

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2018 COUNCIL WORK SESSION
NO. 18-21

The Council Work Session of the Town of Sykesville was held on Tuesday, November 13, 2018. Mayor Shaw called the Work Session to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Council Meeting Room at the Town House. Mayor Shaw led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

PRESENT: Mayor Ian Shaw, Council President Julia Betz, and Council Members Anna Carter, Alan Grasley, Leo Keenan, Chris True, and Stacy Link.

STAFF: Aretha Adams, Town Manager
Kerry Chaney, Town Clerk
Michael Spaulding, Chief of Police
Derek Shreves, Public Works Director
Mark Onheiser, Special Projects Coordinator
Evelyn Sweet, Town Treasurer
Jared Schumacher, Circuit Rider

Welcome

Mayor Shaw welcomed Ed Rothstein, County Commissioner-Elect for District 5, and a Boy Scout from Troop 1231.

Strategic Plan

Aretha Adams, Town Manager, presented a draft of the Strategic Plan to the Mayor and Town Council. She explained that she had asked all of the Council for their top priorities. There were some that were repeated throughout the Council. Mayor Shaw explained that he wanted to try to get some consensus on the items and continue moving forward with those.

Parks

Ms. Adams presented some ideas and goals for the three main parks in Town. Council Member True mentioned that at the pre-tour meeting with the State Highway Administration, it was mentioned that there was no more funding for Streetscape projects, including the Town's rehabilitation of Main Street. Council Member True explained that if that is the case, he would like to see improvements made to Main Street for connectivity to South Branch Park prior to any improvements to the park itself. There was discussions for how to prioritize repairs to Main Street and how to best improve pedestrian connectivity to South Branch Park.

Ms. Adams explained that the Town received a Community Legacy grant for upgrades to the playground and repaving and widening the path at Burkett Park. The dog park, one of the stated priorities, could go in part of the open space at Burkett Park.

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Mayor Shaw stated that he would like to have a park master plan so the Town can have a full inventory of park equipment and can pursue grants that would best suit the needs of the parks.

Sidewalks

Ms. Adams explained that a sidewalk policy continues to rank in the top of the priorities list for the Council. There is currently money in the budget to make repairs to the sidewalks that are most desperately in need. The Town may need to get permission from the Department of Natural Resources for removal of some street side trees that cause issues with the sidewalks. Other trees may have to be removed as well or the problems will just continue.

Mayor Shaw asked about the potential to escalate a snow removal policy so it is in place for this winter. Ms. Adams does not recommend that, as it would not give the residents enough time to comment; it may look like the Council was trying to slip it through without discussion from the residents.

It was brought up that Highway User Revenues (HUR) can be used for sidewalks as well. The Town will look into what else HURs can be used for so the money can be maximized.

Town Owned Property

Mark Onheiser, Special Projects Coordinator, explained a recent assessment that was completed for the Girls' Shelter building. The estimated cost to repair the building is \$355,000 and is on the high side for commercial buildings. The estimate includes mold and asbestos remediation, fire suppression, Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, and water and sewer. The building is currently hooked up to a sewage pump system at the top of the hill. There is a need for more parking at Millard Cooper Park especially if it is turned into the flagship park for the Town. The Council decided to wait to see what happens with Millard Cooper Park before deciding what to do with the Girls' Shelter.

Council Member True mentioned that he has only heard parking complaints throughout downtown on Sundays during church services; during regular days, there are few parking complaints. Ms. Adams asked if the Council wants to expand commercial business in downtown using Town owned property. Council Member Keenan said he would because the rental space at Warfield will be two to two and a half times higher than those on Main Street; Council Member Carter said yes because Warfield is meant to complement Main Street; Council Members True and Link both agreed. Mayor Shaw believes the municipal complex should be kept in downtown Sykesville. He also had concerns about how to address parking with increased businesses and selling 714 Sandosky Road for the same amount for which it was purchased. Council Member Grasley explained that he would like the commercial growth to expand up Sandosky Road rather than using Town owned property. Council President Betz explained that while she sees the need for more commercial space on Main Street, she would like to keep the municipal complex downtown. She agrees with the idea of a municipal complex at 714 Sandosky Road and selling the Town House for commercial space.

The Council agreed that the cleanup of Farm and Home Services property belongs as normal business and not on the Strategic Plan. There was the suggestion of having

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the property fenced or screened so the view would not detract from the rest of downtown.

Municipal Complex

Chief Spaulding explained some concerns he, and others, have with the safety of the Town House. He explained that it was built as a house and not with safety in mind. There are multiple entry points with wood doors and many ground level windows, which have had a protective film placed over them in an attempt to increase safety. Ideally, the lobby of the building would be secured with no access to the offices and there would be video cameras that are monitored constantly rather than reviewed after something occurs. Ms. Adams further explained that the inefficiency of the building is not cost effective. She went on to explain that the official Town records are housed in the attic without electricity and climate control. There will need to be upgrades done to the Town House regardless of a plan for a municipal complex.

There was a suggestion to use one of the Warfield Buildings as the municipal complex. The idea would be to negotiate the donation of one of the buildings back to the Town from the current owners. The Town would have to do the remodel, under the MHT easement, at a cost of around \$5 million. There is the possibility of using grants for the remodel. Council Member Grasley said he does not like this idea, as there will be many of the same issues as with the Town House. Council Member True said he would not want to see the commercial space be taken away. Council President Betz said she would like to see the municipal complex stay in downtown. Council Member Keenan was also against the idea of having the municipal complex in Warfield. Council Member Link said she believed the idea was worth vetting, and Council Member Carter was also in favor of vetting the option.

Council Member True presented his idea of locating the municipal complex adjacent to Millard Cooper Park in the wooded area between the park and Sykesville Middle School. The concerns included that there was only one way in and one way out, locating Public Works next to a park and a middle school, and grading issues. It was agreed to do a survey to see if the property is useable for a municipal complex.

Additional

Council Member Carter explained that she would like to see WIFI connectivity throughout Town added to the priorities list as well. The Downtown Sykesville Connection recently applied for a grant to place benches with WIFI hotspots along Main Street. Council Member Carter would like to see something similar brought to the parks.

The Council agreed that there should be a conversation similar to a community roundtable regarding 714 Sandosky to target what they want the request for proposals to say.

Mayor Shaw thanked those that attended the work session and the Town staff. The work session ended at 9:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted
Town Clerk Kerry Chaney