

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 14, 2018

The Commissioners Meeting was held in the meeting room of the Community Services Building on August 14, 2018. Commission President Gordon Graves called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Pepe motioned to adopt the minutes of July 10, 2018 as distributed. Commissioner Graves seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

A motion was made by Commissioner Pepe to approve and file for audit the disbursements for the month of June 2018. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Graves and unanimously carried by all in favor.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Superintendent Delude reported the following:

- The Public Works crew has installed life ring buoys at all of the town docks for the safety of the town's residents.
- A recent sewer backup was caused by a build-up of SOS pads in the main. It was jetted out and the pads removed from the system.
- A recent water leak repair on West Division Street was caused by a faulty rubber washer where the service line ties into the town's water main.
- The Town of Oxford recently performed 4 interviews with perspective new public works employees as replacements for recently retired employees.
- Two new Stihl electric chainsaws were recently purchase. One is a pole saw and the other is a regular saw.
- Power was recently lost in one of the main lift station pumps last week and had to be replaced with a back-up. The pump is now in the shop waiting for an estimate to have it repaired.

Commissioner Pepe thanked Superintendent Delude and his crew for a job well done on the recent repair work.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Maxwell reported the following:

- 1 – Found property
- 1 – Lost property
- 11 - Parking Violations (citations issued)
- 2 - Assist the Fire Department
- 55 - Police information-service
- 3 – Alarm calls
- 5 - Suspicious Person
- 25 - Patrol Checks
- 2 - Check the Welfare
- 5 – Assist other police agencies
- 1 – Domestic (protective order – no assault)

- 4 – Suspicious vehicles
- 1 – Noise complaint (residential – nothing observed)
- 1 – Disorderly person (removed & advised)

Chief Maxwell reported that the TAYC regatta went off without any major incidents and that the participants were well behaved.

Chief Maxwell also reported that he has recently witnessed young adults, in their 20's and early 30's, upon leaving the bars/restaurants, displaying inappropriate gestures towards himself and other officers and hopes it is not a continuing trend.

FIRE COMPANY

The Oxford Fire Company report was given by Oxford Fire Chief Graham Norton for the period of 7/25/18 to 8/14/18, which consisted of the following:

Fire: 11 calls (6 in Oxford, 5 mutual aid); 74 miles traveled; 16 hours worked; 78 member responses. Also reported were two recent "box alarms" for fire in/near a residence which thankfully was easily resolved without significant damage with great response by fire company membership.

EMS: 9 calls (4 patients transported, 2 citizen assists, 2 fire standbys, 1 medical standby); 110 miles traveled; 35 hours worked; 31 members responses.

The fire company served over 320 people at their August 12 Sunday Breakfast (with 720+ eggs cooked) and later participated in their EMS standby at Harleigh for the Oxford Regatta awards party.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Clerk Lewis noted that there had been a minor schedule change for the visit of the Dove due to a lack of school participation. The Dove will still be docking in Oxford on September 11, 2018 and will be open to the public for tours from 3 pm to 6 pm, after which there will be a less formal private gathering to welcome the Dove to Oxford.

NEW BUSINESS

Lewis reminded the Commissioners that she was preparing a grant application to be submitted to the State's Parks and Playground Grant Program for rehabilitation of the unused Little League field. The field is currently being used to store dirt removed as part of the stormwater retention pond construction. The remaining dirt will be available to level off the old ballfield and create one additional stormwater pond at the street corner. The purpose of the grant is to request funding to create this new recreational facility for the town, consisting of outdoor activities like Bocce Ball, Table Tennis and Chess Tables, along with Picnic and Outdoor Cooking facilities. The upgraded park area would include new trees and plantings resulting in a central park atmosphere for citizens to gather and enjoy the company of others. She inquired as to the Commissioners support for the concept and the application. Commissioner Pepe motioned to approve the concept and application, Commissioner Graves seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

A draft of Resolution 1813 Updating the Fee Schedule for the Town was presented and reviewed. Lewis pointed out several minor changes including the incorporation of a fee for Long Term Rentals per a previously approved ordinance, stating the proposed fee of \$35 would go to MDIA for building inspections. Lewis also recommended an increase to the Water and Sewer connection fees for new

properties, mainly because of the debt currently carried for the prior Water improvements and the significant future debt anticipated for the Sewer improvements. Current users pay into this system with every bill and there should be a reasonable fee charged to a new property who would be able to take advantage of the utility. Lewis recommended increasing the combined connection fee for new service from \$3000 to \$10,000, as in her experience this was inline with other small utilities and was at least half the cost of sewer and well set up. Attorney Booth agreed that other communities had done the same and also recommended placing the Water and Sewer connection fees in a separate ordinance. Lewis ask that Booth also revise the old Water and Sewer Ordinance to address items like back flow preventers and meter tampering. Booth will work with Lewis and Delude on updating and providing new ordinances for the purposes of Water and Sewer. Commissioner Graves expressed a preference for waiting until the following meeting when all three Commissioners where present to address Ordinance 1813. Lewis stated she would amend Resolution 1813 removing the connection fees for Water and Sewer and present the updated Resolution at the next Commissioners meeting.

LETTERS

Commissioner Graves read aloud a letter from the Oxford Library requesting approval to close off Market Street from Morris Street to the intersection of Factory Street on Saturday, September 29 between the hours of 7 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. (or on September 30, at the same time, in case of rain) for the library's annual book sale. Commissioner Graves noted that this has been done in the past. Both Commissioners were in favor of the request.

Commissioner Graves read a letter from the Managing Director of the Oxford Museum to inform the Commissioners of the museum's plans to have an indoor racing game at their annual Labor Day Pig Roast on Monday, September 3, at the Oxford Fire Hall. Commissioner Graves and Commissioner Pepe both approved of the addition to the annual Pig Roast.

ATTORNEY

Attorney Booth reported that work was progressing with regards to removal of the additional sludge within the decommissioned Lagoon as part of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade. She pointed out that it was discovered there was considerably more sludge within the old lagoon than initially thought and that the town was working with MDE and USDA to put out a separate bid for removal of the remaining of the sludge. Once a sufficient amount had been removed in order to allow for the construction contractors to move forward on construction of the new plant, the remainder was stock piled until the bidding process was complete. The bids are due on August 31 and Attorney Booth will keep the Commissioners posted on the results.

CLERK COMMENTS

Administrator Lewis reported that she had sent out a list of town board members to the Commissioners and was requesting the reappointment of some of the members along with the appointment for a new one. A request was made that reappointments be made on the Board of Appeals for Sarah Ramsey, Mary Valliant, and Susan Delean-Botkin. A request was made to put Brian Wells on the Board of Appeals. A second request was made that reappointments be made on the Oxford Historic District Commission for Thomas Costigan and Jennifer Stanley, and on Parks and Recreation for Connie Greenhawk. In addition, the HDC has requested and recommended a name for the appointment of an alternate member to their commission. Commissioner Pepe made a motion to approve the slate as presented and to await the

appointee as an alternate. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Graves, all were in favor and the motion carried.

Lewis noted that she had circulated the recommended name for HDC earlier, which was Julie Wells, to serve as alternate on the HDC and that she had checked with Attorney Booth to make sure an additional appointment could be made on this commission. Commissioner Graves made a motion to accept the request. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pepe and unanimously carried. This was followed by Mrs. Wells, who was present at the meeting, being sworn into the HDC by Acting Commissioner President Gordon Graves.

Lewis stated that she had applied a year ago to the DNR Waterway Improvement Fund in an effort to continue funding for waterway infrastructure and the town has recently received notice of an award of \$50,000 towards the construction of a floating dock down by the ferry boat. She is working on a current year application for an additional \$50,000 this week. She noted that the town had been awarded grant funds for design of resiliency improvements for the Strand through a separate program and that this project would be a good match for the larger design project, as the Resiliency Funding does not support hard infrastructure. The purpose of the floating dock is to serve as a place for dinghies and small sailboats to tie up to and have access to town businesses.

Lewis told the Commissioners she would like to introduce a new Floodplain Management concept to them, as result of her recent work in regards to stormwater and floodplain management, and sea level rise in Oxford. When looking at the way the floodplain map is implemented, one is either on one side of the line or the other, meaning that a house on the inside of the line must build to 3' above the Base Flood Elevation (BFE), which in most cases is 8' above BFE, whereby the very next home on the other side of the line does not have to address increased elevation at all. Most of the new homes built in town in the floodplain are built at 8' above BFE, distinctly different from the homes not built in the 100-year floodplain, which can be as low as 5'. This results in areas of no transition and does not take potential sea level rise into consideration at all, which is something the town needs to address as FEMA does not. Thought should be given to setting a flood protection level for the whole of the Town of Oxford by enforcing all new and substantially improved construction be brought up to 8' above the BFE. This new elevation requirement would begin to get homes all at the same level whereby you're building toward a more consistent future. Administrator Lewis stated she had proposed this concept today during an educational phone conference, in which representatives from MEMA were participating, and received very positive responses. Lewis stated that residents with flood insurance could potentially see reductions in their premiums if the town were to adopt such a higher standard. She was just putting this information out there as a way that Oxford could proactively address future issues by building for resiliency now. As we are applying for CRS currently, introduction of higher standards, can reduce premiums across the board. Properties outside of the floodplain, that have built to a higher standard, would already be benefiting for a preferred rate. If floodplain areas were to expand in the future, these homes would already comply and would have proper documentation to keep premium costs down. We currently promote higher elevations and the use of flood vents on new construction but do not get much support from home owners of existing buildings. Lewis stated she felt the town was doing very well with responsible construction in the floodplain but not when it comes to homes outside the floodplain, especially right near the line. The concept behind implementation of regulations in the floodplain is to reduce time, effort and cost of the community to recover from a flood. If everyone is elevated to a higher standard the ability of the town to get back on its feet quickly is greatly increased. But if only 50% of your homes are elevated and you have a catastrophic disaster, you will not be up and running right away. Commissioner Pepe asked if other towns were considering this. Lewis stated that other communities had discussed it, but it was much easier for a small town to consider such a move. This type of regulation would be part of the planning code, not just the floodplain code, and would be the normal for the town going forward. Based on recent history, especially as it relates to the extreme flood incidents seen in

coastal towns, there is a need to start thinking outside the box. Commissioner Pepe stated that considering what is happening elsewhere and what we have seen in our town, this concept makes a lot of sense, and would help emergency management and recovery time. Lewis finished by reiterating she would like everyone to think about setting the higher standard, which would, by example, makes us stand out in the state, be beneficial to the community and would help the town build its resiliency to future changes and emergencies.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioners Graves present Administrator Lewis with a photo taken on July 17th at the Cooperative Oxford Laboratory, when the Secretary of Natural Resources, Mark Belton, presented Lewis with a Governor's Citation signed by Governor Hogan, recognizing her dedication and outstanding service as Administrator for the Town of Oxford, and acknowledging her success in securing state funding from the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund, the Coastal Resilience, Waterway Improvement Fund and from Working Waterfront grants for the town.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Graham Norbury asked what the criteria for rental inspections was, and Lewis responded that there were standards set by the International Property Maintenance Code, but basically the inspector walks in and looks around for any obvious deficiencies such as poor electrical outlets, doors that do not open and close, windows that do not work, unnecessary holes in the wrong places, missing smoke detectors, etc. Attorney Booth added that the state requires counties and towns to adopt the minimum livability code, permitting this type of enforcement. Lewis added that basically the inspection is to ensure that the renter is living in a safe environment.

Resident Peter Dunbar asked if anything was being done about a request he had made about changing the speed limits along the state road when leaving town. Lewis said that the county staff had responded to the request in a positive manner and once they gave her the go ahead, she intends to approach SHA.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Commissioner Graves and seconded by Commissioner Pepe and the meeting was closed.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lewis, Town Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer