

TOWN COMMISSIONER'S MEETING
MINUTES
JANUARY 13, 2009

The meeting was called to order by President Vandervort at 7:30 p.m. Commissioners in attendance were Mary Carol Durange, Joseph Letts, Robert Gell and Donna Sheets. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ryleigh Johnson.

President Vandervort announced that the winners of the January 12th, Town election were Mary Carol Durange and Joseph Letts, who were then duly sworn in by Clerk of the Court, William Brueckman.

The Commissioners next elected their officers for the next year. Steve Vandervort was elected unanimously as President. The elected Vice-President was Robert Gell by a 3-2 vote. The office of Treasurer went to Donna Sheets by a 3-2 vote. Mr. Brueckman then swore in Steven Vandervort as President; Robert Gell as Vice-President and Donna Sheets as the new Treasurer.

Commissioner Gell moved to approve the Accounts Payable as written. Commissioner Sheets questioned the high Verizon Wireless bill. It was suggested that these charges be investigated. President Vandervort mentioned that the first \$25,000 installment of the Principio settlement has been paid, with the next due in April. Commissioner Durange then seconded Commissioner Gell's motion and all approved.

The 12/9/08 minutes were reviewed. A short discussion ensued concerning a wording change made to a portion of the draft. Commissioner Gell motioned to approve the minutes as now written. Since only two Commissioners, of the three who attended the December 9th meeting, were now in attendance, President Vandervort seconded. These two eligible Commissioners approved the minutes with three abstaining from the vote.

Robert Corn delivered the Miller Environmental report. Mention was made of the need to have the water tower available for inspection in the near future, prior to a scheduled painting.

Sgt. Dennis Campbell was in attendance to deliver the Sheriff's Report for December. Commissioner Gell mentioned perhaps acquiring a portable speed indicator device for the Town. A citizen questioned the ATV activity in Cool Springs on weekends and Sgt. Campbell explained how to report the incidents. Commissioner Letts asked questions about the criminal complaints mentioned on the report. President Vandervort asked that Commissioner Letts head the Safety Committee and that Commissioner Durange and Commissioner Sheets fill out the committee. Discussion concerning the duties of the Safety Committee ensued and a resident questioned as to how he could present his own ideas concerning Town safety.

It was noted that the boat ramp, Town pier, fireboat pier dredging project was moving along nicely and would continue to do so as long as there was no ice formation. President Vandervort again mentioned the first payment from the Principio Business Park settlement.

Public Comment began with a call to give serious consideration to future, active police protection provided by the Town. It was noted that a Neighborhood (Community) Watch Program is in the planning stage. It was also noted that “Watch” programs are started by the community members within any town. The economics of a Town police department were briefly discussed. Commissioner Letts expressed his support for a full-time police department. Another resident called for more and better information about reporting and obtaining information on vandalism, mischief and crime within the Town.

A resident questioned why the voter turnout in Town is so low and what can, and is, being done to improve the percentages. It was noted that no Town funds are budgeted for electioneering, that voter turnout in Charlestown is actually higher than many other municipalities. There was no clear reason why turnout is low, however.

Two residents from Trinity Woods Homeowners Association reported on a recent spate of vehicle break-ins. They also commented on the interest their community has in establishing a “watch” program.

President Vandervort opened discussion on the recent purchase of the Cecil Inn. The Town is will seek to negotiate a loan from the Maryland Historic Trust hopefully for 7 year’s duration at a rate of 2%. Commissioner Gell motioned to move forward with the process and Commissioner Sheets seconded with all approving.

President Vandervort spoke of the Executive Order created to restore the Cecil Inn. It was noted that the Board charged the Cecil Inn Restoration Committee with overseeing the restoration. The Board discussed the committee make up and the subsequent duties of the members. President Vandervort asked Ronald Edwards to chair the committee and he accepted. Commissioner Sheets motioned to accept the Executive Order 2009-01. Commissioner Durange seconded and all approved. President Vandervort explained the significance of the structure to a resident, and that hopefully the restoration would be completed in five years.

The Town Administrator expounded on the research done on security systems available for the Cecil Inn. It was noted that the figures provided were for 3-year contracts. The companies that submitted bids were: ADT at \$2,051.64; Brinks at \$1,998.64, Harford Alarm at \$2,813.00 (wireless) and Security Consultants at \$1,358.64 (leased) \$1,426.64 (purchased). None of these costs include charges for the required telephone hook-up. Mr. Pumpaly favored the ADT system since, although not the lowest bidder, the contract provides more equipment (better coverage) than any of the others. Commissioner Gell motioned to use ADT for security. Commissioner Letts forwarded the second and all approved.

Commissioner Gell commented on the possibility of a Town resident staying at the Inn during the renovations. This “caretaker” would be responsible for utilities and some security. It was noted that the Town’s attorney should be consulted beforehand.

Concerned was expressed for the habitability of the structure and the liability concerned. It was decided to consult with the Town's attorney on the matter.

The vacancies on the Ethics Committee were discussed. It was noted that only one person has expressed interest so far. It was decided to interview the applicant. The duties of the Ethics Committee were explained to a curious resident who then submitted a letter of interest for the second vacancy on that committee.

Discussion on the Neighborhood Watch Program began once more and Sgt. Campbell expressed approval of this program and was willing to research past programs for the residents. It was noted that visibility is an important part of this program and an effective deterrent. Contact information was taken from interested individuals.

The motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Letts with Commissioner Durange seconded and approved by all. Adjournment was at 9:15 p.m.