

**COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD**  
**Regular Meeting Minutes**  
**March 23, 2021**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Commissioners Meeting was held virtually in a Zoom Meeting Room on Tuesday, March 23, 2021. The public was provided call in information for the purpose of listening, watching, and participating in the meeting, notice of which was posted on the bulletin board and the town website. President Pepe called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PRESENT**

Attending the meeting were Commission President John Pepe, Commissioner Gordon Fronk, Commissioner Jimmy Jaramillo, Police Chief Pat Maxwell, Public Works WW Superintendent Matt Ozman, Town Manager Cheryl Lewis, and Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan. Multiple residents, including Barbara Paca and Phillip Logan, members of the Waters Edge Museum and the Middle Passage initiative, Myles Taylor, Toby Frey, Dale Benson, the Murrs, Julie Wells, and numerous others residents were in attendance.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Commissioner Fronk motioned to approve the February 23, 2021 meeting minutes, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to approve the March 9, 2021 meeting minutes, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Commissioner Fronk motioned to file the report of disbursements for the month of February, 2021, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

President Pepe stated that a Special Meeting for the purpose of going into Closed Session was held on March 12, 2021 at 5 pm for the purpose of discussing public security including the implementation of an emergency plan and to obtain legal advice regarding a real estate matter and negotiations.

**MAINTENANCE REPORT**

Wastewater Superintendent Matt Ozman gave an update for Public Works: The hydrant at Bachelor's point was dug up to find that the hydrant needed to be replaced and a hydrant has been ordered and will be replaced next week. Public works investigated a low pressure FDC at Popes tavern and this problem has been updated and fixed by our department. New automatic transfer switch has been installed at the main lift station and temporary generator setup has been removed, further investigation proved to find a bad battery backup and has been replaced and existing generator is back in service. The new wastewater plant secondary performance testing with Parkson is scheduled to start next week now that water temperatures are over 50 degrees; this is to fine tune Biolab settings for the wave ox plus mode. Public works has started cleaning and jetting all culverts through town. Both water towers were inspected by Southern Corrosion nothing to report, both towers are in good working order.

**POLICE REPORT**

Chief Patrick Maxwell gave a brief update for the Police Department: With the nice weather there are more people utilizing town facilities, beaches and parks. Speed enforcement and regular checks on businesses continue. The chief requested consideration of no parking to corner signage at the Riverview/Morris Street intersection, which will be reviewed by management.

**FIRE COMPANY**

Report as provided by Graham Norbury: Activity since Feb 24, 2021, Fire/Rescue: 4 calls, 1 in first-due area, 3 mutual aid. Nothing particularly significant to report except we did work for a couple hours at

Easton Hospital cleaning up after a water leak in the Pathology Lab. Easton, Trappe & St Michaels all participated. 77 miles traveled, 26 member responses, and 22 hours worked. Medical: 7 calls, 5 patients transported, 1 citizen assist, 1 cardiac arrest, 112 miles traveled, 30 member responses and 31 hours worked. Our ladder truck (Trunk 23) is presently out of service for repairs to a small hydraulic leak. Should the need arise, coverage will come from neighboring departments. Cambridge, Easton or St Michaels.

### **PRESENTATION**

Barbara Paca provided information regarding the Middle Passage Marker project and plans to hold a ceremony at the Water's Edge Museum on Mill Street this year. Members of the Middle Passage initiative were on hand and provided additional information regarding their project to place markers in historic passage locations along the east coast. Barbara provided historic data and sample language for the proposed Oxford sign and stated she intended to have it placed at the Mill Street location with an accompanying ceremony this year, but that she was seeking support from the Commissioners to have the markers final destination be a location yet to be determined along the waterfront in 2022 which would be the 250-year anniversary of the last known documented Middle Passage ship docking in Oxford. The Commissioners applauded her efforts, looked forward to receiving more information and initiating public participation in the placement process. The marker will initially be available for the public to view at the Water's Edge property and could be presented to the public for consideration of the future permanent location as soon as the June newsletter.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

Commissioner Jaramillo provided an update on the Speed Camera Legislation, which has passed the House and has been forwarded to the Senate for their consideration.

Regarding the Strand Coastal Resilience Design continued discussion, Lewis stated that the Strand design had been revised to accommodate as many citizen concerns as possible, while still providing the necessary mitigation, and which will be presented at the April 13<sup>th</sup> Commissioner meeting allowing for notice of the meeting to be placed in the Oxford Newsletter to be distributed the first week of April. In addition, in response to citizen requests, Lewis provided a slide presentation demonstrating multiple Underwood and Associates living shoreline projects, with before, during and after construction photos for each. Lewis also recommended a currently available PBS series on Sea Level Rise, which looks at the concerns, mitigations, and future efforts to address sea level rise in New York, Miami, London, and Tokyo, which identifies concerns similar to Oxfords, but on a much larger scale, and the similarities in methods being considered. She stated it was worth noting that the big take away is that there is no one solution, it is a combination of efforts incrementally working towards the end goal, which is ever changing and not all efforts will be successful, but it will be necessary to continually improve. Commissioner Fronk reminded all of purpose of the planned Resilience Committee and identified the need to provide these educational opportunities to this future committee.

Commissioner Pepe reminded all of the continued effort to create a committee to review signage in town and make recommendations to the Commissioners. Commissioner Fronk moved to create a committee for this purpose, without a further motion, the discussion was postponed to the next meeting.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Fronk stated, that following many years of effort to preserve the historic MEWS mixed-use structure, the Commissioners had reached an agreement to Lease the structure to Oxford business owner Rich Leggett, who will be completing the interior construction of the intended 3 retail spaces downstairs and 2-3 rental units upstairs, and including potential for 2 more units in newly constructed wings. Attorney Ryan provided a Lease agreement for the MEWS, which is a long-term lease that contains a purchase

option after 5 years, and briefed the Commissioners on the most relevant sections. Ryan stated after careful consideration that the Commissioners reached the conclusion that starting with a lease in order to preserve the towns desires for the property was in the best interest of the town. Following discussion, Commissioner Fronk motioned to enter into a Lease with Richard Leggett (proposed tenant) for the MEWS, in accordance with the terms drafted by the attorney, and reviewed in detail by the Commissioners, and to which is attached a purchase agreement; but whether or not the purchase option is exercised, the conditions of the occupancy of the MEWS must remain a mixed-use of retail and commercial and must remain in good condition throughout the term of the lease and thereafter. Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

#### **LETTERS AND REQUEST**

A letter was received from Toby Frey regarding consideration of some minor changes at the Tilghman Street parking lot to better accommodate boat trailer parking. Toby Frey discussed his recommendations. The information will be forwarded to the Commissioners for review.

#### **ATTORNEY**

No further comments.

#### **TOWN MANAGER**

Lewis stated she was still working on a plan for the auction of the abandoned boats, was following an online auction of other property, and was in discussions with Liza at the OCC to develop a process and she would report back. She also noted that under the new American Rescue Plan Act municipalities should be receiving grant funding for infrastructure improvements, with the funding being specifically identified for Water and Sewer projects. She stated that she had discussions with neighboring towns that are considering purchase of new water metering equipment with this same funding and that she was recommended Oxford pursue the same. This improvement has been discussed during budget time for the last several years and is currently being investigated by engineers as part of the Water Preliminary Engineering Report which should be completed shortly. Her purpose in mentioning the project is due to the anticipated short turn around on the stimulus funding and the need for the town to proceed with project investigation in order to be prepared when the funding is announced. There was discussion of opportunity for online payments and/or monthly billings which would be investigated with the purchase of new equipment and software.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner Jaramillo requested further discussion at the next meeting regarding a sign committee. Commissioner Fronk agreed that further discussion was needed and reminded everyone that initially the intent of the committee was the review of the permanent signage currently found in town.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

No comment provided.

Being no further business, Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Cheryl Lewis, Town Manager

*"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".*