



Meeting of the Town Council
February 12, 2024, 7:30 p.m.
Approved March 11, 2024

The regular meeting of the Town Council was held remotely via ZOOM Video Conferencing. The meeting was recorded.

Mayor John Compton called the meeting of the Town Council to order at 7:34 p.m. In attendance were Councilors Christine Dibble, Peter Nagrod, Eva Patrone, Barbara Raimondo, and Mary Warfield. Also in attendance were Treasurer Jean Moyer, Planning Commission Chair Georgette Cole, Historic Preservation Committee Chair Bob Booher, and several other residents.

Approval of Agenda: Peter Nagrod moved to approve the agenda. Eva Patrone seconded the motion. *Action: Vote: 5-0. Agenda approved.*

Public Appearances:

[Meredith Horan read a letter](#) to the Mayor and Council about the addressing a proposal from RASEC that the Town Council consider changing the name of McCathran Hall. She urges the proposal to be dropped.

Treasurer's Report:

- a. *January 2024 Treasurer's Report.* Barbara Raimondo moved to accept the February 2024 Treasurer's Report. Rob Gilmore seconded the motion.
Action: Vote: 5-0. Report accepted.
- b. *FY25 Budget Preparation:* Treasurer Jean Moyer and Mayor Compton urged committee chairs to have their committees start planning expenditures for the coming year and develop their budget requests. The Town Council Budget Work Session was scheduled for March 25, 2024.

Mayor's Report:

- a. *Kudos:* To *Steve Werts* for stopping a weekend flood in the furnace room of McCathran Hall, saving a private event in progress. Kathy called and Steve came!
- b. *Shared Use Pathway Report – Advocating for construction funding of the Washington Grove Connector (WGC) in the County FY25 CIP.* Jay Everhart's monthly report from the Bikeways Liaison Group summarized the advocacy that resulted in WGC construction funds being included in the County's proposed FY25 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget. The FY25 CIP from County Executive Marc Elrich included did not include construction funds for the WGC (estimated at about \$800,000). With key advocacy by County Councilor Sydney Katz, the T&E Committee agreed to consider adding the construction funds. Mayor Compton appeared before them to advocate for the funding, and the committee agreed that construction funds for the WGC should be explicitly included in the MCDOT FY25 CIP. Barbara Raimondo thanked John Compton for his leadership.

- c. *Dumpster Enclosure at the Commercial Corner has been Removed* – The dumpster formerly at the Commercial Corner has been removed. Mayor Compton proposed the Town’s contractor GFI could pick up the refuse and recycling from the back of the building. The Town will include the Commercial Corner businesses in the coming new Refuse and Recycling RFPs this spring and the property owner will be assessed the appropriate Dwelling Tax starting in FY25.
- d. *Deer Management Report for FY24* – The Woods Committee reports that ten deer were harvested by bow hunters this season. Mayor Compton thanked Patty Klein and Joan Mahaffey for managing and monitoring this program.
- e. *Resignation of Jeff McCrehan from the Historic Preservation Commission* – The Mayor and extended his great thanks and appreciation to Jeff McCrehan for his service as Commissioner. The Town and the HPC are seeking volunteers to serve on the Commission.
- f. *National League of Cities* – Courtesy of the Maryland Municipal League, the Town is now a member of this group. The MML arranged to support memberships for the small towns in Maryland.
- g. *Demographics of Washington Grove* – Appreciation to Councilor Christine Dibble who has volunteered to extract data from the 2020 census and report to the Town Council and Town.
- h. *“Washington Grove: The Montgomery County Outlier”* – Phil Edwards will give a ZOOM talk on February 13 at 2:00 pm for the Montgomery Historical Society.

Administrative Matters:

- a. *Approval of Minutes of the Public Hearing on Ordinance 2023-08*. It was moved (Peter Nagrod) and seconded (Barbara Raimondo) to approve the minutes of the Public Hearing on Ordinance 2023-08. *Action: Vote: 5-0. Report accepted.*
- b. *Auditing Services RFP*. Treasurer Jean Moyer described additional best practices for the auditing process she included in the proposed Audit Services RFP. Mary Warfield moved and Eva Patrone seconded approval of the RFP. *Action: Vote: 4-0. RFP approved for distribution. (Christine Dibble left the meeting.). Bids will be considered at the March Town Council meeting.*
- c. *Stormwater Infrastructure Maintenance RFP – Discussion and approval to issue RFP*. Bob Booher questioned several aspects of the RFP. He noted the absence of quantitative goals and assessment parameters making it difficult to compare proposals or determine the outcome of the work. He also thought asking bidders to respond by specifying the work they could do for the available funds (~\$500,000) would not provide information about the cost for project areas in the RFP (5 or 6) not proposed for work. There was a lengthy discussion of his comments and other matters that included the following:
 - The amount of funds available for the design/build project.
 - The difference in triggering County permitting requirements between specifying maintenance and restoration (...okay) versus new infrastructure (...to be avoided).

- Absence of engineering requirements in the plan.
- Calculations, measurements, flow requirements. Assessing design parameters and flow rates and capacities of swales and bioswales.
- Clarifying the goals for each separate sub-area of the project as well as the overall goal of reducing flow to the West Woods.
- Performance bonds, insurance levels, termination concerns.
- Considerations of improvements to water flowing on private properties.
- How to be sure water flow and control will improve, and how much?
- The need for further input from Jason at Soltesz.

Action: The RFP will be revised by the working group and brought to the Council for review in March.

- d. *Refuse and Recycling RFPs – Discussion and approval to issue RFP.* The RFP proposes to include collection of refuse and recycling from the Commercial Corner at the back of the building. Mayor Compton explained a Dwelling Tax assessment will be made to pay for the service. Discussion also included trash from at the Post Office. The Council unanimously agreed with adding Commercial Corner pickup. A motion to approve the RFP with amendments was moved (Mary Warfield) and seconded (Eva Patrone). *Action: Vote: 4-0, RFP approved for distribution. Bids will be considered at the March Town Council meeting.*
- e. *Playground Equipment Review –* Councilor Eva Patrone briefly reviewed the Survey, created by herself and the Playground group, aiming to get resident opinions and priorities for improving the Playground. The survey will remain open until March 15.

Unfinished Business

Ordinance 2023-08, Amending the Washington Grove Zoning Ordinance to Expand Housing Opportunities and Update Vehicle Parking Requirements: Discussion. The Minutes of the Public Hearing on January 23, 2024 (approved at this meeting) and letters received with the record open may be found on the [ADUs page of the Town's website](#). The Council discussion included:

- The Planning Commission's review before transmitting to the Town Council.
- Relaxing parking requirements.
- Permitting both detached and attached ADUs.
- Phasing in the ordinance.
- Concerns about adequate enforcement by Montgomery County.
- State ADU Task Force hearings and recommendations.
- Requirement for owner occupation.
- Prohibition of short-term rentals.
- Potential changes to the definition of "household" in our Ordinances.
- Creating a new group to review comments received and recommend any changes to the full Town Council.

Action: The Council agreed to charge a group of Councilors (Barbara Raimondo, Peter Nagrod, Eva Patrone) to consider and recommend modifications to the Ordinance for consideration by the full Council at the March 11 meeting.

Neglected Maintenance of Properties: Discussion of the memo from the Town Attorney. Mayor Compton, referring to the information and guidance contained in the memo from Town Attorney Suellen Ferguson, asked whether the Council wanted a Closed Session to discuss the legal issues with the Town Attorney. Consensus favored having the session. *Action: The Council agreed to schedule a virtual Special Town Council for this purpose on February 27th at 7:30. The Mayor noted the possibility of addressing other regular business that evening in Open Session following the Closed Session. Grove Alerts with the meeting Agenda will be sent to notify residents of the Special Town Council meeting.*

New Business

Town Policy on Snow Removal: Discussion. It was decided to defer this subject until the next meeting.

Other Regular Business

Town Council Reports: Of note:

- *Conservation Park (Dibble)* – Initial meeting held, and actions discussed.
- *Website (Dibble)* - Identified long-term projects to prioritize, making ordinances current, online permit applications, online court reservations, and more.
- *Playground (Patrone)* – A summary of information gathered to date is presented. Also see agenda item #6.
- *RASEC (Raimondo)* – Recommendations to the Town Council to promote diversity and inclusion are still pending.

Approval of Minutes: Peter Nagrod moved and Barbara Raimondo seconded approving the January Town Council Minutes. *Action: Vote: 4-0, Minutes approved.*

Next Meetings:

- A virtual Special Town Council Meeting was scheduled for February 27, 2024 at 7:30.
- The regular virtual meeting of the Town Council will be on March 11, 2024

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Kathryn L. Lehman
Town Clerk