

**COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**January 23, 2018**

The Commissioners Meeting was held in the meeting room of the Community Services Building on January 23, 2018. Commission President Gordon Graves called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Attending the meeting were Commission President Gordon Graves, Commissioner Gordon Fronk, Commissioner John Pepe, Police Chief Patrick Maxwell, Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Lewis, and Town Attorney Brynja Booth. Maintenance Supervisor Scott Delude was out of town.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Fronk made a motion to adopt the minutes of January 9, 2018 as modified. President Graves seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Commissioner Pepe made a motion to approve the filing for audit of the disbursements of funds for December 2017. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fronk, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

**MAINTENANCE REPORT**

Administrator Lewis reported for Public Works Superintendent Scott Delude. Lewis stated that the public works department received the new backhoe last month. The crew has been busy cleaning up around town and repairing various broken pipes and leaking valves due to the cold weather. The Christmas lights have finally been removed to storage. We have one PW employee out on extended sick leave.

**POLICE REPORT**

Chief Maxwell reported the following:

- 15 – Police information-service
- 1 – Disorderly person
- 2 – Patrol Checks
- 5 – Check the welfare (storm and cold related)
- 1 – Suspicious MV (ID and moved on)
- 3 – Suspicious persons (ID and moved on – all had criminal records)

Chief Maxwell reminded those present to be on the lookout for suspicious persons in the area along with phone scams.

**OXFORD FIRE COMPANY REPORT**

The Oxford Fire Company report was given by Fire Chief Graham Norton who stated that all has been quiet with only 6 EMS calls and 0 fire calls. The installation of the new fire company officers and annual banquet was successful with the Oxford Auxiliary raising enough funds over the year to pay off the remainder of the fire company's mortgage. The next fire company breakfast will be held on February 11. President Graves added that he had a great time at the banquet and that the food that had been provided by Docs Sunset Grill was outstanding.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Commissioner Fronk reported that he and Administrator Lewis met with the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT) and MD DHDC representatives along with architect Cameron MacTavish to go over the plans for the Oxford Mews. At that meeting it was explained that the grant funding comes from the DHCD to the town and that MHT review is required by DHCD, but DHCD is not required to abide by it. The MHT assistance comes in the form of tax credits that can only go to a private investor. If the town were to take an approach that would allow a private investor to capture historic tax credits, it would be best to preserve the Mews footprint and exterior design. The plan would be to preserve as much of the original structure as is salvageable and to keep the building looking very much like it is today. The ceilings would remain at 7'. Two apartments would be on the second floor, accessed from a rear elevator or stairs. This

direction is the simplest solution. Mr. MacTavish is reworking the design. Lewis added she thought this was the best approach as well and added that it was important to have Mr. MacTavish do a full construction package and to separate out the stabilization as Phase 1 of the construction and everything else to be in Phase 2 of the project. She went onto say that it would be possible for the town to apply to DHCD for additional grant funding for Phase 1, and, if funding was received then the town could look at the best way to move forward on Phase 2, final construction. Mr. MacTavish will continue to move on with his work so the town can finalize the current grant funding. Though the grant application dates have not been announced yet, the DHCD did ask whom the private partners are going to be and recommended including them in the grant application. Commissioner Pepe asked if the building would have to be made ADA accessible. Administrator Lewis responded that was not a requirement in historic buildings, although we would do our best to accommodate from the back of the building.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Attorney Booth reported on the design for Morris Street Waterline Replacement. A design contract has been submitted by our engineers at GMB for the design and construction plans for bidding of the Morris Street Water replacement. Discussions have taken place with Terry Fearins/USDA, who has suggested the town look at the overall water system, determining and prioritizing needs in the form of a PER, in order to be in a position for current and future funding that would address such items as arsenic removal and other infrastructure needs. The Town has already tasked GMB with this work. In order to keep the recently awarded \$1 million grant/\$1 million loan MDE funding in place the town also needs to proceed with a design of the waterline replacement and we have until December of 2018 to complete the design and be ready to go to construction. GMB has presented a contract for the design of the waterline replacement and bidding process for a lump sum for \$113,975.51. GMB is proposing to put in two water mains that run on each side of Morris Street and abandon what is under the road. They would have to survey all property abutting the road, locate the stormwater and sewer that currently run under and along the road, and make sure that there is 10' of separation between the sewer lines and the proposed new water lines, along with designing all 90 laterals running into the sewer main. Commissioner Fronk made a motion to approve the contract with GMB for the design as stated in the contract for waterline replacement down Morris Street from the pincushion to the ferry. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pepe. President Graves asked how far the lateral lines would go. Booth responded by stating that the meter pits would not be replaced, only the lines to the meters so that the tearing up of lawns should not be an issue. Resident Christine Myles-Tochko spoke of her concerns regarding the cutting of tree roots along Morris Street. Lewis explained that running the lines under Morris Street would be cost prohibitive and all replacement work would have to be built to meet State Highway standards. The engineers are looking to run the lines of each side of Morris Street and that everything possible will be done to keep the trees healthy. Fire Chief Graham Norton asked if the town's hydrant system would stay the same or end up being better. Lewis responded that it would remain the same. Lewis added that the worst case scenario would be the town spends the money for the design and finds out that it is not currently a feasible project, but as with the wastewater treatment project, the town would still be about to use the investigation and design in the future, so the money is not a complete waste. She emphasized that with the state offering a million dollar grant for the project, now was the time to attempt to do this project in order to take advantage of the grant funds. A question was raised as to the town's current arsenic system, which had been put in service less than 10 years ago and requires a very expensive and unreliable replacement filter. Lewis said It is not easy to go out and just buy another system when, in fact, the town still owes around ½ million dollars on the current system. USDA has suggested if the town does a study and comes to the conclusion that the system the town does not function properly and that a new system would be better, USDA would look into refinancing the town's ½ million dollar remaining loan while offering additional grant funds to assist the town in acquiring a different system. The motion made by Commission Fronk to approve the contract for design for the Morris St waterline replacement was still on the table, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Administrator Lewis explained she was requesting a letter of interest to apply for design funds for green infrastructure for the town's shoreline areas, to include the Strand, the parking lot off the Strand, Lovers Lane beach, and all of the town's street ends, which potentially could use some green infrastructure to improve resiliency and reduce erosion. Most all of the town's street ends have hardscapes on either side

of them so they are susceptible to erosion. A design would look at all the elements. The plan would be to look at the design in two phases. Phase 1 would be the Strand and Strand parking lot, and Phase II would be Lovers Lane beach and the street ends. Even though no one knows what the best design would be right now, what is known is that the Strand is a historic beach and would need to be preserved as a sandy beach and the parking lot is used as a kayak access, but something is needed to add resiliency to the beach and protect the street and parking lot infrastructure. Lewis added that the National Wildlife Federation is looking for a community to collaborate with on a project in applying to the grant program, as the NWF is expanding their work on the preservation of shorelines and the use of green as opposed to gray infrastructure. Lewis stated she was approached by the NWF to see if the town would be interested in partnering with them. Lewis asked for permission to prepare a letter of interest to design potential green infrastructure to protect the town's beach areas with consideration for a partnership in the application with the National Wildlife Federation, although the application and project would clearly be the towns. The potential design funds are \$100,000. Currently there is no construction funding available through this program, but the intent is to select a few projects in the State of MD and see them through. If Oxford gets the money for design, it may open up a path for the town to receive additional funding to continue the project. Commissioner Fronk made a motion to allow Administrator Lewis to prepare a letter of intent to apply to the community resiliency grant program to look at designing green infrastructure for the beach areas, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Pepe, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis reported that the Heritage Area Grant Program was seeking letters of interest to apply for grant funds. The town has applied to this program twice in the past for the proposed audio tour. Lewis had heard that there was interest in the program but there was concern it lacked new technology. She is proposing submitting the application one more time, but incorporating a phone app that would complement the on the ground hard infrastructure at the sites of interest. Lewis stated that Liza Ledford of the Oxford Community Center expressed interest in working with her to incorporate the phone app into the project. A motion was made by Commission Fronk to send a letter of interest to reapply for the Heritage Area Authority for the audio tour for the town, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Pepe, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis stated personnel from NOAA had suggested submitting an application to the Heritage Program for trails. She added she would need to review the program further to see how it would apply for the town, but if the Commissioners were inclined to vote on a possible letter of interest for that purpose they could. A motion was made by Commissioner Pepe approving a possible letter of intent, the motion was seconded by Commission Fronk, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

#### **LETTERS AND REQUESTS**

Lewis explained a letter had been received from the Trappe Little League reaching out to the town for support for their teams and fields. She explained that there were too few children in Oxford to maintain our own teams and any Oxford children wishing to play baseball, play on the Trappe teams. The Commissioners expressed their interest in helping to sponsor the league. Lewis stated she would explore what funds might remain in the current budget and will report to the Commissioners.

Lewis addressed a letter received from the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy announcing that they were successful in getting a grant for \$62,000 to continue to assist the Eastern Shore Climate Adaptation Partnership's communities with becoming prepared for sea level rise through existing planning and policy tools. The letter was to let the town know that they were successful in getting the grant funding for FY 2017 and Lewis reminded the Commissioners that a request for financial support to match the grant funds is likely in the future.

President Graves read an email from Clark Semmes asking for permission to once again hold the Oxford Biathlon in Oxford on Saturday, June 9 with the registration and after-event party to be held at the Robert Morris Inn. Mr. Semmes indicated in his note that he would coordinate all traffic and safety precautions with Chief Maxwell and that the event raised over \$100,000 last year, all of which went to Charcot Marie Tooth disease research. Chief Maxwell spoke stating that he would work with Mr. Semmes in the handling of the event. The Commissioners were all in favor of the request.

#### **ATTORNEY**

Attorney Booth provided an update on the WWTP construction project. Part of the construction project includes removing the sludge from Lagoon #2, and filling it with fill dirt. Once the sludge is removed and the lagoon is filled, the new wastewater treatment system will be constructed within part of the footprint where the lagoon had been located. Ms. Booth stated that as construction has progressed, there is more sludge being removed than the engineers had originally estimated or anticipated. Booth noted that both she and Administrator Lewis had met with the MDE recently to keep them apprised of the sludge removal efforts. Attorney Booth stated that MDE recently contacted her and recommended that the Town apply for additional grant funding to cover the additional cost of the sludge removal. The engineers are putting together an estimate of costs and the grant application is due by 1/31/18. She asked for a motion to authorize Administrator Lewis or the President of the Commissioners to sign whatever grant application is necessary to apply for the additional funding to cover the sludge removal. Commissioner Fronk motioned to have Brynja prepare a grant application for submittal to MDE for the estimated overages and for Lewis to sign the application, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Pepe, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR/CLERK COMMENTS**

Lewis reported that she had received information regarding the Delmarva Community Services annual Transportation Plan, adding that the service does provide bus transport in Oxford and that if anyone is interested, she has information available.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

The Oxford Polar Dip will take place on February 11 to support Camp Sunshine.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Resident Tom Ray raised a question regarding the grant for green shorelines and what the National Wildlife Federation was looking to get out of the partnership. Lewis responded that they are interested in participating in the green infrastructure industry and would like to partnership on projects they can use to demonstrate their work. Mr. Ray stated that his only concern was there interest in possibly decreasing access to the public in those areas. Administrator Lewis responded that they could do nothing without the town's approval and the intention is to continue the historic public access and uses in those areas.

Rev. Kevin Cross asked the Commissioners for support to recognize WWII vet, Lewis Richards, who is 95 years old. He was hoping the town could write up something to present him with at a reception party the church is planning to have for him. The Commissioners were receptive to the request. Administrator Lewis noted that if the event would be soon, the Commissioners could approve a resolution at this meeting. Commissioner Fronk made a motion to adopt a resolution to honor Lewis Richards for his service to the nation during WWII, Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Dale Benson expressed concerns regarding the upkeep of the kayak ramp at the Ferry Dock. Lewis stated Public Works had cleaned it last season and she would ask them to look at it in the spring.

There being no further business, Commissioner Fronk made a motion to adjourn into Executive Session for a legal matter concerning a contract, Commissioner Graves seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned into Executive Session at 7:18 pm.

The Commissioners reconvened the regular meeting at 7:37 pm at which time Commissioner Graves made a motion to close the regular meeting, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the meeting was closed at 7:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Cheryl Lewis, Town Administrator/Clerk-Treasurer

*“In accordance with Section 10-508(d) of the State Government Article of the Maryland Annotated Code, a written statement of the closed session is attached to the official minutes of the Commissioners of Oxford and maintained in the minute book in the Town Office.”*