

Town Commissioners' Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2010, 6:30 pm

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Commission President Robert Gell. Also in attendance were Commissioners Michael Doss, Joseph Letts and Donna Sheets.

Ryleigh Johnson led the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Accounts Payable report was reviewed with President Gell making the motion to accept as presented. The motion was approved 4-0.

The minutes from the February 24th meeting were reviewed and President Gell moved to accept them as written. Approval was unanimous, 3 with 1 abstention.

Miller Environmental activity report for February was given by Robert Corn. He spoke of two new meter installation inspections, a leak and a meter reading check. There were also two water turn-ons and one reading for a settlement. Further Mr. Corn spoke about work being done to discover the source of electrical problems related to well #3. Also, it was reported that the fire hydrant on the corner of Baltimore Street and Cather Avenue is now back in service.

Ron Edwards, Chairman of the Cecil Inn Restoration Board, was present with a report. He mentioned that the Inn is now under easement meaning that it is under the protection of the "Trust" and that now any work must be first be reviewed by the Maryland Historic Trust. From a meeting with the "Trust" it was learned that they would like a conceptual plan from the Board to preview.

Also, he mentioned that the University of Delaware received a non-capital grant from Maryland Historic Trust to do surveys and architectural drawings. The Cecil Inn is at the top of their project list and their visit is tentatively scheduled for the March 24th.

Stan Hearne is completing an application for a non-capital grant for the Cecil Inn but it cannot be known if or when it may be approved. Mr. Edwards would ask the Commissioners to consider payments to cover items (i.e. soil analysis) which would be required prior to getting estimates for structural improvements. Since the "Capital Improvement Grants" program fell through, the Board would like guidance as to how the Commission wants the Cecil Inn Restoration Board to proceed in the interim. For now Mr. Edwards would like financing for a sign to say that the Cecil Inn is being restored by the Town and also to get the soil analysis completed. Further, in order to collect any oral history about the structure, and Charlestown in general, he asked that the "Charlestown Chatter" be reinstated to solicit help from the community for this project.

A short discussion concerning recent activity and past history of the Cecil Inn ensued. It is hoped that the Cecil Inn could be incorporated into the upcoming War of 1812 activities.

Steve Lay, Secretary of Cecil/Harford County Watermen's Association was in attendance to discuss their commercial fishing nets in Charlestown's harbor and the North East River. He noted the ongoing conflict concerning these nets, especially when they are set during the yellow perch run. The hope is to clear up some of the conflict and misunderstanding. At times watermen have been asked by Charlestown to remove their nets from the waters.

Mr. Lay gave a review of recreational and commercial regulations concerning the yellow perch harvest. There are two watermen each from Harford County and Cecil County who have yellow perch permits (January thru March only) for the nets in our area (the Upper Bay). He noted that Charlestown cannot

establish commercial fishing laws for watermen since they are in State controlled waters and the State sets and enforces these laws.

There was concern about the location of nets which must be 150 feet away from the Charlestown pier. Maryland Department of Natural Resources inspected the nets and reported that they were 300 feet from said pier. Mr. Lay would like to know why the Town is continually putting pressure on commercial fishers by contacting the DNR about these legally set nets.

The watermen are very willing to answer questions to clear up concerns. Edgar McMullen spoke up to say he is the one who made the complaint about the net. He feels there is one net that blocks the fish from making it to the pier. Mr. Lay spoke with Mr. McMullen to help him understand that the net, because of its size and placement, is not blocking all of the fish. Mr. Lay encourages townspeople to report any illegal fishing activity.

Further discussion between the Commissioners and Mr. Lay further revealed where misunderstandings concerning the commercial watermen and the Town lay. With continued dialog the airing of these differing perceptions resulted in mutual understanding.

Public Comment

Brice Cooper – Senior Patrol Leader, Troop 367

The Troop members need to complete their “Citizenship in the Community” merit badge and are looking for projects they can do to help the Town. Commissioner Doss suggested having them work on painting the Town’s fire hydrants. Emily Fletcher mentioned having them help with the colonial cemetery clean-up.

Mike Doss – Resident

Cecil Street pump station project placed a transformer different from where the drawings showed, additionally two yellow bollards have been placed right on the edge of the road making the road narrower than its original width. Since this is a Town road and the bollards are incorrectly placed, they should be relocated according to code. Note to have the Town contact Delmarva to have bollards relocated.

Administrator’s Report

Artesian Emergency Interconnect agreement again was presented for review with no action needed at present save for approval. There is no rush to complete the project but it will need to be put into next year’s budget. Commissioner Doss made the motion to approve. The motion was unanimously approved 4-0.

The Budget Review, Cash Balances and Accounts Receivable reports were observed.

Review of the Fuel Spreadsheet revealed that by having the town tank and eliminating travel to gas station, the number of travel miles has been reduced. Commissioner Doss raised a concern over the gas mileage being so low. The Office Manager noted that the recent snow plowing activity during the storms and continual operation during snow storms affected the averages. It was suggested that the fuel usage be monitored very carefully since there may be an indication of fuel losses.

Maintenance Work Order and Building Permit Reports were also perused.

Condemnation Order for 240 Frederick Street. County informed the owner that the structures only need to be boarded up to 10 feet above the ground; this will be accomplished. At some point the owner hopes to sell property.

Constant Yield Tax considerations need to be studied to determine how it will affect the upcoming budget.

Mention was made of the MML Dinner Meeting scheduled for April 15th which will be hosted by Aberdeen.

The recent Ice Splash event held at Veteran's Park was discussed and President Gell noted that they raised about \$30,000 (for Special Olympics). He displayed the award presented to the Town in appreciation of their participation.

Commissioner Doss asked if there is an update for Colonial Drive Tasker Lane issue. Present Gell said that Town attorney has been instructed to move forward since the Town has had no success by going through the health department who claims the site is not inhabited. Nearby resident disagree, saying that an elderly man lives there as well as other people. There is confidence that the Town has an ordinance in place that would apply to this situation, it just needs to be located.

Commissioner Letts motioned to adjourn, all approved, and the meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm.