closed Session.

Adjournment.

At , 6:34 upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, President Cook adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk

