

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 27, 2024

The Commissioners Meeting was held in the Oxford Commissioners meeting room on Tuesday, August 27, 2024. Meeting was called to order and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT

Attending the meeting were Commissioner Norm Bell, Pres., Commissioner Tom Costigan, Commissioner Greer, Chief Chris Phillips, Clerk/Treasurer Vickie Sharp, and Attorney Lyndsey Ryan. Approximately 44 people were in attendance along with individuals attending virtually.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Oxford Commissioners will vote to go into Closed Session following this open session on this 27th day of August 2024 under the Open Meetings Act, General Provisions Art. Sub-Section 3-305(b) (1) To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction and consult with counsel to obtain legal advice.

Commissioner Greer motioned to amend the agenda for new business to add the approval for staff and volunteer parties. Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried

PUBLIC HEARING

Ordinance #2412 – AN ORDINANCE FOR THE COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD TO AMEND THE OXFORD TOWN CODE TO PROHIBIT RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE TOWN FROM PROVIDING CUSTOMERS WITH SINGLE USE DISPOSABLE PLASTIC BAGS. Public comment was heard from both against the ban and for the ban. Commissioner Costigan suggested to postpone the vote until the next meeting so that everyone could think about what has been heard tonight. Attorney Ryan suggested incentive to retail establishments and restaurants if they don't use plastic bags. All were in favor to table the Ordinance #2412 until further notice. For full detail of this ordinance watch the Town meeting recording for August 27, 2024 for full discussion and questions.

Ordinance #2413 – AN ORDINANCE FOR THE TOWN OF OXFORD TO AMEND CHAPTER 11 OF THE TOWN CODE TITLES “HARBOR MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE”, TO REVISE SPECIFICATIONS FOR MOORINGS AND ESTABLISH AN ESCROW ACCOUNT FOR MOORING MAINTENANCE. Public comment was heard both for and against Ordinance #2413. Attorney Ryan, further explained the possible alternatives regarding residence vs. non-residence. Comments were heard from the public as well. Commissioner Bell closed the public comment. Commissioner Greer motioned to set up another public hearing on the ordinance as amended. This will be at the same time as the resolution for the fee schedule from the Port Wardens both resolution and ordinance will be considered together. Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. For full detail of this ordinance watch the Town meeting recording for August 27, 2024 for full discussion and questions.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Commissioner Bell announced that Baker Tilly was selected as the professional search for the Town Manager's position.

Commissioner Greer spoke on the orange fence at the Strand. She motioned to have a workshop to visually inspect the orange fence and decide which parts should be removed. All public is invited. Comments were received regarding getting the grasses to seed, keeping people off of the dunes and using the walking paths. Due to the orange fence 2 lane traffic is not accessible making bicyclists and pedestrians at risk. Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried. Public will be invited for their input.

Commissioner Costigan gave an update on Water Well #2 has failed. The pump at the bottom of the well has failed. While pulling the pump up the turbine that sits on top of the well was found to have holes. The turbine is what gives the water pressure. The new pump found was an upgrade to what had failed and could be acquired fast. A new turbine was constructed for our use as well. Once all parts were replaced the well needs to be cleaned, sanitized, filled and tested. That took place on Friday and failed. The well will need to be emptied and re-sanitized and tested. Hopefully by the end of the week it will have passed and be back up and functioning. The old 230 volt system was also updated to a new 480 volt system.

NEW BUSINESS

Liza Ledford from the Oxford Community Center asked for a recommendation letter from the Commissioner's in support of the Community Center's application for funding to replace the subfloor and seal the crawl space. Commissioner Greer motioned to provide a recommendation letter for the OCC. Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Public Works request authorization for the following expenditures; UV light kits for full replacement of the UV disinfection bulbs. This will include all bulbs, new glass, seals, springs and spacers totaling \$2,465.80. Service kits for the YSI probes that includes stationary probes that operate the wastewater treatment plant. These are services month and updated yearly. Also includes bi-yearly service/calibration by the YSI factory representative. For the amount of \$4,105.00. Total \$6,570.80 for routine maintenance. Commissioner Costigan motioned to approve the request for purchase. Commissioner Greer seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Request to run ad for the Administrative Clerk position, Commissioner Greer motioned to approve the job description for the Administrative Clerk position and have an ad ran as soon as possible. Commissioner Costigan seconded, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Commissioner Greer proposed that the funds for the October volunteer party be used for Christmas bonuses for employees and explore other opportunities for a volunteer/staff party. Could have an ice cream social, or do something at the OCC. Commissioner Costigan stated he has enjoyed the party and was a nice way to say Thank You for the 60 some volunteers and would like to see the party continue. This was tabled until the next meeting.

LETTER RECEIVED

These letters will be attached to the minutes of this meeting.

James Wilcox – Tree Pruning

Dan Kordell – The Baseball Field

Susan DeLean-Botkins – Trees

Richard Leggett – Against Plastic Bag Ban

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Costigan, thanked Matt Ozman, Mike Bell, The Team, and Vickie for the great job they did dealing with the Well situation.

Commissioner Greer needs amateur photos, high resolution, shots of the town for Baker Tilly to build the brochure.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Citizen asked, when the well comes back online, does homeowners of older properties have to be aware or anticipate a surge. Commissioner Costigan stated not that we are aware of. Liza from the Community Center stated that there will be a community pot-luck on December 18th. Barbara Ranson suggested a work session or information video or podcast to bring everyone up to speed on a new well. Debbie Krolicki, suggested keeping everyone up to date on the well. Citizen asked for a status on the Strand. Regarding planting, removing orange fence, mats for the path regarding the first phase. Susan Kordell, asked who and how the background check will be done for who is hired for the administrative clerk position? Commissioner Greer was given names of background search firms. The current application for employment does not contain the types of questions that are needed since the office does handle petty cash. Has a job posting from Wicomico that requires a secretary to take a drug test and have a back ground check. Working on an application form that requires acknowledgement of such information. Bob Bergner, asked about the pruning of the trees around Town and is there an update. Russ Gray, how far back does a back ground check look at? Most go back 7 to 10 years. Maryland has restrictions. Susan DeLean-Botkin, be cautious in making comments about age discrimination. Need to advertise to all groups cannot shift toward one group or another because that is discrimination. Scott Rensberger stated he spent \$27 to do a background check and was able to go back a zillion years. Suggested that if the Town is only able to go back 7 to 10 years, they should pay the \$27 to go further back, if it's legal and if it's not legal send me an email and I'll do it. Scott Rensberger stated he has a series of questions he would like to ask Commissioner Bell. Would you please sit down with me at some point and just chat, would be happy to send questions ahead of time. Tom Campbell stated he has spent a lot of time around here and considers himself a good will ambassador, fancy pictures are not going to sell our community. If this is on his camera right now, live on social media, I can't imagine who wants to come to work here. Something needs to be figured out, this can't be every town meeting. It is making it harder for me to cherr on my community, really disappointing.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Commissioner Bell, Town Office will be closed on Monday, Labor Day.

The Oxford Commissioners will vote to go into Closed Session following this open session on this 27th day of August 2024 under the Open Meetings Act, General Provisions Art. Sub-Section 3-305(b) (1) To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction and consult with counsel to obtain legal advice. Commissioner Bell, do I hear a motion to adjourn to closed session. Commissioner Costigan motioned to go into closed session. Commissioner Greer seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted, Vickie Sharp, Clerk/Treasurer

*Letters discussed in these minutes are attached and available upon request at the Town Office.
Commissioner Meetings are now live streaming and are archived on townhallstreams.com*

From: oxfordplanner@goeaston.net
Sent: Friday, August 23, 2024 10:02 AM
To: oxfordclerktreasurer@goeaston.net
Subject: FW: Tree Pruning

Marilyn B. Williams, CFM
Planner
Town of Oxford
P.O. Box 339
Oxford, MD 216545
410-226-5122

-----Original Message-----

From: James Wilcox <jameswilcoxjr@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, August 22, 2024 5:13 PM
To: Norman Bell <normanbell45@gmail.com>; dc2ox4d@verizon.net; Katrina Greer <katrina4commissioner@gmail.com>; Marilyn Williams <oxfordplanner@goeaston.net>
Subject: Tree Pruning

Let me respectfully offer a suggestion. During a meeting of the Town Commissioners, a lot of dissatisfaction was expressed about the recent tree pruning by Delmarva Power, and the representative from the company offered to work with a resident group to ensure that aesthetic considerations were adequately taken into account in the future. Delmarva described its four year cycle, so there is nothing that can be done immediately, but Oxford can start planning ahead.

If the town wants to retain a professional arborist, that would probably be very good, but I assume there would be an associated cost. Alternatively, the town could enlist resident volunteers. We did that in DC, where there is a long established group named Trees for Georgetown, which has been associated with the Citizens Association of Georgetown, but which separately raises money in support of an issue of great importance to the neighborhood. I know the principals with that organization, and I assume that they would be willing to communicate with you if desired. I don't know that Oxford needs to go quite that far. But the Charles Bensons, who live next door to me at 305 N Morris, were especially vociferous in their complaints about the recent pruning, so I just asked Caroline if she would be willing to assist with town tree pruning if the Town Commissioners believed that would be helpful. And she said that she would. The Bensons have an unusually large intown lot with massive trees, which you can see is very tastefully and immaculately maintained. Caroline is actively involved with the local garden clubs, is a member of the Royal Horticultural Society, previously owned Garden Treasures in Easton before selling it to her protégée Amy, and before downsizing to their house in Oxford, lived on several very large estates in Talbot County with many, many trees, including the Knightly estate. Caroline's father previously owned Poplar Hill Farm near the intersection of the Bypass and the Oxford Rd., and her mother's maiden name was Thompson, and her mother donated Thompson Park in downtown Easton to the town. Although Caroline is not a professional arborist by trade, she is an established horticulturalist who has a lot of experience with trees and their pruning. And she is very collegial by nature.

Caroline is leaving town in a few days for a trip to Great Britain, which is likely to be garden-oriented, but she should be back in a couple of weeks if anyone wants to explore this general concept with her then. This is your call and is only my suggestion, but I thought I should make it while tree pruning is on the minds of many people.

I hope you enjoy the good weather and the upcoming Regatta.

Jim

From: Daniel Kordell <dank20879@yahoo.com>

Sent: Tuesday, August 13, 2024 11:39 PM

To: Katrina Greer <katrina4commissioner@gmail.com>; Norman Bell <normanbell45@gmail.com>; Tom Costigan <dc2ox4d@verizon.net>; oxfordplanner@goeaston.net; Lyndsey Ryan <lryan@bbcmlaw.com>; Scott Rensberger <scott.rensberger@gmail.com>

Subject: Re: The Baseball Field

Commissioners,

Please give us back our baseball field. And here is a good opportunity to unite our town: After the ball field is restored, have an annual softball competition with teams comprised of supporters of individuals running for that year's commissioner seat. It can be an annual event, with a softball game, a band, banners, cheerleaders, watermelon, a picnic lunch, maybe a pie eating contest, and the like. Could be a lot of fun.... - Dan Kordell

On Tuesday, August 13, 2024 at 10:28:31 PM EDT, Scott Rensberger <scott.rensberger@gmail.com> wrote:

Several years ago, when Cheryl Lewis needed to find a place to dump unwanted soil she decided on the outfield of our historic baseball field. At the time, according to our minutes, the soil was placed there only temporarily. She said it would be used elsewhere.

But, for some reason, in a town that needs soil more than anything else — Lewis never allowed it to be used by anyone. And, at the same time we were actually buying other soil and bringing it into town to build the wastewater treatment plant — it was a special kind of dirt used to pack down the area so we could build on it.

However, after that soil was used as weight to pack down the underlying layer — tons of high quality dirt was removed from our new plant before it went into operation. I was told Cheryl Lewis donated that expensive dirt to a wealthy person who lives on Oxford Road. Why didn't she donate the pile of dirt that was dumped onto the baseball field? You tell me?

For some reason Cheryl Lewis refused to remove the mountain of dirt from the historic ballpark. I can't find one Commissioner who approved putting the dirt there in the first place. After that, Lewis went on a full assault to completely destroy our baseball diamond. She had trees planted in the infield just to make sure no child would ever run the bases again. The Oxford Kids Camp could no longer use it as a kickball park. Lewis's last act was to literally donate our two bleachers to another baseball field. I bet everyone can guess where those bleachers went? I visited them the other day in Trappe.

\That mountain of dirt should be completely removed. It was dumped there with zero Commissioner support. After someone takes it away we can test its core for high levels of nitrates. The only way to properly test it is by removing it. Paying someone to poke at its top surface is just a waste of time and money.

I think all three Commissioners should call Cheryl Lewis and ask her if the soil can be donated to a landscape company. If she says, Yes. Problem solved. If she says, No with hesitation in her voice — just maybe that soil isn't fit to give away. Folks — there's a reason it's there.

At the same time that mountain was being created we were spending millions of dollars removing our huge sludge problem to several different landfills. It literally put the wastewater plant behind one year. Our contractor had a heck of a time finding landfills to take the toxic soil.

The only way to solve this problem is to have someone pick it up. If it's safe, clean dirt — excavation companies would love every inch. The bottom line is — IT DOES NOT BELONG THERE. If this is safe, clean dirt — it only takes two Commissioners to fix this problem without spending a dime.

Scott Rensberger

202-423-9040

From: susan delean-botkin <sdel@hotmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, August 18, 2024 12:38 PM
To: The Talbot Spy
Cc: Norman Bell; Tom Costigan; Katrina Greer; Vickie Sharp; Marilyn Williams
Subject: Trees

My nephew Sean sent me a work video this week. He loves what he does and periodically shares scenes from his locations. I had been thinking about Sean this week. At the Oxford Commissioners meeting Delmarva Power answered questions about the tree trimming they are required to do in all of our small towns. Some of the Oxford townfolks were pretty upset that the beautiful tree canopy had to be cut back away from the power lines. There were a lot of suggestions about "How I would do it, even though I am not an arborist". It got a little hot in the hearing room.

The folks from Delmarva Power came in peace to inform the public of why it is critical and the law to prune back the trees away from the power lines at least every four years. I think it might have helped to have Sean's video played that night - he is a federal fire firefighter out west. He has been in Chico and Paradise, CA and is now, as I write this, in Wilamette, Oregon - The video was him in the fire line - trees on fire above, brush on fire at his feet. Scary just for me to look at it - Fires are often triggered by power lines that snap and spark trees, brush, and houses.

I can see a fire whipping through the old frame houses in Oxford in high winds. One broken branch that falls onto power lines could spark the whole town.. It is a real possibility. If you don't have respect for Delmarva Power, how about for Graham, Tim, Henry, Easy, Dave, Rachel, Connie, Bruce and all the other Fire Company that would be out fighting for your town.

Susan Delean- Botkin
202 3rd St.
Oxford, Md. 21654
443-786-4454

From: Richard Leggett <roleggett@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 19, 2024 3:32 PM
To: oxfordmanager@goeaston.net; Town Office - Lisa <townoffice@goeaston.net>
Cc: normanbell45@gmail.com; Tom Costigan <dc2ox4d@verizon.net>
Subject: Re: Proposed Ordinance #2412

Confirming receipt of my e-mail sent on 8/7. Please confirm. Thank you.

Rich

On Wed, Aug 7, 2024 at 11:26 AM Richard Leggett <roleggett@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Town of Oxford Commissioners,

As a local business owner, I am writing to share my views and request an exemption in advance of your August 27th hearing regarding proposed Ordinance #2412 prohibiting retail establishments from providing customers with single use disposable plastic bags.

Specifically, we are supportive of the ordinance for most uses -- merchandise, non-frozen goods, etc., -- but, would respectfully request an exemption be included in the ordinance as it relates to the use of single-use disposable plastic bags specifically for transporting ice cream and frozen goods.

At SHC and OXS, we purposely use plastic bags when packaging our take-away frozen foods such as ice cream pints, quarts and frozen meals (at Oxford Social) as these goods are not well suited for paper bags as they create condensation which would ultimately weaken and break a paper bag and result in the destruction of the product. In addition, paper bags would result in faster melt times for the product. The combination of these two factors would ultimately create dissatisfaction among our customers.

In researching other jurisdictions that have also banned single-use plastic bags, we have consistently found exemptions to their rules specifically for frozen foods or fresh refrigerated goods (ex: PG County, Easton, etc.). As an example, in Prince George's County, the exemption includes

- *Package bulk items, including fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, candy, or small hardware items;*
- *Contain or wrap frozen foods, meat, or fish, whether prepackaged or not;*
- *Contain or wrap flowers, potted plants, or other damp items;*
- *Contain unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods;*

As such, we respectfully formally ask that Ordinance #2412 also be amended to provide such an exemption specifically for frozen foods. I am available for further discussion at your convenience at 646.483.3835.

Sincerely,

Richard Leggett

Owner, The Scottish Highland Creamery and Oxford Social Cafe