

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2022

The Commissioners Meeting was held virtually on April 12, 2022, due to covid complications. The public was invited to participate in the meeting virtually. This information was posted on the town bulletin board and the town website. President Gordon Fronk called the meeting to order at 6 pm.

President Fronk requested a momentum of silence to reflect on the security of our lives and to pray for the safety of all.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting were Commission President Gordon Fronk, Commissioner Brian Wells, Commissioner Jaramillo, Town Manager Cheryl Lewis. Public Works WW Superintendent Matt Ozman, Police Chief Patrick Maxwell, and Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan attended virtually, as did approximately 12 residents.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to approve the March 22, 2022 meeting minutes, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, both were in favor, and the motion carried.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Matt Ozman provided the following report: Public works has moved the Historic District marker to its new location within the Causeway pin cushion, and a new flower bed has been constructed around it. A new mulched border has also been installed around the train in town park. New trees provided as mitigation by town residents have been picked up by town employees, and will be planted around the fence line at pump stations. Fidelity has been in this past week to perform generator preventive maintenance on all Town generators. The technician for Fidelity found that there was a bad block heater during the inspection and replaced it the same day under warranty. The wastewater plant is running as it should and we are about to make the switch over from winter mode to summer mode. This means we go from regular wave ox to wave ox plus mode, which lets the system run fully automated during the summer months.

The Commissioners expressed their appreciation for the changes with the historic marker at the pin cushion and asked that PW employee Mike Carroll be thanked for his diligence in proposing and completing the improvements.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Maxwell reported that he is in the process of closing the case on the vehicle theft and reminded citizens to be proactive and keep their doors locked. The department is gearing up for Oxford Day.

FIRE COMPANY

No report submitted.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

A brief explanation behind the development of Ordinance 2201 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD TO AMEND SECTIONS 19 AND 32 OF THE OXFORD ZONING ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE A PROCESS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF AN ACCESSORY BUILDING ON A LOT WITHOUT A PRINCIPAL USE WHEN NONCONTIGUOUS LOTS ARE IN COMMON OWNERSHIP AND ARE DIVIDED BY A PAPER STREET OR PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY was provided by Attorney Ryan, including the addition of a definition for Paper Street at the request of the Planning Commission. A positive recommendation from the Planning Commission was read, after which the public hearing was opened. Susan Botkin stated how important it is to continue to provide public access to the water and expressed her desire and appreciation in keeping public right of ways open for pedestrians. With no further comments the hearing was closed.

In refence to the NOTICE OF INTENT to File an Application with USDA Rural Development, manager Lewis provided an explanation of the proposed USDA Water System Rehabilitation Projects as identified in the recently completed Preliminary Engineering Report prepared by GMB for the town. Listing the projects found in Phase One and Phase Two (attached to these minutes). She explained following review and discussion with USDA engineers, that one recommended change was to investigate the digging of a much deeper well in order to reach an aquifer that does not require arsenic or fluoride removal, naturally occurring elements in our current wells. Lewis said she was pleased with this approach, noting that the plans included the digging of a third well in the second phase and by moving the test well into the first phase it could be determined if the town could access an improved water source. If it this approach proved feasible, the cost of the arsenic/fluoride removal components would be replaced with the cost of installing new wells. The public hearing allowing for comments on the proposed projects totaling \$26,274,000, which will be divided into Phase One which would be funded by a USDA Loan of \$2,572,000 at 1.25% for 40 years and Grant of \$2,102,000, and Phase Two totaling \$21,600,000 with funding to be addressed in the future. At Commissioner request Lewis provided budget notes identifying the means for funding the future payments on the proposed loan in 2024, with a proposed 3% annual increase for 2023 and 4% increase for 2024, stating it would be reviewed in further detail during the budget review. Lewis also offered that the town would proceed with the investigation of solar to offset electric cost. Several residents endorsed the solar project with the understanding it was outside the scope of the currently discussed Water rehabilitation project. Susan Botkin inquired as to whether we would be able to access a better well, to which it was explained that test wells would be the only means to make that determination. She also inquired into the naturally occurring fluoride, which although currently below the MDE requirement of less than 4 ppm, is very close to the EPA secondary standard of 2 ppm. With no further comments the public hearing was closed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Having no further comments, Commissioner Wells motioned to approve Ordinance 2201 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD TO AMEND SECTIONS 19 AND 32 OF THE OXFORD ZONING ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE A PROCESS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF AN ACCESSORY BUILDING ON A LOT WITHOUT A PRINCIPAL USE WHEN NONCONTIGUOUS LOTS ARE IN COMMON OWNERSHIP AND ARE DIVIDED BY A PAPER STREET OR PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis explained following the hearing for the USDA Notice of Intent, it would be necessary for the Commissioners to act on the Letter of Conditions approving the USDA \$2,572,000 Loan (1.25% interest)/\$2,102,000 Grant offer for the first phase of Water System Improvements as proposed in the Phasing provided in the PER, with the noted change of investigation a new well in the first phase. Commissioner Fronk motioned to accept the Letter of Conditions for the Town of Oxford to receive a Water System Improvement Project Loan of \$2,572,000 (1.25%

interest) and grant of \$2,102,000 for total project cost of \$4,674,000, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. Commissioner Fronk motioned to authorize Ryan to certify the Letter of Conditions and Lewis to execute all necessary documentation for the loan/grant application and construction project, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

It was noted that a public hearing for Ordinance 2202: AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD TO AMEND THE HARBOR LINE TO ELIMINATE THE NONCONFORMING STATUS OF SEVERAL EXISTING PIERS AFFIXED TO PROPERTIES WITHIN TOWN CREEK IN THE AREA KNOWN AS CROCKETT'S COVE would be held on April 26, 2022 at the regular Commissioner's meeting.

President Fronk noted that the Commissioners had received additional designs from Philip Logan with respect to the proposed Middle Passage signage at the Ferry Dock just prior to the meeting. As the Commissioners had not had time to review the proposals, they deferred conversation until the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

None presented.

LETTERS AND REQUEST

The Oxford Garden Club was granted approval to hold their annual Memorial Day Service. Lewis also noted that she had received a request from Bonfield Avenue to hold a block party, to which she said that although closing the street would be difficult, we could assist with some cones to deter street parking during their gathering.

ATTORNEY

Ryan had no further comments.

TOWN MANAGER

Lewis stated that the Community Resilience Committee held a kickoff meeting recently and had been assigned their first project. The Sign Committee had also met, as a post Covid reboot, and she had narrowed their initial scope of work to the Ferry Landing to allow for input for the Middle Passage signage.

Lewis presented a brief overview of **Ordinance 2203 - FY 2022 General/Enterprise Budget Amendment; and Ordinance 2204 - FY 2023 General/Enterprise Budget and setting a Tax Rate of .32 per \$100 of Assessed Real Property Value (formerly .3187)**, presenting the documents online for virtual viewing, after which a detailed spreadsheet for each budget was presented for a closer review. It was suggested a more detailed discussion could be held in a virtual Budget Workshop, which would be scheduled in the following week, information of which to participate would be posted. Lewis presented **Ordinance 2205 - FY 2023 Water and Sewer Rates**, setting the new water rates with a 3% annual increase across the board, stating this rate schedule produced the identified income found in the FY 2023 Budget.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

It was noted that Oxford Day would be on April 23, 2022. Lewis also noted an Election was coming up and the notice would be posted soon.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Easter wishes were extended to all.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Liza Ledford said the OCC would be holding their annual Open House on April 25, 2022 at 5 pm, and that the OCC would be celebrating 40 years since the community had rescued the building and 10 years since the completion of their recent renovations this year, with a Birthday Happy Hour on June 24, 2022.

Freiderikos Franke inquired as to whether the town was going to hire additional Police Officers. Lewis stated the town was actively pursuing applicants and currently had a published hiring notice. President Fronk noted that nationally the demand exceeds the supply for officers and locally the state police have increased the benefits and starting salaries for new hires creating shortages within the towns, and there simply is not enough applicants to go around. He noted that we are fortunate to have the good officers that we do have and want to continue to hire at their level.

Capt. Judy Bixler noted that the Ferry would be opening on Oxford Day, April 23, 2022, and they would hold their annual Blessing of the Ferry the night before, all were invited.

Hearing no further business Commissioner Fronk motioned to close the meeting, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion and the meeting was closed at 7:16 pm.

Cheryl Lewis, Town Manager