

**TOWN COMMISSIONER'S MEETING
CHARLESTOWN, MARYLAND
June 23, 2020**

Call to Order – President Fockler called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The meeting was conducted in the Charlestown Fire Hall and broadcast on Facebook Live. The room was disinfected and everyone was subjected to a temperature check and was wearing a mask. Those in attendance were Commissioners Fockler, Kronner, Letts and Wood. Town Administrator Wib Pumpaly and Commissioner Fields attended by Zoom. Janine Antoshak, Office Manager, Debbie Myers, Town Clerk were also in attendance physically. Trey Giraldi was present on Zoom for the discussion of the drainage issue at Avalon.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Commissioner Jack Kronner.

Approval of the Minutes – **Commissioner Kronner moved to approve the minutes of June 9, 2020, seconded by Commissioner Letts . Approved 4-0-1(Commissioner Fields abstained).**

Accounts Payable Review – Accounts payable in the amount of 53,984.57 were presented for payment. One question was asked and answered. **Commissioner Kronner moved to approve the payments, seconded by Commissioner Letts. Approved 4-0-1(Fields).**

Water drainage issues at Avalon impacting resident @ 8 Louisa Lane Mr. Giraldi (in attendance by Zoom) would like the town to do something about the water runoff from Avalon onto his property. Commissioner Kronner spoke in favor of the town doing something to alleviate this problem. Commissioner Wood concurs that the water problems are caused by Upper Avalon. Mr. Giraldi stated that the amount of water that comes down the hill even in a minor rain event is quite shocking. He has presented a possible solution with the installation of a berm to redirect the water to an existing catch basin. Commissioner Fockler suggested that Mr. Giraldi had offered to do some of this work sometime previously. He is not opposed to doing some of the work, but the water is not coming from his property. The property line is pretty much right on the fence. Commissioner Fockler stated that Mr. Giraldi is not the first to come with a stormwater management issue. He asked if Mr. Pumpaly could explore some possibilities. Mr. Pumpaly stated that we had much the same problem on the other side of Louisa and we were able to solve it with the assistance of McGuirk Construction. The cost of that project was around 3500 – 5000. Mr. Giraldi was asked if he was going to have any fill dirt. He said yes. Mr. Pumpaly stated that we have fill that our maintenance staff could utilize. We can put the berm in using in house staff. Mr. Pumpaly will work on this solution. Mr. Giraldi suggests talking to one of three contractors that he named to see if there would be any other solutions. Commissioner Wood suggests that we need to look at the damage that is occurring in the lower part of Avalon as well. It is also causing the fire boat to be silted in. A question was asked if the grant we used from KCI addressed any solutions. Only in generalities.

Old Business

Update on Scott Gardens - The overgrowth is gone and they are making great progress. The original stormwater specs have been found. Commissioner Letts stated that this is the homeowner's problem, not the town's. Commissioner Fockler stated that once the cleaning is done, then we will meet with the homeowner's to see if there is more that needs to be done to make sure that the pond is operating as designed. This led to a discussion of:

Trinity Woods Stormwater Management – Commissioner Fockler wants to know who owns the stormwater system in Trinity Woods. Mr. Pumpaly stated that they are common lands of the defunct homeowner’s association. They are in a similar situation as those in Scott Gardens. Commissioner Fields has seen the one on Salvation Circle. Commissioner Fields stated that he has a work order from 2010 to have the maintenance staff clean the pond out. If it belongs to the homeowner’s why was the work order populated? Mr. Pumpaly replied that obviously the work was never done and we had an engineering study done and more work was required than the town could perform at the time. Commissioner Kronner asked if we could help facilitate the restart of the HOA. Commissioner Fields stated that there was never a HOA set up, as he is one of the original homeowner’s and there was never one established by the builder. He further stated that the state needs to come in and inspect. He thinks that somebody should be inspecting them from the town. Commissioner Fockler stated that we will start at square one and progress from there. Mr. Pumpaly will pull the public works agreements. The thought in 2010-2011 was that the county would take over the inspection and management and back charge the homeowners. This has since changed and never occurred.

Abatement of Slip Tax Commissioner Fockler is not in favor of abatement of the slip tax. He sees a great amount of boat activity. Commissioner Wood stated that many boats have only just begun to launch. She thinks that the marinas are feeling the effects of COVID-19. She stated that the marinas bring business to the Wellwood and Market Street. She feels we need to give them (the marinas) something back. Commissioner Fockler stated that if they don’t lease the slip they don’t pay the tax and we as a town are taking a hit as well due to COVID-19. Commissioner Kronner stated that the marinas are passing the slip tax on to the end user. Commissioner Wood stated that we seem to be always looking to our businesses to support us. Commissioner Letts stated that the decline in their business is not our fault. Commissioner Wood stated that we (Charlestown) take care of each other and we take care of our money and a 40 to 50% abatement would show good faith to our businesses. Commissioner Letts understands where Commissioner Wood is coming from. Commissioner Kronner stated that we have cut the budget in response to COVID-19 already and this would be another hit to income. **Commissioner Wood moved to give the marinas an abatement of 30% on slip tax fees in reference to the COVID-19 for one year, seconded by Commissioner Fields. Approved 3-2.**

Update on ParkMobile – We received our first check from the ParkMobile App in the amount of 60.50. As this was for just a few days at the end of May, this is a sign that people are using the app. Some of the funds were boat ramp launch fees. Commissioner Kronner stated that the last couple of weekends people are parking for free at the free fishing pier and jumping on boats, not fishing. He wants to see the free fishing go away and to start the ParkMobile app at the fishing pier. Commissioner Wood asked what impact taking away the free fishing would have on the parking? We would have to enforce it. Commissioner Letts stated that it was built with state funds and we need to make sure we can do away with the free fishing and not jeopardize grants down the road.

Town Hall Entry System Update – We received a bid of \$5,570.00 from Harford Alarm, our alarm company to install a Door Intercom/Video System and Locking Devices. This would be a system whereby both Ms. Myers and Ms. Antoshak would be able to interact visually and by voice with those wishing to obtain access to the Town Hall. The door could then be unlocked remotely allowing the staff to stay behind the plexiglass. At the present time, opening the door manually requires interacting in close contact with those at the door, not knowing who is there, or being able to see who is there. Commissioner Letts stated that the town hall has been this way for 20 years. He is not in favor of the this. Commissioner Wood presented a ring doorbell ad that she thinks would work as well. Commissioner Fockler stated that the fever reader would have the capabilities of unlocking the door. Commissioner Kronner stated that the Ring system would give the capabilities that we would need for around \$500.00. This will be discussed at a future meeting and Commissioner Kronner will explore the Ring possibility with the company.

Cool Springs Access Road - We have received a letter from Mr. Lambdin requesting the town to delete the requirement of the access road to Rte. 40 for the Cool Springs development. Commissioner Fockler

wants to make sure that the Fire Company knows of this development. Once that conversation takes place we will have it on the agenda for the next meeting.

New Business

Shoreline Park Erosion Control – Commissioner Fockler stated that with all of the conversations about erosion at our parks. Mr. Basgar (sp) from the state will be here tomorrow to look over and start to make a plan to shore up our shorelines. They will be looking at all the shorelines. Commissioner Wood asked if he can make sure to look at the Avalon Park area where we chain it off it is literally like a river and also near the stage.

Training Session on Sexual Harassment & Discrimination – Commissioner Fockler stated that this type of training should be offered to staff and Commissioners. This is important for insurance and employment reasons. LEGIT has the training online and you earn a certificate.

North East River Marina complaint – Commissioner Fockler had a discussion with the owner of North East River Marina who is having a dispute with the neighboring tenant Lee's Marina. Commissioner Kronner stated that we own the property but he owns the buildings and the piers. Commissioner Wood also stated that there was more going on and maybe we need to sit back. Commissioner Letts stated that this has been going on for more than 10 years. Commissioner Fockler would like to have our attorney look at the lease to see where we stand. Commissioner Wood stated that DNR and the Coast Guard were summoned and charges have been filed. By consensus our attorney will be asked to look at both the letter and the lease to see what our liability may be in the dispute.

Commissioner Kronner asked if Charlestown Marina is supposed to put their trash out at the street? Mr. Pumpaly stated that we have never picked up the trash from the Marinas. We do pick up the trash from C Dock. Commissioner Kronner stated that he has on the last two Mondays observed workers at Charlestown Marina taking trash from their dumpster and placing it at the street.

Commissioner Kronner asked if we have gotten bids back on the Foot Log bridge repairs? Not yet.

Commissioner Wood thanked the town for the rental of the park. Ms. Myers was asked to send out copies of the rental agreements to the Commissioners.

Period of Public Comments by email:

Val Hahn

1.) I would like to request that one of the requirements for any shoreline erosion project be that it not cause erosion to adjacent properties.

Years ago, I researched the topic and found that groins cause erosion to adjacent property. I asked the question back when the revetment project for the footlog park area was being designed if angling out the rocks would be a groin that might actually worsen erosion to the public beach area. I was assured by the engineer that it wouldn't. It certainly seems to have worsened. In my opinion, in an effort to create a beach, the design actually contributed to the destruction of it.

My parents purchased their property at 253 Conestoga Street in 1962, and my husband and I purchased our property at 249 Conestoga Street in 1980 so I do have a long history with the area (and the changes that have occurred).

I agree that something needs to be done in that area, but it needs to be a "win-win" solution for both the public and private waterfront areas. I will adamantly oppose any plan to use groins near the creek (which would cause erosion for private property across the creek). I will support a "win-win" solution (that is economically feasible).

2.) I think training sessions on sexual harassment and discrimination are warranted and worthwhile.

In last night's discussion of this topic, Karl mentioned respect.

During the prior discussion of a town hall entry system, some commissioners referred to Debbie and Janine as "the girls". Personally, I find this disrespectful. I don't think the male commissioners or staff would like to be referred to as "the boys", so why disrespect the female office staff?

I don't think the disrespect was intentional, but it is an example of how training might help with awareness and sensitivity.

Andy Thompson - First off I would like to say thank you for your service in representing the town of Charlestown. I know it can be difficult, at times thankless but rewarding job.

Now for the thankless part of the job:)

I wanted to tell you I think your vote on decreasing the slip fees, while well intentioned, was the wrong call. The majority of slip holders are not Charlestown residents and boats are luxury items(not essential). Why would you support giving non Charlestown residents a finical break on non-essential items? This decision has directly taken money from the town and I hope that you do not plan on the residents filling the financial gap you have created.

If you wanted to help out residents from COVID why not give them a break on water/ sewer bill(essential item). In effect you have taken money from the town by providing a break on luxury toys which seems silly and short sighted. If the business owners were truly hurting they have resources as the Gov of Maryland did an excellent job in insuring resources were in place to support business during this time.

On a side note

The money that the town generates should be used to insure town taxes are not raised, increase civic beauty and quality of life for the residents of the town. Not as a way to provide donates to specific groups , which is essential what happened. I hope this idea of giving money away (especial for non-essential things) does not become a trend

Again, thank you for your support as you know you are not going to make everyone happy and this is just one of those times were I think the town commissions made a call that will have an overall negative impact on the town.

There being no further business before the board, Commissioner Letts moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Fields at 8:35PM. Approved 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Myers, Town Clerk