



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 6, 2023 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

4:00 PM Workshop to discuss the components of a draft Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

Present:

Mayor Robert C. Willey

Mr. Al Silverstein

Mr. Don Abbatiello (joined the meeting at 4:47 p.m.)

Mr. Ron Engle

Rev. Elmer Davis

President Megan Cook

Also present was the Town Manager, Mr. Don Richardson, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf, Affordable Housing Chairman James Bent and Planning and Zoning Director Miguel Salinas.

Affordable Housing Workshop.

At 4:00, President Cook called the meeting to order.

Miguel Salinas opened the meeting thanking the council for the meeting and discussing affordable housing. He stated the median home price is approaching \$400,000. He stated that more than half of the workforce commutes into Talbot County and it is virtually impossible to attract businesses or young people and recent graduates to the Town of Easton. Mr. Salinas discussed the proposed inclusionary housing ordinance and defined what the ordinance would be. Mr. Salinas stated, "One way to address the issue is through inclusionary zoning. Opposite to exclusionary zoning practices - whereby the zoning requirements are structured to limit the supply and types of new housing, which can have the effect (intended or not) of pricing out middle and lower-income families. Inclusionary zoning requires developers to help local jurisdictions achieve their objective of providing attainable housing for their citizens and workforce by requiring developers to make available a certain percentage of housing in their developments for households within targeted income levels."

Mr. Salinas discussed neighboring communities and Affordable Housing legislation. He stated legislation has been sent to the council before. He gave a broad view of what the inclusionary zoning ordinance includes.

Mr. Salinas discussed alternative contributions for developers.

Mr. Jim Bent. The Affordable Housing Chairman discussed renovations and the applications in process.

This workshop is intended for introduction. Miguel recommends anyone contact him for clarification or suggestions which may be helpful for future workshops.

At 4:52 p.m., President Cook adjourned the workshop.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk

5:00 PM Audit Outbrief.

Present for the audit outbrief was Bill Early, Principal, CliftonLarsonAllen, Finance Officer Carol Callahan, Assistance Finance Officers Charlie Connolly and Jill Sherwood.

Overall, Mr. Early stated that this is a good audit, with an unmodified opinion. Mr. Early thanked Carol and her staff for their assistance. Mr. Early stated that CliftonLarsonAllen was assisted by Alex Walther, CPA.

Mr. Early stated that the financial statements are lengthy. He stated they use a risk-based approach. He stated they found effective controls with no other findings or recommendations.

Mr. Early stated that GASB went in place and was implemented with no issues. He discussed reasons for the delay.

Mrs. Callahan stated we have until 2026 to spend the remainder of the ARPA funds.

The audit outbrief was concluded at 5:18 p.m. Mr. Early departed.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk

Regularly Scheduled Council Meeting.

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

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

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Engle.

Councilmember Engle gave opening remarks and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes.

Minutes of the January 17, 2023 meetings.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, minutes of the January 17, 2023 meeting were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Willey.

Confirm Reappointment of William B. Stagg to Easton Utilities Commission.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, the re-appointment of Mr. William B. Stagg to the Easton Utilities Commission was approved.

Mayor Willey stated the project list for the Town Engineer is expanding as there are consideration for added sidewalks on Lexington Street and Mile Post Drive.

Mayor Willey stated the Historic District Commission is looking for members for the Historic District Commission.

Mayor Willey stated that congratulations are in order to Mr. Abbatiello as he is being considered teacher of the Year for Wicomico County

Items by the Town Manager.

Audit.

Mr. Richardson asked the council to accept the audit as presented by CliftonLarsonAllen during the audit outbrief prior to the regular council meeting.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, the audit as presented was accepted.

Public Assembly Event, Fire & Ice Festival – 2/17 – 2/19/23.

Upon motion by Mr. Engle seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, the Public Assembly Event as requested by EEDS for the Fire & Ice Festival was approved.

Public Assembly Event, Academy Art Museum Spring Event - 5/6/23

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, the Academy Art Museum Spring Event was approved.

Public Assembly Event, Pride Festival - 6/17/23

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, the Public Assembly Event Pride Festival was approved.

Approval to award bid for stormdrain lining to Pleasants Construction.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, the storm repair-replace lining as submitted by Pleasants Construction in the amount of \$170,350.21 was approved.

Approval to award bid to Breeding for Waterside Village Parking Lot.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by President Cook and carried unanimously, the bid from Breeding for the Waterside Village parking lot was approved in the amount of \$154,469.10.

Items by the Town Attorney.

The Town Attorney has nothing at this time.

Fire Board.

President Rick Stacey, was present with 2023 Administrative and Fire Suppression Officers. He discussed the training grounds, the two engines under build, with a brush truck's delivery anticipated in December. He stated that the Day Room renovation at EVFD is out to the architect.

President Stacey stated they had elected a new man of cloth, councilmember Rev. Elmer Davis.

Chief Sonny Jones distributed stats for fire calls and EMS calls. Chief Jones introduced line officers.

He stated they plan to invite the council to the department.

The Administrative Officers are as follows: President Rick Stacey, Vice President Richard Williamson, Secretary Rebecca Caldwell, Treasurer Chris Hash, Trustees Ken Bush, Sol James, Phil Marshall, Jeff Meintzer, Russel Miles, J.T. Morris and Ralph Romano. The parliamentarian is Barry VanVechten and the Chaplain is Rev. Elmer Davis.

The line officers are Chief Morris (Sonny) Jones, Asst. Chief J.R. Dobson, Captain Daryl Caldwell, 1st Lt. Justin Jones, 2nd Lt. William Keswick, 3rd Lt. Mike Ziegler, 4th Lt. Jake Gale, Chief Engineer Adam Mayock, 1st Asst. Chief Engineer Jason Spies, 2nd Asst. Chief Engineer Gordon Seeber and Ambulance Captain Madi Spies.

Chief Sonny Jones stated if residents need smoke alarms, call the EVFD and they will see that they get one and if need be, install them.

President Stacey discussed how to make a donation to EVFD.

Public Hearing.

5:35 PM To discuss Ordinance No. 794, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF EASTON TO SELL LOT 1 AT MISTLETOE HALL COMMERCE-BUSINESS PARK TO PRO WELLNESS GROUP, LLC."

At 5:58 p.m., President Cook opened the 5:35 p.m. scheduled public hearing. She asked for comments. There were none.

At 5:59 p. m., President Cook closed the public hearing.

Legislation.

Ordinance No. 794, "AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF EASTON TO SELL LOT 1 AT MISTLETOE HALL COMMERCE-BUSINESS PARK TO PRO WELLNESS GROUP, LLC."

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, Ordinance No. 794 was approved.

Resolution No. 6160, "A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A SUBRECIPIENT AGREEMENT WITH BUILDING AFRICAN AMERICAN MINDS, INC. FOR A GRANT FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MARYLAND COMMUNITY LEGACY PROGRAM."

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, Resolution No. 6160 was approved.

Review of Invoices.

Invoices from 1/4 - 1/25/23 totaling \$1,036.510.46.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, invoices totaling \$1,036,510.46 were approved.

Public Participation/Comments.

Affordable Housing.

Mr. James Bent, Affordable Housing Chairman, was present to discuss the accounting of the Affordable Housing Fund. He stated the Affordable Housing Commission has funded 26 renovations with an additional three under consideration.

Mr. Bent stated they have over a million dollars now in the fund.

Mr. Silverstein discussed a 250 unit senior housing project and asked if conversations should occur regarding contributions to the Affordable Housing fund.

Mr. Bent stated the contribution should occur.

Mr. Bent discussed a closing cost assistance program for town employees and EVFD members.

Mr. Richardson stated that Mr. Bent's main objective this evening with the distribution of the accounting summary, is to get the support of the council for the replenishment to the Affordable Housing Fund in the amount of \$400,000. Mr. Richardson stated he fully supports this initiative.

Mr. Silverstein asked if it should be done by legislation.

The Town Attorney stated it could be done by motion.
Mr. Silverstein asked for the request to be an agenda item for the next meeting.

Adjournment.

At 6:08 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