

MINUTES

COSM

Commissioners

COSM Working and Legislative Session - Virtual and In-Person

Wednesday, November 10, 2021, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Edgar M Bosley Jr. Municipal Admin Building

300 Mill Street; PO Box 206

St. Michaels, MD 21663

- I.
Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance
- President Bibb called to order a live and remote legislative session of the Commissioners of St. Michaels at 6:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley Jr. Municipal Building, 300 Mill Street, St. Michaels, Maryland, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Also present were Commissioners David Breimhurst, Joyce Harrod, Aida Khalil and Tad duPont, Zoning Officer Kymberly Kudla, Legislative Clerk Suzanna Warnick, Meeting Coordinator Kimberly Weller, and members of the public.
- II. Agenda Amendments
- There were no agenda amendments.
- III. Announcements from COSM and Staff
- Commissioner duPont said the Motor Museum's partnership with the high school for the driver's education program had graduated 15 students this past spring, and the class would be offered again this winter. Commissioner Khalil said there was a state grant listed on the Talbot County Economic Development website, which was available to those businesses who had suffered property damage during the last storm. She noted that the grant was up to \$50,000 and encouraged anyone with damage to apply. Chief Anthony Smith said the storm flooding and a recent incident on the Nature Trail had made it clear to him that the Town should maintain a trailer with special equipment for such emergencies that could quickly and easily be moved to an emergency scene. The Chief said he had met with an individual who would provide expertise and donate the funds to get the equipment needed and recommend the right type of trailer. Chief said the emergency trailer and equipment was estimated to cost about \$10,000.
- Town Manager Jeff Rhodes provided an update on filling staff vacancies. He added that there would be one meeting in December at which the Commissioners would discuss staffing issues and acceptance of Brooks Lane as an official town street.
- President Bibb then called for public comment. He noted there would be another opportunity for comment at the end of the meeting.
- IV. Comments from the Public
- Jennifer Stevens of 403 S. Talbot Street asked about federal recovery funds and parking

issues. Ms. Stevens also raised the issue of business licensing and said the business community opposed licensing in St. Michaels. Mike Estrella of E. Chew Avenue questioned the veracity of claims that the majority of surrounding towns have business licenses. Paulette Florio of Talbot Street had concerns about where and when the SHA sidewalk project would start. Ms. Florio also asked for an update on the search for a new Town Manager. Kimberly Weller read a comment from Jeff Knapp, who said the Planning Commission was working on a plan for an additional 24-space parking area at Fremont and Canton Streets. Karen Wald of Grace Street opposed a potentially new restaurant at 310 S. Talbot Street and its plan for a parking area immediately adjacent to a residential area.

V. Consent Agenda for Minutes, Department Reports and Event Permits

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Minutes
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Department Reports for October 2021
- Police Department
 - Disbursements
 - Year to Date
 - Profit and Loss
 - Administration
 - Public Works
 - Planning and Zoning
 - Marketing
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Event Permits
- -- Application for Sign Permit from Hearts on Talbot for a Fundraiser for St. Michaels Food Pantry, Hearts to be hung on utility poles along Talbot Street from Jan 17 to Feb 14, 2022;
 - Permit Application for Christmas in St. Michaels Event, from Christmas in St. Michaels, Inc., to be held at various venues throughout town and to include a Parade and touring of Homes, from Friday, Dec 10 to Sunday December 12 2021 with Talbot Street closure from 10:00 - 11:30;
 - Sign Permit Application from St. Luke's Church, for Community Christmas Breakfast, on December 11 2021 at St. Luke's Church, from 7:30 am - 10:00 am.
- President Bibb said the Consent Agenda included approval of minutes and departmental reports for the month of October 2021 and event permits for the

Hearts on Talbot fundraiser, the Christmas in St. Michaels event, and a sign permit for the Christmas Breakfast at St. Luke's Church on December 11, 2021. President Bibb called for any Commissioner comments. Commissioner duPont said he wished to address the October Profit and Loss statement. Commissioner duPont said all the numbers were up and above projections for the quarter and for year to date. Commissioner duPont said the water department lease back was in place and the Town was now billing public works and administrative time for water-related work. He added that the time and money saved by this change would go toward the cost of a new well for the Town.

As there were no other comments, President Bibb called for a motion to accept the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Khalil made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner duPont. The motion passed on a roll call vote of 5-0 in favor.

VI. Boards and Commissions

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Board and Commissions due to expire in December 2021

- Applications due to office by Nov 15th
- President Bibb said some terms for board and commission members are set to expire on December 31st and individuals interested in serving on a Town board should submit applications by November 15th. He added that the Commissioners would be making appointments at their meeting on December 15th.

VII. Presentation

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Love and Dreams Bay Cruises

- Genavie McCrea and Jamie McKibbin
- Jamie McKibbin of Easton, Maryland provided details of his cruise business and answered questions from the Commissioners. Mr. McKibbin said he operated during the day with a final sunset cruise at 6 p.m. and said he would make any adjustments in his business that would accommodate the community.

VIII. Items for Discussion

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County Proposal to Increase Accommodation Tax

- Commissioner Khalil opened the discussion of a County plan to increase the accommodations tax, noting that she wanted the public to be aware of the plan and if a vote on the matter was necessary, both she and Commissioner duPont would abstain. Commissioner Khalil said that all lodging facilities in St. Michaels collect this tax from customers, send it to the County, and then get a distributed portion of it back from the County. Commissioner Khalil said the

increase would have a direct effect on visitors and their financial decision to stay in St. Michaels lodgings. Commissioner Khalil said St. Michaels was the leading provider of this tax for the whole region and she opposed the increase. Commissioner duPont said he opposed the increase as well and considered it unnecessary given projections for increased travel through 2023. President Bibb said he would be attending County meetings that had the proposed increase on the agenda to make the Town's position known.

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Chapter 340 - Revisions to parking non-accessory

- Jefferson Knapp, chairman of the Planning Commission, opened the discussion. He explained that a text amendment was necessary to correct an oversight in the Code that only permitted public parking lots in the commercial zone. Chairman Knapp said the correction would allow parking lots in other zones, except for residential. Zoning Officer Kudla said the text amendment required two Commissioners to introduce it and she would then schedule it for a public hearing and possible vote at the next meeting. Commissioners Bibb and Breimhurst introduced the text amendment.

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Moratorium on Applications to Install Tent(s) on Private Property

- President Bibb opened the discussion of applications for permanent tents on private property. Chairman Knapp said at present there is nothing in the Code that addresses this matter and his recommendation was for the Commissioners to remand the issue to the Planning Commission for study and recommendations. Chairman Knapp said that tents were allowed as infill during the pandemic, but permanent tents should be analyzed as part of the broader goals of the Town's Comprehensive Plan. He added that no-one wants to see the Town become a "tent city," and more permanent structures should be discussed for those properties that qualify under the zoning regulations.

Commissioner duPont said that the matter should be remanded to the Planning Commission for review and recommendations. Commissioner Breimhurst agreed.

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Proposal from Rauch Engineering for raising of Mill Street

- Roy Myers
- Roy Myers, Chairman of the Waterways Committee, said he was asking for the Commissioners to approve Rauch Engineering going forward with a study of what would be involved in raising the level of Mill Street to accommodate potential sea level rise in the area. Mr. Myers said that Rauch Engineering had quoted him a cost of \$5280 to do a preliminary sketch plan. After some discussion of funding, the Commissioners agreed that Rauch Engineering should

go ahead and the money for it would come out of the Sea Level Rise Committee's initial \$25,000.00.

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Climate Change/Sea Level Rise - Grants to apply for from DNR
- Chairman Myer also provided an update on the Sea Level Rise Committee and the status of grant applications. Mr. Myers said he had secured support letters from Talbot County for the two grants the Committee had applied for, one for the main harbor improvements and one for Back Creek improvements. President Bibb said he was pursuing support at the state legislative level.
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Farmers Market request to move shed onto Town property
- Jena Paice, president of the Farmer's Market, said the market would like to move the Farmer's Market shed onto Town property as there was no longer room for it on the community garden property . Ms. Paice said the shed was 6 by 8 feet and the Market was willing to do a lease agreement with the Town, and pay for the shed's foundation. The Commissioners agreed to do a simple lease agreement with the Market and said they should apply for the usual permit.
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Update on SMBA kiosk repair and lease
- Commissioner Khalil opened the discussion. She noted that the Business Association had sent a letter of intent to enter into a lease agreement with the Town to use the town's property for their kiosk and to pay a nominal rental fee. She said the Business Association wanted the insurance check for the damages to the building before they decided on the lease agreement. President Bibb said the damage to the building was more extensive than originally thought and he wanted to turn the matter over to Bill Gilmore, Codes Enforcement Officer, to do a study of exactly what would be required to bring the building up to code.

IX. Commissioners Calendar

- The Commissioners discussed agenda items for their December meeting.

X. Comments from the Commissioners

- Commissioner duPont answered questions from Jennifer Stevens of the Bistro regarding removal of parking places on Talbot Street and business licensing. Commissioner duPont offered to sit down with members of the business community to discuss both matters.

The Commissioners then took public comment. Debra Alms of the Hambleton Inn said she thought good things were happening in the town and she had put in her application to serve on one of two boards. Ms. Alms added that she would volunteer her services for drawings for the kiosk project. Ms. Alms also had comments

regarding the sea level rise project and the effects of an accommodations tax increase on smaller accommodations like hers.

Jennifer Stevens of Marengo Street had comments about future tourism and business in St. Michaels.

XI. Announcement of Future Meetings

- Nov 11 2021 - Office closed for Veterans Day
- Nov 25-26 2021 - Office closed for Thanksgiving Holiday
- Dec 8 2021 - 6:00 COSM Work and Legislative Session
- President Bibb announced future meetings and holiday closures.

XII. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.