

**Town Commissioners' of Charlestown
Meeting Minutes
November 23, 2010 - 6:30 pm**

Meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm by President Robert Gell. Attending were Commissioner Donna Sheets and Commissioner Mary Carol Durange. Commissioners Michael Doss and Joseph Letts were absent.

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Cpl. Adam Streight

The Accounts Payable report was reviewed with Commissioner Durange making the motion to approve. The motion passed 3-0. Commissioner Sheets added that a check for Jack Foreaker would be needed tonight for the same amount as last year.

The minutes from the November 9, 2010 meeting were reviewed with Commissioner Sheets moving to accept as written. Approved 3-0.

Sheriff's Report for October 2010 was delivered by Cpl. Adam Streight. He indicated that October was a relatively light month, patrol wise, but with a total of three adult arrests.

Ron Edwards presented an update for the Cecil Hotel. It was noted that the Maryland Historic Trust must be informed and approvals must be obtained prior to doing any work. Approval has been granted to do shore-up work and remove the brick veneer from the foundation. The next items requiring attention are the structural problem with the roof and the chimney so these items will be on the next request. He spoke about the lack of funding from grants but mentioned the grant recently received from Preservation Maryland for \$3,000 for non-capital work. He also mentioned that they would like to take the asbestos from the outside of the chimney and due to the limit of funding; they want to concentrate on small repairs. The Board has decided to leave the upstairs in the 1810 fashion, downstairs in the Victorian era, and the exterior in the 1810 version. A drawing was presented to the Commissioners depicting how the house looked in the early period.

Heather Dunigan, Principal Planner for WILMAPCO, spoke about updating the Regional Transportation Plan long-range plan and presented a draft copy for review. She intends to contact Charlestown to set up an advisory committee to update the current plan which expires in March of 2011 and invites citizen input. She spoke about the available funding for County and about the continuing effort to extend MARC rail service to Elkton. Charlestown is likely to get a bus stop for service between Harford County, Perryville, North East and Elkton.

Ms. Dunigan mentioned future projects including MD 213 and MD 272 improvements, the I-95 widening through Cecil County and a study on how to alleviate the Perryville road and rail bottlenecks. She will bring the Commissioner's concern about the toll booth locations to her council. President Gell expressed gratitude for their grant to help with our planning and zoning ordinance revision. There was a short discussion about the Harford/Cecil Greenway project extending to Charlestown with President Gell making a comment about building a footbridge across the Susquehanna River. In closing, she was asked to present the council with Charlestown's wish to establish a bus stop in Town.

A program started by the First Lady to fight childhood obesity, "Let's Move Cities & Towns", was introduced by Commissioner Durange. She noted that a Town must sign up and implement at least one item from a four pillar program that includes helping parents make healthy family choices, creating healthy schools, provide access to healthy, affordable food (i.e. a local farmers market) and promote physical activity. She requested permission to sign up the Town for this program. Commissioner Sheets would like "play days" instituted at the Athletic Complex. Commissioner Durange made the motion to use the remaining Athletic Complex POS grant funds for outdoor exercise equipment at the Complex. This was approved 3-0. Commissioner Sheets made the motion for the Town to join the "Let's Move Cities & Towns" program. This was approved 3-0.

Commissioner Sheets commented on recent issues concerning Town staffing. There have been suggestions to make all Town personnel part-time which would eliminate benefits. She feels it would not be of the Town's best interest to change the current staffing policy. She explained that our current employees are dedicated and in order to keep them benefits have to be offered.

Public Comment

Jeanette Armour requested permission to have an 8-foot bench placed in the church area as she feels there is a need for a bench in the front of the church. Ms. Armour was advised that she would need to contact the Board of Trustees of the Church and that the Town would support whatever agreement was reached. Ms. Armour mentioned that the money must be spent before November 30th. Comment was made that the Town does not want to start allowing benches in the cemetery as this may get out of control and it was noted that there are several locations in Town parks that are available. Additionally, if approval is given by the church, the Town can handle this request.

Wib Pumpaly commented on the quality of the maintenance staff. He stated that Niles Garrison has taken layoff for the winter. Regarding to the quality of the maintenance staff, he noted there is nothing that the staff will not try to get the work done. He also commented on Niles' care of the cemetery and the multiple compliments received on the quality of work he performs. Commissioner Sheets mentioned clearing snow from driveways for elderly residents. Emily Fletcher will investigate the Town's insurance liability for clearing snow from personal residences.

Jeff Fields spoke and mentioned that he is an employee of the Town as well as a taxpayer. He noted the difference in his experience between working for Charlestown and the State. In Charlestown they work as a team and the residents are very appreciative of their work. He complimented Robert Straiton on being able to accomplish drainage projects and snow removal with one piece of equipment.

Doris McDaniel expressed her thanks to the Town for fixing the drainage in front of her house. She complained about a hedge in front of her house (on Town property) that contains a bee's nest. Since she is highly allergic to bees, she would like to have the hedge removed if possible.

Gloria Wood said she has never lived in a town where the maintenance crew has done such a nice job.

Christopher Capano made his request to continue serving on the Planning & Zoning Commission. Having interviewed Mr. Capano, President Gell asked for a motion to approve continuance; this was made by Commissioner Sheets and approved 3-0.

President Gell made mention of the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Board of Appeals' work on revising the present Zoning Ordinance in order to streamline it and solve some of the problems resulting from the present code.

Town Administrator's Report

Old Business

- Disposition of POS Grant at the Athletic Complex – Commissioner Durange's suggestion for the use of this money must be submitted by tomorrow (11/24). A contractor's estimate was \$3200 to make Athletic field look like a ball diamond.
- Market and Calvert Street Drainage Project – The problem begins at the drains in the Wellwood parking lot. The Town had Cecil County inspect the down slope line with their camera truck and this located an obstruction. High-pressure equipment was unable to clear the obstruction. The Town does not have equipment to correct this problem as the pipes lay too deep. Renting the several pieces of equipment required to clear and replace the pipes would cost over \$13,000, and, at this point, it is unclear whether our crew has the capability do this.

Additionally, the location of blockage and the pipes that need to be replaced is below a sewer force main. Cecil Construction and HIE have been contacted and quotes for the work have been requested.

New Business

- Lambdin Development Company has made a request to cover the existing roads in Cool Springs with final top coat. Lambdin wants the town to accept ownership of the road, water and sewer systems but the Town normally does not accept these items until an entire development is built out. Lambdin feels that finished roads would attract buyers but Charlestown is concerned that with construction still ongoing, the roads will be damaged. It was suggested that a bond be put in place to cover repairs to roads as required after the "build out". Mr. Lambdin feels the Town attorney should write up an agreement to affect this so nothing is missed. The Commissioners were asked to keep this area in mind for future meetings.
- It was reported that the new truck has been made and the back portion is currently being built. We expect delivery by mid-December.
- Two Budget Amendments for Fiscal 2010/2011 were explained by Emily Fletcher noting the need to transfer funds from Utility (Water and Sewer) Long-Term savings to Utility (Streets) for the Louisa Lane repair project. Commissioner Durange made the motion to accept the amendments and this was approved 3-0. McGuirk Construction will repair the bad spots before winter and pave this spring.
- Mr. Pumpaly suggested that we need to discuss revenue concerns and major project expenditures to be sure they are addressed and prioritized during the budget process so as not to be brought up after the budget is set for the year.
- Commissioner Sheets discussed paper shredding for the residents as a source of revenue. The possibility of having an outside concern come into Town for a specific "shredding" day was discussed but no action was taken.
- A review of a sewer rate increase proposal for Charlestown was presented. Charlestown has not kept pace with the County as they raised their sewer rates. It was explained that Charlestown needs an increase in order accumulate investments to maintain the utility systems and to accomplish the capital projects we need. Mr. Pumpaly reviewed the current rates and the proposed rate increases and he suggested a cost-of-service study be done every 3-5 years. He would like to create a 5-10 year capital improvement plan budget and develop a long-term operations and maintenance expense table. He also suggested a 3% annual inflation rate should be built into the rates. He feels Charlestown should use a rate schedule similar to Elkton's and hopes to have this in effect for the first quarter of 2011. It was noted that a public notice and hearing will be necessary before implementing this increase. Commissioner Sheets requested an explanation of how the Town is able to give the resident the lower rate for sewer also, the Trinity Woods/county sewer billing possibly being transferred to Town was also discussed. It was reported that this has been taken under advisement and we are waiting to hear back from the County Commissioners. Commissioner Sheets motioned to move forward with implementing the sewer rate increase from \$55.00 to \$63.25 for the 15,000 gallon minimum. This was approved 3-0.
- A short report on the progress of the water tower refurbishment was given.
- A proposed increase for Town pier boat slips was discussed beginning in 2011. Maryland DNR will permit raising the fee for Town boat slips from \$300 to \$400. Commissioner Sheets motioned to do two increases of \$50 per year. This was approved 3-0.
- Ken Ropp (DNR) has asked that we make handicap accessible parking for the Town boat ramp. Mr. Pumpaly explained how this can be accomplished in Charlestown using the approximately \$12,000 left from the recent pier re-decking project.
- The need for a diesel tank for the soon to be new Town truck at the maintenance shop was discussed. Quotes of \$375 for the installation of this tank by Southern States and \$875 for the electrical work for the 275 gallon tank were presented. Commissioner Sheets moved to proceed with the installation and this was approved 3-0.

- The cemetery map that Emily Fletcher has been working on has been completed and computerized and we are now able to update the map as necessary. Edgar McMullen has reported there are aisle lots that can now be sold. It was also reported that the proposed cemetery expansion is moving slowly.

There being no further business, Commissioner Sheets motioned to adjourn and the meeting adjourned at 8:27 PM.