

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2016

The Commissioners Meeting was held in the meeting room of the Community Services Building on November 8, 2016. Commission President Gordon Graves called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting were Commission President Gordon Graves, Commissioner Carole Abruzzese, Chief Patrick Maxwell, Public Works Superintendent Scott Delude, Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Lewis, and Town Attorney Brynja Booth. Several citizens and a representative of the Star Democrat were also in attendance.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Abruzzese made a motion to approve the minutes of October 11 and 25, 2016 as distributed. Commission President Graves seconded the motion, all were in favor, and motion carried.

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

PUBLIC WORKS

Superintendent Delude presented the public works report as follows:

- The public works department has been getting ready for winter weather by winterizing the fountains, vehicles, equipment, and dog park.
- The public works department went on a tour of the Oxford NOAA facility last week for an understanding of what they are doing to improve the bay and also to better understand their infrastructure so that the department can offer assistance in an emergency operation.
- Leaf pickup has been taking place for the past three weeks and the “leaf vacuum” has been set up to speed up the operation. Superintendent asked that residents put their leaves out along the roadside and not in the ditches as this causes problem for the storm water to flow effectively.
- The Town of Oxford put out an RFP back in September for the rehab on the town’s tennis court playing area but no bids were received prior to the cutoff. The Public Works Departments has since received a bid for the work which has been turned over the town office.

POLICE REPORT

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

- 33 - Property Checks
- 13 – Police Information - Service
- 6 – Assist Other Police Agencies
- 4 – Animal Complaints
- 6 - Assist the Fire Department
- 1 – Alarm
- 1 – Check the Welfare

Chief Maxwell noted that his report covered the period from October 12 through November 8 as he was out sick at the last Commissioner’s meeting.

Halloween went off without any major incidents. Two adults were found to have open containers of alcohol with their children and the situation was dealt with. Overall it appeared that the crowds were down from past years.

PUBLIC HEARING

President Graves presented Ordinance #1617 - **AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD TO AMEND THE OXFORD TOWN CODE TO ADD CHAPTER 19 TITLED "RESIDENTIAL RENTAL HOUSING LICENSE AND INSPECTION" TO ESTABLISH A LICENSING AND INSPECTION PROGRAM FOR RESIDENTIAL RENTAL DWELLING UNITS WITHIN THE TOWN OF OXFORD.** Attorney Booth spoke stating that it had been discussed that the town did not have a residential rental housing license and inspection program and that this ordinance had been based on similar ordinances that other towns in the area were using. If adopted, this ordinance would be put into the town's code. Residential rental units would be inspected, issued a license, and would be placed under the property maintenance code. Commissioner Abruzzese made a motion to open the hearing for public comment. The motion was seconded by President Graves. Local resident and realtor Jane McCarthy spoke asking if the town was talking about long term rentals or short term rentals. Attorney Booth responded that this ordinance was addressing long term rentals which would be separate from short term rentals. This would apply to housing units that are not owner occupied, that are rented for profit, and would require a basic rental housing maintenance inspection whereby once inspected and approved would be issued a license that would be good for two (2) years. Both interior and exterior inspections would be involved. This would insure that there are basic livability standards in place. Administrator Lewis added that in order to start the program, the town would send letters out notifying property owners that if they are renting, they would need to contact the town office. This would not apply to property owners who are renting out to other immediate family members. Resident Judd Vreeland asked if there were laws in place for tenants and landlords now. Administrator Lewis responded there were but only for lead paint, not for property inspections. There is currently a requirement by the State that requires rented properties to have a lead inspection. It is the responsibility of the landlord to provide his/her tenant a safe place and this ordinance would make sure a rental property meets the standard code for a rental property.

Attorney and Oxford property owner David Thompson spoke stating that he was at this night's meeting at the request of Judd Vreeland. He stated that there a couple of practical issues that he would like the Commissioners to consider. The first was that Mr. Vreeland has a home on Bayview Avenue that is a duplex that Mr. Vreeland rents usually to members of the fire department and that he tries to keep the rent low. Mr. Vreeland's primary concern was what the cost was going to be to have his property inspected and having to pass on that expense to his tenants. He also questioned just how many rental units were in the Town of Oxford. Administrator Lewis responded she didn't know for sure but she thought there were probably 30 to 40 homes that rented on a yearly basis. As far as the cost of inspection was concerned, she did not think the cost would be that high as the inspector would be hired to inspect on the very basis things to make sure the home or apartment was fairly safe. The town would not be trying to make any profit on the inspections. Attorney Thompson noted that those types of inspections were sometimes arbitrarily scheduled at times that were inconvenient to either the tenant(s) and/or landlord(s). Administrator Lewis responded that past appointments had been set up directly with homeowners and that, to date, there had been no conflicts with anyone. Mr. Vreeland asked if he would be charged double for the inspector to inspect his duplex. Administrator Lewis responded that he was not sure at this time, but she would look into a reduce rate for a single visit. Commissioner Abruzzese addressed Mr. Vreeland by stating she understood Mr. Vreeland's concerns but that this ordinance was be done primarily to address safety issues, not to make homeowners change the way in which their house was built. A motion was made to close this public hearing and open the next public hearing.

President Graves presented Ordinance #1618 - **AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD TO AMEND THE OXFORD TOWN CODE TO ADD CHAPTER 20 TITLED "SHORT TERM RENTALS" TO INCORPORATE INTO THE TOWN CODE CERTAIN MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SHORT TERM RENTALS WITHIN THE TOWN OF OXFORD.**

Attorney Booth explained that this was a re-adoption of the same short-term rental ordinance that has been on the books since 2010 with minor non-substantive changes. The town recently codified its town ordinances and it made sense to add the rental license inspection program as one chapter and the short-term rental as another chapter within the town code. It was explained that short term rental is viewed as being 60 days or less. The ordinance was open for public discussion. Administrator Lewis noted that the intent of the ordinance was not to move people away from short term renting. There was no public comment. President Graves moved to close the public hearing.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The Commissioners revisited Ordinance 1616 – **AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD TO AMEND SECTIONS 19.01, 33.01, 33.02, AND 33.14 OF THE OXFORD ZONING ORDINANCE TO INCORPORATE REVISIONS TO THE TOWN'S CRITICAL AREA PROGRAM TO ADDRESS STORMWATER MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT LESS THAN 5,000 SQUARE FEET, THREE REPLACEMENT IN THE INTENSELY DEVELOPED AREA (IDA), PERMEABLE PAVERS IN THE IDA AND CHANGES TO THE MITIGATION STANDARDS FOR BUFFER MANAGEMENT AREA.** Attorney Booth mentioned that there had been one addition since the last public hearing involving a change that she and Administrator Lewis were recommending. The ordinance had mentioned that there was a provision for native Oxford plant species but that neither she nor Administrator Lewis were aware of such a list and that wish to address plantings in a different way. A new paragraph 4, was added on page 7, which mentions that information concerning native vegetation suitable for planting within the Buffer can be found in the *Green Book for the Bay*, which is a tangible publication that can also be found on-line. An additional change was also made on page 4 as there had been no accurate definition of rain garden or bio-swale, as pointed out by the Oxford Planning Commission. Rather than adding a definition for something vague, a reference has been made to the *Environmental Site Design Criteria for the Maryland Critical Area*, as prepared for the Maryland Critical Area Commission, which does discuss different ways to do raingardens and bio-swales. Once approved, this ordinance would next go before the Critical Area Commission for their review. Upon their approval, the ordinance would go into effect. Commissioner Abruzzese made a motion to approve Ordinance 1616 – **AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD TO AMEND SECTIONS 19.01, 33.01, 33.02, AND 33.14 OF THE OXFORD ZONING ORDINANCE TO INCORPORATE REVISIONS TO THE TOWN'S CRITICAL AREA PROGRAM TO ADDRESS STORMWATER MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT LESS THAN 5,000 SQUARE FEET, THREE REPLACEMENT IN THE INTENSELY DEVELOPED AREA (IDA), PERMEABLE PAVERS IN THE IDA AND CHANGES TO THE MITIGATION STANDARDS FOR BUFFER MANAGEMENT AREA** as amended. The motion was seconded by President Graves and unanimously carried without further discussion.

Commissioner Abruzzese made a motion to adopt Ordinance 1617 - **AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD TO AMEND THE OXFORD TOWN CODE TO ADD CHAPTER 19 TITLED "RESIDENTIAL RENTAL HOUSING LICENSE AND INSPECTION" TO ESTABLISH A LICENSING AND INSPECTION PROGRAM FOR RESIDENTIAL RENTAL DWELLING UNITS WITHIN THE TOWN OF OXFORD.** The motion was seconded by President Graves and unanimously carried with all in favor.

President Graves made a motion to adopt Ordinance 1618 - **AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD TO AMEND THE OXFORD TOWN CODE TO ADD CHAPTER 20 TITLED "SHORT TERM RENTALS" TO INCORPORATE INTO THE TOWN CODE CERTAIN MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SHORT TERM RENTALS WITHIN THE TOWN OF OXFORD.** The motion was seconded by Commissioner Abruzzese and unanimously carried with all in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

The Commissioners will only have this one meeting in November and only one meeting in December, to be held on the 13th.

LETTERS AND REQUESTS

Administrator Lewis announced that she had received notice that the County's next quarterly municipal meeting is scheduled for November 14 at 5 p.m., in the Easton Library. On November 15 the county is having their annual consolidated transportation planning meeting with the Department of Transportation.

ATTORNEY

Attorney Booth stated the town is still receiving bids for The Mews and that the bid period will not close until November 30. Active advertising is currently taking place for the WWTP as well.

ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK-TREASURER

Administrator Lewis stated that no bids had been received when the RFP was published to redo the tennis court. However, she mentioned the Superintendent Delude had received word that the one company that had requested a bid packet (American Tennis Courts) failed to submit their bid because they knew they could not get the bid completed done within the time allotted. Since that time, they have submitted an estimate to the town of what they would charge to do the job and it was found to be within what the town had budgeted. The price came in after the cut-off-date for bids. Administrator Lewis stated that she contacted Attorney Booth regarding the incident and was told that since this was the only bid received, even though late, the town could award it to American Tennis Courts. The price they quoted was \$46,200, which is less than the estimate they had originally given to Administrator Lewis when she talked with them about it. A Maryland Parks and Playground grant will be used to complete this project. With the extra money available due to the reduced cost of the tennis court project, Administrator Lewis and Superintendent Delude into having a pickle ball court. It was found that the basketball court is perfectly sized to hold two pickle bar courts since the town does not have full use of this court at all times. Instead of having the 6 hoops that the court currently holds, this could be brought down to 2 hoops on either end of the court and lines laid out for the 2 pickle ball courts in the middle. Administrator Lewis noted that she was going to investigate this further with the American Tennis Court company to see if this court could be converted to hold both spots and asked for a motion to approve the repaving of the tennis courts by American Tennis Court. A motion was made to do so by Commissioner Abruzzese, seconded by President Graves, and unanimously carried with all in favor.

There being no further business, Commissioner Abruzzese motioned to close the meeting, Graves seconded the motion, and the meeting was closed at 6:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lewis, Administrator - Clerk/Treasurer