Meeting minutes of Town Council on October 3, 2023

As reviewed, approved, and accepted by the Town Council on November 7, 2023

There being a quorum, Mayor Charles Hendricks called the regular meeting of the Town Council to order at 7:32 p.m. The meeting was held using video conferencing. Council Members Charles Bradsher, Tom Burke, Amy Koval and Christina Pellegrino were present. The Treasurer, Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Planning Commission Chair, Historic Commission Chair, and approximately three residents and guests were also present.

Minutes

The minutes from the Town Council Meeting held September 5, 2023, were approved as submitted.

Treasurer’s Report

Treasurer Angela Hoffman pointed out on the Profit & Loss sheet two large income amounts: Municipal Duplication Services, $47,801, and Income Taxes $37,522; and three expenses: $1,289 for Town Hall HVAC servicing, $390 for the historic sign project, and $2,280 for American flags. Mayor Hendricks observed that the income from Municipal Duplication Services was revenue the town received from the county for town-provided services comparable to those the county provides to residents outside corporate limits. On the Balance Sheet Treasurer Hoffman pointed out that the Fixed Asset column changed due to the addition of the value of the capital improvements made in the preceding fiscal year to the Building and Improvements amount. Council Member Burke asked what the Franchise Fee – Cable TV income on the Profit & Loss sheet represented. Treasurer Hoffman replied that comes from Verizon and Comcast for using town land perhaps, or as others suggested, possibly the monopole at the fire house. Council Member Koval asked about the Waste Removal income, and Treasurer Hoffman responded that revenue comes from property owners who do not otherwise pay taxes, such as churches.

Council Member Koval made a motion to approve the August 2023 treasurer’s report subject to audit. Council Member Burke seconded the motion. ***Unanimously approved.***

Planning Commission Report

Eric Wenger, Planning Commission Chair, reported that the Planning Commission met on September 8, 2023 to discuss the Comprehensive Plan. Members are making progress with their assigned sections, he stated.

Historic District Commission Report

Jennifer Sizemore, Historic District Commission (HDC) Chair, said that the HDC approved an application for the placement of two wayside historic signs to be located on Town Hall property. She reported that the HDC members discussed the overlap in responsibilities between the Tree Commission and the HDC and will be looking into presenting some options to clarify this for our residents.

Election Reform: Chair Sizemore, speaking as an election judge, brought up two points regarding town elections: one with provisional ballots and one with uncontested elections. Mayor Hendricks stated that the election judges hold office for a full year and may as a group discuss election procedures and make recommendations. The Election Ordinance is very lengthy and any input from the election judges would be welcomed.

Old Business

Town Picnic: Council Member Pellegrino reported attendance to the picnic based on raffle tickets distributed was 163 adults and 30 children. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for October 12 at 7:30 p.m. Items that may be discussed include shifting the time of the picnic earlier to gain more sunlight and tweaking the sound volume for the speakers.

Status of Occupancy Permit for 420 Smoke N Vape at Laytons Village Shopping Center: Mayor Hendricks reported that the applicant had agreed in writing to comply with the newly revised Zoning Ordinance, and the town provided the occupancy permit. Council Member Pellegrino asked if there is any county agency to inspect that this business is in compliance with county guidelines. Planning Commission Chair Wenger suggested that the town ask Mike Ryan, who had been the town’s code enforcement officer, to help enforce the town ordinance.

Jones Farm Pond Update: Council Member Burke shared images of the riser before and after recent rainstorms, as well as photos of the plugs Goshen Enterprises added inside the riser. He observed that at this time there is no evidence of leaking through the riser. Mayor Hendricks asked if the water had risen to the level of the plugs yet. Council Member Burke responded not at this time. Mayor Hendricks asked if there is any way we can measure and record the water level of the pond. Council Member Burke stated that the PVC pipe pictured is a good eyeball measurement of water level. We keep an eye on it and regularly take photographs of it. Chair Wenger added that Goggle Earth is another good resource to compare the shoreline over time, and the shoreline appeared to be very stable until 2018. Council Member Pellegrino asked if we are still going to look into any longer-term solutions to extend the life of the pond. Council Member Burke responded that we could continue to get prices to line the pond, but any large project like this would require Maryland Department of the Environment approval.

Addendum to Key Sanitation Contract: Mayor Hendricks reported that the owner of Key Sanitation agreed to his proposed offer for a monthly increase to offset the increase in the county’s tonnage fee. Council Member Burke motioned to increase the monthly payment to Key Sanitation to $6,615.00. Council Member Bradsher seconded the motion. ***Unanimously approved.***

New Business

Quarterly Safety Inspection: Council Member Burke reported that the panel box outside of Town Hall needs to be locked. He showed photos illustrating that the sidewalk along Route 108 has several pavement lifts and that the sidewalks along Cracklin Road and Maple Knoll Drive have a few similar issues. Mayor Hendricks replied that we have two contacts, including Precision Concrete, which Council Member Koval had recommended, that we will follow up with to remedy the problems. Council Member Koval suggested that we should also contract with a company to perform an annual inspection of our sidewalks.

J. B. Kline Snow Removal Contract: Mayor Hendricks reviewed proposed changes made to the previous year’s contract with J. B. Kline. He recommended approval of the revised contract, which he had sent to Town Council members. Council members discussied whether or not to use ice melt on the new brick patio and wooden ramp at the rear of Town Hall. Brian Kline, the president of J. B. Kline, stated that any of the options available to melt ice may be detrimental to building structures, but safety is essential. Chair Wenger agreed that public safety must be given priority over concerns about increased maintenance costs. Council Member Pellegrino made a motion to approve the new snow removal contract. Council Member Bradsher seconded the motion. ***Unanimously approved.***

**Town Hall Painting: Mayor Hendricks referred to a proposed painting contract, which had been sent to Council members, that the town had received on the day of the meeting.** Council Member Pellegrino pointed out that some of the windowsills on the back of Town Hall were rotted, and she believes that this trim work needs to be replaced before any painting is done. Mayor Hendricks also noted that the porch roof is leaking. He suggested that the contract work could be done in sections. Council Member Burke stated the roof repair should be done prior to any painting. Council Member Koval recommended treating the wooden ramp at the back of Town Hall prior to the application of any ice melt. Council members discussed various aspects of prioritizing exterior Town Hall repairs, and the Council decided not to act on the proposed painting contract at this time.

WSSC Community Update Meeting: At the request of WSSC, the town has arranged for that agency to hold a community meeting in November at the Laytonsville fire house. Mayor Hendricks reported that WSSC provided a chlorine analysis that showed a decrease in the levels of chlorine in several areas of town. Mayor Hendricks will let the HOAs in Laytonsville Preserve and Laytonsville Grove know of this chlorine analysis, and he has asked WSSC about them.

Appointments: Mayor Hendricks presented Patrick Murray of 7401 White House Lane for appointment as a Historic District Commission member to replace Michael McDonald, who had resigned. Council Member Pellegrino made a motion to approve this appointment. Council Member Koval seconded. ***Unanimously approved.***

Resident’s Forum

No comments were offered.

Adjournment

Council Member Koval made a motion to adjourn at 9:36 p.m. Council Member Burke seconded the motion. ***Unanimously approved.***

Respectfully Submitted,

James Schneider, Assistant Clerk

Town of Laytonsville