

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 26, 2021

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Commissioners Meeting was held virtually in a Zoom Meeting Room on Tuesday, January 26, 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.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting were Commission President John Pepe, Commissioner Gordon Fronk, Commissioner James Jaramillo, Police Chief Pat Maxwell, Public Works Matt Ozman, Town Manager Cheryl Lewis, and Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan. Multiple residents were in attendance including Julie Wells, Larry Mekulski, Phyllis Rambo, Dick Deerin, Steve Goldman, Tom Bixler, Sandi Pepe, Jim and Nora Drayton, Barbara Paca, Phillip Logan, and others.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Jaramillo motioned to approve the January 12, 2021 meeting minutes, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

President Pepe stated that the Commissioners held a Closed Session on January 25, 2021 at 4 pm for the purpose of discussing public security including implementation of an emergency plan and real estate negotiations.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Wastewater Supervisor Matt Ozman gave a brief update for Public Works: Barkers Landing has now started to run new pipe behind the firehouse to complete the loop to East Pier Street. This work could be completed as early as next week depending on the conditions. The fence has been completed around the main lift station. There have been some complications at the new wastewater plant with the sand filter air compressor, which failed and is currently under investigation. Banks St. pump station had a bad main breaker and the station had to be bypassed for a short period of time while the breaker was being replaced on the same day by Bilbrough electric. Training has been set up for the beginning of February for the last of the equipment for the new wastewater plant.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Patrick Maxwell gave a brief update for the Police Department: Officers have been doing daily checks and keeping an eye on everything. He stated there has been increased suspicious activity in communities along the Oxford Road outside of town. He also stated he had received complaints from residents regarding issue with the US mail and non or late delivery of mail, checks, etc. Commissioner Jaramillo stated that this concern had been discussed in meetings with the Eastern Shore delegation, and that our representatives are aware and have approached the federal government with their concerns.

FIRE COMPANY

Fire Company Report for the period 1/13/21 thru 1/26/21. Fire/Rescue: 6 calls total; 1 in first-due area, 5 mutual aid; of the 5 mutual aid calls, 4 were working fires of greater or lesser severity (1 boat fire in Cambridge, 1 structure fire in Cambridge, 1 structure fire in Easton, 1 structure fire in Tilghman), 115 miles traveled, 42 member responses, 27 hrs worked. For Medical: 7 total calls; 3 patients transported, 2 citizen assists, 1 patient transferred to Talbot DES, 1 fire-dept assist, 73 miles traveled, 20 hrs worked,

22 member responses. There has been a recent flurry of structure and vehicle fires in both Talbot and surrounding Counties. There has not been any specific reason behind this as the State Fire Marshal reports indicated they have been mostly accidental in nature. Please be careful with electrical appliances and fireplace ash disposal!

PRESENTATION

Members participating in the Strand Beach Design work group were present including, Keith Binstead U&A, Josh Hanson U&A, Amanda Pokaitis NWF, Chis Hilke NWF, Bhaskar Subramanian DNR, Nicole Carlozo DNR, Sarah Hilderbrand DNR, and Rebecca Swerida DNR, who individually introduced themselves and their part in the project. Keith Binstead of the town's contracted engineers, Underwood and Associates, presented engineered designs for the Strand Beach living shorelines, explaining that the engineering philosophy is to work with constructed natural headland and breakwater structures to dissipate wave energy before it reaches the shoreline, with a focus on protecting the town from wind driven waves during 100 year storm events. It was noted this project would not prevent elevated tidal flooding, which takes place on the backside of the Strand parking lot and along private properties, the project is intended to reduce damage to the exposed northern side and the fragile infrastructure found along this northern edge. After the detailed presentation, the Commissioners and citizens were provided the opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns regarding the design, which mostly focused on the Strand Beach Improvements, and included concerns regarding the view from residential properties, the height of the dune between the beach and the road, the height of the marshy breakwaters off shore, the possible loss of beach area, grass area or walking area, how the beach would be accessed, the need for the project, how the design would improve conditions, and the science behind the proposed design, along with the desire to have more visual information in order to understand the final project. In addition, the design for the Strand Parking Lot and shoreline, the Ferry shoreline, the TAYC shoreline, and the Lovers Lane shoreline were presented and discussed, with the understanding that the engineers would be in contact with the private entities involved. Following a lengthy discussion of the project, and clarification on many of the questions regarding the design, Keith Binstead stated he would focus on methods in which to mitigate some of the remaining concerns expressed, especially the need to retain some grassy area for recreation, and further information would be provided in future meetings. It was also noted that currently funding is committed for the Strand Beach and the Lovers Lane improvements from NFWF and DNR, although we are not at the final funding approval stage. Permitting, which is in process, is anticipated in the late summer with an RFP for construction to follow in the fall. Start of construction will depend on criteria provided with the permit, the funding window, and the town's desired work season.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None presented.

NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Jaramillo stated that Delegate Mautz is expected to drop the bill for the proposed Speed Camera legislation over the next few weeks and Senate Bill 496, 2021 relief act for 1.7 Billion dollars, is currently being discussed.

President Pepe stated that Commission Fronk had come forward with a suggestion to set up a Community Service Grant Program in honor of former Commissioner Gordon Graves. Fronk stated the Commissioner Graves was a major contributor to the community and he felt that an 'R Gordon Graves Scholarship Award available to young and rising community participants would be appropriate. The program would award one or more local students, who had put an emphasis on community service, with a grant of financial assistance for college expenses. Lewis stated that, like the Hanks Christmas Tree

Fund, she felt this could be a program that other community partners might want to participate in and for which the town could be an umbrella. All felt this was a great proposition and Lewis will look at drafting a program for review at the next meeting.

Commissioner Fronk stated that sufficient funds had been raised to replace the failed heating system at Waters Church and the contractors were expected to complete the work soon.

LETTERS AND REQUEST

A second thank you note was received from a member at Waters Church for the recent donation in Al Gibson's name to support the replacement of the failed heating system was read.

ATTORNEY

Attorney Ryan stated work continues on securing the trailer titles for the abandoned boats. The boats are currently displayed along the fence of the PW facility where the public can view them from outside of the fencing.

TOWN MANAGER

Lewis provided a brief update on current COVID news, including registration options for vaccines, the county's current implementation of the vaccine roll out, and the real concern of limited availability of vaccines local, state, and nationwide.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT

Nothing additional

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nothing additional

Being no further business, Commissioner Fronk motioned to close the meeting, Commissioner Jaramillo seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Lewis, Town Manager