

MINUTES

COSM

Commissioners

COSM Legislative Remote Session

Tuesday, April 27, 2021, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Virtual Remote Meeting

- I.

Call to Order - Pledge of Allegiance

- President Harrod called to order the remote legislative meeting of the Commissioners of St. Michaels at 6:00 p.m. Also present were Commissioners Michael Bibb, David Breimhurst, Jaime Windon, and T. C. duPont, Town Manager Jean Weisman, Legislative Clerk Suzanna Warnick, and about 50 members of the public. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. Agenda Amendments

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

- President Harrod reminded public speakers to state their name and address before speaking and limit comments to 3-5 minutes. Commissioner Breimhurst read a statement of apology to two restaurant owners who oppose any reduction in the tourism advertising budget and said he and Tad duPont had since talked with other business owners in Town who also oppose such a reduction.

Commissioner duPont said he urged open dialogue between the Commissioners and all community members and encouraged participation by the business community in the meetings, especially in the accommodations tax discussions and the issue of the Town's direction over the next few years. He also suggested a business owner's committee headed by Kim Weller to discuss the issues important to them.

At a recent MML meeting, Commissioner Bibb said he had talked to eight different towns of varying sizes about their tourism and advertising budgets - Hampstead, North Beach, Denton, Gaithersburg, Cumberland, Pocomoke City, and College Park - none of whom had accommodations tax to support advertising or tourism budgets. Commissioner Bibb said these other towns do not receive an accommodations tax and have very limited ad budgets. He added that all the towns recognize St. Michaels as one of the best known towns in Maryland.

IV. Comments from the Public

Donna Hunt of E. Chew Avenue said that trash collection should remain in the Town and not be contracted out. She added that if the trash is collected later in the day by an independent contractor, trash cans will stay out on town streets. all day because everyone has gone to work before the trash gets collected and will not be home to pull the cans in. Ms. Hunt also said the Commissioners should consider a donation to the Union United Methodist Church for their mold and repair fund as it was an important part of the community and in need of attention.

President Harrod then called upon Jeff Knapp, Chairman of the Planning Commission, and began the presentation of the Planning Commission's parking committee.

Continuing with public comment, Mark Van Fleet of E. Chew Street had a question on the advertising budget. Dan Speigel of Mulberry Street commented on the parking congestion during events and festivals. Captain Iris, owner and operator of the Selina II, said the portion of the accommodations/amusement taxes spent on advertising benefits the Town, as does the remainder, which supports other Town improvements. She added that the smaller towns do very little advertising, and therefore do not have the notoriety of St. Michaels. Kristin Greenaway of the Maritime Museum noted that the smaller towns do not have businesses or accommodations that could contribute to a tax.

V. FY21 Budget Review

- Commissioner duPont
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- Commissioner duPont opened the discussion. He said the budget discussions were ongoing and he had no additional comments for now.

VI. Marketing Review

- Kimberly Weller, Marketing Director
- Mrs. Weller said she would be approaching the online versions of boating magazines and newsletters, with the Commissioner's permission. Mrs. Weller said reaching out to these publications for two months would cost approximately \$5,000. Commissioner duPont said that such an expenditure would be unnecessary but could be discussed at the next budget meeting. Commissioner Windon said she supported the advertising. Mrs. Weller said she did have money left in this year's budget to cover the costs.

Jeff Fones, president of the St. Michaels Museum, said the advertising St. Michaels does draws people to the Museum and is important to them.

Commissioner Bibb made a motion to approve the \$5,000 expenditure. Commissioner Windon seconded it, and the motion passed on a roll call vote of 4-1 in favor, with Commissioner duPont voting "nay."

Jen Smith of the Galley Restaurant said she wholly supported the marketing/advertising that has been done by Mrs. Weller and opposed any reduction in the advertising budget. Ms. Smith also said she supported the comments from Captain Iris and Donna Hunt.

VII. Consent Agenda

- Antique and Classic Boat Festival

- Public Event permit application from Antique and Classic Boat Assoc. for antique boat show on the grounds of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, on June 18, 19 and 20, 2021, from 10am - 5pm, approx. 2,500 attendees over the 3 days. No alcohol or food.
- President Harrod said the only item on the Consent Agenda was the Antique and Classic Boat Festival. Commissioner duPont made a motion to accept the application of the Antique and Classic Boat Festival as presented. Commissioner Breimhurst seconded it and the motion passed on a roll call vote of 5-0 in favor. In response to public inquiries she had received, Commissioner Windon noted that the Museum, not the Town, had determined that the festival would not include alcohol or food service, exercising commendable caution with regard to Covid19.
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VIII. Ordinances for Consideration or Introduction

- Ordinance No. 523 - Climate Change / Sea Level Rise Commission

- AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF ST. MICHAELS, CHAPTER 98 (BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES AND PANELS) TO INCLUDE §98.9 CLIMATE CHANGE/SEA LEVEL RISE COMMISSION SETTING PROVISIONS FOR THE COMMISSION AND THE TERMS OF THE MEMBERS PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY; AND GENERALLY RELATING TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS IN THE TOWN OF ST. MICHAELS.
- President Harrod opened the discussion of Ordinance No. 523 and noted that Roy Myers of the Waterways Committee had reviewed and approved of the ordinance. Mrs. Weisman said this was the ordinance she had been directed to draft creating a Climate Change/Sea Level Rise Committee and setting its membership and objectives. Mrs. Weisman read the title of Ordinance No. 523 into the record as noted above. Commissioners Bibb and Breimhurst introduced the ordinance. The Commissioners thanked Mr. Myers for his work on this project.
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Ordinance No. 525 - Chpt 285 - Streets, Sidewalks and Alleys

- AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF ST. MICHAELS, CHAPTER 285 (STREETS, SIDEWALKS, AND ALLEYS) TO AMEND §285-2 OBSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC ACCESS TO PIERS AND BULKHEADS PROHIBITED; TO ALLOW FOR BETTER ENFORCEMENT PROVIDING THAT THE TITLE OF THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE DEEMED A FAIR SUMMARY; AND GENERALLY RELATING TO PUBLIC WAYS IN THE TOWN OF ST. MICHAELS.
- Mrs. Weisman said Ordinance No. 525 would increase fines for putting obstructions in a public way, such as unauthorized cones to mark out parking space in front of a residence. The Commissioners wanted to add an exception for senior citizens without a driveway to be able to mark a parking space. Mrs. Weisman said she would add language and the ordinance would be placed on the Commissioners' May agenda. There were no public comments.

IX. Resolution for Consideration and possible Vote

Resolution 2021-03 - HDC Guidelines

- A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF ST. MICHAELS TO ADOPT THE ST. MICHAELS HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGN REVIEW GUIDELINES DATED 2021
- James Fulton of the Historic District Commission (HDC) presented the revisions to the guidelines that had been a work in progress since 2017. Mr. Fulton thanked HDC members and everyone who had contributed to the project and took questions from the Commissioners. Commissioner Breimhurst commented that the revised guidelines were much more readable and useable. Mrs. Weisman also thanked the HDC for all of their work. Doug Rollow of Water Street thanked Mr. Fulton for his service on the Commission. Mr. Fulton explained the HDC's purview with regard to repairs to the Union United Methodist Church in response to questions posed by Commissioner Harrod.

As there was no additional discussion, President Harrod called for a motion to adopt Resolution 2021-03 (HDC Guidelines). Commissioner duPont made the motion, which was seconded by Commissioner Bibb, and which passed on a roll call vote of 5-0 in favor.

X. Items for Discussion

Lights for sidewalk at Boy Scout Cabin

- Bill Gilmore, the Town's Code Enforcement Officer, provided a description of the problem with the walkway lighting at the Boy Scout Cabin. Mr. Gilmore explained that the neighbors had complained about the brightness of the lighting and the Town's solution is to reduce the lumens by changing out the bulbs and installing shields to direct all the lighting toward the ground. Mr. Gilmore said he had more work to do to complete the light reduction project and would report

back to the Commissioners. Jim Fulton of Cherry Street said the HDC had approved the lighting, having been assured that the illumination would be appropriate. Mr. Fulton said that he appreciated and approved Mr. Gillmore's efforts to correct the problem on behalf of the Town. Public comment was then taken.

- St. Michaels Museum request for Carriage Rides
- Jeff Fones, President of the St. Michaels Museum, described the horse-drawn carriage route, the historical tour to be provided, and the costs which he believed were reasonable. Mr. Fones said that the ride and tour would be conducted initially during the week - Fridays and Mondays from 4-7 p.m. - and, if successful, expanded to include a Museum component. Mr. Fones said the horse carriage operator would take care of horse droppings and any other associated debris, and he emphasized that the carriage would not be on Talbot Street except very briefly. Mr. Fones added that these carriage rides are conducted in Berlin and Ocean City, Maryland by the carriage operator, who is based in Salisbury, Maryland.

Mr. Spiegel of the Cannonball House said he was totally opposed to the project because of the noise of the horses' hooves, the disturbance of already congested streets, and the tourist gimmickry of the offering.

Mr. Fones then took questions from the Commissioners and noted that the program was being proposed on a trial basis and could be terminated if it does not work. Mr. Fones said the trial would begin Memorial Day weekend and extend for approximately 60 days. Commissioner Bibb made a motion for a 60-day trial of the carriage rides two days a week, which was seconded by Commissioner Windon, and which passed on a roll call vote of 5-0 in favor.

- Parking Study - Planning Commission recommendations
- Chairman Knapp said the Planning Commission's parking committee had made its recommendations to the Commissioners at the last meeting and was now looking for some feedback from the Commissioners on specific suggestions, particularly those related to public safety and enforcement. Chairman Knapp said the committee had received some positive feedback from the Post Office on the committee's suggestion for additional signage to prevent one-way violations. Commissioner Breimhurst said he liked most of the suggestions of the committee, and that progress was being made on these issues.

XI. Comments from the Public

- Mark Van Fleet of E. Chew Street had a question on the advertising budget. Captain Iris, owner and operator of the Selina II, said the money spent on advertising represents a very small portion of the

accommodations/amusement tax money the Town receives and that the expenditure benefits the Town. She added that the reason people know about St. Michaels and that it has a reputation among other lesser-known towns as a premier destination is because of advertising/marketing.

XII. Comments from the Commissioners

- Commissioner Windon asked if there would be a committee composed of businesses regarding the Noise Ordinance. Commissioner Breimhurst said he thought further discussion was appropriate, although there had been no additional complaints. Mr. Van Fleet of E. Chew Avenue said he would like to be part of any future discussion and could someone let him know.

Commissioner Bibb said he favored resuming in-person meetings. Commissioner Windon said she still opposed meeting in person and considered it unnecessary as the Commission's work was progressing. The Commissioners agreed to postpone a decision on in-person meetings.

XIII. Commissioners Calendar

- The Commissioners discussed agendas for their meetings in May 2021 and scheduling a budget workshop for May 4th at 5 p.m. and the budget hearing for May 12th. President Harrod called for final comments.

Jeff Knapp said the arbor vitae trees have been removed from the planter boxes and are residing at his house. He added that the Commissioners needed to decide where the trees should be planted and arrange for watering. The Commissioners discussed suggestions and turned the matter over to public works.

XIV. Announcement of Future Meetings

- May 12 2021 - COSM Working Session
- May 26 2021 - COSM Legislative Session

XV. Adjournment

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.