



Minutes of the Town Council
January 9, 2023

Approved:

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 7:35 p.m. In attendance were Councilors David Cosson, Christine Dibble, Rob Gilmore, Eva Patrone, Barbara Raimondo. Also in attendance was Treasurer Jean Moyer, Sylvie Favret and approximately fifteen other residents.

Approval of Agenda: Eva Patrone moved to approve the agenda. Barbara Raimondo seconded the motion. Minor wording correction was made.

Action: Voted 5-0, approved. (No vote from Gray, resigned January 5th.)

Appointment of a Town Councilor to Serve Until the Annual Town Election on May 13, 2023: Mayor Compton explained that he accepted the resignation Councilor Gray Yachup, who cited increased obligations at work did not leave him enough time to meet his responsibilities. Gray stated it has been his honor to be a member of the Town Council. The Mayor and Council thanked Gray for his hard work and efforts, wished him the very best, and expressed their appreciation of his views as a younger resident who grew up in the Grove and his willingness to serve the Town on the Town Council.

Barbara Raimondo moved to nominate Sylvie Favre as interim Town Councilor. Dave Cosson seconded the motion. Sylvie is a former Town Councilor. The mayor applauded Sylvie's willingness to serve in the Council for four months.

Action: 5-0, approved.

Mayor Compton administered the Oath of Office to Ms. Favre.

Public Appearances: There were none.

Treasurer's Report: Christine Dibble moved and Eva Patrone seconded acceptance of the December 2022 Treasurer's report. Treasurer Jean Moyer guided the Town Council through a couple of items. She reminded everyone that budget time was approaching and that she would be inviting Committee and Commission representatives to a virtual meeting in January to discuss the process and encourage budgeting for contract projects that previously would have been the job of the Town's maintenance supervisor. There was a discussion about anticipating expenses.

Action: Voted 6-0, report accepted.

Mayor's Report:

- a) Mayor Compton offered *Kudos*:
 - To the "light fairies" who decorated the Gazebo

- To Bruce Rothrock and Terry Cox for putting up the wreath at McCathran Hall
 - To Steve Werts for fixing the Dog Spot gate
- b) Gaithersburg Shared-Use Path Study consultant to present concept plans for Diamond Avenue to Brown Street to Town representatives on January 25 – Gaithersburg has engaged the services of a consultant for this study and reached out to the mayor to arrange a meeting with appropriate Town representatives to share thoughts on potential pathway options crossing the intersection of Railroad Street and Diamond Avenue and continuing to Brown Street. The informational meeting, scheduled for January 25th, will include the Town Council-appointed Multi-user Pathway Liaison group, Council members and relevant Committee chairs.
- c) 150th Anniversary of Washington Grove: The first Washington Grove Camp Meeting was organized and held in 1873. An organizational/planning meeting led by Meredith Horan will be held tomorrow, January 10th to form an Ad Hoc 150th Anniversary Committee. All interested residents are encouraged to attend this or subsequent meeting(s) that will be scheduled.

RFP for a Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan – Update on Distribution: The RFP went out to 12 vendors. The Town Clerk will check in with prospective bidders in the next couple of weeks.

- d) USPS Service to Washington Grove Residents – Update: Mayor Compton reported no progress and no further contacts from the USPS. He committed to writing another letter requesting assistance from our Congressional representatives this coming week. Discussion and suggestions included:
- Contacting the IG's office about the USPS violation of their mandate
 - Possible USPS violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act
 - Consulting the Town Attorney about legal action against the USPS by the Town and a possible letter to induce renewed negotiation.
 - Alternatively, Councilor Gilmore offered to research and draft a letter to the USPS with respect to a potential lawsuit by one or more residents. This would be reviewed by the Town Attorney.
 - That the Town have in-person meetings with our legislators to ask them to arrange and participate in face-to-face discussion with the USPS.

Administrative Matters:

- a. Town Appointee to the Montgomery Municipal Cable Board of Directors: Mayor Compton explained the Town needs someone to fill the spot left from Gray's resignation.

Unfinished Business

Purchase of Municipal Electric Power from a Community Solar Energy Provider:

Proposal that the Town Council authorize the mayor to contract with a community solar provider, with certain provisions, should the opportunity become available.

Dave Cosson reviewed a draft resolution giving the mayor authorization to enter into a Community Solar contract to supply electricity to the Town's three Pepco facilities accounts. Bob Booher explained the rationale and benefits of using community solar sourcing. Although these accounts do not see large energy consumption, by switching them to renewable energy the Town would signal its support for a sustainable future, reduce use of fossil fuels and lower CO2 emissions, and likely see a small savings in expense. Pre-approval was requested because opportunities for a community solar account occur irregularly and require rapid acceptance.

Dave Cosson moved and Christine Dibble seconded introduction of the Resolution, and the ensuing discussion included:

- The advisability and ramifications of the Council pre-approving a contract.
- Insufficient time to review examples of actual contract terms.
- The time the community solar contract process might take to complete, and whether a special Town Council meeting could be called to obtain Council action.

Mayor and Council requested Bob Booher to:

- 1) provide sample contract(s) to better understand their terms;
- 2) determine if we can get on their waiting list without pre-approval by the Town Council; and
- 3) learn whether we would have sufficient time for Town Council approval before they must receive the signed contract.

Action: The motion and second were withdrawn, and the matter deferred to a future Council meeting.

New Business

2023 RFP for Landscaping and Maintenance – Review of the current draft: Mayor Compton reviewed edits made by him and Dave Cosson to the 2022 RFP. Some additions to the Scope of Work were discussed. The document will be ready for approval at the February Town Council meeting.

Other Regular Business

Town Council Reports:

- a. *Woods Committee (Cosson) and Gateway Committee (Patrone)* – Locations along the West Woods on Washington Grove Lane for new identity fencing will be proposed. Additional Identity Fences will be installed on WG Lane. The Emergency

Preparedness Committee is pushing Montgomery County to install safety barriers where a precipitous drop-off exists at the location of two drainpipes emerging into the woods from underneath the roadway.

- b. *Planning Commission (Christine Dibble)* – Transition to a partial online submission process for Town Permits is being investigated. A member will contact Montgomery County to learn how other municipalities accept electronic permit applications.
- c. *Website and Communications (Christine Dibble)* – More updates have been made to the website content, including displaying useful current information on the home page. Mayor Compton offered his appreciation to Christine for this specific very useful improvement, and to Christine for her dedication and all the volunteer time she has devoted to making vast improvements to the Town website.
- d. *Forestry and Beautification (Raimondo)* – The Forestry and Beautification Committee presented their evaluation of the Town canopy: There was a discussion about climate change, oak trees, regular review of the plan, and publishing the document in the Town Bulletin. Mayor Compton recommended that the Town Council discuss the plan in greater detail at a future meeting.
- e. *RASEC (Raimondo)* – An anti-racism Resolution and statement will be submitted to the Town and the Town Council for consideration in February. The February submission of the RASEC document begins the conversation. A well-publicized Public Hearing will be considered as a means to encourage resident awareness and engagement with the content and intent of the proposed statement. Approval should take place after comments are received.
- f. *RASEC (Raimondo)* – Committee thoughts were reported on the Planning Commission consideration Town licensing of room rentals. The PC discussed a permitting process at a November 2022 meeting. RASEC will provide comments on this proposal.

Approval of Minutes: Barbara Raimondo moved and Eva Patrone seconded approval of the 12 December 2022 minutes of the Town Council as distributed. Mayor Compton moved to amend the paragraphs about increasing the number of paid holidays with revised language to report that 12 fixed paid holidays were approved.

Action: Vote: 5-0, approved as amended. (Favre abstained)

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Kathryn L. Lehman
Town Clerk