

**TOWN COMMISSIONER'S MEETING**  
**CHARLESTOWN, MARYLAND**  
*September 23, 2014*

The Town Meeting was called to order by President Bruce Hechmer at 7:00PM. Commissioners present were Ken Confalone, Robert Gell, Bruce Hechmer, and Joseph Letts. At 7:02 Commissioner Rene Capano arrived

Pledge of Allegiance was led by: Dennis Taylor

The approval of the minutes was deferred until the anticipated arrival of Commissioner Capano.

**Accounts Payable Review** –Commissioner Confalone made a motion to approve \$17,703.04 presented for expenditures, Commissioner Letts seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 4 – 0.

**Approval of the Minutes of September 9, 2014** this was deferred until the arrival of Commissioner Capano. Commissioner Letts made the motion to approve the minutes Commissioner Confalone seconded the motion. The vote was 3 for with 2 abstentions from Commissioner Hechmer and Commissioner Gell as they were not present for the meeting on September 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Osprey Nest Relocation** – Delmarva and the State of Maryland want the poles moved and so they will move the poles to a safer spot. Mr. Letts expressed concern over not having advance warning of this activity. He was approached by a citizen who was upset and he did not have an answer and that is his concern. President Hechmer stated he has spoken with Fire Chief Bott and Chief Bott and President Bicking are aware of and OK with the placement of the pole. President Hechmer and Mr. Pumpaly have discussed creating a regular synopsis of town happenings to be emailed and printed and placed in the Commissioner's mailboxes to try to help keep everyone updated on a daily basis.

**Sale of Cecil Inn Up-date** – President Hechmer stated that we are still trying to sell. It recently had a 2<sup>nd</sup> showing and that potential buyer has taken pictures of the foundation and sent them to an engineer to help him to ascertain the amount required for repairs and whether to make an offer or not. The list price is currently \$69,900. Commissioner Confalone questions how low we are willing to lower the price and what are our options? He wonders if the Maryland Historical Trust or the Cecil County Historical Society may like to have the property to fix it up. Could we maybe give it to them and have them fix it up or do we hope that we get an offer and that the future buyer has the wherewithal to restore it? We have already paid \$65,000 and have a balloon payment of \$110,000 due next month. Considering that we have no means to restore the property what would we choose? Can we compel a buyer to restore the home within a certain timeframe? Commissioner Confalone informed the commissioners that the Cecil County Historical Society is seeking something to auction off this fall. Might this be an option? Commissioner Gell stated that we would want to make sure that if we offer it to someone that they would have the means to fix it up. It was the general consensus of the Commissioners to

approach The Maryland Historical Trust and the Cecil County Historical Society to see if either of these two entities might be interested in receiving the property free of charge with the understanding that they would restore it. This is just an exploration at this time and does not commit the Commissioners to actually giving the property to either entity. Commissioner Gell wanted to know if this was what the Cecil County Historical Society was asking for in their request for auction items. Commissioner Confalone stated no, he believed that they were looking for something small that might be put into a silent auction.

## **Town Administrators Report**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Cecil Inn Balloon Payment** Mr. Pumpaly stated that this is due in October in the amount of \$110,114. He would like to ask the commissioners how they want this handled. Commissioner Confalone stated there are several things we can do; we can pay the full amount or continue to pay the payments that we have been paying for the last two years. We tried to renegotiate this loan twice and have failed. The bank's only offer is to extend the loan if we take an additional \$250,000 to fix up the property. It is not felt that this is the wise choice. Our plan was to fix it up and sell it and recoup our money. This has not come to fruition. We have the cash reserve to pay the \$110,114.00. We have not budgeted for the next 8 monthly mortgage payments in the budget, so the budget would be short. Commissioner Hechmer asked what not paying the balloon would do to our bond rating. The answer would be "not good". Commissioner Capano expressed her concerns over our future bond rating so feels that the balloon should be paid. Commissioner Confalone feels that when due we should pay the bill in its entirety. President Hechmer asked each commissioner where they stood about the payment of this loan and they all agreed to pay the payment in full at the latest meeting in October.

**Decoy Auction Proceeds** – Mr. Pumpaly stated that the decoy sold for \$28,500. With our \$237 in repairs and the commission taken out we received a check in the amount of \$25,212.50. The check has been deposited and the money is to be used for the renovation of the Ice House the Town has one more decoy being sold at auction on the weekend of November 12 & 13 at the Talbot County Community Center, Easton Maryland by Guyette and Deeter Auctioneers.

**Community Parks & Playground Reimbursement** – Mr. Pumpaly reported that the Tennis and Basketball Courts have been refurbished, the gates have been repaired and the sidewalks are in. We have received reimbursements from the Department of Natural Resources in the amounts of \$18,785.00 and \$56,355.00 which we are trying to track down. The Department of Natural Resources states that the payments have been deposited. Mr. Pumpaly will continue to be on the "look out" for the payments.

**Sidewalk Replacement (Trinity Woods, Cool Springs & Scott Gardens)** there are a number of sidewalks that need either repair or extension. Mr. Pumpaly presented pictures of the repairs and has solicited two quotes. Alexander Concrete's quote was \$2,900.00, and McGuirk's was \$4,064.00. Mr. Pumpaly wants to have this completed before the winter weather sets in. Commissioner Confalone said we budgeted \$3,000.00. Commissioner Gell questioned if the specs were identical? Mr. Pumpaly stated they seem to be. Both contractors have viewed the

sites. McGuirk's quote seems to be more definitive in what he proposes to do but any cement contractor should be able to remove the bad sections and put the base in and replace the sections. Commissioner Letts also commented that there are more sidewalks in need of repair. The consensus was to go with Alexander Concrete.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Portable Restroom Removal** – Mr. Pumpaly stated that the portable toilets are going to be removed by the 15<sup>th</sup> of October. Commissioner Capano asked if the bathrooms at Veterans Park could stay operational for the Halloween parade on October 24<sup>th</sup> as there will be 130+ kids attending. Mr. Pumpaly stated that he will not winterize the bathrooms until after that.

**Winterization of the Piers (Municipal & "C" Dock)** – Mr. Pumpaly stated that the water service to the Town Pier will be suspended by 15<sup>th</sup> of October. Boats can stay in until November 15<sup>th</sup> without water service. Ice eaters will be placed on the pier by the week of November 17<sup>th</sup>. C Dock suspends water November 3<sup>rd</sup> and has the entire system winterized by the week of the 17<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Pumpaly also requests that we purchase more ice eaters possibly 4 or 5 which is in the budgeted number. A question was raised by Commissioner Bruce Hechmer questioned if our maintenance staff is doing the winterization? Mr. Pumpaly stated that "yes" our staff is doing the winterization. Commissioner Hechmer asked if the locking fire caps remain on after the winterization. Last year they were off. In November the town will assume the electric bill for C dock from November through March.

**Christmas Tree Decorations & Lighting** – Last year the town tree was up for Thanksgiving. Mr. Pumpaly is waiting to see what is preferred. Commissioner Rene Capano is still waiting from the Fire Department to line up the schedule. She will forward information to Commissioner Hechmer and Commissioner Letts to see if they can get a more timely response from the Fire Department, so that information can get into the newsletter. Mr. Pumpaly feels we are going to need some larger lights and ornaments so that it will look better. Commissioner Capano wants to have Santa ride in the fire truck around town and then light the tree.

**Town Hall Holiday Party** – Mr. Pumpaly suggested the 12<sup>th</sup> of December for the Town Hall Christmas party. He asked the commissioners for their thoughts. Commissioner Confalone suggested that we have outgrown the area of Town Hall for the party. Mr. Pumpaly stated that it was held at the fire house one year. It was not well attended, so it is felt it should remain at Town Hall.

**December 5<sup>th</sup> Town's Christmas Party at the school.** We are collaborating with the school on this program.

**"Ice Eater" Purchase** – budgeted for 5 at \$600 each. We now know that we do not need that many because five came with the purchase of C Dock, so that we will need only 3 or 4 more. We have two very old units that we use on the Municipal Dock so some of the new units will replace those. Ken feels it is worth the money to get thermostats for each ice eater. He has them at his dock and has had success. They are \$50.00 to 75.00 each. Without thermostats the ice eaters will run continuously, with the thermostats on they will run only when the temperature warrants.

A purchase of three ice eaters and matching thermostats for all of the ice eaters that we will own is the consensus.

**Disposition of Church Maple Tree** - Mr. Pumpaly was asked by the President Bruce Hechmer to get the opinion of an arborists concerning the health of the tree. He spoke with Russell Carlson tree arborists. Commissioner Hechmer stated that he asked Mr. Pumpaly to ask the licensed tree trimmers that are considered arborists, what their opinions are. Mr. Hechmer stated that he was under the impression that two tree services stated that the tree could be trimmed. Mr. Pumpaly stated that they did not attest to the stability of the tree but stated they could trim it to a “shadow of its former self.” Commissioner Letts doesn’t feel we should take another chance on the tree, “as it could fall on a kid instead of a car next time”. It was stated to get a verbal opinion of the arborist the cost would be \$250 or \$400 for a written opinion. Commissioner Gell stated that the trunk is rotten in the middle. We received estimates to trim the tree from Cecil Tree Service \$1,410.00, and Bob’s Tree Service \$1,450.00 respectively. Commissioner Capano stated that she would like to preserve the tree if possible. Mr. Boudart suggested two tree experts that could come and look at the tree to see if it can be saved. Mr. Pumpaly stated that he received an estimate for \$1,950.00 to take it down. Commissioner Confalone said that based on the difference of the price we should take it down. It was decided by the commissioners that Mr. Pumpaly would seek the opinion of the tree surgeon suggested by Mr. Boudart and then take what action is recommended. Commissioner Confalone expanded on this topic and stated that he feels that residents wishing to remove a dead tree should not have to wait and go through the whole process of the Planning and Zoning code. He stated that Mr. Pumpaly should be able to determine if the tree is dead and can come down without the resident waiting for the next Planning and Zoning meeting. All the commissioners were in consensus. President Hechmer stated that a change in zoning code would be needed but for practical purposes it would be allowed.

**Grant** – Commissioner Rene Capano with volunteers mostly from the County (i.e. people storm water, aging, and master gardeners) planted some bushes. There was some leftover mulch and stone that was left. A comment was raised on the purpose of bushes down the center of the right of way by Baltimore Street. The bushes were put there to hold the stones. Commissioner Capano asked and was told by our maintenance men that the vehicles could get through. Commissioner Joe Letts stated that this was not the case. He said that this was his only objection to the project.

### **PERIOD OF PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Taylor questioned why the town is picking up electric on C Dock in the winter. What is the loss that the town is taking? Commissioner Confalone stated that the town is not taking any loss. The lease is approximately \$20,000 over costs and we will get all of the winter storage and this does not include the winter storage fees. Mr. Taylor also questioned why there were no lights on C Dock. Mr. Pumpaly asked how many were on the north side of C Dock. The answer is none. At 4:30 in the morning there are no lights on the north side.

Mr. Boudart – No comment

Mrs. Boudart – questioned the amount of the grant based on the shrubs and material supplied. Commissioner Capano stated that the grant from State was \$2500 and the County matched it making a total of \$5000. The only portion that came from the Town was paying our maintenance staff as an “in kind” donation. Mrs. Boudart feels that the work that was done is not going to last. It will be washed away or kick away by kids. She also doesn’t agree that the erosion is coming from the top down. She feels it is coming from the river. She stated that she has a hard time with the cost of this project. The cure for the whole thing is underground. Commissioner Capano stated that we are not allowed to do anything underground due to the DNR. Mrs. Boudart stated that “time will tell.”

No further comment.

Commissioner Letts motioned to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Confalone seconded the motion. It was unanimously approved 5-0.

*Respectfully submitted by: Debbie Myers, town clerk*