



Meeting of the Town Council
August 14, 2023, 7:30 p.m.
Online by ZOOM Videoconference
Access information below
Approved September 11, 2023

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 7:33 p.m. In attendance were Councilors Christine Dibble, Rob Gilmore, Peter Nagrod, Eva Patrone, Barbara Raimondo, and Mary Warfield. Also in attendance were Treasurer Jean Moyer, HPC Chair Bob Booher and residents Peggy Booher, Georgette Cole, Dave Cosson, Bruce Daggy, Jonathan Dahl, Jay Everhart, Mihili Gunaratne, Meredith Horan, Joan Mahaffey, Paul Patrone, Paula Puglisi, Kiffa Shirley and Dami Soile. Mimi Bolotin arrived later.

Approval of Agenda: Peter Nagrod moved to approve the agenda. Barbara Raimondo seconded the motion. Several modifications were made. Vote: 6-0, as amended.

Public Appearances: None

Treasurer's Report:

- a. Following brief review and discussion, it was moved and seconded to accept the August 14, 2023 Treasurer's Report.
- b. FY 2023 Year-end Financial Report: Jean Moyer provided explanatory notes in the report, and reviewed some of these with the Council.
 - A new leaf contract is needed before fall pickup can start. A new leaf collection RFP should be issued.
 - Funds mistakenly paid by the County the Town are shown. They will be returned to the County in FY24.
 - A Balance Sheet was provided to better reported the Town's assets and liabilities.
 - Jean was congratulated on her promotion to Senior Director of Finance and Administration at The Green Bank.

Vote 6-0, Reports accepted.

150th Anniversary Celebrations:

- a. **Kudos and Commentaries:** To Peter Nagrod and Meredith Horan and ALL the great volunteers. The whole event was fantastic. This happened due to many committed residents.
 - Meredith Horan accepted the thanks and added we need to go onward for the rest of 2023. She outlined how to record everything for future generations. The next 150th Committee meeting will take place on August 29.
 - Bob Booher added emphatic agreement on the need to record everything. He suggested working with Phil Winter and Sylvia Appleby to digitize and save their trove of material.

- Peter Nagrod spoke to the uniquely large number of people involved and how to harness and direct this “new volunteerism” into other areas and Town needs. Keep the positive energy going!

- b. **Joint Emory Grove - Washington Grove United Methodist Churches Resolution Acknowledging Methodism’s Racially Exclusionary Past and Committing to an Equitable and Inclusive Future:** Barbara Raimondo spoke warmly of the Joint service on Sunday August 13 and accepted the formal presentation of the resolution to the Town. In the future communication should be improved to strengthen the relationship between the Washington Grove and Emory Grove Communities. The Council agreed to share the resolution more widely by posting it on the Listserv, and as a link in the WGUMC section of the September Bulletin.
Action: Councilor Dibble will make the Joint Resolution available on the website and Mayor Compton will insure a link is included in the September Bulletin.

Mayor’s Report:

- a. **Restoration of Chestnut Rd: Status** – The mayor met with Pepco and contractors to discuss repaving the damaged pavement at Pepco expense (trenched during installation of the EV charging facility). It may be cost-effective to replace the deteriorated 14” metal culvert pipe (at Town expense) as part of the road restoration, likely with a concrete pipe to withstand the weight of vehicular traffic. Repaving will be delayed pending advice on whether enlargement to 18” will be recommended as part of the stormwater plan being developed by Soltesz, and a cost proposal from the repaving contractor.
- b. **Shared Use Pathway (Washington Grove Connector)** – see Liaison Committee report. The mayor reported on his testimony to the Planning Board at the MCDOT update with their 15% engineering study recommendations. Several alternative alignments had been advanced by the Town and discussed with MCDOT contractors. Selection from two alternatives were recommended for construction. Notably, the Planning Board supported moving forward with construction of the WGC independently of any extension of roadway or trail between Crabbs Branch and Amity drive. The Liaison Committee and mayor will advocate with MCDOT on the next phase of the engineering study, and with Councilman Sidney Katz for priority funding in the FY 2025 County budget.
- c. **Condition of the Sewer Main Lateral at 10 Center Street – Update:** John and Rob continue to confirm with WSSC on how to get them to replace the lateral sewer line.
- d. **Soltesz Stormwater Management Plan:** Work by Soltesz on the Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan. Final Report Expected and Proposal to Extend the Contract. The Report is not in hand yet, but they have indicated it will focus on residential areas. Mayor Compton suggested extending the contract, if necessary, so we get useable recommendations for the West Woods for the purpose of proceeding to construction as speedily as possible.

Kiffa Shirley spoke of the large amount of stormwater crossing his property from Townecrest into the West Woods. He has improved things on his property by repairing the culvert between his property and his neighbors', but he believes water flow in the entire area needs improvement, and noted the negative effect the woods. He offered YouTube videos of the water flow.

Administrative Matters:

- **Mayor “Pro” Pro Tempore for September 1 – 18:** The Mayor and Council discussed selection of a Mayor “Pro” Pro Tempore for the part of September when both Mayor Compton and Councilor Raimondo will be out of Town. It was moved and seconded to elect Christine Dibble as Mayor “Pro” Pro Tempore for September 1 – 18.
Vote 6-0, Councilor Dibble approved.
- **Leaf Collection Request for Proposal:** The Mayor noted we need an RFP for the September meeting in order to award a 2023-24 leaf contract.
Action: Councilor Gilmore will take responsibility for the Leaf Collection RFP
[Note added 9/1/23: Green Earth will be offered a fourth and final annual renewal per their existing contract award. In the event they accept, the RFP will be deferred until 2024].

Resolution 2023-04 and 2023-05: Authorizing Deer Management Bow Hunting

Sessions – Discussion and approval. Patty Klein reviewed the minimal text updates in this year's. The effectiveness of the deer culling program and the number of deer culled last season was discussed. Mary Warfield moved to introduce both resolutions which Christine Dibble seconded. Rob Gilmore asked if Washington Grove does an assessment of the impact. Joan Mahaffey explained the resurgence of saplings and native species seen on their walks with the Invasive Plant Control (IPC) representative. Blueberries are finally getting to bloom. This is partly due to IPC herbicide treatment, but IPC says it's also less deer damage to native species such as significantly less rubbing on trees in the fall. and. There have also been fewer complaints about deer from Town residents.

Action: Vote 6-0, both resolutions adopted.

Resolution 2023-06 Establishing a Renewable Energy Conversion Incentives Pilot Program

– Introduction and Discussion. Barbara Raimondo moved to introduce the resolution which Rob Gilmore seconded. Mayor Compton reviewed the resolution which he reorganized for clarity to consists of a single page with details in the attached Appendices A (Program Description) & B (Program Operation). It was noted there have been two presentations and discussions of the proposed program. The mayor reviewed and answered questions on the Operations appendix. Support was expressed. Patty asked if Incentive Pilot Program applied to adding a home backup generator in case of electrical outage. Bob Booher clarified this wasn't included in this pilot program, but when whole-house battery backups become more widespread, they could be added. A wording change was then added to clarify the exclusion of traditional types of backup generators, and several other minor corrections.

Action: Vote 6-0, Resolution adopted.

The effective date was declared as August 14 (today). The incentive program will be publicized in the Bulletin, and applications will be made available once the Sustainability Committee is prepared. A Town representative will be chosen at the September Town Council meeting.

Contracted Tree Services: Mayor Compton explained that for the last few years the Town has used Myers and Laws for most tree removals due to their excellent responsiveness and advice, and while costs were less than \$5,000 per event, . However, the increase in loss of our large old oaks means removals exceed \$5,000 more often, especially when a crane is needed to work safely in the densely housed areas in RR2. After a recent proposal of \$7,500 to remove the oak at 313 Grove Avenue, Mayor Compton and Audrey Maskery decided price comparison from several vendors was prudent. Multiple bids on four (4) trees needing removal were reviewed. The Mayor will use the low-bid contractors to reduce expenses and to develop a relationship with several vendors. Myers and Laws will remove the tree at 313 Grove Avenue.

The Mayor also suggested the Town Council consider an RFP to issue a contract for tree removals, possibly approving several vendors. This will allow for flexibility and best pricing. He will put this together for a future Council discussion.

Woods Committee Co-Chair Patty Klein spoke of the excellent service Myers and Laws had given the Town when the Committee has worked with them. They have always been very conscientious about scheduling non-urgent work in times when they have less business and give a better rate. They will piggyback trees so we get the maximum work at one go for a single price.

Mayor Compton agreed with Patty and added that Audrey Maskery, delegated by him to manage tree removal, has reminded him that Myers and Laws were always quick to come when we have an emergency. He doesn't want to undermine a good working relationship. Councilor Nagrod agreed, but stated we have a responsibility to make sure that contracted prices are competitive.

Proposal to Carve a Tree Stump in Woodward Park – Discussion. Mayor Compton outlined the stump carving proposal first made by Christine Dibble and now supported by other residents, as being a nice way to mark the 150th Anniversary Celebration. They saw strong support for it on the listserv, where it was suggested raising half the funds from residents, to be matched by the Town government to carve the stump of a large dead oak tree in Woodward Park. This tree requires at least pruning its top for safety now, but the trunk could be left while Tom Land and Christine get more information, such as whether the powder-post beetle infestation of the dead tree is a problem and/or how to deal with it and a ballpark cost for carving the trunk/stump. If the tree was not carved it would not cost more to finish removing it a bit later. Mayor Compton pointed out that if this tree didn't work out, it was likely another candidate could be identified.

Action: The trunk of the tree will be left while its potential for carving is determined by Christine Dibble and Tom Land.

Town Council Reports:

- *Sustainability (Warfield):* The proposal to enlarge the Edible Garden by 20% was discussed by the Town Council.
- *McCathran Hall (Raimondo):* A 4000+lumen projector with 3D capability has been purchased.
- *RASEC (Raimondo):* A workgroup has been formed to study renaming Boundary Street.
- *EPSC (Patrone):* Letter prepared requesting information regarding railroad safety from the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security. Mayor Compton has not signed this yet.
- *Planning Commission (Nagrod):* The Commission plans to publicize an opportunity for resident input on a draft Zoning Text Amendment to the Town Ordinances that will enable accessory dwelling units (ADU) in Washington Grove.
- *Maintenance (Nagrod):* Peter proposed standardizing the distance RJ Landscaping clears from the street (3-5 ft) so residents and their dogs have space to step off the road touched off a firestorm. It was suggested Peter keep a specific log of resident complaints to show the Council. Replacement of unsightly No-Thru Traffic signage is in the works.
- *Website (Dibble):* A new "In Memoriam" page has been added. Looks great.

Actions: Mary Warfield asked for an update on The Vacant Homes maintenance issue will t 2023 be updated at the September Town Council meeting. Vote 6-0, Town Council Reports approved for posting.

Approval of Minutes – Town Council meeting July 10, 2023: Barbara Raimondo moved to approve the July 10, 2023 minutes of the Town Council and Eva Patrone seconded the motion. A minor spelling change was made.

Action: Vote 6-0, edited Minutes approved.

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

Kathryn L. Lehman
Town Clerk (Not in attendance)

Georgette Cole