



March 11, 2024
Online by ZOOM Videoconference

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 6:35 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, Planning Commission Chair Georgette Cole, Historic Preservation Committee Chair Bob Booher, Town Attorney Suellen Ferguson and several other residents.

Approval of Agenda: Eva Patrone moved to approve the agenda. Barbara Raimondo seconded the motion.

Action: Vote: 6-0. Agenda approved.

Proposal to Close the Meeting for the Purpose of Obtaining Legal Advice from the Town Attorney on State, County, Attorney for Addressing Neglected Maintenance of Private Property.

Mayor Compton went over the following:

- Reviewed the requirements to close the meeting.
- Required meeting closing statement.
- Discussion and vote to close the meeting.

Mary Warfield moved to close the meeting of the Town Council. Eva Patrone seconded the motion.

Action: Vote: 6-0. Meeting closed at 7:33p.m.

The public was invited to attend the open session. Peter Nagrod moved to approve the agenda for the Open Meeting. Eva Patrone seconded the motion. Vote: 6-0.

Public Appearances: There were none.

Treasurer's Report:

- a. Treasurer Jean Moyer reported no real changes to the accounts. She explained that some money was moved to the money market and asked if there were questions about the report. Rob Gilmore moved to accept the Treasurer's Report for March 2024. Barbara Raimondo seconded the motion.

Action: Vote: 6-0, as approved.

- b. Reminder that the Town Council FY 25 Budget Work Session will be on the March 25 Agenda of the Town Council.

Mayor's Report:

a. Kudos:

- i. Big kudos to *Christine Dibble*, our volunteer super webmaster, who for the benefit of residents having access, has taken upon herself the task of promptly posting the recent flood of correspondence to the Mayor and Town Council. This in addition to time she spent modifying webpages to keep up with developments in Town.
- ii. To organizers *Peggy Koniz-Booher, Arlene McCrehan and the Woman's Club* for the Chili Supper on February 17th, which brought Grovers out and together in mid-winter for a welcome harbinger that spring is almost here.

- b. *Shared Use Pathway Report* – The proposed County MCDOT FY25 Capital Improvement Plan now explicitly includes construction funding for the Washington Grove Connector. MCDOT needs to complete first the 35% engineering, update the Planning Board, and then get required permits from the Parks Department and WSSC while completing engineering plans. Only then will construction begin. It will be a push for this to happen in FY25.

- c. *Historic Preservation Commission* – Still seeking of a new member.

- d. *Mayor's coming absences.*

RASEC recommendations for furthering the goals of Resolution 2023-01; “Acknowledging Washington Grove’s Racially Exclusionary Past and Committing to an Equitable and Inclusive Future” – Likely procedural discussion only.

Paula Puglisi addressed the Council on behalf of RASEC and requested that consideration of changing the name of McCathran Hall be removed from further consideration. RASEC requested the Council continue to entertain RASEC’s other four recommendations.

Discussion began with a motion and second to reject all five RASEC recommendations. Objections were raised to making this decision without additional discussion of each recommendation individually. Councilor support for some of recommendations was expressed, and after further discussion, the motion and second were withdrawn.

There followed a motion and second for the Council to vote *to decline to act on changing the name of McCathran Hall*. However, after discussion, this motion and second were withdrawn in favor of an alternative wording for the motion, namely that the Council vote to *reject changing the name of McCathran Hall* (moved by Barbara Raimondo and seconded by Christine Dibble). Arguments in favor of this stronger wording including that many residents had written and spoken in opposition to a name change, and that the contentious atmosphere raised by the issue needed stronger action by the Council. Councilors individually stated their various reasons for supporting the motion.

Action: Vote: 6-0, motion approve to reject changing the name of McCathran Hall.

Action: The four remaining RASEC recommendations were deferred for consideration until the April Town Council meeting.

Administrative Matters:

a. Auditing Services 2024 contract – Bid opening, discussion and award.

The Mayor and Council reviewed the three proposals received for FY24 audit services, renewable for 4 additional years, from Lindsey and Associates, LSWG, SBG. Bids for FY24 services were \$7,875, \$10,000 and \$14,000, respectively. Treasurer Jean Moyer recommended awarding the contract to the low bidder, Lindsey and Associates, who are also the Town's current auditors.

Peter Nagrod moved and Christine Dibble seconded, awarding the contract to Lindsey and Associates.

Action: Vote: 6-0, contract awarded to Lindsey and Associates.

b. Refuse and Recycling 2024 contract – Bid opening, discussion, and award. The Mayor and Council reviewed the two bids.

Refuse:	Casella	\$2,523.81 (per month)
	Key	\$4,158.00 (per month)
Recycling:	Casella	\$1,562.36 (per month)
	Key	\$2,772.00 (per month)

Rob Gilmore moved and Eva Patrone seconded awarding the Refuse and Recycling contract to low-bidder Casella. Casella is the Town's current contractor.

Action: Vote: 6-0, contracts awarded to Casella.

c. Leaf Collection 2024 RFP – Discussion and approval to issue. The Mayor and Town Council reviewed the draft RFP and determined it was ready to be issued with bids to be reviewed and a contract awarded at the April Town Council meeting.

Peter Nagrod moved and Rob Gilmore seconded approving the RFP for issuance.

Action: Vote: 6-0, RFP approved.

d. Stormwater Infrastructure Maintenance RFP – Status report. Mayor Compton reported that the RFP is being revised and may come back for review at the Town Council Meeting and Budget Work Session on March 25.

e. Disposition of Town maintenance equipment – Possible sale of the skid loader and a Honda generator. Mayor Compton reported he was considering an offer received to purchase the two pieces of equipment.

f. Policy on Town Tree Management (for residents) – The existing Town policy on responding to the concerns from property owner about Town trees overhanging their property has been drafted into a written document by Audrey Maskery and Georgette Cole, co-Chairs of the Forestry and Beautification Committee. After discussion, a motion to adopt the written policy was made and seconded.

Action: Vote: 6-0, Policy approved.

g. Policy for Snow Removal from Town Roads – Discussion. This item was deferred.

h. Planning for FY24 Road Repair Work – Discussion. Bids received on the Road RFP in 2022 to repair for various road segments are now two years old. The mayor proposed to contact the two

vendors who responded to ask them for revised dollar amounts for the road work in 2024. A resident living on 6th Avenue requested that the portion of the Avenue used for vehicular access to their property be added to the list for repairs, perhaps to be asphalted. The Planning Commission has recommended against asphaltting, but that gravel be used to harden and level the walkway. *Action: Mayor Compton will inquire about revised costs for the segments identified in 2022, as well as several additional areas where the pavement is damaged.*

Unfinished Business

Ordinance 2023-08, Amending the Washington Grove Zoning Ordinance to Expand Housing Opportunities and Update Vehicle Parking Requirements – Review of the timeline for Council action on ZTA proposals, recommendations from the Town Council Work Group, discussion and possible action.

Councilor Barbara Raimondo, representing the Council work group (herself, Councilors Peter Nagrod and Eva Patron, and PC Chair Georgette Cole), reviewed their proposed changes to the Ordinance introduced from the Planning Commission. These included:

- Deleting proposed modifications to the Commercial Zone.
- Clarifying how the PC should consider HPC guidelines when approving plans for enclosing additional space for either an attached or detached ADU.
- Retaining the existing definition of “household” rather than adopting that of Montgomery County.
- Adding a definition for “Off-Street Parking” and using it to replace references to “on-site” parking.
- Adding a definition for “Short-Term Residential Rental” and prohibiting the same on sites with an ADU.
- Changing the allowed occupants per ADU from 2 adults plus others to 5 individuals in total.
- Limiting the increase in enclosed floor space to 800 square feet when building an addition to create an ADU, but imposing no such limit when using the existing footprint of a dwelling.
- Grandfathering with size and other conditions, accessory buildings constructed before March 1, 2024.
- Specifying that the Town Council review the consequences of this Ordinance on or before March 2029 (~5 years).
- Date and minor word changes.

After Council discussion, it was moved and seconded to approve the amendments to the Ordinance as proposed.

Action: Vote: 6-0, Ordinance 2023-8 amended as proposed.

Action: The Council deferred a vote on the Ordinance until the March 25th Council meeting to give residents time to review the revised Ordinance.

Neglected Maintenance of Properties – Memo from the Town Attorney - Discussion deferred.

New Business

Other Regular Business

Town Council Reports – Of note:

- a. *Gateway (Nagrod)* – Many signs around Town have been removed. Replacements coming soon.
- b. *Planning Commission (Nagrod)* – Recommended against paving the portion of 6th Avenue providing vehicular access to several properties. Instead, support improving drainage and hardening the surface to make safe for vehicular use.
- c. *Website (Dibble)* – Posted at least 50 letters from residents to the Mayor and Town Council. Added many links and documents to various web pages.
- d. *Woods (Dibble)* – Supported scheduling a Master Gardner presentation to residents about native plants and promoting ecological biodiversity in conjunction with either Earth Day or Arbor Day.
- e. *RASEC (Raimondo)* – Details of the voting process for the recommendations to promote diversity and inclusion sent to the Town Council in February,

Approval of Minutes – Peter Nagrod moved to approve the February 12, 2024, Town Council minutes. Barbara Raimondo seconded the motion.

Action: Vote: 6-0, Minutes approved.

Next Meetings

Monday, March 25, 2024, at 7:30 – Town Council meeting and FY25 Budget work session.

Monday, April 16, 2024 at 7:30 – Town Council meeting

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Kathryn L. Lehman
Town Clerk