

**TOWN COMMISSIONER'S MEETING  
MINUTES  
AUGUST 26, 2009**

The meeting was called to order by Commission President Steve Vandervort at 7:30. Also in attendance were Commissioners Durange, Gell, Letts and Sheets.

The Pledge of Allegiance was once again, ably led by Ryleigh Johnson.

Accounts Payable were reviewed with Commissioner Sheets motioning to approve and Commissioner Letts seconding. Approval was 4-0. Commissioner Gell abstained from the vote.

Commissioner Gell motioned to approve 8-11-09 minutes as written with Commissioner Sheets seconding and all approving.

The July Sheriff's report was read by President Vandervort in Sgt. Campbell's absence.

Public Comment: Ursula Boudart suggested posting times of the Town meetings on the outside board. She also noted that posting of the agenda would be helpful. This will now be done.

Ron Edwards appeared for the Cecil Hotel Board to review their progress. It has been established that the Hotel was built around 1810 with most of the structure as original. Some remodeling was done on the first floor in 1880 Victorian and it was suggested to be kept that way. The roof must be replaced and it was suggested to be redone in modern materials which mimic the 1810 era. Cost estimates are being garnered for the various phases of the restoration.

Mr. Edwards noted that the Hotel Board is becoming frustrated over the structural problems within the Hotel. The evaluation of the structure to determine what needs doing would cost about \$4,700 and they have been put off since April.

President Vandervort explained that the Town projects they have undertaken are in the form of grants which are being affected by the economy, the State budget and cost increases. It was explained that a grant for \$29,000 has been submitted for the non-capitol projects but no answer would come before September. Mr. Edwards pointed out that the structure will be much more valuable when the project is done thoroughly and carefully and this grant money would ensure this being done.

Henry Burden spoke that preliminary engineering must come first and be done in a timely manner. He believes that the cost is minimal enough that it should be put forward now. Dr. Price noted that there is a danger in delay since costs continue to rise. The money would be to evaluate and analyze the problems and receive recommendations.

Commissioner Letts asked about retrieving the money when and if the grant arrives. It was explained that any money spent before a contract is signed is not reimbursable.

Commissioner Sheets made the motion to forward \$4,700 to the Cecil Hotel Board. Commissioner Letts seconded the reaffirmation to release the funds. All approved.

Mr. Edwards explained that this money is only for evaluation of the problems as a non-capitol expense. After the evaluation and recommendations a contractor is approached to do the actual work.

More discussion about grants and what goes into the process continued. Commissioner Gell requested monthly progress reports from the "Hotel" committee.

President Vandervort began discussion about the Critical Area and Special Buffer zones in Charlestown. Dr. Richard Price noted that tree plantings had been required only along the waterfront according to the State's provisions with absolutely no disturbance of vegetation as the ideal. The State's mitigation plan involves planting twice the square footage as had been disturbed. A change involves a provision that the Town could do this planting where it decides to be most reasonable.

Constitution Week Proclamation (September 17<sup>th</sup> thru 23<sup>rd</sup>) was discussed. Commissioner Gell moved to approve signing the proclamation with Commissioner Durange seconding all approving.

Judy Newsome spoke, representing the Town's Election Board, to request a pay increase of \$50 each for the three judges. Commissioner Gell moved to approve the increase with Commissioner Letts seconding and all approving.

#### Town Administrator's Report

- Fire Department has a thank you for the Town's donation
- Thank you was received from a resident concerning timely branch and tree removal needed as a result of a recent storm. It was noted that a chipper will be rented to mulch the branches and brush collected. The resulting mulch is intended to be made available to residents. A brief discussion about renting versus buying a chipper ensued and it was mentioned that the issue could be revisited if a good opportunity arises.
- Health plan costs will be increasing significantly because of the increase in the median age of the insured. Mr. Pumpaly mentioned that he is investigating proposals to possibly alleviate the increase. Discussion ensued concerning the differences in plans. It was noted that a decision would have to be made before mid-September.
- Chesapeake Utilities wants to supply natural and propane gas to Charlestown and also Cecil County. A franchise agreement was presented to provide land above and below ground to install supply lines. A definite amount of hook-ups would be required before they would do installations. It was agreed to have the Town's Attorney review the document.

Discussion ensued concerning Maryland Highway User Funds and the fact that the State reportedly intends to cut 90% of this revenue to the County. This would have a great, negative impact Charlestown's streets budget. President Vandervort hopes to speak with the Governor tomorrow (8/27/09) at a planned, nearby gathering.

Commissioner Gell expounded on the 2010 Legislative action requests presented from Maryland municipalities for consideration in the next General Assembly. He requested that any comments be directed to him concerning interest or opposition.

Commissioner Sheets moved to adjourn with Commissioner Durange seconding and all approving. The meeting adjourned at 9:08.