

Dear

DRAFT

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 28, 2020 REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING
NO. 20-15

The Council meeting of the Town of Sykesville was held on Monday, September 28, 2020. Mayor Shaw called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. via Zoom.us. Mayor Shaw led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

PRESENT: Mayor Ian Shaw, Council President Alan Grasley, and Council Members Anna Carter, Mark Dyer, Leo Keenan, Stacy Link, and Jeremiah Schofield.

STAFF: Joseph Cosentini, Town Manager
Police Chief Michael Spaulding
Kerry Chaney, Town Clerk
Jana Antrobus, Executive Assistant
Derek Shreves, Public Works Director
Dennis Hoover, Town Attorney

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

CONSENT AGENDA

I. Minutes from September 14, 2020

Council Member Schofield noted that the minutes should be adjusted to show the Raincliffe HOA is not interested in completing the sidewalk connection between Freedom Park and the end of the existing sidewalk. It is a possible idea, but not one that the HOA is actively pursuing currently.

MOTION: Council President Grasley motioned to approve the item on the Consent Agenda with the correction from Council Member Schofield. Council Member Schofield seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

II. Strategic Demolition Grant (Warfield) – Change of Scope Request

Mayor Shaw explained that this was carried over from the previous meeting. Council was looking for additional information before making a determination.

Joseph Cosentini, Town Manager, explained that due to potential disclosure issues, there has not been an agreement for information sharing between the developer and the Town. Mr. Cosentini explained that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) needs an answer regarding the change of scope.

Steve McCleaf and Roger Conley were in attendance from the developers. Mr. McCleaf explained that the scope change is needed due to changes to the tax laws. The developers were not aware of the law change until after the grant was awarded. If the funding goes directly into a depreciable asset, such as a building, then the funding is taxable at the investors marginal rate, about 30%. The most tax efficient way to invest the funds is through infrastructure.

Mr. McCleaf further explained that the buildings will cost up to \$30,000,000 for total rehabilitation. Building costs have also increased post-pandemic. The \$750,000 grant funding would be used for the Town park improvements and wetlands remediation starting as early as next spring if the scope change is approved. The remediation will allow parcels A and B to be prepped for development.

Mr. Conley explained that this funding was supposed to be the first of three annual state grants that were to be used for the buildings. Federal grants are not taxed the same way as state grants, so those are possibilities for funding for the buildings.

Council Member Schofield asked if there were any changes between the original plan and where the developers see the future taking them due to COVID-19 or other factors. Mr. McCleaf explained that support from the state level has been driving thoughts on use even prior to COVID-19. He explained there is a meeting on the books for October 20 with Mayor Shaw, Mr. Cosentini, the chairs of the Planning Commission and Historic District Commission, and others to discuss thoughts on use.

Council President Grasley voiced his support for using the funds to create a useable park for the Town.

Council Member Link voiced her concerns regarding the lack of updates, the information that the Council has received, and the numbers available to the Council regarding the cost to fully complete Building G. She explained that all of those factors leave her uncertain with taking funding from the historic buildings. She asked if the developers have received quotes for the roof repairs for the individual buildings and if the funding could be used to seal a building from the weather, such as the auditorium building, which has a large hole in the roof.

MOTION: Council President Grasley motioned to approve the new scope of work and the Town will serve as the administrator of the grant but will not pay the contractors. Council Member Schofield seconded the motion.

It was further clarified that the contractors will issue invoices, which will be sent to the State for payment. The Town will not be paying contractors directly.

The motion passed 4-3 with Mayor Shaw, Council President Grasley, and Council Members Dyer and Schofield voting for the motion. Council Members Carter, Keenan, and Link voted against the motion.

NEW BUSINESS

III. Consider/Discuss/Act on Capital Purchases

Mr. Cosentini explained that the bids for the purchase of a new dump truck, which was budgeted for during the CIP process, came in higher than expected. The bids are \$12,160 more than anticipated. Also, the in-vehicle cameras for the police vehicles need to be replaced quicker than anticipated. There are new in-vehicle camera purchases scheduled for each year in the CIP. Mr. Cosentini is asking to move up the purchases of those cameras to this year. The new cameras will be upgradable and transferrable to new cars. They will also have the infrastructure to add body cameras to the system.

MOTION: Council President Grasley motioned to approve the CIP adjustments as presented. Council Member Carter seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Introduction of Ordinance NO. 2020-08 – Ethics Ordinance Update

Mr. Cosentini introduced this item. He explained that during the annual review of the ethics ordinance, there was some minor language that should be changed to keep it in line with the State ordinance. He further explained that Council Member Dyer had asked about the use of the word “may” instead of “shall”. The Town Attorneys reviewed, and the wording will be changed to “shall”.

MOTION: Council Member Link motioned to introduce Ordinance NO. 2020-08 – Ethics Ordinance Update with the amendment described by Mr. Cosentini. Council Member Dyer seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/REPORTS

- Next Mayor and Town Council Meeting is on TUESDAY, October 13, 2020. This will be a Zoom meeting.
- We have volunteer opportunities available on the Historic District Commission, SPARC, Police Auxiliary, and Crossing Guard. Email town@sykesville.net for more information about volunteering with the Town.
- There is still time to respond to the 2020 United States Census. The census is now extended until September 30. The Town of Sykesville is asking all community members to do their part to meet the goal of counting everyone once – and only once – in the right place. Please take a few minutes to complete the Census questionnaire you received. You can also complete online: 2020census.gov, or by phone 844-330-2020. Your personal information is legally protected and confidential.
- Staff Updates
 - o Mr. Cosentini announced there are multiple events for the Comprehensive Plan in October, including a survey. All information is on the Town website.

- o Halloween has not been cancelled. An infographic for safest practices will be released on the Town website and Facebook page. Kerry Chaney, Town Clerk, will reach out to other towns to compare the information being released.
- o Public Safety Report
Chief Spaulding presented the Public Safety Report for the period of September 5 through September 20. There was a total of 456 reports, including nine assist other agencies, eight community policing events, 33 foot patrols, 11 incident reports, 270 patrol checks, and 50 traffic enforcement initiatives.

Staff continues to push Howard County and the contractors to finish the skate park. The current completion date is October 1. If there is a safe way to open the park while work continues, it will happen.

- Council/Committee Reports

- o Council Member Keenan announced Downtown Sykesville Connection Board met to discuss sponsorship efforts and 2021 events. He also announced that DunnRite Furniture will be closing and the building will be sold soon.
- o Council Member Schofield announced there will be a Raincliffe Home Owners' Association meeting on October 5. He also announced there is a Legislative Committee meeting at the virtual Maryland Municipal League Fall Conference. He is also starting a new, unofficial role as a liaison between the towns and the County Board of Education.
- o Council President Grasley announced there was a Merchant's meeting on September 25. They discussed an introduction/welcome kit for new business, the Master Plan survey, and decorations for the holidays. There was a discussion regarding the barriers on Main Street and removing them. Mr. Cosentini will work with the merchants to determine the best time to remove them.
- o Council Member Link announced there is a cleanup day scheduled for October 10, beginning at 9 AM, at Burkett Park and at Oklahoma Avenue. SPARC discussed park maintenance at their last meeting, and they complimented the new playground at Millard Cooper Park. There is a concert on October 3 and a movie on October 10. The next meeting is October 22.
- o Council Member Carter announced there was a Historic District Commission meeting on September 22. They reviewed applications from a new business, Happy Kids Co., 7323 Springfield Avenue, and Sykesville Station. The next meeting is October 27.
- o Council Member Dyer announced that there was not a Planning Commission meeting since the last Council meeting. There won't be a meeting in October.
- o Mayor Shaw announced he talked with Pat Greenwald regarding the Schoolhouse. They are currently doing tutoring outside. He has not heard from Jack White regarding the Gate House yet.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Council, Council President Grasley motioned and Mayor Shaw seconded to adjourn meeting at 8:55 P.M.

The motion carried unanimously.

**Respectfully submitted
Town Clerk Kerry Chaney**