

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD

Regular Meeting Minutes

March 22, 2016

The Commissioners Meeting was held in the meeting room of the Community Services Building on March 22, 2016. Commissioner President Gordon Fronk called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting were Commission President Gordon Fronk, Commissioner Carole Abruzzese, Commissioner Gordon Graves, Town Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Lewis, Chief Patrick Maxwell, and Public Works Supervisor Scott Delude. Attending was a representative from the Star Democrat and about eight citizens.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Graves made a motion to approve the minutes of March 8, 2016 as distributed. Commissioner Abruzzese seconded the motion, all were in favor, and motion carried.

PUBLIC WORKS

Superintendent Delude presented the following public works report as follows:

- A 30 foot tree was removed from the Strand beach area on March 1st in the mooring area with assistance from the DNR.
- The public works department has been getting ready for spring by mulching the park areas and setting up the mowers for the grass season. Town Park will be ready for the Easter egg hunt scheduled for the upcoming weekend and shore lines have been cleaned of washed up debris.
- The MD Dept. of the Environment did a three (3) year inspection of the town's wastewater plant last week on the department's operations and paperwork. Only a few minor clerical errors were found that were corrected and resubmitted.
- The Town of Oxford Public Works Department performed the annual grease trap inspections of the businesses that prepare and serve food. This inspection is done to keep the grease out of the town's sewer system that may cause major backups.
- The sewer realigning on Banks Street has been completed and the pipes look brand new and are working well. Total cost of the project was \$45,000.
- The public works department has been taking classes in the last month in preparation for their water and wastewater licenses/renewals. Two classes have been in Salisbury, one in Easton, one in Centreville, and another in Ocean City. These classes are relatively free to the department through the town's membership with Maryland Rural Waters.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Maxwell presented the police report which consisted of the following:

- 10 – Police information/ service
- 1 – Suspicious person (cable TV installer)

- 1 – Warrant service (criminal case)
- 2 – Assist the fire department

Chief Maxwell reminded everyone again of on-going phone scams, noting that since the last town meeting scams seem to be escalating. He advised residents to hang up immediately and not to respond to any questions.

The Oxford Police Department is getting ready for the upcoming Easter weekend. The department will be in Town Park on Saturday, March 26, for the Easter egg hunt to provide traffic control for the children and parents alike.

REPORT OF DISBURSEMENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2016

A motion was made by Commissioner Abruzzese to file the reported disbursements for February 2016 for audit. Commissioner Graves seconded the motion, all were in favor, and motion carried.

Following the regular meeting of March 8, 2016, the Commissioners convened a closed session for legal advice regarding a contract. Those present were Commissioners Abruzzese, Graves and Fronk, Clerk Lewis and Attorney Booth. A written statement setting forth the vote of the Commissioners and the topics that were discussed will be filed within the minutes' book of the Commissioner meetings.

OXFORD FIRE COMPANY REPORT

David Baker, Secretary of the Oxford Fire Company, read aloud the Oxford Fire Company Report for the period of February 26th to March 10th, 2016, as follows: During this 2 week period there was 1 fire call to Canterbury Drive, Easton; OFC was dispatched and cancelled en route; 3 personnel participated, 15 minutes.

During the same period there were 3 medical calls, 2 with patient transport to Easton Memorial and 1 standby at USCG Station 20. There were 6 personnel participating with 4.3 hours, 8.3 personnel hours and 43 miles traveled.

The next Fire Company Breakfast will be Sunday, April 10th from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. There will also be a county wide open house for Fire and Rescue stations on this day, so OFC invites you to join is for breakfast and to tour Station 20.

GUEST SPEAKER

John Hanes, President of the Oxford Volunteer Fire Company, presented himself to the Commissioners in response to a recent article in the newspaper in which the Commissioners had expressed an interest in reaching out to the fire company. Mr. Hanes informed the Commissioners that last year the Oxford Fire Company responded to 100 fire calls and 100 ambulance calls. Between training and fundraising alone, approximately 6,000 volunteer hours were spent among the unpaid members of this organization. The Oxford Fire Company will be participating in a nationwide open house event on Sunday, April 10th in hopes of recruiting new members. Mr. Hanes noted that every firehouse, not just Oxford's, is having problems getting members. The fire equipment is very expensive and running a fire company is serious business and is run as a business. Money is received from the County and the Town annually to support the company, but Oxford VFC still does its own fundraising and looks to the town for help. Many young people can't afford to live in town and that has posed a problem in recruiting new members. Mr. Hanes noted that he is available any time one or more of the Commissioners would like to speak with him. He added that he thought the article in the paper, may have been misleading as he felt the fire company had always worked well with the town. Commissioner Abruzzese agreed with what Mr. Hanes was saying and was also amazed at the amount of funds the fire company has raised in the

past. She questioned if there might be some items that the fire company needed that the town could help raise funds for, noting her amazement at the cost of the fire vehicles and the interest on the loans for those items and suggesting the fire company use the town newsletter as a platform to reach out to the citizens. Tim Kearns, Vice-President of the Oxford Fire Company, also spoke stressing the need for new members and encouraging anyone interested in the fire house to attend their open house. Both Mr. Hanes and Mr. Kearns encouraged the Commissioners to come down to the firehouse and speak with them at any time. Commissioner Abruzzese thanked the gentlemen for attending the Commissioners meeting. Secretary of the Oxford Fire Company, David Baker, thanked the town for their support.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

President Fronk read aloud Ordinance 1605: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD ADOPTING THE 2015 EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXISTING BUILDING CODE, AS AMENDED BY THIS ORDINANCE, AS THE EXISTING BUILDING CODE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD, AND REPEALING ALL ORDINANCE IN CONFLICT HEREWITH**, for public comment. Administrator Lewis stated that the town generally adopts the new building codes, which come out every 3 years, after the state adopts them. This code, however, is a new building code that the town is adopting for the first time, which would apply to houses that already exist in town. The town has not used this code in the past as this is the first time it has been adopted by the State. The International Existing Building Code will make it easier to work with permits for older buildings. No public comments were presented. President Fronk closed Ordinance 1605 for public comment.

President Fronk read aloud Ordinance 1606: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD ADOPTING THE 2015 EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE, AS AMENDED BY THIS ORDINANCE, AS THE PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD, AND REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH**, for public comment. Administrator Lewis noted that this was the ordinance that incorporated the results of the discussion with the Historic District Commission and the Planning Commission in reference to demolition by neglect, adding that incorporated within this ordinance is Section 102.6 pertaining to historic buildings, whereby the HDC may notify the Town Clerk of any violation of the Property Maintenance Ordinance, including any condition considered to be demolition by neglect. Also included within this ordinance is a definition of Demolition by Neglect, as well as Section 304.20: Demolition by Neglect, in which no property owner in the Historic District shall allow their property to fall into disrepair in a manner that is considered demolition by neglect. This accomplishes what the Historic District Commission was seeking to do within the Property Maintenance Code. Audience member and Chairman of the Historic District Commission Tom Costigan asked about publication and copyright issues regarding placing the ordinance online. Administrator Lewis responded that the 2015 Edition of the International Property Maintenance Code could not be put online. The ordinance itself would be put online referencing the building code and that the building code can be viewed in the Town Office or be purchased from the International Code Council for a fee. There being no further comments, President Fronk closed Ordinance 1606 for public comment.

President Fronk read aloud Ordinance 1607: **AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD AUTHORIZING THE PURCHASE AND ACQUISITION OF CERTAIN PROPERTY LOCATED AT 105 SOUTH MORRIS STREET, OXFORD, MARYLAND, CONTINGENT UPON THE RECEIPT OF A GRANT FROM THE STATE OF MARYLAND IN THE AMOUNT OF THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$300,000) TO BE APPLIED TOWARD ACQUISITION COSTS**, for public comment. Comment was received from town resident James Deerin who stated that it did not look like this property would ever get purchased by a private purchaser. He thought that what the town had done to get grant funds and additional funds to purchase the property was the right thing to do. No other comments were received. President Fronk closed Ordinance 1607 for public comment.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Commissioner Graves made a motion to approve Ordinance 1605: 2015 International Existing Building Code. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abruzzese and unanimously carried with all in favor.

Commissioner Abruzzese made a motion to approve Ordinance 1606: 2015 International Property Maintenance Code. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Graves and unanimously carried with all in favor.

Commissioner Graves commented on Ordinance 1607: Authorization to Purchase the MEWS assisted by grant funds by noting that the town was waiting for an environmental report on the building and that he thought it would be prudent to have Attorney Booth present. He added that the town had a tentative environmental report on The Mews but that the final report had not been received. Administrator Lewis explained that a Phase One Environmental had been requested for the MEWS and that the contracted inspector had researched the property, requested documentation from multiple offices and had inspected the actual property the day before, including an in depth review of history with regards to the uses of the property that Lewis had put together. Lewis state that the inspector felt after a thorough review of the information, she felt confident in saying she had found no serious concerns. She also stated the only request for documentation she had not received was from the State, although she had in fact done her own research of the state records regarding hazards in the area. The inspector added that she would hold off another week to see if the State provided any further information and would finalize the report and forward the information to the town. Lewis also informed the Commissioners that the report does not cover lead paint and asbestos, and there was certainly an assumption that one or both did exist and would have to be managed per acceptable procedures. The purpose of the environmental review is to look for evidence of serious contaminants that could be liabilities in the future. Administrator Lewis also added that she found reasonable documentation demonstrating that the Mews building was constructed in or about 1879.

Commissioner Graves made a motion to defer consideration of Ordinance 1607 Authorizing Purchase of the MEWS until April 12, 2016; Commissioner Abruzzese seconded the motion to defer Ordinance 1607. Abruzzese questioned if there was a guarantee that the State would have their report in by April 12' to which Lewis responded there was no guarantee and they could remain silent, but added that she had been assured she would have the inspectors completed report prior to April 12, 2016 either way. Commissioner Graves stated that if the State did not comment by then he would be willing to go forward with the approval of the ordinance. President Fronk asked if deferring this ordinance would have any impact on the grant application process. Lewis responded that it would not, but requested that the Commissioners, in a separate motion, vote to allow her to let the Commission President sign the grant agreement so that it could be returned to the state, as they were waiting on it. A vote was called on the deferral of Ordinance 1607, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis explained that the Grant Agreement she was requesting approval for basically states that the Commissioners agree to the terms of the grant, if and when they agree to receive the grant funds and does not commit the Commissioner to the purchase. Commissioner Graves made a motion authorizing the President to sign the grant agreement; the motion was seconded by Commissioner Abruzzese, and unanimously carried with all in favor.

Administrator Lewis revisited the Tilghman Street boat ramp construction bid results. As noted in a previous meeting, the bid results came in \$100,000 short of funding. Administrator Lewis stated she was working with DNR regarding additional funding to reach the needed amount and that there was an outstanding grant application, with award anticipated in August. Lewis stated that her recommendation, after talking to the DNR, is to postpone the work until this fall in order to verify the town would be able to secure the necessary funding to complete the project, which would also move the majority of the construction out of the busy summer season. She added that the engineers had consulted with the lowest bidder and he said he felt he could start the project the day after Labor Day and have the water

portion of the project done in time to avoid the winter waterfowl restriction currently in place. There will be a modification of the bid to reflect this change, along with some value added changes and once approved by DNR, she would bring it back to the Commissioners for award at a future date.

NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business to report.

CLERK COMMENTS

Lewis reported that she had received a phone call from the Little League coach in Easton looking to see if he and his team could use the Oxford baseball field for practice, as it was hard for him to get his team on the fields in Easton. Administrator Lewis told him the he could use the field as long as the Parks and Recreation Committee or Coast Guard didn't need it, as they took precedence.

Lewis reported that the updated FEMA mapping has arrived and she would be working with the attorney on an adopting ordinance, which could possibly be introduced at the end of April.

The Oxford Day Committee has asked if the Commissioners are planning to ride in the parade and in what vehicle, requesting they let her know what they settle on so she could inform the committee.

Lewis noted that she would be in training the first and second week in April and will not be attending the Commissioner's meeting scheduled for April 12, 2016. She also reminded the Commissioners we would be entering budget season and she will begin work on the draft budget towards the end of April.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS

President Fronk reported that Commissioner Abruzzese took part in the recent Polar Plunge, which raised \$15,500 for Camp Sunshine, a retreat for children with life-threatening illnesses and their families in Casco, Maine. The money raised will provide 6 families the opportunity to attend the retreat.

There being no further business, President Fronk called for the meeting to be closed at 7:08 p.m. The motion was seconded and unanimously carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lewis