



Town Council MEETING MINUTES

Monday, February 20, 2023 - 5:30 PM
Council Chambers, Easton Town Office
14 S Harrison Street

5:00 PM Affordable Housing Workshop.

Discussion of a Draft Inclusionary Housing Ordinance.

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, Planning and Zoning Director Miguel Salinas, Chairman of Affordable Housing Jim Bent and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf.

President Cook called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Miguel Salinas stated there is a lot of information to consider for the draft Inclusionary Housing Ordinance. He discussed the analysis for the affordable sales price and calculations. He provided an alternative method of how to come up with cash in lieu. He discussed difficulties with development and discussed the projects in the pipeline. He stated that if the council has questions in the methodology in the next few weeks, feel free to reach out to him.

Mr. Engle discussed affordable housing and starting salaries. He thought it best to establish parameters that would be set for developers that are interested in Easton.

Mr. Salinas discussed setting priority preferences.
The Town Attorney stated the Affordable Housing Commission is working on a draft for consideration to help with closings for home sales in Easton. She discussed a scoring system for the available homes.

President Cook stated this is a lot of information and the council probably won't be looking at this again until April.

At 5:19, President Cook adjourned the workshop meeting.

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

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

Opening remarks and Pledge of Allegiance by Councilmember Rev. Davis.

Rev. Davis gave opening remarks and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Minutes.

Minutes of the February 6, 2023 Workshop, Audit Outbrief and Regularly Scheduled Council Meeting.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Rev. Davis and carried unanimously, minutes of the February 6, 2023 meetings were approved as written.

Municipal Official Items.

Items by Mayor Willey.

Mayor Willey discussed a memo he distributed regarding the Drop Policy the police department would like to be considered. He stated an actuarial study is necessary from Boomershine.

Mayor Willey discussed the interactive map now enabled by the Town of Easton. He stated Nick Johnson from Plan Ning and Zoning was on WMDT, and possibly WBOC tomorrow. Mayor Willey distributed projects that have been approved or are various stages. He stated emphasis needs to be placed on trying to get these completed.

Mr. Silverstein asked for a workshop for further discussion.

President Cook stated she will send out dates for consideration.

Mr. Richardson asked for a workshop before the next meeting in order for staff to organize the projects to get completed.

Mayor Willey stated that Chief Lowery is working on a contract for eight new police cars. He has found cars and is trying to cancel previous contracts.

Items by the Town Manager.

Approval for Affordable Housing Renovation Fund Replenishment of \$400,000.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously, approval for the replenishment of the Affordable Housing Renovation Fund in the amount of \$400,000 was approved.

Approval of 2023 Annual Street Resurfacing & Rail Trail Resurfacing Asphalt Repairs bid.

Mr. Richardson identified the streets to be resurfaced.

Mr. Silverstein discussed the rails-to-trails and asked that the section between the bridge and Goldsborough Street be considered for rehab as well as a section on Dover Street with roots protruding.

Mr. Abbatiello questioned if Bramble's did Wrightson Avenue last year. Mr. Richardson stated the problem has been rectified by another contractor.

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, approval of Bramble's bid in the amount of \$330,318 for the 2023 Annual Street Resurfacing & Rail Trail as recommended by staff was approved.

Public Assembly Event: Easton Volunteer Fire Dept. 5K Run - 4/15/23

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, the Public Assembly Event - 5K Run scheduled for April 15, 2023 at 10:30 a.m. for Easton Volunteer Fire Dept. was approved.

Mr. Richardson gave an update on the fire truck on order. He stated that the chassis is delayed for approximately six months. It may get carried forward in the next budget. He stated there may be a \$10,000 overage. He stated the ARPA money will be compiled and considered.

Mr. Richardson stated the Fire and Ice Festival was an enjoyable event with great attendance.

Mr. Silverstein asked about the timeframe for the Housing on the Hill houses. Mr. Richardson discussed the projects and stated they are on target. He stated two of the houses are the Town's project and one is Habitat's.

Mayor Willey suggested looking at the crosswalks that are being installed on South Washington Street.

Items by the Town Attorney.

The Town Attorney stated the annexation for the former Southern States property will be forthcoming.

Presentations.

Al Bond, Avalon President & CEO to update Town Council on Avalon Programming.

Mr. Bond was present to discuss the programming. He thanked those that came out for the Frederick Douglass program this weekend.

Mr. Bond stated Avalon has purchased Bannings and is considering how it will integrate with their present program.

He discussed a commitment for \$500,000 from the Sarah B. Ryan fund for in-school programming for the children of the community.

He discussed pre-pandemic programs where every child from grade 2 through grade 8 was a part of the children's Young Audience Program. He stated they are updating their strategic planning efforts.

Mr. Bond discussed their outdoor programming. He stated the vendors want year-round participation.
Mr. Bond stated that next year is the 20th year for the Plein Air Festival.
Mr. Bond stated they are completely re-doing their website.
Mr. Bond discussed the obstacles for the outdoor tent. He stated they would love to bring it back if it is feasible.

Holly DeKarske, Executive Director Easton Economic Development Corporation to give EEDC update.

Ms. Holly DeKarske, Executive Director, discussed EEDC's reorganization. Ms. DeKarske introduced Deena Kilmon, who had recently been hired and introduced Lance Morris, Communications Coordinator. She discussed looking for revenue opportunities. She discussed safety and beautification events.

Ms. DeKarske stated they are trying to promote Easton as a destination.

Ms. DeKarske stated that Chesapeake Harvest is no longer a part of EEDC and it is now a multi-county program. She stated they have acquired Discover Easton brand.

EEDC plans to install directional signage and name the parking lots as well as a walking map which can be distributed outside of downtown.

Ms. DeKarske stated she is doing monthly merchant meetings, 9am 4th Thursday of the month and stated she will network with other Main Street managers.

Ms. Deena Killmon, Director of Strategic Initiatives, discussed target marketing and community strategies.

Mr. Abbatiello asked for information from hotels regarding out-of town guests. He stated he appreciated the 911 event. Discussion occurred regarding the Supporting Community, We Are One is their slogan.

Public Participation/Comments.

There was no one present to come before the council.

Items by Members of the Council:

Mr. Silverstein stated rails-to-trails is getting busy. He reminded everyone that there is nothing motorized allowed on the path.

Mr. Abbatiello reminded everyone that April 2 is the BYOB (bring your own bag) initiative.

Mr. Engle stated EEDC is doing a great job. He stated the crosswalks are nice and he wants to recognize those helping with the Comprehensive Plan as it is critical to the growth of Easton.

Rev. Davis stated Easton is the best place on the entire eastern shore to live. He stated folks here feel safe. Rev. Davis stated he is grateful for everything going on in town and appreciates the recognition of Black History.

President Cook congratulated the town on the Frederick Douglass event and for a great weekend.

Adjournment.

At 6:25 p.m., President Cook entertained a motion from Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried unanimously following a roll call vote to go into Closed Session for General Provisions Article 3-3205(5)(4); to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the state.

At 6:34 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Rev Davis and carried unanimously, President Cook adjourned the Closed Session and convened back in to the regular meeting.

At 6:35 p.m., 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