



Minutes of Annual Town Meeting
May 14, 2022
Approved May 13, 2023

Call to Order: Mayor John Compton welcomed everyone and called the 86th Annual Town Meeting by ZOOM Videoconference to order at 8:00 p.m. There were over 75 residents in attendance.

Rules of Order: Mayor Compton explained the rules of this videoconference meeting covering how to mute, unmute, raise your hand, use the chat function, and voting. He also reviewed Roberts Rules of Order and made Dennis Kirschbaum the parliamentarian.

Invocation: Reverend Joseph Clark gave the invocation.

Approval of Agenda: Darrell Anderson moved to approve the agenda. Patty Klein seconded the motion. There was a brief discussion about voting methods. Approved (unanimous).

Approval of Minutes: Patty Klein moved to approve the minutes of the 2022 Annual Town Meeting. Peter Nagrod seconded the motion. Approved (unanimous).

State of the Town Report: Mayor Compton gave his state of the Town report. He explained the Pandemic and recent uptick were reasons for holding a virtual meeting again this year. Mayor Compton thanked everyone who kept our Town traditions going for another year. The fabric of Washington Grove was maintained! He specifically mentioned the following:

- The Woman's Club
- Washington Grove Cares
- The Film Society
- The Town Office stayed open
- Maple Lake opened, thanks to the Lake Committee
- Summer In the Parks took place thanks to Emily Cavey and company

He thanked and mentioned by name the following committees:

- Town Council
- Planning Commission
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Board of Zoning Appeals
- The Audit Committee

Groundskeeping and maintenance were kept going by RJ Landscape with the help of Steve Werts and Company. McCathran Hall is now open and following the Montgomery County

COVID-19 rules. There are still no in-person meetings, but the year was productive. Work was done on the following:

- Shared Use Pathway Task Force
- Shared Use Liaison Group (design and build with Montgomery County).
- EV Charging Stations

Both the Historic Preservation Commission and the Planning Commission had very active years working extremely hard on the Comprehensive Plan. John gave many thanks to Georgette Cole for her supreme organizational skills and he urged everyone to read the plan.

John gave many thanks to Christine Dibble for her work on the Town website. He stated how lucky we are to have her skill and energy.

Mayor Compton also recognized Steve Werts' and Terry Cox's 10 years working for the Town. They did an excellent job keeping the nature of the Town intact. John explained how we are now using a contractor to take care of our Landscape and maintenance needs.

John recognized the Historic Preservation Commission and Gail Littlefield for their work on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Border Committee spearheaded a sign project. One was installed at Ridge Road and Railroad Street and the other at Washington Grove Lane and Daylily Lane. They are also responsible for identity fencing on various walkways.

The Lighting Committee had bollard lights installed along a path at McCathran Hall. This project was blessed by the State. The Committee is also working on a process to allow municipalities to buy and maintain their own streetlights.

The Sustainability Committee explained how to reduce our carbon footprint and is including articles in the Town Bulletin.

RASEC (Racial and Social Equity Committee) group continues to work on many important issues.

Mayor Compton is looking ahead to the adoption of the 2022 Comprehensive Plan, producing mitigation strategies for stormwater management, working with Montgomery County and Gaithersburg on the Shared Use Path (WG Connector), using the American Rescue Funds, the installation of PEPCO EV Charging Stations, and sustainability programs to help reduce our carbon footprint. Mayor Compton thanked everyone for their support, their volunteer spirit, and for attending meetings even if/when they are a bit contentious.

Volunteer of the Year Award: No award was given this year.

Woods Committee: Co-Chairs Patty Klein and Joan Mahaffey thanked everyone who worked in our woods during the past year. They reported on the deer management program: six deer were harvested. The Committee planted 13 trees: Dogwood, American Holly, and Hickory. In addition, trail and woods maintenance took place. The Woman's Club and the Committee joined hands and presented a program called "Living with Wildlife." Budget details and next steps were discussed (trail maintenance, planting native trees, removal of non-native invasives, deer management, and stormwater management). The Woods Committee will continue to work at making the woods an enjoyable place for all.

The Sustainability Committee: came to being in March. There are 19 members so far. Bob Booher is the Chair. They meet the first Tuesday on the month. The Group is working with Certified Sustainability Maryland and has created an eatable garden near the tennis courts.

RASEC: Paula Puglisi introduced herself and named the members of the Racial and Social Equity Committee (RASEC). She thanked Mayor Compton and read a mission statement. She urged people to go to the new website and thanked Christine Dibble and Chaz Wilson for their hard work in creating it. RASEC is working on the following items:

- Translating English signs to Spanish
- Addressing racially restrictive covenants
- Working with Emory Grove to do things like the walking tour, educational series, and outdoor games.
- Consultation with other Committees in Town
- Reviewing language in the Comprehensive Plan
- Recognizing Martin Luther King Holiday
- Researching Anti-Racist declarations

Peter Nagrod thanked the Committee for their work and stated they have helped change his attitude.

Action on FY 2023 Budget and Tax Rates: Mayor Compton commented on the following income items in the budget:

- Total income was significantly underspent and there was no spending of the reserves
- The Town Council recommended use of the constant yield again
- The COVID-19 pandemic caused a re-negotiation of our refuse and recycling contract Expenses went up and there will be an increase in the dwelling tax.
- Our income is projected to be the same
- The Highway User Revenue funds are getting better with receipt of \$5K more than expected
- We should also receive \$32K in Tax Duplication from Montgomery Council

Mayor Compton commented on the following budget expenses:

- The stormwater management allocation re-categorized to planning and zoning
- Hired a contractor to do the work that retired Maintenance Supervisor Steve Werts did.
(Expenses for this contractor will be covered by the contingency funding)
- Our refuse and recycling collection is higher by 55%
- Our leaf collection contract is higher and will be re-bid in the summer
- Cost of living for employees

Mayor Compton ended by saying the state of the Town accounts is very good. He asked for questions or comments. There was a brief discussion about inflation and the use of reserves.

Action on FY2023 Budget and Tax Rate: Patty Klein moved to adopt the budget and tax rate (\$0.239 per/\$100 assessed valuation) as brought forth to the Town Meeting by the Town Council. Darrell Anderson seconded the motion. There was a discussion about refuse and recycling collection. Some suggested residents take their own trash to the transfer station. There was additional discussion about budgeting, deficits in reserves, and set aside money to allow for budget flexibility.

Vote: Unanimous; to approve the constant yield tax rate (\$0.239per/\$100 assessed valuation) and dwelling tax (\$204 per dwelling unit).

Historic Preservation Commission Report and Award: Chairman Bob Booher acknowledged homes that crossed the line of 100 years. He showed pictures of the homes and wished them Happy Birthday. Bob announced Gail Littlefield's retirement from the HPC and thanked her for all the hard work she did as an expert member of the Commission. Jeff McCrehan has volunteered to serve as a full member of the Commission. Bob stated the HPC now needs an Alternate. Anyone interested should contact him. He went on to explain the accomplishments of the HPC over the past year. The HPC is very concerned about demolition, demolition by neglect, mansionization, and Town zoning for our small houses.

The Outstanding Improvement Award for this year goes to Amy Greenberg (303 First Avenue) for her subtle, well-done changes.

Planning Commission: Chairman Nagrod thanked and mentioned by name the members of the Commission. He singled out Christine Dibble and thanked her for her huge contribution to the Town website. He also praised all who helped with the Comprehensive Plan and urged residents to review the 144-page document. He stated there were 80 – 100 volunteers who participated in updating this living document. Peter asked residents to get Town and County building permits when needed. He also reminded residents if the work being done requires a footer inspection, they must contact Montgomery County.

Border Committee: Peter reported the Committee envisions people driving along Washington Grove Lane seeing they are driving through a town, not around it. Some of the goals of the group are as follows:

- New Welcome Signs

- Roberts Oxygen changes
- Commercial Corner changes
- McCauley Street

Peter also invited residents to CircleFest on May 28th at 4:00pm

Discussion of Town Council Reports: It was moved and seconded to accept the Town Council Reports for posting on the Town website. Mayor Compton asked if there were questions about the written Reports. Bob Booher asked about a gravel plan for the walkways. Gray Yachup reported there would be an analysis later. Council Reports were unanimously accepted.

Old Business: There was none.

New Business: There was none.

Election Results: Chairman Nick Suzich thanked all who have and will serve. He gave the election results.

There were 180 ballots cast.

Mayor:	John Compton	140 votes
	Joli McCathran	10 votes
	Bob Booher	2 votes
	Bruce Rothrock	1 vote
	Ed Roberts	1 vote
	Morgan Henninger	1 vote
	Chipmunk	1 vote
Council:	Eva Patrone	133 votes
	Darrell Anderson	122 votes
	Patty Klein	105 votes
	Jeff McCrehan	2 vote
	Joan Mahaffey	1 vote

Mayor Compton thanked everyone who attended the meeting and all those who served on our Committees, Commissions, and other groups.

Mimi Bolotin announced the Washington Grove Cares Great Grove Get Together taking place next week.

Mayor Compton announced today was Betty Knight's 96th birthday! She was present for the entire Town Meeting.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

_____/s/_____
Kathryn L. Lehman, Town Clerk