

TOWN OF SNOW HILL, MARYLAND

Life on the River

TOWN MEETING

MARCH 8, 2016

A Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Town Council of Snow Hill, Maryland was held at the Train Station at 200 Belt Street on Tuesday, March 8, 2016 with Mayor John Dorman presiding and was called to order at 7:00pm.

PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT

Mayor John Dorman; Councilman Michael Pruitt; Councilwoman Alison Cook; and Councilwoman Jenny Hall

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

Kelly Pruitt, Town Manager; Trish Goodsell, Asst. to the Town Manager; Michael Day, Econ. Development Coordinator; Randy Barfield, Public Works Director; Cynthia Byrd, Executive Director, Julia Purnell Museum; and Tom Davis, SHPD Lt.

SALUTE TO THE FLAG / INVOCATION

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by an invocation from Rev. Trish Goodsell.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Dorman opened the public hearing on the Arts and Entertainment re-designation application at 7:02pm. Ann Gibb, Grants Administrator advised that the Town is applying for a re-designation of the A&E district and will need approval from the Mayor and Town Council by signing a Resolution this evening. Resident business owner and former A&E District Chairperson commented that there will be expenses that need to be covered for marketing. The biggest involvement has been T.A.D.D. Councilman Pruitt asked for clarification on the expense involved. Mrs. Coates stated that they spent approximately \$1500 per year over the past six years. With no further comments or questions, the public hearing was closed at 7:04pm.

DR. CLARA SMALL

Dr. Small was present to provide an update on the book she is writing about the history of Snow Hill. She advised that she has been obtaining information from the NAAB Center and in Annapolis. She will be meeting with Sherry Glascox, owner of the Cedars B&B on Monday at 1pm. She asked that anyone who would like to share information call her at 410-430-7135.

Dr. Small advised that the research on earlier years was the hardest part for research but she now has access to all records. She will need assistance from people for the recent years. She will be visiting the Purnell Museum in the near future.

MEETING MINUTES

Councilman Pruitt stated that in the minutes it states that contract with Comcast would be ten years. At the time, this was what was understood. Since then, he has come to know that the contract is actually 12 years or so.

A motion was given to approve the Town Meeting minutes for February 2016 by Councilman Pruitt and was seconded by Councilwoman Hall. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was carried. The results of the vote were: 3 in favor; 0 opposed.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Councilman Pruitt asked about the basis of the over 90 days past due on water/sewer bills. Kelly Pruitt advised that these were bills for vacant houses that have not been paid.

A motion was given to approve the February 2016 Financial Report by Councilwoman Cook and was seconded by Councilwoman Hall. A roll call vote was taken and the motion was carried. The results of the vote were: 3 in favor; 0 opposed.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Councilman Pruitt asked what the cost of the downtown Wi-Fi access would be. Kelly Pruitt, Town Manager advised that the access would be free to users; installation is free; and a monthly fee would be applied (approximately \$200-\$300/month).

Councilman Pruitt asked if the grants listed on Mrs. Pruitt's report were granted or applied for. Mrs. Pruitt advised that we are waiting to hear if we were selected, as we apply for these grants on a continual basis.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Mr. Day reported that the Vacant Building Committee has been meeting regularly and will soon bring recommendations to the Mayor and Council. Mr. Day advised that the committee wants registration to begin now so they can review the inventory. The committee would suggest penalties be established for those who do not register.

Mr. Day is working with Lisa Challenger with Worcester County Tourism on setting up a webcam near the river that could be accessed through WBOC, much like what others have in Berlin and Ocean City. Worcester County would incur the cost of this project.

The Bayside Gazette newspaper has a front page story on Snow Hill in the latest edition. Mr. Day is working with them to have the newspaper distributed in Snow Hill and Pocomoke.

The Rosenfeld's Deli food truck should open in mid-March and will be stationed in the parking lot behind Town Hall on Thursdays. Mr. Day spoke with the owners of Harvest Moon, who voiced no conflict with having the deli truck nearby.

PUBLIC WORKS REPORT

Randy Barfield, Public Works Director stated that the asphalt plants have started to reopen and he anticipates that the Martin Street project will be completed by the first or second week in April.

WWTP REPORT

No questions or comments.

PLANNING & ZONING REPORT

Councilman Pruitt stated that he had a question for Karen Houtman, Town Planner on what her idea of "conservation district" is but in her absence from the meeting will contact her directly at a later date.

MUSEUM REPORT

Dr. Byrd announced the annual opening for the Museum scheduled for April 8, 2016 from 5:00pm-7:00pm. Visitors will be able to see the updated exhibits and light refreshments will be served.

Councilwoman Hall asked when the newsletter would be distributed. Dr. Byrd advised that they will have it out before the season opening and will also provide the Calendar of Events.

Mayor Dorman reported the lifetime resident, Mary Elizabeth "Lizzie" Waters passed away at the age of 109 years. He provided a framed photograph of Mrs. Waters and asked that Dr. Byrd display it at the Museum.

FIRE / EMS REPORT

No questions/comments

POLICE REPORT

Lt. Davis reported that after a complaint last month on the speeding on Bay Street the SHPD monitored the area for 12 days around the clock. The findings were: out of 926 vehicles, 80% were at or below the posted limit; 12% were 1-9 mph over the limit; and less than 1% were 16 mph over the limit. Officers did random enforcement measures as well, noting the biggest violators.

Councilman Pruitt asked for an explanation of the reported MDOP violations were. Lt. Davis stated they were not serious, stating that one was a broken window.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Ordinance No. 2016-03

Comcast Franchise Agreement

This Ordinance grants unto Comcast of Delmarva, LLC a franchise for the installation, maintenance, and operation of cable communication facilities with the corporate limits of Snow Hill, as presently constituted and as subsequently enlarged, prescribing certain conditions and fixing the duration of such franchise.

Chris Conner with Comcast was present to address any questions or concerns.

Councilman Pruitt asked if a 15 year contract was standard, as he sees that is the actual term of the contract. Mr. Conner advised it was a standard term.

Councilman Pruitt inquired about underground lines. Mr. Conner stated that Comcast does not own the electric poles, as they are property of Delmarva Power and they attach their

equipment to them. If DP&L goes with underground or if costs show it is more efficient to do so Comcast will install underground lines.

A motion was given by Councilwoman Cook to adopt the Ordinance and it was seconded by Councilwoman Hall. A roll call vote was taken and the Ordinance was unanimously passed. The vote was: 3 in favor; 0 opposed.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Resolution No. 2016-01 Arts & Entertainment District

This Resolution approves the application to the State of Maryland for re-designation of the Snow Hill Arts and Entertainment District.

Mrs. Pruitt advised that Kevin Karpinski, Town Attorney will need to draft a letter to be submitted with the application.

A motion to approve this Resolution was given by Councilwoman Hall and seconded by Councilman Pruitt. A roll call vote was taken and the Resolution was unanimously passed. The vote was: 3 in favor; 0 opposed.

COMMENTS FROM THE MAYOR

1. Mayor Dorman advised that, in response to Mrs. Price's request for handicap parking in the lot behind Town Hall, a handicap parking space has been established, as well as the police parking has been relocated.
2. Mayor Dorman commented that Mr. Weber had made comment at the last town meeting that events do not help the vendors' downtown. He produced a newspaper article where Mrs. Coates was quoted as saying that a recent event had helped her business greatly.

Mr. Weber responded, stating that there seems to be a history of pulling negative comments he has made in a public meeting. He added that his statement was taken out of context and would like to see his good and positive comments noted, although he does not seem to get this from the elected officials or town staff.

Mr. Weber stated that the town's population has decreased and that this needs to be worked on. He added that his point was not to denigrate events or the work Michael Day and the citizens have done. He commented that no one is building or working and we need to focus on that. He stated that he takes offense to what the Mayor said and didn't appreciate it.

Councilwoman Cook commented in defense of the meeting minutes, adding that what was recorded was exactly what she heard him say at the last meeting. She stated that positivity works both ways and hopes to see more moving forward.

3. Mayor Dorman will be meeting with President of UMES tomorrow, as he is trying to pair with them to try to get more jobs and get things moving in Snow Hill.

4. Mayor Dorman will leave on Thursday, March 10th and return March 11th. He will be in Annapolis and the surrounding areas to meet with Delegates and the Secretary of Maryland Department of Transportation. He plans to ask the Secretary for support to finalize the dualization project of Route 113 and to support plan for the excursion train.
5. Easter in Snow Hill will be held on Saturday, March 19th, with an Easter egg hunt at 11am. Staff will be hiding 3000 eggs this year.
6. The Town will be holding a Town-Wide Clean Up Day on Monday, April 25th.

COMMENTS FROM THE COUNCIL

1. Councilman Pruitt stated that he feels various groups need to be brought to the table for discussions and to maintain dialogue. He reminded people that in the next few weeks Council will be meeting to formulate the budget and invited people to attend and take part. The budget session are scheduled for March 21, 22, and 23rd at 4:30pm at the Train Station. March 21st will be the department heads bringing their requests before the Mayor and Council.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

1. Fred Schultz asked why the Arts and Entertainment District were being offered tax breaks when other businesses were not. Michael Day responded that no tax breaks have ever been offered outside of a small amount of income tax. This is more for publicity but rarely is provided.
2. Sylvester Bratten asked Mayor Dorman what is being done to increase jobs in town. He added that he feels it is getting worse instead of better. Mayor Dorman responded that his meeting at UMES is one step that is being taken.
3. Mike Karnis thanked the staff and Snow Hill Police for their efforts on the traffic issue on Bay Street. He requested that they continue, as he has seen improvement.
4. A resident of Maple Street voiced concern over mailboxes and mail being tampered with at some of the houses and asked how often officers patrol her area. She requested more patrols after school, starting around 430pm into the evening. She added that she rode for 2 hours and could not locate a police officer to speak with. Another resident of Ironshire Street voiced complaint of the lack of visibility of the officers in town and asked why the force could not be increased.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further discussion, Mayor Dorman adjourned the meeting at 7:53pm

Respectfully submitted: Trish Goodsell, Asst. to Town Manager