



Town of Sykesville

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Town House

Stacy Link, Mayor

Joseph Cosentini, Town Manager

Craig Weaver, Town Treasurer

Kerry G. Kavaloski, Town Clerk

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 28, 2022 REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING **NO. 22-21**

The Council meeting of the Town of Sykesville was held on Monday November 28, 2022. Mayor Link called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. in the Town House Council Chambers. Mayor Link led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

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

STAFF: Joseph Cosentini, Town Manager
Police Lieutenant Shawn Kilgore
Kerry Kavaloski, Town Clerk

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Mayor Link gave a brief discussion of the Rules of Council that were adopted in August 2021.

Council Member Grasley gave a statement regarding the previous meeting and the Elections ordinance. He explained that he wasn't trying to be accusatory regarding the 2021 election and the election results.

There were no public comments.

APPOINTMENTS:

- I. **Reappointment of Chris Seveck and Billy Shifflet to the Parks and Recreation Commission for a term expiring April 2025.**

MOTION: Council Member Guroff motioned to reappoint Chris Seveck and Billy Shifflet to the Parks and Recreation Commission for a term expiring April 2025. Council President Carter seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Link and Council Member Guroff thanked Chris Seveck and Billy Shifflet for their continued volunteerism and their many years of service.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

- II. **Public Hearing and to Consider/Discuss/Act on the adoption of Ordinance NO. 2022-07 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE AMENDING CHAPTER 12 “ETHICS”, OF THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE TO INCORPORATE CHANGES**

REQUIRED BY THE STATE LAW REGARDING CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE PROVISIONS AND CHANGES TO REFER TO THE TOWN GENERALLY RATHER THAN ITS AGENCIES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Joe Cosentini, Town Manager, explained that Town legal counsel advised him that changes could not be made while keeping the Town in compliance with State Ethics Code.

MOTION: Council Member Grasley motioned to open the Public Hearing at 7:10 P.M. Council Member Keenan seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

There were no comments from the public.

MOTION: Council Member Grasley motioned to close the Public Hearing at 7:11 P.M. Council President Carter seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Council Member Dyer reiterated his concerns about the lack of public disclosure for the University of Maryland Medical System disclosures.

MOTION: Council Member Grasley motioned to adopt Ordinance NO. 2022-07 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE AMENDING CHAPTER 12 “ETHICS”, OF THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE TO INCORPORATE CHANGES REQUIRED BY THE STATE LAW REGARDING CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE PROVISIONS AND CHANGES TO REFER TO THE TOWN GENERALLY RATHER THAN ITS AGENCIES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS. Council Member Schofield seconded the motion.

The motion carried 6-1 with Mayor Link, Council President Carter, and Council Members Grasley, Guroff, Keenan, and Schofield voting for the adoption, and Council Member Dyer voting against the adoption.

NEW BUSINESS

III. Consider/Discuss/Act on the introduction of Ordinance NO. 2022-08 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE AMENDING CHAPTER 60 “BRUSH, GRASS, WEEDS, AND TREES” OF THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE TO INCORPORATE CHANGES NECESSARY TO DESIGNATE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING PUBLIC TREES AND ESTABLISHING PRACTICES GOVERNING THE PLANTING AND CARE OF TREES ON PUBLIC PROPERTY

Mr. Cosentini explained that the Town is pursuing a Sustainable Community designation, and becoming a Tree City, USA, is needed for the designation. In order to become a Tree City, USA, there needs to be a tree ordinance that is always in effect covering public trees, a designated department responsible for tree maintenance, \$2 per capita budgeted towards trees each year, and a celebration of Arbor Day each year.

There was a discussion regarding trees on private properties that are deemed “nuisance trees”. The Town currently has a process in place for trees that are overhanging sidewalks, blocking traffic signs, or posing a risk to public safety. This ordinance would not change the existing process.

Council Member Schofield presented the idea of planting two trees for every tree that is taken down. He explained many positive reasons to increase the tree population on public property. There was a discussion of requiring this for private properties; however, this would only be for trees on public property. Mr. Cosentini explained that this could be a policy followed by the Town, but it does not need to be incorporated into this ordinance. Council Member Schofield asked for the policy to be written down in a standard operating procedure within the next few months.

Council Member Guroff raised the possibility of creating a fund to help homeowners take down nuisance trees. There was clarification that nuisance trees could also require maintenance instead of taking the tree down fully.

Mr. Cosentini further explained that this ordinance would in no way prevent the Town from removing trees that are healthy but would impede development, such as the trees along Warfield Drive that would impede the construction of a sidewalk.

Mayor Link provided comments regarding grammar and verbiage including §60-16: authority: remove the word “is” in the first sentence, and define the designee as a licensed, certified arborist. §60-20: Certain Trees Declared a Nuisance: add the words “treat or” before remove in the second sentence of B, and remove the “/or” from the third sentence.

There was a discussion regarding §60-21 and the classification of the infractions. It was decided that intentional harm of public trees in §60-18: Prohibition Against Harming Public Trees, shall constitute a more severe violation and will be a Class D municipal infraction.

MOTION: Council President Carter motioned to introduce Ordinance NO. 2022-08 – AN ORDINANCE OF THE COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE AMENDING CHAPTER 60 “BRUSH, GRASS, WEEDS, AND TREES” OF THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE TO INCORPORATE CHANGES NECESSARY TO DESIGNATE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR MANAGING PUBLIC TREES AND ESTABLISHING PRACTICES GOVERNING THE PLANTING AND CARE OF TREES ON PUBLIC PROPERTY as amended. Council Member Schofield seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/REPORTS

- The next meeting is Monday, December 12, 2022

- We have volunteer opportunities available on the Historic District Commission and Police Auxiliary. Email town@sykesville.net for more information about volunteering with the Town.
- Staff Updates

- Public Safety Report

Lieutenant Kilgore presented the Public Safety Report for November 17 through November 21. There was a total of 518 reports, including 24 assist other agencies, 14 community policing events, 28 foot patrols, 246 patrol checks, and 27 traffic enforcement initiatives.

Council Member Grasley asked about the dog bite incident. Lieutenant Kilgore explained that Animal Control is in charge of animal bite reports, however he believes this was classified as a provoked dog attack.

The damage at Warfield was discovered after the fact, not in the process of, so there are no current suspects.

- Council/Committee Reports

- Council Member Keenan announced that the DSC visitor guide has been redone and is available at merchants, the Post Office, and the Town House. The new decorations have been installed along Main Street. Donations for the 2022 Happy-Thon are still being accepted, and donations can be made on Facebook during Giving Tuesday.
 - Council Member Guroff announced that Santa will be coming to the S&P caboose on December 3 beginning at 3 P.M. followed by the tree lighting around 6 P.M.
 - Council President Carter announced that the Historic District Commission is meeting on Wednesday, November 30 at 7 P.M.
 - Council Member Schofield announced that the Planning Commission will be meeting on December 5 at 7 P.M.
 - Mayor Link gave a “Syke-out” (a Sykesville shout-out) to Derek Shreves, Public Works Director, and the Public Works Department, for removing some unsightly graffiti from the bridge on River Road.
 - Mayor Link also announced that she, Council Member Schofield, and Mr. Cosentini met with Governor Hogan’s Chief of Staff regarding the Department of Housing and Community Development’s refusal to award grant funding to the Town because of the denial of the zoning text amendment for the Warfield development. Council Member Schofield thanked Mayor Link for her dedication to this item and remaining on top of this issue.

- Holiday Decorating Contest

It was decided to hold the judging on December 22 beginning at 6:30 P.M.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Council, Council Member Grasley motioned and Council Member Guroff seconded to adjourn meeting at 8:10 P.M.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted
Town Clerk Kerry Kavaloski