

CHARLESTOWN TOWN COMMISSIONER'S MEETING
APRIL 29, 2009
MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 7:32 by President Steve Vandervort. Commissioners in attendance were Robert Gell, Joseph Letts and Donna Sheets. The Pledge of Allegiance was once again ably led by Brownie Ryleigh Johnson.

Accounts payable were reviewed and Commissioner Gell motioned to pay the bills with Commissioner Sheets seconding and all approving.

The minutes from April 14, 2009 were reviewed with Commissioner Sheets making the motion to accept as written and Commissioner Gell forwarding the second. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Commissioner Durange arrived at 7:34 pm.

Dawn Rodenbaugh made a presentation to the Commissioners about the Neighborhood Youth Panel in Cecil County. This program is for first-time, misdemeanor offences only, so a youth can avoid acquiring a juvenile record. Cecil County Juvenile Services refers eligible cases. A youth must be 100% cooperative or the case is sent back to Juvenile Services. The program often pairs the offender with an adult mentor/positive role model. She mentioned that three towns are involved so far. (Rising Sun, North East and Elkton)

The possibility of joining with the North East program was discussed. The process of choosing the panel members was discussed. After asking various questions Commissioner Sheets made the motion for Charlestown to enter into the Neighborhood Youth Panel. Commissioner Letts seconded and the motion passed with unanimous approval.

Ms. Rodenbaugh will begin the process. A Charlestown contingent plans to attend Thursday evening's Neighborhood Youth Panel meeting in North East.

Public Comment:

A resident asked about the timetable for proposed "foot patrols" in Town to begin. Commissioner Letts mentioned that all the actions Sheriff Janney proposed at the first April meeting are now being implemented.

Commissioner Sheets spoke of holding an "Appreciation Gathering" for members of the community who volunteer their time on various Boards and Commissions. It was suggested to combine this with the Town's annual Christmas Open House. Work will begin on implementing this.

President Vandervort reported that the Cecil Inn committee is requesting non-capital expense money. They need \$4,700 to hire a consultant to advise on where restoration should begin. It was advised to delay the issuing the funds until July when grant eligibility would be known. Commissioner Letts made the motion to hold up issuing the requested funds until July with Commissioner Sheets seconding and all approving.

Town Administrator's Report:

Mr. Pumpaly made mention of a thank you note received from the "Ice Splash" organizers, the Sons of the American Legion, Cecil Squadron #15.

The possibility of the signboard at St. John's Cemetery being converted for the Town's use was discussed and it was revealed that a decision from the Methodist administration is required. It was thought to move the Town map there and use the Post Office location for Town announcements and such. More consideration will be given to this.

Postmistress Lynne Reed has expressed the desire to plant a memorial tree to honor deceased patrons/residents. A location near the Fairgreen Park gazebo was suggested. Commissioner Letts moved to approve this request and Commissioner Sheets seconded with all approving.

A fifth "letter of interest" to offer a loan has been received from MDE by the Town. This is in lieu of stimulus money pre-applications submitted by Charlestown and apparently denied. The loan terms are presumed to be for very low interest. In order to determine what terms may be presented, it was suggested the Town reply expressing interest. Each of the stimulus pre-applications the Town had submitted have been countered with a "letter of interest" loan offer.

At this point President Vandervort spoke of a meeting he recently attended relating to getting funds from the Federal government to help Towns prepare for the BRAC influx. This meeting resulted in a meeting this day with Walter Graff to learn about getting his help in obtaining stimulus money for the Town's BRAC related projects, these being the I&I project and well #3. Mr. Graff received information on these projects to investigate BRAC grants that may be available.

The administrator reported on the BRAC informational breakfast meeting for Cecil County held at the Principio Furnace Mansion with the Commanding General of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Major General Izzo. More meetings concerning BRAC are being scheduled for both Ft. Monmouth and Cecil County.

Mr. Pumpaly offered the 2009-2010 preliminary budget for consideration. President Vandervort plans to review this document and is planning to present the preliminary budget at the first meeting in June as required.

The constant yield tax rate was mentioned and it appears the Town is exempt from having to hold a public hearing on the subject because the present rate will not generate more than \$25,000 over last year's tax yield. This will be confirmed by May 26th by which time the Town's preliminary budget will have been studied.

The LGIT insurance coverage application for the 2009/2010 was discussed. It was noted that an up-to-date inventory list of Town property has recently been compiled. Property inventory was also discussed with the addition of historic property and the eventual dispersal of two pumping stations.

The Susan Moore property on Greenspring Road in Holloway Beach was mentioned as being offered to Charlestown to purchase. There was no interest.

The fishing pier on the Stone Wharf is in need of repair. It was mentioned that Steve Lewis could repair it for \$560. Commissioner Sheets motioned to contract with Mr. Lewis to make the needed repairs on the pier. Commissioner Gell seconded and all approved.

The erosion, aquatic grass (14,400 sq. ft.) mitigation project in the Foot Log Park area was brought up for discussion. Apparently MDE and DNR are at odds over the situation. Mr. Pumpaly hopes to meet soon with all concerned individuals to discuss the situation.

An issue with the Clayton property on Baltimore Street disclosed that the Town approved a subdivision which apparently never materialized. This brought to light an issue concerning “paper streets” in that area specifically and the Town in general. A “paper street” is a byway that was planned but has never officially been turned over to the Town. Until that time, they officially do not exist.

Commissioner Gell reported that over 50 bills that would affect municipalities have been introduced at the State legislative session this year. Thirty-three were supported by MML and of these, twenty-two passed. Of the seventeen bills that MML opposed, only one passed (with amendments). A legislative task force to study funding for municipalities will be formed. The ability to use “speed cameras” was approved for limited areas and times in municipalities. Program Open Space money may now also be used for facilities. It was approved that a town may now annex parcels of land of less than five acres at will, without hearings (no more than 25 acres maximum) up until September 30, 2011.

Other legislation enacted include: Town budgets of less than \$250,000 need to be audited only every fourth year; removal of roadside trees may be halted by a Town; a “clean energy loan” program has been enacted; towns may enact ordinances to require early notification of home foreclosures; construction permits which have been issued will be allowed more leeway in start/completion dates and town may now apply for State disaster relief without having to deal with the “legacy board”.

President Vandervort spoke of water supply policies that many towns employ and Cecil County is hoping to stop. For now town water can be supplied to out-of-town residents at an increased cost with a stipulation that allows for annexation at any time. President Vandervort would hope to make it impossible for the County to change the current policy, perhaps via a legislative enactment that would allow town to have special provisions for out-of-town water service.

President mentioned the recent meeting concerning the Stone Wharf erosion project. The preliminary design was presented at the meeting by a representative of the design engineering firm. A DNR representative, Shawn Ryan, was present to add comments. The design may now be finalized, permits granted and the search for funding can begin.

Commissioner Sheets motioned to adjourn the meeting (at 9:29) and go into an executive session. Commissioner Durange seconded and all approved.

