

MINUTES

COSM

Commissioners

COSM Working Remote Session

Wednesday, December 9, 2020, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Virtual Remote Meeting

- I.

Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance

- President Harrod called to order a remote working session of the Commissioners of St. Michaels at 6:00 p.m. Also present were Commissioners Tad duPont, Michael Bibb, Jaime Windon, and David Breimhurst, Town Manager Jean Weisman, Police Chief Anthony Smith, Public Works Director Jeff Richardson, Legislative Clerk Suzanna Warnick, Meeting Coordinator Kim Weller and approximately 34 members of the public. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

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II. Announcements from COSM and Staff

- Town Manager Jean Weisman announced that the Commissioners held Closed Sessions on November 30th and December 8th, pursuant to Maryland Code, State Government Article 3-305B(1) to discuss personnel matters.

Commissioner Bibb said the Shore Leadership group is accepting applications now for the Shore Leadership class of 2021 beginning in May. Commissioner Bibb also noted that the State legislative season will begin on January 13th and he would be following pertinent legislation affecting the Eastern Shore as a member of the board of the Maryland Municipal League.

President Harrod said she had met with the Mid-Shore Regional Board, noting that the Board had praised the Talbot Co. Economic Development Committee for its work on behalf of the County.

Chief Anthony Smith said that the Police Department had extra officers on patrol for the Midnight Madness shopping over the weekend to ensure compliance with masking and distancing. Chief Smith said Talbot County has the lowest COVID numbers compared to other areas. Chief Smith said there would be vaccines available to Health Care workers beginning next week.

III. Agenda Amendments

- Mrs. Weisman said the Commissioners needed to select a new Vice President. Commissioner duPont nominated Jaime Windon for Vice President. Commissioner Bibb seconded it. Commissioner Windon said that Commissioner Harrod, who was Vice President, had stepped up to the role of President to replace Commissioner Bibb as President, necessitating the selection of a new Vice President. The Commissioners then approved the appointment of Commissioner Windon as Vice President on a roll call vote of 5-0 in favor.

Mrs. Weisman reiterated the Commissioners' rules for public comment at the beginning and the end of meetings and the procedure for being recognized by President Harrod for comments at other times. President Harrod then invited public comment.

- IV.

Comments from the Public

- Roy Myers of E. Chestnut Street congratulated Commissioners Harrod and Windon on their new positions. Mr. Myers provided an update on the Waterways Committee's work on the sea level rise report and encouraged the Commissioners to listen in on the next Waterways meeting on December 15th from 4-6 p.m. for discussion. Commissioners Bibb and Breimhurst said they would sit in on the meeting. Jeff Knapp of Miles Avenue said he would also attend and asked to have the Planning Commission calendared for the next Commissioners' meeting to discuss the most recent updates to the zoning code.

Kristin Greenaway, President of the Maritime Museum, said the Museum has created a holiday light show to compliment the Harbor light show and said that the public had free access to the event on the museum campus/Navy Pont beginning the evening of December 12th at 4:00 p.m. Ms. Greenaway praised the work of Dennis Glackin in coordinating the event.

V. Special Presentations and Announcements

- Delegate Johnny Mautz

- Johnny Mautz introduced himself and outlined the activities and operations of the upcoming legislative session in Annapolis with COVID-19 restrictions still in place and encouraged the Town to communicate with him for any assistance needed. Mrs. Weisman said the Town has two projects coming up that the Town may need some coordination with Representative Mautz. She noted the State Highway Administration's plans for upgrading the sidewalks and curb cuts along Route 33, and the Town's project with the Rotary to extend the Nature Trail to the County ballfield. The Commissioners thanked Delegate Mautz for his time and information.
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FY21 Budget Review

- Update from Commissioner duPont
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- Commissioner duPont opened the discussion of the regular review of the budget, and noted that he had attended an MML-sponsored virtual meeting on how small towns were operating in a COVID environment. Commissioner duPont said he agreed with the point made that the restaurants in a tourist town drive its economy. He said that St. Michaels should be doing everything it can to support and encourage restaurants in St. Michaels. Commissioner duPont also reviewed this year's profit and loss compared to last year, noting that overall, the Town's revenue was off approximately 16 percent. He had several suggestions on how to reduce expenditures and advocated a tax rate reduction.

Commissioner Harrod asked if any of the businesses in town received CARES grants from the government for losses due to COVID. Mrs. Weisman said there were businesses which qualified for CARES grants and the County has given out \$1.3 million in relief. Mrs. Weisman said there

were St. Michaels businesses that benefitted, and other grants are still available specifically for restaurants. Mrs. Weisman added that the Town itself is eligible for reimbursement for COVID-related expenses and that she was preparing the necessary documentation.

Commissioner Windon said while the grants and reimbursements were great, one should not assume that the relief totally offsets losses. Commissioner Windon suggested that a pro-active step to support the businesses in Town might be to come up with a safe way to market the Town over the next 3-6 months just to let people know the Town is open. Mrs. Weisman designated a discussion of a marketing plan for calendaring.

Mrs. Weisman read public comments about speed camera revenues and lowering the tax rate.

Commissioner Breimhurst cautioned that there should be a balance between the capacity of the Town and advertising for visitors.

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

Minutes

November 23, 2020 - Closed Executive Session

November 24, 2020 - COSM Legislative Session

November 30, 2020 - Closed Executive Session

Department Reports

Police

Disbursements

Year to Date

Profit and Loss

Planning and Zoning

Public Works

Administrative

Marketing and Communication

Event Permits

'Stars over Talbot' - Public Event Sign Permit from SM Community Center for fund raising stars, place on utility poles along Talbot Street from Dec 15 - Jan 15.

- President Harrod announced that the Consent Agenda included minutes and departmental reports from the month of November 2020, and a permit application for the Stars over Talbot charity fundraising program. President

Harrod called for adoption of the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Bibb made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Breimhurst seconded it and the motion passed on a roll call vote of 5-0 in favor.

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- VII.

Bids and Contracts

- Grace Street Box Culvert Guard Rail
- Schummer Bid and/or Public Works Assistance
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- Town Manager Jean Weisman said that Town Engineer Casey Rauch had provided a spec for the guardrail and had made the rails as short as possible while still meeting safety requirements. Mrs. Weisman added that Schumer could do the job for \$10,252.00. Commissioner duPont questioned the necessity of the rails. Public Works Director Jeff Richardson said that the size of the culvert had doubled from 10 to 20 feet. The Commissioners discussed alternatives such as marine pilings or bollards instead of rails. Commissioner duPont said he liked the idea of pilings, they were aesthetically preferable and may be less expensive than guardrails. After some additional discussion, the Commissioners directed staff to consult with Mark Hill regarding pile driving costs and with Casey Rauch regarding the choice and necessity of guardrails at the Grace Street culvert.

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- VIII.

Boards and Commission Appointments

- Boards and Commissions with terms expiring Dec 31 2020 or vacancies
- President Harrod opened the discussion on board appointments, noting that Don Bibb, Director of the Housing Authority of Talbot, had requested an opportunity to interview the individual who had applied for the vacancy on the Housing Authority board.

Commissioner Windon said that the Housing Authority position had been vacant for two years and no one had come forward until now. She recommended going forward with the slate as discussed by the Commissioners in Closed Session. Mrs. Weisman read comments from the public. Chris Thomas, a member of the Housing Authority board, said he

would like to have Don Bibb vet the candidate as he had done with previous applicants, especially regarding conflict of interest. Other public comments favored going ahead with the appointment.

Commissioner Windon suggested that since the Commissioners had determined that the candidate was qualified, the appointment should be made. Commissioners duPont and Breimhurst said they thought the appointment should go ahead.

President Harrod made a motion to re-appoint William Harvey to the Board of Appeals with a term expiring December 31, 2023; Walda duPriest Brandt to the Historic District Commission for a term expiring December 31, 2023; Glenn Fong to the Historic District Commission for a term expiring December 31, 2023; and Marie Martin and Melissa Knapp to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for terms expiring December 31, 2023; Mark Welsh and Mark Van Fleet to the Waterways Advisory Board for terms expiring December 31, 2023.

President Harrod also moved to appoint Mark Pelavin to the Ethics Commission for a term expiring December 31, 2023, replacing Peter Hartjens; Paul Tveit to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board with a term expiring December 31, 2023, Cynthia Allen to the Planning Commission, with a five-year term expiring December 31, 2025 and to the Housing Authority of Talbot, Alexis Roiter for a partial term expiring December 31, 2023.

President Harrod called for a second. Commissioner duPont seconded the motion. President Harrod called for any additional discussion. Commissioner Windon thanked all the applicants for their interest. The Commissioners then voted 5-0 in favor of the appointments.

IX. Items for Discussion

- St Michaels Museum Funding Request

Jeff Fones, President of the St. Michaels Museum, requested that the Town

pay for a full plat survey that the Museum needed for its grant application. Mr. Fones said the Museum is closed currently due to COVID, but plans to open hopefully in the summer with new and improved exhibits. Mr. Fones said the Town benefits from by having a legitimate plat of Town property in St. Mary's Square, including the Boy Scout Cabin. Commissioner Windon said she was in favor of reimbursing the museum for the new plat, as were all the other Commissioners. Commissioner Windon made a motion to pay the plat invoice. Commissioner Breimhurst seconded it, and the motion passed on a roll call vote of 5-0 in favor.

- Green Street - Repair or Replace

Public Works Director Jeff Richardson said he met with Steve Schumer, who gave him a price of \$3,150.00 (while Schumer is still mobilized in Town) to remove the existing asphalt and excavate the road bed on Green Street to approximately four inches, and then install a culvert block, and then the Town would take over and apply the surface, whether shells or stone, and roll the material into place at a cost of about \$1,600.00.

Commissioner duPont said he opposed asphalt, but was comfortable with white rock or clam shells. He added that the white stone would match the driveway parking area and make it look like a driveway, which would prohibit tourists from thinking it was a through street.

Mr. Richardson confirmed that the cost would be below \$5,000.00.

After some additional discussion, the Commissioners were satisfied that all environmental and aesthetic issues had been resolved with this solution. Mrs. Weisman said she would check on whether a environmental report was required. Mr. Sohan and Mr. Byrne of Green Street said they supported Jeff Richardson's solution and the use of the white stone.

President Harrod made a motion to accept the solution of putting stone on Green Street. Commissioner duPont seconded it, and the motion passed on a roll call vote of 5-0 in favor.

- Mulberry Street sidewalk repair

President Harrod recognized Mr. Conway of Mulberry Street. Mr. Conway said he had submitted a plan to the Town to fix his sidewalk and had the work done. Mr.

Conway said he would like the Town to pay for half of the cost of the sidewalk repair, which he understood was the precedent. Mr. Conway added that most of the damage to the sidewalk was caused by the roots of the Town's tree in the Town's right-of-way. Mr. Conway said half the cost of the repair was in the amount of \$3,712.50. Jeff Richardson said the sidewalk was approximately 8 feet wide and about 50 feet long. Mr. Conway said that, based on Mr. Richardson's suggestion, the sidewalk width was reduced to a uniform six feet to minimize any future damage to the sidewalk from the tree.

Mrs. Weisman said the homeowners did pay half of the cost of sidewalk replacement on West Chestnut Street and in a few other instances. After some additional discussion, the Commissioners were in agreement that the Town should pay half the cost of the sidewalk repair. Commissioner Bibb made a motion that the Town pay fifty (50) percent of the cost of the sidewalk repair. Commissioner Windon seconded it, and the motion passed on a roll call vote of 5-0 in favor.

X. Comments from the Public

President Harrod called for public comment. Melissa Knapp of Miles Avenue asked about the electric board on the Boundary Lane property, and wondered whether there would be plantings to shield it from Talbot Street. Jeff Richardson said that Fluharty Electric installed the electric for \$300.00, which was a discounted cost.

There was discussion among the Commissioners regarding cost and the location of the evergreen tree and the electric panel. Jeff Knapp of Miles Avenue said he would obtain information on relocation and would take the lead on decoration of the tree using traditional white lights. The Commissioners agreed.

XI. Comments from the Commissioners

- Commissioner Breimhurst praised the work of the St. Michaels in Bloom organization and the Town's Parks and Rec board for the Christmas decorations around town.
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XII. Calendaring

The Commissioners discussed agenda items for their meetings in January 2021 and decided to have an additional meeting on December 16th at 5:30 p.m. to discuss

the State Highway Administration (SHA) highway project and a marketing plan for the Town.

XIII. Announcement of Future Meetings

Dec 24-25 -- Closed for Christmas Eve and Day

Dec 31-Jan 1 - Closed for New Years Eve and Day

Jan 13 2021 - COSM Work Session

XIV. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.