

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 9, 2022

The Commissioners Meeting was held in person at 101 Market Street on August 9, 2022. Virtual viewing was also available. This information was posted on the town bulletin board and the town website. Commission President James Jaramillo called the meeting to order at 6 pm with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting were Commission President James Jaramillo, Commissioner Brian Wells, and Commissioner Tom Costigan, along with Town Manager Cheryl Lewis, Police Chief Patrick Maxwell, and Planning Officer Maria Brophy who attended virtually. There were approximately 12 citizens in attendance, along with 2 virtual participants.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Costigan motioned to approve the July 12, 2022 meeting minutes, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

REPORT OF DISBURSEMENTS

Commissioner Wells motioned to file the reported disbursements for the month June 2022 for audit, Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

GORDON GRAVES SCHOLARSHIP

Former Commissioner John Pepe and Phyllis Rambo presented scholarship certificates to this year's awardees, Sarah Chapple and Haley Sadler. Each student was awarded \$750 from the scholarship fund and an additional \$500 from an anonymous donor.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Matt Ozman's report was submitted to the Commissioners prior to the meeting. No further information was requested.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Maxwell's report was submitted to Commissioners prior to the meeting. President Jaramillo inquired as to whether the issued citations were tickets and was told yes. Commissioner Wells asked when the old police car would be placed on the street and Manager Lewis replied that it had been sent in for service and would be out any day. Maxwell stated the radar sign had not been shipped yet, he was waiting for an enhanced shipping label.

FIRE COMPANY

No report at this time.

OATH OF OFFICE

Manager Lewis stated that she would like to recommend Henry Hale be placed as the alternate on the Oxford Board of Port Wardens. Commissioner Costigan motioned to approve the recommendation,

Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all voted in favor, and the motion carried. Henry Hale was asked to step forward and President Jaramillo issued him the oath of office.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Geneva Shaffle, Talbot County Emergency Management Coordinator, addressed the Commissioners regarding the Talbot County Hazard Mitigation and Community Resilience Plan, explaining the purpose and also the completed update process which included all Talbot County jurisdictions and community input. With the Plan complete and available for adoption, Commissioner Wells motioned to adopt the Talbot County Hazard Mitigation and Community Resilience Plan as the Hazard Mitigation Plan for the Town of Oxford, Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Attorney Ryan provided two draft Charter Amending Resolutions in response to Commissioner Costigan's request to update the Charter to reflect an improved procedure for issuance of the Oath of Office to newly elected Commissioner and also to expand election poll times to be from 8 am to 7 pm. Ryan reviewed the two changes and recommended both sit on the table until the next Commissioners meeting.

Lewis provided the Commissioners a copy of the current Oxford Fees Schedule with edits for fee increase recommendations she was proposing. She provided an explanation for the recommended increases based on scope of effort for the individual line items. She also noted the increases for parking tickets as requested by the Chief at a prior meeting was included in the fees schedule. The Commissioners will review the recommendation and consider an adopting resolution at a future meeting.

Ryan stated, following Commissioner request to review the feasibility of lowering speed limits under 25 mph on Oxford roads, that it was possible if the town were to prepare a report sufficiently justifying the safety concerns. Her recommendation would be to reach out to a few firms that provide traffic studies and determine the cost based on the scope of consideration. Following discussion regarding whether the speeds should be lowered and the potential cost of a study, Lewis and Ryan were tasked to investigate, with Bonfield, Tilghman, S Morris and the Strand being the areas of concern. Other suggested speed reduction options included rumble strips and portable speed bumps, although there are concerns with noise for such installations in residential neighborhoods.

LETTERS AND REQUESTS

A letter was received from Talbot County Manager, Clay Stamp, notifying the Commissioners that Manager Lewis's term as the Oxford representative on the Talbot County Local Emergency Planning Committee was to expire on August 1, 2022 and requesting consideration of reappointing Lewis of providing another recommendation for the seat. Commissioner Wells motioned to request reappointment on Lewis on the Committee, Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. The recommendation for reappointment will be sent to the County.

Lewis stated that a verbal concern was received in reference to the Pickleball Players reserving of playtime on the Tennis courts. Lewis stated that Pickleball Players had been reserving Monday and Friday mornings for their league playing when they were utilizing the Basketball courts and had requested a means to post a similar reservation at the Tennis courts, so the blank sign for posting notices was moved from the

Basketball Courts to the Tennis courts. Lewis stated that in order for a large group of players to arrive at the same time of day and play, she felt reserving the courts was necessary, as it would be unrealistic for a league of players to show up spontaneously several times a day to see if the courts were open. She would continue to monitor the playing times to assure fairness for all players.

ATTORNEY

Attorney Ryan told the Commissioners she had been notified of a Third Amended Complaint from Rebecca Keegan naming the Town of Oxford and the Oxford Commissioners as defendants following an appeal of the issuance of a dock permit to the neighboring Hauck property and the filing of two prior complaints. The Amended Complaint adds two counts against the Town and Commissioners, one for Declaratory Judgment as a result Ordinance 1801, which the Commissioners approved in 2018, and a count for Mandamus alleging an unlawful and unconstitutional taking of the Plaintiff's property in violation of Article 24 of the Maryland Declaration of Rights.

Ryan also noted it will be necessary to review the town's Critical Area regulations in the near future per state requirements.

TOWN MANAGER

Lewis informed the Commissioners she was anticipating receipt of the final DNR grant paperwork for the previously discussed funding for the Strand Beach Project. The amount is expected to be \$900,000 for construction, matching the previously awarded NFWF funding for this project, with a proposed additional \$100,000 in the future for necessary efforts following construction. She was requesting authorization for the Commission President to sign the grant agreement when it was received so that the document could be forwarded to the Board of Public Works for approval. Commissioner Wells motioned to approve acceptance of the awarded funds and authorization for the President to execute necessary documents, Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis provided an updated on the Short Term Rental procedure and some enforcement challenges being faced. She stated that the number of registered rentals was still under 25 and still spread throughout town. She noted that one of the stipulations she had been placing on approved licenses, which authority is granted in the ordinance, was a limit on two vehicles per STR, noting that the ordinance requires off street parking and two spaces is the normal amount of off-street parking available. The ordinance does allow for granting of on street parking if there are no parking constraints, but she feels that based on current conditions the town does not have any streets that do not already have parking constraints. She has received some pushback regarding the two vehicle per STR limit and wanted to provide the Commissioners with her reasoning, which include the fact that the STRs are located in residential neighborhoods and that STRs should blend into the residential setting and not be a burden to those residents who live near an STR. Specifically, that the 2 per bedroom/2 car limit is to keep the use of the STR at a family size and not to promote a large vacation property with multiple guest and vehicles. She noted that unlike a large resort area where the majority of the occupants are on vacation, Oxford is a quiet residential town and most properties are primary residential homes. The Commissioners acknowledged the intent of the STR language and the need to regulate rentals in keeping with the residential nature of the neighborhoods where they are located.

Lewis explained that, following up on the presentation on the Oyster Trail at a prior Commissioner meeting, she would like to send a letter to the Talbot County Council recommending improvements to the dirt trail that leads from West Pier Street to the developed portion of the County Conservation Park, including consideration of utilizing street millings to create a hard surface path that would be safer for joggers and bicyclist. The Commissioners were in agreement to submitting a letter to the County with the recommendation in support of the Oyster Trail.

Reappointment of Suzanne Litty on the Historic District Committee was recommended, noting that Litty is the only member to have grown up in Oxford and possesses historic information relevant to the decisions of the board. Commissioner Wells motioned to approve the recommendation, Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. Reappointment of Bob Trevorrow for his second term on Port Wardens was recommended. Commissioner Costigan motioned to approve, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. Lewis recommended all members on the Ethics Committee be reappointed to another term: William Dial, Mary Klair, and Cammy Passarella. Commissioner Costigan motioned to approve the Ethics Committee reappointment, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Lewis stated that the grant application for residential elevations had been submitted to Maryland Department of Emergency Management in hopes of being included in the state's final submittal to FEMA, noting that 14 residential homes were detailed in the application following commitments by the homeowners and an additional 8 properties were identified for consideration.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Wells thanked the public for their patience during the ongoing State Highway paving project. Commissioner Jaramillo requested a close session for legal advice.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dorothy Fenwick suggested to changes to the current town regulations, a change in the Charter requiring a commissioner vacancy be filled by a vote of the public as opposed to the current language which allows for an appointment by the seated Commissioners, and placement of term limits on members appointed to the various town boards.

Hearing no further business Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to go into a closed session for legal advice, Commissioner Wells seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned into close session at 7:36 pm. Following the closed session Commissioner Wells motioned to close the regular meeting, Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the meeting closed at 7:50 pm.

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."