

TOWN COMMISSIONERS MEETING
MINUTES
February 25, 2009

The meeting was called to order by President Steve Vandervort at 7:32 pm. Present were Mary Carol Durange, Robert Gell, Donna Sheets and Steve Vandervort. The Pledge of Allegiance was once again led by Ryleigh Johnson.

Commissioner Gell made the motion to accept the Accounts Payable report as written with Commissioner Sheets seconding and all approving.

Commissioner Gell moved to accept the 01/13/09 minutes as written. Commissioner Sheets forwarded the second. Commissioner Durange abstained and the motion was approved 3-0. Commissioner Joseph Letts arrived at 7:36.

A resident commented on the recent Neighborhood Watch meeting and suggested that the Town find a means to improve communications with residents about incidents. A weekly "crime report" on the Town web site was suggested. A thought that taxes should pay for county police patrols to augment paid patrols. President Vandervort explained that Cecil County pays Charlestown a differential (\$26,000 in 2008) to help pay for various services the Town must provide. It was explained that \$60,000 had been budgeted in 2008 for County Sheriffs' patrols.

Commissioner Gell discussed House Bill 484 concerning a task force to study the municipal revenue structure. Apparently transfer fees on home sales in Maryland can be collected only by the State. Individual towns have no right to these fees in their own towns.

House Bill 1182 would move cable fees payments from the county control to the state.

This bill would also remove control of the right of way from Towns.

Senate Bill 672 would enable a municipality to enact a fee for each residence to help with storm water control.

President Vandervort reported on the recent MD Mayor's Conference which dealt with grants becoming available because of the stimulus package. February 28th would be the deadline for applications dealing with energy efficiency, green programs and the like.

Commissioner Sheets brought up a discussion about acquiring a lighted message sign for the Town. An optimal location for this sign was problematic and more investigation will be needed.

A brief mention was made about the Wilmington Blue Rocks community night. It was thought to put this information in the next "Chatter".

Town Administrator's Report -

The pre-bid meeting for the new trash contract will be February 26th at 10 am. A meeting between Artesian Water and Charlestown to discuss establishing an emergency

water interconnect will be held Friday, March 6th at 10 am. Also at 2 pm Friday there will be a meeting with Baylands Consultants & Designers to discuss the final punch list regarding the recently completed dredging project. The fireboat pier site may have a problem with the dredged channel having missed portions. This will be investigated more thoroughly.

Bids for Charlestown's next, three-year waste collection contract are due by 2 pm on 12 March 2009.

The next Neighborhood Watch informational meeting will be held at the fire hall on 03/17/2009 at 7 pm.

It was noted that Coastline Design has done the survey work to begin the design for the erosion project at Long Point.

It was reported that Public Works, Development Services Division Supervisor, Tim Whittie, called to ask Charlestown for help to find a place to plant 6,000 square feet worth of trees in order to comply with the Critical Area Commission guidelines. This issue stems from the necessity of moving the Cecil Street pump station. The two, Town-owned lots on West Old Philadelphia Road were suggested. More investigation is required on this.

Charlestown will be submitting six grant requests to the State, Thursday (2/26). The projects include painting the water tower; two I&I projects; both phases of the Town Hall drainage project (to be completed by outside contractors); replacing the heater and install air conditioning at the Boys & Girls Club. Costs for various combinations of heating and air conditioning systems have been obtained.

The Maryland Environmental Services report on the condition of the water tower: The wet storage area is good but the area of dry storage needs work in some spots. The tank exterior could either be restored from bare metal, primed and painted (\$300,000/\$400,000) or cleaned, primed and painted (\$100,000/\$150,000). President Vandervort feels that on-site inspections during the work in progress are very important to get an optimum job. This would be an extra cost but MSE could guarantee the life of the paint job. Apparently, some antennas on the water tower have created problems with maintenance and safety. Their cables are strewn across the top surface and down the outside. It was recommended to affix a safety rail around the outside perimeter of the tower.

A County Commissioner meeting is scheduled for Charlestown on May 19th at 7 pm. These meetings have historically been held at the fire hall. Since last year's meeting overflowed the fire hall, it was questioned if perhaps the elementary school should be used for this meeting? It was questioned if a dinner beforehand should be offered.

LGIT has suggested instituting a "TULIP" (tenant user liability insurance policy) plan for individual, paid, reserved functions held on Town property. Apparently when the Town accepts money to reserve an area, it negates the LGIT protection. Requiring individuals to obtain this policy would create protection for Charlestown. The application form will be distributed with the reservation application. Larry Metz, of the Wellwood Club, had explained that their business carries liability for functions and perhaps their policy could be added on their clients behalf, thus relieving Charlestown of liability concerns. More discussion will follow after vacations are over the concerned individuals.

Constant yield tax rate this year (\$.265 per 100 vs. \$.280 per 100 in 2008) would not cause tax rate to go up enough to require a public hearing. County Department of Assessments and Taxation must receive information by June 19th if a public hearing is required, in order to distribute tax bills by July 1st.

Progress on utilizing current, approved remaining grant dollars:

Lighting at athletic complex with Holophane supplied lights to utilize the remainder of the lighting grant. If Charlestown became a Holophane distributor it would save 12% on the purchases. Three additional lights are all the Town can acquire with the grant money available. Commissioner Durange moved to approve becoming a Holophane distributor. Commissioner Gell seconded and the motion was approved by all.

The frost-free hydrant for the ball field was discussed and work to obtain the equipment continues. It was noted that the hydrant at Veterans Park will also be changed to the same type as the one at the ball field. The Veterans Park hydrant will not be covered by the grant.

The facilities at Veterans Park have been readied for the 2 pm, 02/28/2009, Saturday, Ice Splash.

Major building permit and hook-up fees for the 48 Canvasback Lane garage which has been converted to a residence have been paid. The homeowner asked if actual work on the water and sewer hook-ups could be delayed due to health concerns. Commissioner Durange moved to approve the delay with Commissioner Gell seconding and all approving. A note that physical hook-ups should be completed within 1 year of the vacating of the building, with yearly reviews of the situation.

The furnace at the Boys & Girls club requires immediate replacement of its heat exchanger at a cost of \$600. Commissioner Sheets made the motion to get this done with Commissioner Durange seconding and all approving.

Cecil Inn Restoration Committee commented that a suggested live-in caretaker situation not be allowed.

Commissioner Sheets reported that the prescription card program moving along and should be available for Town residents without medical insurance within a few weeks.

Commissioner Letts spoke about the Neighborhood Watch meeting and the great interest shown with attendees from all three sections of Charlestown. It is understood that the Town does not and will not run the program. Discussion occurred about whether a weekly incident report could be made available on the web site?

Commissioner Gell motioned to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Sheets seconded and all approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 to go into an Executive Session.

