

MINUTES



**Commissioners of
St Michaels
Meeting Minutes Legislative Session
Wednesday, October 25, 2023, 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
St. Michaels Branch of the Talbot Co. Library
106 S. Fremont Street
St. Michaels, MD 21663**

1. 6:00 pm - Call to Order for Working Session - Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Breimhurst, President, called to order a live and remote Working Session of the Commissioners of St. Michaels at 6:00 p.m. in St. Michaels, Maryland and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. Also present at the meeting were Commissioners Joyce Harrod, Al Mercier, Tad DuPont and Katrina Whittington. Other Representatives included Town Administrator Rob Straebel, Town Planner Steve Ball, Code Compliance Office Kathy Thomas and Chief Oswald. With members of the public and Zoom present as well.

2. Announcements from COSM and Staff

Commissioner Harrod requested a moment of silence for the firefighters in Baltimore. Commissioner Whittington attended the Friends of the Library Cruise on the Patriot and this morning spoke at the Rotary meeting.

Rob Straebel – great meeting with residents in the area between Chester Park area, Brooks Lane, and Railroad Ave regarding storm water management, working with BayLand Associates. An approach could be to submit a grant for stormwater improvement on public right of ways as well as private property. Looking at various improvements to Environmental Concern building, including transitioning office to that location in early 2024. The bathroom needs to be renovated to be ADA compliant. The filing system needs to be moved from the Town Office to the new building, looking into what needs to be done. The heating and cooling system will be serviced, new paint and carpet estimates are in process. Met with Talbot Co. Fire Marshal for compliance with fire safety. Finished Town Clerk interviews, 5 finalists and a great candidate was found. Commissioner Breimhurst inquired if the ADA bathroom and roof is over \$5,000, if so they need to go out to bid. Commissioner duPont comments on the weight of the filing cabinets and suggested using buying filing cabinets.

Steve Ball – Public outreach meeting on Oct 24th on EC/Boundary Lane Master Park Plan, approximately 50 people attended. The consultant presented two site plan concepts and the next one will be the preferred site plan.

Kathy Thomas – working on final stages of blight property violations. Working with owners who have large amounts of debris on their property and are very close to compliance.

Chief Oswald – Friday the 13th had a great turnout for lunch with a cop. Met with a local business regarding a fraud and identify theft incident, subject was arrested.

3. Comments from the Public

Mark Berman inquired about the architects and the preliminary drawings, and the fees

associated with the work for the EC building and if the Commission will sign off on it.

John Clarke – something needs to be addressed with the broadband going through the town. Mentioned phone and internet were down. Lines are exposed on the telephone poles, not confined.

Sue Ann Raring – member of Parks and Rec requesting the Commissioners to increase the number of members from 5 to 7. Commissioners Breimhurst requested the change to be in writing

4. Events for Approval

Holiday Sea Glass and Arts Festival and the Running Festival. Commissioner Harrod made a motion to approve, the motion was seconded, all in favor motion passed 5-0.

5. Ordinance for Public Hearing

Ordinance No. 551 -Burning Outdoor - **AN ORDINANCE REPEALING AND REENACTING AS AMENDED CHAPTER 122, "BURNING, OUTDOOR", FOR THE PURPOSE OF BETTER REGULATING OUTDOOR BURNING IN THE TOWN OF ST. MICHAELS IN ACCORDANCE WITH CURRENT FIRE CODES AND BEST PRACTICES.** Staff has added section 122-5 regarding cooking equipment recommended by Talbot County Fire Marshal's office. Commissioner Whittington made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Harrod, all in favor, motion passed 5-0.

6. Ordinance for Introduction/Discussion

Ordinance No. 552 - Leaf Blowers - **AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 216, "NOISE", TO ADD SUBSECTION e., "LEAF BLOWERS", PROHIBITING THE USE OF GASOLINE AND DIESEL-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS IN THE TOWN OF ST. MICHAELS AND IMPOSING CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF OTHERWISE LAWFUL LEAFBLOWERS.** Highlights of ordinance are the new legislation would fall under the noise ordinance requiring all leaf blowers to be operated by electricity or battery by January 1, 2025. Noise level shall not exceed 65 decibels at 50ft, distance could be problematic and suggested a change to "regardless of distance". Commissioner Breimhurst inquired about showing proof that one has changed to a battery or electric leaf blower. Commissioner Mercier inquired about the \$100 reimbursement and look at the number closer regarding the actual cost of a new leaf blower. Must consider how this will be monitored. Commissioner duPont against the Federal and Local holiday noise schedule. The reimbursement issue is opening the Town to a large expense. Commissioner Harrod was approached by a resident regarding the affordability of leaf blowers and one not being able to afford it. Commissioner Harrod also noted a resident inquired as to why we are not enforcing gas lawn mowers.

Eric Bridges noted safety issues with the battery packs and cost difference between gas and electric leaf blower. Mark Berman inquired about 4 stroke and 2 stroke gas leaf blowers, and which are louder. A public comment via Zoom also suggested the Town ban plastic bags. George Galgano noted while he was at the park a lawn care service was using gas powered equipment, then another company came with a leaf blower, and he had to go home due to the noise level. Also noted an issue with fertilizer being unnecessarily distributed and fully supports the ban on gas blowers. Mark VanFleet – supports electric leaf blowers. Marise Galgano – noted March-November there is a constant stream of noise from leaf blowers and supports the restriction of gas-powered leaf blowers. Bonnie Morris noted battery is just as loud as the gas-powered leaf blowers and asked about battery pack disposal.

7. Old Business

Sustainable Communities Program Application Designation renewal – Steve Ball conducted a PowerPoint presentation. Commissioner duPont noted in 2015 comprehensive plan the utility poles were an issue on Talbot Street and it is not shown in the presentation. Steve will add that to the quality of life section in the application. Commissioner Harrod noted MML recognizes municipalities when a project is completed and to contact them. Commissioner Whittington made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Harrod, all in favor motion passed 5-0.

8. New Business

Chief Oswald conducted a competitive analysis regarding police salaries and is seeking an adjustment to pay. Chief Oswald mentioned that Easton is doing a pay study this year and has a program where officers can be educated for free, and we need to be competitive. Chief Oswald noted the proposed pay scale increments provide an officer with the ability to know they will get a raise every year. Commissioner duPont noted the Town has enough opportunity with money to make this adjustment work. Commissioners agree to start with approval of the low range for suggested Annual Adjustment Range by Chief Oswald.

9. Comments from the Public

Roy Myers spoke about the next GMB and BayLand meeting.

10. Comments from the Commissioners

Commissioner duPont is inquiring why the Preppy Redneck trailer has been parked on Willow Street for over a month and why the parking lot is private now. Commissioner Breimhurst mentioned the businesses purchased the parking spots with the purchase of the offices. Officer Taylor noted the issue with the trailer was addressed with the owner.

11. Announcement of Future Meetings - to be held at Library

November 8, 2023 - Working Session

November 10, 2023 - Veterans Day - Town Office Closed

November 23, 2023 - Thanksgiving - Town Office Closed

November 24, 2023 - American Indian Heritage Day - Town Office Closed

December 13, 2023 - Working Session

December 25, 2023 - Christmas Day - Town Office Closed

12. Adjournment of Open Session

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:55pm.

Public Participation: All comments from the public will be taken during the period set aside for "Comments from the Public." The "Comments from the Public" portion of the Commission agenda shall have a limited time period as determined by the Commissioners, and shall be at the beginning and at the end of each agenda. To be recognized, a member of the public should raise his or her hand and wait to be recognized by the President. Comments and questions should be kept brief and to the point, and be directed to the President.