



Minutes of Annual Town Meeting
May 8, 2021

Approved: May 14, 2022

Mayor John Compton welcomed everyone and called the 85th Annual Town Meeting by ZOOM Videoconference to order at 8:00 p.m. There were over sixty-four qualified voters in attendance.

Rules of Order: Mayor Compton explained the rules of this Videoconference meeting covering how to sign-in, how to mute, unmute, raise your hand, use the chat function, and voting.

Invocation: The Reverend Joseph Clark gave the invocation.

Approval of Agenda: Darrell Anderson moved to approve the agenda. Dave Hix seconded the motion. Approved (unanimous).

Approval of Minutes: David Cosson moved to approve the minutes of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting. Peter Nagrod seconded the motion. Approved (unanimous).

State of the Town Report: The State of the Town Report began with Mayor Compton talking about the measures the Town took to protect against the spread of COVID-19. He specifically thanked Town Clerk Kathy Lehman for keeping operations going. He expressed his great appreciation for how well employees Mary Challstrom, Terry Cox, and Steve Werts did during this trying time. He also pointed out the spectacular work done by the Lake Committee. John thanked, recognized, and mentioned by name, the dedicated volunteers who serve on the Town Council, Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, Audit Committee, and Board of Elections Supervisors. In addition, he gave brief explanation of the work these groups do to keep the Town in good shape. He acknowledged contract employees Archivist Pat Patula, Webmaster Bill Saar, and Records Management/IT guru Marilyn Frey.

Mayor Compton reported that after 39 years, Treasurer and Town Institution Mary Challstrom, will be retiring on June 30, 2021. He stated the Town is in good shape financially because of Mary's diligence and hard work. Resident Jean Moyer will be our Treasurer starting July 1, 2021. At this time, John also announced that Charlie Challstrom was stepping away from Town committees and commissions as well.

When we are allowed to gather again, a more fitting celebration of Mary and Charlie will take place.

Mayor Compton stated that because of COVID-19 many of the social activities/Town traditions did not take place. That said, Emily Cavey and company were able to keep some of those traditions going. Our path ahead is uncertain due to the current health crisis. A return to normalcy this time next year will be welcome.

Mayor Compton brought the following items to resident's attention:

- Cherry Avenue drainage – after many years of an area impassable after rainfall, Town Maintenance fixed the problem.
- Acorn Lane parking area improved.
- WSSC projects on Ridge Road.
- Paving repairs on Chestnut Road and on McCauley Street.
- Speed hump installation on Hickory Road.
- Forestry & Beautification – planted larger trees and covered the smaller ones to protect them from Cicadas.
- Emergency Preparedness and Safety Committee – Railroad Street crosswalk and new crossing at the Commercial Corner.

Items to be worked on in the coming year include, adoption of updated Comprehensive Plan, stormwater management, bikeway connection, and the appointment of a bikeway connection group.

Comprehensive Plan Report: Chair Georgette Cole gave a history of this two-year, nine-month monumental task. The update is being done with information from 11 committees, two commissions, and fifty-eight writers and editors. There are new sections; Municipal Growth Area 5, Emergency Preparedness with Risk and Hazard Mitigation, Housing Element, and Sustainability. Georgette thanked everyone who volunteered to work on this important document.

Sustainability and Washington Grove: Gary Temple reported this to be an unusual time in the history of the world. He reviewed the formation of the group and explained Maryland and Montgomery County goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. He presented strategies for the Town and asked residents to consider a climate action plan.

Racial Equity and Social Justice in Washington Grove: Julia Cavicchi gave a background of the formation of the group. She talked about Town history with Emory Grove including housing covenants and other inclusion issues. Committee member Sita Strother stated she loved our Town and knows our community can be more equitable. Paula Puglisi reviewed the accomplishments of the group, Education Forums, Comprehensive Plan feedback, graffiti guidance, and proposed community equity assessment.

Action on FY 2022 Budget and Tax Rate: Darrell Anderson moved to adopt the budget and tax rate (\$0.2479/\$100 assessed valuation) as brought forth to the Town Meeting by the Town Council. Dave Cosson seconded the motion.

The following items were discussed:

- Constant Yield Rate
- Dwelling Tax

Mayor Compton asked if there were any questions and shared the summary page from the Town Bulletin. Because of the unusual situation with COVID-19, there is a surplus.

Woods Committee Plans: Joan Mahaffey explained the budget money for the woods would be spent on the following items:

- Invasive Plant Control
- Public Safety Tree Pruning
- Tree Planting
- Community Outreach
- Whetstone Spring Restoration
- Deer Management
- Trail Maintenance/Improvements

She talked about the trails, signage, canopy restoration, non-native invasive removal and control, stormwater management, and seasonal clean-up days. Joan showed pictures of the projects and encouraged all to enjoy the woods. There was a brief discussion about riding bikes in the woods. The Committee is against such action.

The budget was approved unanimously.

Historic Preservation Commission Report and Award: Chairman Bob Booher showed some pictures of the 2021 National Register Listing and announced its completion. He gave an update on the inclusions since the original 1980 version and explained their importance. The full document can be found on the Town website. The HPC also added language to the Public Ways and Property Permit and the Comprehensive Plan. The Bell houses (410 & 412 4th Ave.) have enjoyed a face lift. The HPC Award goes to Bryant Foreman, owner of 412 4th Ave. home for a very thoughtful renovation. Bob showed pictures of the renovated home.

Planning Commission Report: Peter Nagrod explained the duties of the Commissioners. He went on to say that Charlie Challstrom's retirement will leave a big hole in the group. He highlighted the year's actions and listed some active projects, preservation of historic houses, Commercial Corner renovation and potential change of use, dumpster relocation, parking issues, and the bike path.

- Border Committee – Peter Nagrod showed a prototype of the new welcome signs. The goal is to make people feel welcome when they use Washington Grove Lane. It will be a transformation.

Discussion of Town Council Reports: There was none. John Hutchinson reported the Lake will be open like last year with COVID-19 restrictions in place.

Volunteer of the Year Award: Mayor Compton explained the award is for someone who goes above and beyond the call in their volunteer efforts. This year there will be two (2) awards. They go to Julia Cavicchi and Sita Strother for their work on the Racial and Social Equity Committee. The Committee's guidelines and recommendations will enrich the Town. The Mayor encouraged residents to participate in the activities of this group.

Old Business: There was none.

New Business: Bob Booher thanked Mayor Compton for taking this on again.

Peter Nagrod expressed concern with impending retirement of Steve Werts. He stressed the importance of knowing the magnitude of all the things Steve's job entails.

Election Results: Chairman Nick Suzich gave the election results.

Mayor

John Compton 112 votes

Write-ins	Joli McCathran	10 votes
	Marc Hansen	3 votes
	Dave Cosson	2 votes
	Dennis Kirschbaum	2 votes
	Audrey Maskery	2 votes
	Paul Campbell	1 vote
	Georgette Cole	1 vote
	Karen Kelly	1 vote
	Judy Mroczka	1 vote
	Gray Yachup	1 vote

Town Council

Christine Dibble	105 votes
Barbara Raimondo	101 votes
Audrey Maskery	76 votes

Write-ins	Judy Mroczka	4 votes
	Charlie Challstrom	1 vote
	Andrew Hotaling	1 vote
	Eva Patrone	1 vote
	Paula Puglisi	1 vote

With no further business, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 10:17 p.m.

Kathryn L. Lehman, Town Clerk