



Minutes of the Town Council
11 April 2022

Approved:

The unprecedented emergency health crisis poses a challenge to all - individually and collectively. To protect ourselves and do our part to impede the spread of the coronavirus and Covid-19 disease, the regular meeting of the Town Council was held remotely via Zoom Video Conferencing. The meeting was recorded.

Mayor Compton called the meeting of the Town Council to order at 7:37 p.m. In attendance were Councilors Darrell Anderson, David Cosson, Christine Dibble, Pat Klein, and Barbara Raimondo. Councilmember Gray Yachup was absent. Also in attendance were Treasurer Jean Moyer some residents and HPC Chair Bob Booher, PC Chair Peter Nagrod, and PEPCO representative Alberto Zegada.

Approval of Agenda: It was moved and seconded to approve [the agenda \(PDF\)](#). The Mayor and Council added a discussion about the increase in Post Office box rental rates and about recognizing the Martin Luther King holiday.

Action: Voted 5-0 to approve as amended.

Public Appearances: There were none.

Treasurer's Report: It was moved and seconded to accept the [March Treasurer's Report \(PDF\)](#). Treasurer Jean Moyer will resume notifying the Mayor and Town Council when a transfer of money is needed to pay bills. Monthly cash balances will also be reported.

Action: Voted 5-0 to accept the report.

2022 Comprehensive Plan: Planning Commission Chairman Peter Nagrod formally submitted the [Draft 2022 Comprehensive Plan \(PDF\)](#) to the Town Council. Mayor Compton reviewed the timeline for Town Council review and approval of the Plan.

Actions: The Council set the date for the required Public Hearing as May 9th at 7:00 PM, ahead of the regular meeting of the Town Council. The public record will remain open until June 10th. Review and consideration of adopting the Comprehensive Plan will take place at the Town Council meeting on June 13th meeting.

Mayor's Report:

- a. **Kudos:** Mayor Compton thanked the Border Committee and volunteers who installed the new Welcome to Washington Grove sign at Daylily and Washington Grove Lane.
- b. **Legislative Bond Initiative:** A \$250K legislative bond to be used for stormwater management was awarded to the Town.
- c. **Use of ARPA funds by 2024:** A stormwater management project in the West woods is being developed by the Woods Committee, and John Tomlin is exploring with WSSC extending water service to properties on Ridge Road currently on well water. The Town has received ~\$460,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funds. Funds may be used for stormwater management in the residential area as well.
- d. **Washington Grove Connector Study:** Montgomery County is in receipt of the Mayor's letter about the Shared-Use Pathway Liaison Committee.
- e. **EV Charging Stations:** With completion of the Pepco License agreement, a site planning meeting has been scheduled for next week.
- f. **RJ Landscape Contractors:** Mayor Compton and a few others met with the contractors last week to discuss their work plans. Their work began around town last week.

Unfinished Business

Potomac Disposal Request to Revise Refuse and Recycling Contracts –

Discussion and Action: Per direction of the Town Council in March, Mayor Compton and Councilor Dave Cosson met with Potomac Disposal (PD) representatives to discuss PD's proposed increase in the contract cost of refuse and recycling services from \$10.78 to \$20.00 per household per month proposed by PD to off-set the significant increase in cost of operations experienced over the past year. PD agreed to phasing-in the rates from \$10.78 in FY 21, to \$16.75 in FY 23, and \$20.00 in FY 24. An additional monthly fuel surcharge to account for gasoline price increases will be discussed further.

The Mayor and Council discussed the phased-in proposal and fuel surcharge. Discussion included PD's very satisfactory service, the best value options available to the Town, re-bidding the contract, and previous problems with mixing recyclables. There was also some discussion about the Town paying for part of the proposed increase from general funds.

***Action:** Darrell Anderson moved to approve the contract prices proposed by Potomac Disposal for 2023 and 2024 with a fuel surcharge formula subject to later review. Patty Klein seconded the motion. Vote: 5-0.*

Proposed FY 23 Tax Rate, Dwelling Tax and Budget for the Town Meeting –

Discussion and Approval: Respecting revenue generation, Mayor Compton noted the following: the FY 23 Budget proposes using the Constant Yield property tax rate, which is ~5% less than approved in FY 22 due to increased property assessed value, but will raise the same funds; the Dwelling Tax is proposed to go up from \$130 to \$204 to recover the ~50% increase in refuse and recycling costs; and that the Town expects to receive 60% more in tax duplication funds from Montgomery County. Expenditures included in the FY 23 Budget were ~2% higher for the current year. There was a discussion about the following:

- Assessed valuations in town.
- Budget transparency.

- Pros and cons of off-setting some of the increase for refuse and recycling collection using general funds.
- Residents transporting their own recyclables to the transfer station.
- A request that the Town construct a pickleball court.

Barbara Raimondo moved to approve the proposed FY 23 budget and tax rates for approval at the Annual Town Meeting. Patty Klein seconded the motion.

Action: *Vote: 5-0.*

Post Office Box Rates: Mayor Compton began by explaining the situation for Washington Grove residents, and discussion of what to do about followed. While USPS mail service is free to most customers in the US, town residents must pay for a post box in order to receive mail because the US Postal Service offers neither home delivery in town, nor general delivery or free post boxes at the Washington Grove Post Office. This cost has risen steeply in recent years to an average of ~\$200 per box. At the urging of resident John McClelland, and with the assistance of Senator Cardin's and Representative Trone's offices, the Mayor has engaged with the USPS to understand the history of this situation. Neither the Town nor the Postal Service have yet found any agreements or documents that explain the lack of home delivery in town.

Councilor Dibble reported her unsatisfactory experience when she contacted the USPS directly, as well as through her congressman, corroborating John McClelland's frustrations. The Mayor proposed that it would serve residents well if the Town negotiated an agreement with the USPS to establish a level of mail service acceptable to residents that is comparable in cost and convenience to that available to most customers in the US.

Action: *Mayor Compton will pursue discussions with the USPS to formalize an agreement for mail service to be offered Washington Grove residents.*

New Business

Ordinance 2022-03: Adopting the Town Budget and Tax Rates for FY 23 –

Introduction. Former Town Treasurer, Mary Challstrom, reminded the Town Council that per Maryland state law, the budget, tax rate and dwelling tax must be established by ordinance. In order to report the tax rates to the State and County in May, the ordinance must be introduced in April. Patty Klein moved to introduce Ordinance 2022-03. Dave Cosson seconded the motion.

Action: *Vote: 5-0.*

Approval of Road Paving RFP – Discussion of Road Segments to Include, and

Approval: In the absence of Councilor Gray Yachup, Mayor Compton reviewed the RFP he and Gray prepared and the 12 road segments to be bid for repaving. The Town Council intends to use bid responses to award work before June 30 to use the remaining funds in the FY 22 Resurfacing budget, as well as for resurfacing in FY 23. Clarifying language was added in several places.

Action: *RFP approved for distribution. Bids and award of work to be considered at the May 24 Town Council meeting.*

Policies and Procedures for Surveys – Discussion: Councilor Klein expressed concerns that the recent survey distributed by the Racial and Social Equity Committee was not sufficiently reviewed by the Town Council to ensure confidentiality and preservation of the information obtained, and also whether it would be available per the Maryland Public Information Act.

Action: *The Council agreed to defer additional discussion about rules and procedures to the next meeting.*

Proposal to Add Martin Luther King Day as an Official Town Holiday:

Action: *Council agreed to review and revise the Town vacation policy before next year.*

Other Regular Business

Town Council Reports – Selected matters of note:

- a. Sustainability Committee Climate Action Plan – The Climate Action Plan is now available on the Town website.
- b. Arbor Day – Arbor Day will take place on April 30.

It was moved and seconded to approve the Town Council Reports for posting on the website.

Action: Vote: 5-0 to approve Council Reports for posting to the website.

Approval of Minutes: It was moved and seconded to approve the [minutes of the March 2022 Town Council meeting \(PDF\)](#).

Action: Vote 5-0 approved.

It was moved and seconded to approve the [minutes of the March 2022 Town Council Budget Work Session meeting \(PDF\)](#).

Action: Vote 5-0 approved.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Kathryn L. Lehman
Town Clerk