

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
July 23, 2019

The Commissioners Meeting was held in the meeting room of the Community Services Building on July 23, 2019. Commission President Gordon Graves called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting were Commission President Gordon Fronk, Commissioner Gordon Graves, Commissioner John Pepe, Public Works Superintendent Scott Delude, Administrator/Clerk Cheryl Lewis, and Town Attorney Lyndsey Ryan.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Fronk motioned to adopt the minutes of July 9, 2019 as distributed. Commissioner Pepe seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

REPORT OF DISBURSEMENTS

A motion was made by Commissioner Fronk to approve and file for audit the disbursements for the month of June 2019. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Fronk, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Public Works Superintendent Delude reported the following:

- Electric service has been installed at Tilghman docks at a cost of approximately \$4000.
- The walking platform at the Causeway docks has been replaced by Public Works with treated lumber, replacing a deck that appears to have dated back to the 70's.
- The budget for this year included a replacement truck, which has been ordered off the state contract at an approximate cost of \$47,000, with delivery anticipated in the fall. Two of the oldest trucks will be retired this year.
- There was a sewer backup due to root intrusion, which was corrected through the use of a cutting router and flow was restored without digging up the street.
- A new employee has been hired, Wilson Keeter. PW has been running short staffed for most of the summer and the new hire is a welcome relief and hopefully less critical projects can now be caught up. Positive comments regarding the hire have been received from the public.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Patrick Maxwell was not available for the meeting for personal reasons.

FIRE COMPANY

Chief Graham Norbury presented fire company statistics: 17 fire calls, including 6 working fires and 1 fatal motor vehicle collision, 184 miles traveled and 66 personnel hours, 113 member responses; 27 medical calls, 401 miles traveled, 97 personnel hours and 99 member responses. Chief thanked the town for its support for recent member funerals. He added that he has received a few new member applications and was optimistic.

PUBLIC REQUEST

President Graves stated that the Commissioners were going to open the meeting for public discussion regarding recent resident concerns surrounding the use of the beach area of the Strand. Steve Goldman

asked to speak, reading aloud his prepared letter, which will be attached to these minutes, along with multiple emailed communications with the Commissioners from other Strand residents. Goldman requested the Commissioners review his comments and give serious consideration to his suggestions. Bruce Wallace on behalf the Oxford Condominiums expressed his concern with unauthorized use of their parking lot, the need to install large signs threatening towing and disturbance from a truck running all weekend in the parking lot awaiting entrance to the Marina. Graham Norbury representing the Marina stated he wanted to point out that this area was not just residential, but was also Maritime Commercial and some truck traffic is unavoidable if we want to support this industry. He stated the trailer pulling a boat was a one-time occurrence and they were not aware of the truck's arrival. Mitch Nathanson added that the truck had wanted to enter the Marina but it was not possible. Mitch also stated that having lived at the beach for many, many, years, he did feel that things had become much worse in recent years. A concern was expressed that people were on the beach all hours of the night and it would take too long for someone to drive from Easton if someone was to call 911. Lewis stated that 911 would dispatch Chief Maxwell and this was the normal dispatch for Oxford Police and that any citizen who believes something is wrong or has concerns should never hesitate to call 911. Others stated that the biggest problem currently is enforcement, with a lack of enforcement of the regulations as they stand now, it is hard to say what further improvements might be needed. If we at least begin with enforcement, we would be able to determine how effective current regulations are in curtailing the negative behavior. Others continued with similar testimonials. There were concerns regarding the planned resiliency improvements and the need to not create more beach than we have parking area, which was acknowledged by town staff. Citizens inquired as to whether there was some directive against police presences at the beach area. The Commissioners stated that was absolutely not the case, but did explain that we have been actively seeking a third officer in an environment of limited persons seeking employment for the last six months and will continue. In addition, several initiatives the Commissioners were considering were provided as possible solutions for the area mentioned, including place a piling/rope barrier along the road to prevent vehicles driving on the grass and beach, more informative signage regarding regulations, consideration of a no boat zone, and a camera system to monitor the public areas. Commissioner Pepe added that all suggestions were being considered but we would have to address the issue one step at a time, and not all attempts will be successful. Some conversation continued regarding what should and should not be permissible in the area and the Commissioners assured attendees they would continue to seek resolution.

President Graves stated, as a follow up to the recent tragic pedestrian incident, the Commissioners were scheduling a meeting with State Highway officials to discuss traffic calming measures, issues that the town has been seeking help with for many years. All expressed their desire to push State Highway to finally take some measurable action to make it safer for Oxford residents and visitors.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Administrator Lewis requested permission from the Commissioners to present suggested legislation to the Maryland Municipal League regarding the enabling legislation necessary to permit municipalities straddling State Highway with 25 mph zones to utilize speed cameras to curb driver behavior. She explained the current speed camera legislation and the long process of changing state laws, but offered that this was one tool she felt was worth pursuing through both the MML and the town's state representatives. After discussion, Commissioner Pepe motioned to approve sending a recommendation for speed camera legislation to the Municipal League for their consideration, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

None presented.

LETTERS AND REQUEST

Administrator Lewis stated that she had received a request to provide support for an ESLC grant application to the MAERDAF program, to which she had prepared a letter of support from staff, explaining the town's coordination with ESLC's Eastern Shore Climate Adaptation Partnership and the benefits to the town that have resulted from this partnership.

ATTORNEY

Ryan stated that she had posted the open police position on the state job site, and after our other efforts which have not produced much in the way of results, she would like to have it posted on the Oxford Facebook page, which follows what several other local departments have done. The Commissioners were fine with this approach. Ryan requested a closed session to provide legal advice regarding riparian rights.

ADMINISTRATOR

Lewis reminded the Commissioners that she had been pursuing the ability to keep the temporary ditch crossing that had been used during the construction of the Causeway Ponds as a permanent crossing, for both mowing and pedestrian traffic. She had received the states response regarding mitigation for the wetland disturbance and was requesting Commissioner approval to sign the mitigation agreement, which would require a payment of \$2500. Commissioner Pepe motioned to execute the agreement, Commissioner Fronk seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

Lewis requested a closed session to discuss personnel issues.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Larry Myers asked what was being planned for the old Ball Field. Lewis gave a brief update on the plans for Central Park, stated that the town had received some grant funding towards the park, the town was currently working on site plans, and most likely construction would begin in the fall.

There being no further business, Commissioner Fronk made a motion to adjourn the meeting in to closed session for legal advice regarding riparian rights and also personnel issues, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Pepe, all were in favor and the meeting was adjourned 7:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Lewis, Town Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer

"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".