

TOWN OF SOUTH BETHANY TOWN COUNCIL WORKSHOP MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 10, 2019

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Mayor Saxton called the October 10, 2019, Town Council Workshop Meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

ATTENDANCE

Councilmembers Don Boteler, Sue Callaway, Dick Oliver, Frank Weisgerber, and Mayor Tim Saxton; Town Manager Maureen Hartman; Chief Jason Lovins; and Administrative Assistant Pam Smith.

Present by Remote Access: Councilmember Derek Abbott (due to technical difficulties, the phone connection was lost during the meeting) and Town Solicitor Stephani Ballard (connected through Review and Discussion on MOU)

Excused Absence: Councilmember Stevenson

ADOPTION OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 13, 2019, TOWN COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

Motion by Councilmember Boteler, seconded by Councilmember Weisgerber, to accept the September 13, 2019, Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes. After discussion, motion by Councilmember Boteler, seconded by Councilmember Callaway, to accept the September 13, 2019, Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes as amended. The motion carried with a 5-0 vote. Those members voting for the motion were: Councilmembers Weisgerber, Callaway, Boteler, Oliver, and Mayor Saxton.

UPDATE ON CANALS AND WIDGEON GRASS

Council reviewed a Proposal from Tony Pratt for consulting services to South Bethany for assistance in improving canal navigability and water quality. Mayor Saxton stated that the Town has been requested to meet with DNREC regarding widgeon grass within the canals. This item will be up for discussion/decision at the November 8, 2019, Town Council Regular Meeting.

BEACH WALKWAYS DISCUSSION

Mayor Saxton clarified that this discussion is not about finances – the discussion is to help the Town design an RFP. The Town Manager stated that a decision should be made on whether to build elevated walkways or at-grade walkways.

Mayor Saxton stated that after talking with DNREC he has the following concerns regarding elevated walkways:

- The Town would potentially have to get approval from the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to build an elevated walkway to the dune.
- There is a hard-pack crosswalk that runs north and south between the dune and the houses that is used by the Police, Public Works, and Beach Patrol and should be taken into consideration during design.

Mayor Saxton noted that Mobi-Mats can be utilized as they change with the contour.

Mike Jandzen, who constructed a walkway at Sandpiper Village in 2018, provided information and answered questions from Council regarding structural technicalities of walkways.

Mayor Saxton said his objective is to build walkways with no steps. After discussion it was decided to write the RFP to build at-grade walkways that would end on the west side of the hard-pack crosswalk and Mobi-Mats beginning on the east side of the hard-pack crosswalk and continuing over the dune. Mayor Saxton added that he does not want the guardrails built on the inside of the wooden walkway.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION ON MOU WITH FENWICK ISLAND AND OCEAN VIEW POLICE DEPARTMENTS

Chief Lovins strongly supports a mutual assistance agreement with the Towns of Fenwick Island and Ocean View. He believes it will greatly enhance public safety and officer safety in the three communities at no additional expenses. Chief Lovins noted that the police officers of the three towns would be considered sworn officers of all three departments.

Mayor Saxton clarified that the Towns will still have their own police departments whose main function is to operate within their own town. This item will be discussed and possibly voted on at the October 11, 2019, Town Council Regular Meeting.

DISCUSS CHANGE TO TAKE-HOME VEHICLE POLICY (CHIEF LOVINS)

Chief Lovins requested Council to consider proposed changes to the take-home car policy. Chief Lovins stated that he believes recommended changes will enhance the Town's efforts in retaining police officers, future recruiting of officers, and have a positive impact on morale. Chief Lovins said he is requesting that the officers have the privilege to take the Police car home with them at the end of their shift if they are working the next day. Council discussed possible changes to the proposed policy.

Chief Lovins will revise the proposed policy taking into consideration Council's comments and will send Council a revised policy to discuss and possibly vote at the November 8 Town Council Regular Meeting.

DISCUSS CHANGING TOWN SPEED LIMIT TO 15 MPH (CHIEF LOVINS)

Mayor Saxton clarified that the speed limit change to 15 MPH would apply to Town roads only – it would not apply to Route 1 which is a State highway.

Citing blind driveways, curvy, narrow, and unlit roads at night, the lack of sidewalks, and a high level of pedestrians and cyclists in South Bethany, Chief Lovins is recommending changing the speed limit to 15 MPH on Town roads. He stated that reducing the speed limit increases reaction time and it can significantly reduce the impact of a pedestrian being hit by a vehicle. He also commented that it might change the algorithms on navigation apps possibly directing traffic away from South Bethany's residential area.

After discussion, it was agreed that the Town needed to get clarification from DeIDOT regarding the requirement in the State Code for a traffic study survey to reduce the speed limit on Town owned roads. Mayor Saxton noted that to change the speed limit on town roads does require an ordinance change.

PERMIT PARKING UPDATE (CHIEF LOVINS AND TOWN MANAGER)

Mayor Saxton said the requirement of permit parking on the west side of Route 1 will be implemented next year. After hearing recommendations from the Town Manager and Chief of Police, it was agreed to initially require permit parking the whole length of the following streets that are perpendicular to Route 1: Elizabeth Way, Anchorage Dr., Petherton Dr., Brandywine Dr., Henlopen Dr., New Castle Dr. (if it is not too narrow), and Layton Dr. With the possibility of some exceptions, permit parking would be designated on the north side of the street and the south side

of the street would be designated no parking. It was noted that the placement of bike racks on the west side of Route 1 may impact the designated permit parking areas. To be consistent with permit parking on the east side of Route 1, parking permits will be required on the designated streets on the west side of Route 1 between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and 12:00 midnight to 6:00 a.m., from May 15 through September 15. Permit parking can be implemented on additional streets on the west side of Route 1 if needed.

DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE BUILDING RENOVATIONS TO TOWN HALL

Councilmember Callaway met with the Town Manager and the Code Enforcement Constable on September 25, 2019, to discuss various ideas with regards to renovating Town Hall and what needed to be accomplished. Councilmember Callaway stated the following as a vision for the future of Town Hall: Provide a Town Hall that 1) offers an enhanced, user-friendly community area; 2) initiates productive interaction between Town Hall staff and Police, and; 3) supports a secure and private, cost-effective facility for staff, as recommended and requested by police chiefs, staff, and auditors.

Council reviewed a draft drawing that proposes enclosing the existing area located between Town Hall and the Police Department that could be utilized as a reception area and offices. It was noted that currently there is \$40,000 in the capital budget for the renovations. The estimated cost of this project could be between \$150,000-\$160,000. The Town Manager noted that the actual cost would not be determined until after the project went out for bids. Council will discuss this topic again at the December 13, 2019, Town Council Regular Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Debbie Fanshel, 413 Cattail Rd. – Commented on permit parking availability and suggested the Town do a survey. Ms. Fanshel suggested strobe lights be placed in the crosswalks on Route 1 to increase safety. Mayor Saxton said the Town is working with DeIDOT on the crosswalks issue.

Randy Bartholomew, 6 S. 6th St. – Inquired about the Artesian water quality concern.

Kent Stephan, 46 S. Anchorage Ave. (via an email to Councilmember Callaway) – Made suggestions for improving safety – “enforce traffic laws for bikes and allocate Police time away from Black Gum to deal with Rte. 1 and catch stop sign runners. Also, the council should never make a move like this without surveying owners.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Oliver, seconded by Councilmember Weisgerber, to adjourn the October 10, 2019, Town Council Workshop Meeting at 5:10 p.m. Motion unanimously carried.