

MINUTES

COSM

Commissioners

COSM Work and Legislative Session

Thursday, March 7, 2019, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

St. Michaels Branch of the Talbot County Free Library

106 Fremont Street

St. Michaels, MD 21663

- I.

Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance

- President Boos convened the combined working and legislative session of the Commissioners of St. Michaels in the meeting room of the St. Michaels Library, Fremont Street, St. Michaels, Maryland at 6:00 p.m., and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Present were Commissioners Bill Boos, Joyce Harrod, Jaime Windon, and Michael Gorman, Police Chief Anthony Smith, Town Manager Jean Weisman, Legislative Clerk Suzanna Warnick, and approximately 35 members of the public. Commissioner Bibb arrived later in the meeting.

- II.

Agenda Amendments

- There were no agenda amendments.
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Announcements from COSM and Staff

- Mrs. Weisman said that the Planning Commission has been holding twice monthly zoning re-write meetings since January, and the April meetings will be one evening meeting on April 9th at 6 p.m. and an afternoon meeting on April 23rd at 1:30 p.m., with the same schedule for the two meetings in May. Mrs. Weisman said the Planning Commission had also held a public forum on the zoning re-write in February, as which the provided background and answered questions from the public. Mrs. Weisman said the contest to create a new Town flag is underway and a flag committee is reviewing the entries. Mrs. Weisman said that a design would be selected, and the public will vote on the final design. Mrs. Weisman also announced that the Commissioners would be holding public budget meetings at the end of March on the 26th and 27th from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- III.

Comments from the Public

- President Boos asked for any comments from the public. Tad DuPont of Locust Street suggested that Commissioner Gorman should recuse himself from the budget process because he is moving out of the area. Mr. DuPont also suggested that the Commissioners look at the Town properties individually and assign a value based on the current market. Mr. DuPont added that as a significant taxpayer, he wanted to know what the money from any properties sold would then be used for. Mrs. Wald of Grace Street questioned Commissioner Boos' statement from the *Talbot Spy* about the number of parking spaces available on Fremont Street. Commissioner Boos said he had quoted consultant Peter Johnston's estimate of public parking spaces within 500 feet of the planned town office on Fremont Street. Mrs. Wald also read a statement from resident John Novak. Marie Martin of Cherry Street read a statement urging an independent study of the locations for a town office and police station, and recommended a referendum on the matter. Ann Borders of Cherry Street suggested the Commissioners consult the County Tourism and Economic Development groups for their opinion on the long term benefit of each of the potential town office properties. Mike Estrella of E. Chew Avenue said he would like to see a study of how long we would have a police department, given a planned reduction in the police headcount and the cost of a possible new police building. President Boos thanked everyone for their comments.
- IV.

Consent Agenda for Minutes, Department Reports and Event Permits

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Minutes

- February 13, 2019
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Department Reports for February 2019

- Police Dept.

Public Works

Finance

Administration

Planning and Zoning

Marketing and Communications

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Event Permits

- -- Application for Public Event from St. Michaels in Bloom for an event celebrating the daffodil, on March 30, 2019 from 10am to Noon, for approx. 100 attendees
- -- Application for Public Event from WineFest at St. Michaels, for event to benefit St. Michaels Charity, on April 27 and 28, 2019, from 8am - 5pm each day, vendors will be on private property, parking approval from Talbot County Schools for use of parking lot.
- President Boos said a vote to approve the Consent Agenda would include minutes and departmental reports for the month of February 2019. President Boos questioned the comparative figures in the police report. Chief Smith said he and Captain Oswald could meet with Commissioner Boos to discuss the matter. The consent agenda also included permit applications for the Daffodil Festival and WineFest events as noted above. As there were no comments or changes to the agenda items, Commissioner Boos made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Harrod seconded it, and the motion passed on a roll call vote of 4-0 in favor.
- V.

County sewer and road work

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Sewer and Road Repair

- President Boos called upon Town Manager Jean Weisman, who provided an update on the County's ongoing sewer and road repair project in St. Michaels. Mrs. Weisman said the Talbot Street portion of the project was complete and crews are now focusing on the widening of Brooks Lane, including soil and cement stabilization, followed by an asphalt base layer, and then a final surface in the next month or so, weather permitting. Mrs. Weisman said the recent disruption on Brooks Lane was not the County, but house construction by Habitat for Humanity.

- VI.

Board and Commission appointments

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Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

- - filling 2 vacant positions with 3 year term ending Dec 2019

Cathy Hower

Meghann McNamee

- President Boos announced that the Commissioners had two board appointments to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, expiring in December 2019. The Commissioners had no questions and comments. President Boos called for a motion to approve the appointment of Kathy Hower and Meghann McNamee to fill the two vacant positions. Commissioner Harrod made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Boos, and which then passed on a roll call vote of 4-0 in favor.
- VII.

Old Business

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Flag Design Review Committee - **TENTATIVE**

- Submission of flag designs for Commissioners review
- President Boos began a discussion of the next agenda item with permission from the other commissioners, to allow Commissioner Bibb more time to join the meeting and participate in the discussion.

Mrs. Weisman said the Flag Committee needed additional members from the community to move forward with the review of the 10 flag design submissions. Marie Martin of Cherry Street, Mark Van Fleet of E. Chew Avenue, and Jeannie Butler from the Community Center volunteered to serve on the committee. Commissioner Bibb had joined the meeting and thanked the volunteers.

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LEOPS

- Police Chief Anthony Smith opened the discussion of the LEOPs police pension fund. Chief Smith said the LEOPs pension fund allows officers to retire at 25 years instead of 30 years, which is a very desirable job benefit and a compelling recruitment tool. Chief Smith said that the Town could save money over time and that St. Michaels would have a credit for making the switch, thereby reducing the program cost to \$80,000.00 annually.

Commissioner Harrod recused herself from the discussion of the Chief's proposal. The Commissioners were positive in wanting to support the officers. Commissioner Gorman said at \$80,000, five years would cost \$400,000 for the pension program, and did the Chief think that to be more valuable than a new facility. Chief Smith said yes in the short term, and noted that \$400,000 was about what the Town lost when the last police officer left, in terms of training, salary and benefits.

Scott Patterson, Talbot County State's attorney, spoke in support of speed cameras and recruitment and retention incentives for police departments. Mr. Patterson said his formula for good municipal government was for the government to get an "A" in four important areas - education, fire protection, garbage collection, and law enforcement. He said if a government handles those public areas well, a community should thrive.

Commissioner Windon said she favored the alternative pension plan and would like to see it work financially for the town. She suggested that perhaps postponing a new police building or delaying implementation of the LEOPs pension program to the next budget cycle would be helpful. Commissioner Boos favored delaying a decision, at least until the Commissioners had a better idea of the revenue to be obtained from the speed cameras, and the state of the budget in general from the budget meetings at the end of the month.

Mrs. Weisman said the deadline for applying for LEOPs this year is May 15th.

- VIII.

New Business

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Town Property Disposition Plan

- President Boos referred the Commissioners to the Town property list provided, noting that he felt it was time to assess each property as to its future use or its

availability for sale. President Boos said he agreed that the Commissioners should have professional help to make the determinations and to put any properties to be sold out for competitive bid. Mrs. Weisman provided an overview of the properties that had no use, but could not be sold, i.e. Rolles Range and Church Neck. After some questions and discussion, the Commissioners agreed to review the list but to table further discussion to their April meeting when Commissioner Bibb could be a part of it. In the meantime, Commissioner Boos said Town staff would obtain professional real estate analyses on the properties, including updated appraisals.

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Small Cell Tower Guidelines

- Mrs. Weisman provided background on the issue, noting that the FCC has passed laws allowing advanced cell towers every so many feet on any state road. Mrs. Weisman said the Town can't prohibit them but it can regulate where they can go and how they are installed. Mrs. Weisman said the Commissioners had before them modified guidelines from a similar sized town in Ohio that the Maryland Municipal League (MML) has suggested would be appropriate for St. Michaels to put in place. Mrs. Weisman said she had also provided a draft ordinance that would amend the Town's streets, sidewalks and alleys ordinance. Mrs. Weisman said staff was also working on a draft amendment to the Code in coordination with the Town's attorneys. President Boos said St. Michaels should get ahead of the roll-out of this new technology, even though the Town was probably not a near-term target. President Boos said MML's research indicated the first focus would be highly populated areas, such as sports stadiums, and larger cities like Annapolis. Commissioner Bibb joined the meeting and the discussion, adding that the time frame was likely two to five years from now. Commissioner Bibb noted, however that the upgrades would require new 75-foot poles with the strength to hold transformers the size of refrigerators, and the poles would be placed 50 to 75 feet apart.

After some additional discussion, the Commissioners directed staff to consult with the attorneys to ensure the guidelines are in the correct legal form to be brought back before the Commissioners for their consideration.

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Boy Scout Cabin upgrades

- Commissioner Bibb opened the discussion, noting that he had been to the Historic District Commission to outline the plans for renovation of the Boy Scout cabin and received approval for the foundation, windows, air conditioning, and removing tanks. Commissioner Bibb said the project needed more volunteers, including electricians and plumbers. Commissioner Bibb said the inside for the cabin required a total rehabilitation and his hope was a completion deadline of

June 1st. President Boos thanked Commissioner Bibb for his efforts on behalf of the community. Mrs. Weisman wanted the Commissioners to be aware that trees would be removed for better access to the cabin, and that inside renovations included plans for a full kitchen. The Commissioners were in full consensus that the project should move forward.

President Boos then called for public comments. Tad DuPont of Locust Street had questions about the financing of the LEOPs pension program and favored making the numbers work. Ann Borders of Cherry Street asked if the retention bonus could go away if the LEOPs program was put in place. Doug Rollow of Water Street questioned whether the retention bonus was effective. Donna Hunt of E. Chew Street had concerns about the sewer work tearing up the streets again after the Town repaired them. Commissioner Boos said the County is obligated to put the streets back properly. Kathy Stinchcolm of Locust Street asked about the sewer work on Locust and Mrs. Weisman responded.

Ann Borders of Cherry Street suggested that workforce housing should be considered an incentive for police officers. Mrs. Weisman said that officers get a \$300.00 stipend for housing if they live in Town.

Other residents had questions about the cell tower project and the police pension program, including Roy Myers of E. Chestnut, Jay Fink of E. Chew, and Jeannie Butler of the Community Center.

- IX.

Commissioners Calendar

- Mrs. Weisman and the Commissioners discussed changes and additions to their March budget sessions and to the regular meeting in April 2019.
- X.

Comments from the Commissioners

- Commissioner Bibb mentioned that April 5th was the next meeting of the YMCA Senior Center board. He noted that the pool is almost finished and may have a soft opening in May 2019. Commissioner Windon said the opinion of the Ethics Commission on her potential conflict of interest related to membership in the Museum Friends program would be released shortly and be posted on the Town's website.
- XI.

Announcement of Future Meetings

- March 26 and 27, 2019 - Town Office - Budget Workshops - 8 am to 2 pm

April 10, 2019 - Town Office - COSM Regular Work and Legislative Session

- Future meetings are as noted above.
- XII.

Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.