

Town of Somerset
4510 Cumberland Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Minutes for Council Meeting held on Monday, February 3, 2020.

Council members present: Marnie Shaul; Barbara Zeughouser; Steve Surko; Morris Panner; Franny Peale; **Mayor:** Jeffrey Slavin; **Town Manager:** Matthew Trollinger; **Town Administrative Assistant:** Linda Williams; **Town Attorney:** Ron Bolt; **Town Building Administrator:** Doug Lohmeyer; **Town Hall Renovation Project Manager:** Lou Balodemas; **Residents and other attendees:** Stephen Springer (Dorset Ave.); Lucy Freeman (Falstone Ave.); Drew Olsen (Del. Marc Korman's Office); Kelley Okleson (Groundsmith Collective); Derek Schroeder (Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC); Michael Samson (Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC).

7:00 p.m. Council Work Session

The Council set dates for budget work session meetings, and selected February 25 & 26 from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

The Council discussed resident concerns for stormwater management, and whether money should be allocated. The Council instructed the Town Manager to schedule a time for Mark Etheridge from Montgomery County permitting to explain the County's stormwater management review process; the Council also decided that other municipalities' regulations should be looked at before any changes are made in Somerset.

7:30 p.m. Council meeting convenes – Public Comment Period

Mayor Slavin called the meeting to order.

Lucy Freeman (Falstone Ave.) thanked the Council for the notice about proposed construction at 4712 Essex Ave., said that she liked that new part of the application process.

Council member Shaul asked that the minutes be removed from the consent agenda so the Council can discuss and vote on edits. Council member Shaul moved that a reference to a curb cut being approved at 5508 Uppingham St. be stricken from the record. Council member Peale seconded; all in favor.

7:36 p.m. Discussion: Update on Town Hall construction project

Project Manager Lou Balodemas reported on progress of the Town Hall. The Town is waiting for delivery of lights to complete the project. There is about \$85,000 left in the budget.

7:39 p.m. Discussion: Building Administrator Report

Town Building Administrator Doug Lohmeyer gave an update on ongoing construction projects and building permits. The Council asked about progress at 5800 Deal Pl. The permit extension is set to expire before the April meeting, so the applicant will need to be granted another extension at the March meeting for work to continue uninterrupted. However, very little progress has been made of late.

The Council instructed the Town Manager to discuss with the Town Attorney the best options if there continues to be little progress and if another extension is required.

7:50 p.m. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider approval of tree removal permit and reforestation plan for Stephen & Caroline Spring at 4824 Dorset Ave.

The applicant, Stephen Springer (Dorset Ave.) told the Council that all of the trees for which a permit is sought are dead or distressed. Town Arborist Dr. Tolbert Feather's report confirmed Mr. Springer's assessment. Dr. Feather noted that the only tree of significant size, and that is a desirable species, is a large Black Cherry (which is dead). He proposed a reforestation plan of one canopy tree.

Town Attorney Ron Bolt clarified that the applicant had seen and agreed to the reforestation plan proposed by Dr. Feather.

Council member Zeughauser moved to approve the tree removal permit; Council member Shaul seconded; all in favor.

7:56 p.m. Public Hearing/Motion: Presentation of FY2019 Audit by Zelenkofske Axelrod, LLC; and consideration of approval

Mayor Slavin noted that the Audit Committee has not met in person with the auditors, but that the Town will arrange a follow-up meeting at a later date, when all committee members are present.

Council member Shaul asked if there were recommendations for changes to the Town's accounting principles. The auditors recommended that the reconciliation process be formalized.

Council member Shaul asked if a detail of income and expenditures be sent to the Town.

Council member Panner voted to accept the report; Council member Shaul seconded; all in favor.

8:12 p.m. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider approval of Gardening/Landscaping Consultant contract with Groundsmith Collective in the amount of \$14,000

Kelley Okleson (Groundsmith Collective) gave a brief overview of her approach to the project. Council member Shaul commented that the manual was a good idea and would help the end product be successfully maintained in the future.

Council member Shaul voted to approve the contract with Groundsmith Collective; Council member Zeughouser seconded; all in favor.

The Council discussed arranging a meeting with Ms. Okleson to discuss stormwater management.

8:20 p.m. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider approval of payment to Bishop Tennis, Inc. in the amount of \$980 for Tennis Court repairs.

Town Manager Trollinger reported that the request came from the Tennis Committee to fix cracks in the tennis court.

Council member Panner voted to approve the payment in the amount of \$980 to Bishop Tennis, Inc.; Council member Shaul seconded; all in favor.

8:22 p.m. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider approval of payment to Criterion, Inc. Outdoor Furniture Repair in the amount of \$3,825 for table and chair repairs at the Town Pool.

Town Manager Trollinger reported that the chairs and tables at the Town Pool are in need of repair.

Council member Panner voted to approve; Council member Shaul seconded; all in favor.

Mayor Slavin suggested postponing a vote on Town events.

8:24 p.m. Discussion: Town Manager Administrative and Fiscal Reports

Town Manager Trollinger gave his reports (included at the bottom of the minutes).

8:38 p.m. Discussion: Mayor Report

Mayor Slavin gave his report (included at the bottom of the minutes).

8:41 p.m. Adjourn

Council member Panner moved to adjourn; Council member Surko seconded; all in favor.

Administrative Report: 2/3/2020

Administrative Matters

- **Accounting/Bookkeeping/Auditing:** Auditors Zelenkofske Axelrod LLC have completed the FY19 audit.
 - Preliminary FY2021 meetings are scheduled with the budget Committee for the second week in February. *The Council should select at least two dates for its discussion of a draft budget.*
 - Staff is meeting again with Weyrich, Cronin & Sorra on Friday, February 7 to review best practices moving forward.
- **Composting Issues:** Staff is planning to meet with the new Compost Crew CEO on February 10 to introduce and review Town expectations. Staff has been working with C.C. to help mitigate existing pickup issues related to an overhaul of their route schedule. According the Compost Crew:
 - The streets that were missed are streets that are not plugged into the driver routing app properly. We are already fixing this for next Tuesday's routes.
 - This issue hasn't reared its head in the past because the same driver typically services the Town of Somerset. During several weeks this month, we had strong drivers who had less experience with this route so followed the driver app verbatim. This caused them to miss several streets.
 - This, combined with the truck capacity issue one week, caused multiple disruptions over the past month.
 - As an immediate fix, we have dispatched a driver to complete the missed pickups you reported today
 - For next Tuesday and moving forward, we verified that each address will appear correctly in the driver app
 - We have also added an extra helper to the route, and a larger truck, to mitigate capacity and schedule risks.
 - Residents should continue to contact Compost Crew with any issues, and CC the Town Hall so that Town staff is aware and can stay on top of issues as well.
- **MML Conference:** Staff has secured a hotel for Town attendees to the MML Summer Conference.
- **Pre-Construction Meeting:** Staff is organizing a pre-construction informational meeting between Town staff, neighboring residents, and applicant at 4712 Essex to review site plans ahead of Council meeting.
- **Recording Council Meetings:** MMC now has the ability to record Town Council meetings and post on their website (the Town could link to the YouTube videos as well); if the Council is interested in recording Council meetings, staff can arrange for a demo. The Communications Committee will consider at its next meeting.

- **Tree City:** The Town completed its Tree City, USA application and has been informed by the Arbor Day Foundation that our application was accepted and we have been approved. In addition, the Town will receive the PLANT Award from the State of Maryland.
 - *Arbor Day Foundation recommended updating the ordinance to include who the Mayor delegates the responsibility to (most likely the arborist).*
- **Town Committees:** Staff is working with the Mayor to compile committee members, and re-appointments should be officially made by the Council, hopefully at the March Council meeting.
- **Stormwater Management:** Staff has recommended scheduling Mark Etheridge from Montgomery County to give a presentation on the County's stormwater management permitting process. *Mr. Etheridge has said that he is willing and able to do a presentation for the Council and any interested residents. He recommended a lunch-time meeting.*

Infrastructure

- **Pool Bridge:** Mulheron Tree Services has painted a no-slip epoxy surface onto the bridge to help prevent slippage. Staff has also met with Mason Resurfacing & Construction Co. to get opinions on fixes. They have recommended raising the slats on the side of the bridge to allow excess water to flow off, and will be submitted a proposal to the Town for the work.
- **Utility Poles:** Staff has put together a list of double poles in Somerset, and submitted to Pepco for removal. This is a County-wide issue. Our Pepco representatives have indicated that double pole removals will be a budget priority this upcoming year. The maintenance staff is relocating all signs onto new poles and off of poles that are scheduled to be removed.
 - *The Town may consider contracting with an Engineer to evaluate sign placement.*
- **LED Streetlights:** The Town has been advised by Clean Energy Solutions not to go forward with the proposals from Pepco for LED streetlight replacement due to the high costs. Pepco has expressed some willingness to engage the Town in a pilot program if such a program were to become available. Delegate Al Carr has put forwarded legislation at the state level to allow municipalities to negotiate to purchase lights from Pepco.

Contracting

- **Gardening:** The Town has completed a gardening and landscaping RFP, and received multiple bids. Staff recommends contracting with Groundsmith Collective.
- **Pool Safety:** Staff has completed Safety RFP, and expects the Council to be able to vote on a decision at the March meeting.
- **Pool Software:** Staff is gathering information on pool software options, and expects the Council to be able to vote on a decision at the March meeting.

MAYOR'S REPORT
FOR

FEBRUARY 2020 TOWN MEETING

1. HOUSEHOLD NEWS CONTINUES TO BE NEEDED. As publisher of the Town Journal I want to be remind everyone that we are always seeking news from/about anyone in your households, especially about careers, hobbies and/or lifecycle events. Since our submission deadline is the 15th of every month, please write me sooner than later at mayor@townofsomerset so that we can all share in the happiness in our monthly publication. We have so many interesting residents doing so many interesting things and we want to share in the success of our residents. Let's not be shy about it... it helps create community.

2. SOMERSET DUO DEBUT NEW FILM. Although I was not able to get to the movies this past weekend, I am excited to report that Director MICHAEL PACK and Executive Producer wife GINA CAPPO PACK (both Surrey) had their latest movie debut: "Created Equal: Clarence Thomas in His Own Words." Reviewed in the Washington Post this morning, this groundbreaking film will make us all proud and should be especially of interest to our many history buffs. I can't wait to see it and I am sure many of you will be interested, too. Check your local listings.

3. SNOW & ICE REMOVAL ALERT: ASSISTANCE NEEDED. As most know when we have snow and ice storms the Town has a contract with Mulheron Tree Experts for removal services. As Mayor I take the lead on giving instructions to Ed Mulheron and his staff on the complexities of this task. This year I have once again "deputized" COUNCILMEMBERS BARBARA ZEUGHAUSER (Trent) and STEVE SURKO (Uppingham) to assist me on a 24/7 basis. We always need information from the field on particular problem areas during a storm so I want all residents to know that they should feel free to call me--whatever the time of day--on my cell 202-549-2299 (Text, too) or home (yes, I still have a landline) 301-654-6767. This includes requests to have driveway aprons cleared! But let's all pray for a calm season.

4. WHEN A LOVED ONE PASSES. Another annual reminder: the Council, Staff and I are ready to be of assistance to those who lose family or household members during the year. Among other things, we can help publicize memorial services, contact neighbors and provide space in the Town Journal for obituaries. We are sorry when you have a loss and will assist in lessening burdens wherever possible.

4. TWITTER ENCOURAGEMENT. In the past year I have again stepped up my use of my Twitter account and many of the issues I write about are relevant to Somerset. I encourage all of the "tweeters" in Town to follow me at @jzslavin. I will be happy to follow you back. I also make use of my Facebook page. Look for improvements and new services throughout 2020.

HAPPY BLACK HISTORY MONTH TO EVERYONE AND DON'T FORGET TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL ON VALENTINE'S DAY!