

COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 24, 2024

The Commissioners Meeting was held at 101 Market Street on September 24, 2024 at 6 pm. Meeting was called to order and the meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Present

Attending the meeting were Commissioner Tom Costigan, Commissioner Katrina Greer, Commissioner Norman Bell, Chief Chris Phillips, Town Planner Marilyn Williams, Clerk/Treasurer Vickie Sharp, and Attorney Lyndsey Ryan. Approximately 63 people were in attendance with individuals attending virtually.

Closed Session

The Oxford Commissioners will vote to go into Closed Session following this open session on this 24th day of September 2024 under the Open Meetings Act, General Provision Article 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.

Commissioners Comments/Announcements

Commissioner Greer proposed an alternative resolution for the rules of conduct. The charter states that commissioners shall provide residents a reasonable opportunity to be heard at any meeting regarding any municipal question. There are two meeting proposals, they were just published this afternoon, and one is not in the correct version. There is no way for the public to comment on what has just been posted and what has just been posted as an alternative. There is no way, without really violating the charter, for us to vote on either of these resolutions tonight. One of the resolutions provides only for public comment at the end of the meeting. This proposal does not let the public speak before voting on important legislation. Letting people talk at the end of the meeting about something that has already been voted on is useless and does not satisfy the requirement for a reasonable opportunity to be heard at the meeting. It is also dismissive of the right of citizens to participate. I have an alternative proposal, not on the website, unfortunately, which allows for public comment before an actionable item. Not every item, just the actionable ones. It permits questions to be answered at the meetings by the commissioners and, I think importantly, it codifies rules of decorum or civility. This is all in keeping with C-3-4 of the charter. Both resolutions should be posted on the town website for public inspection so the commissioners can discuss with an informed, and you guys are so engaged, citizenry. We have smart and interested people in our town and we owe them the right to inspect and comment on our legislation. We have many other important issues to deal with, so I move that the two procedures be posted on the town website that would take comments and questions and written comments and questions about them and we vote on them in our next public meeting after that discussion.

Commissioner Bell, stated that the proposed Resolution was talked about at the last meeting and have been receiving emails in support. There were minor changes to the proposed Resolution. We can delay a vote for 2 weeks or vote tonight and if there are amendments, they can be addressed.

There was lengthy discussion among Commissioners about the resolution for The Rules for Conduct.

Resolution No. 2417 To Amend the Rules for Conduct

Commissioner Bell stated to vote on the Resolution tonight have a work shop next week and if any amendments need to be made can be done in 2 weeks at the next Commissioners meeting. Commissioner Costigan motioned to approve Resolution No. 2417, **A Resolution of the Commissioners of Oxford to Amend the Rules for Conduct at Commission Meetings**, Commissioner Greer seconded but will not vote in favor, 2-1 in favor, and the motion carried.

RESOLUTION NO. 2415 - A RESOLUTION OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD ADOPTING THE REVISED 2024 TOWN OF OXFORD EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

Town Planner Marilyn Williams proposed to adopt the revised 2024 Town of Oxford Emergency Plan. I put together a couple of emergency response teams and we came up with a checklist of action items that are needed to fully prepare the town for emergencies, for post-disaster, and pre-disaster planning. If you get an evacuation call, the fire department is the best place for congregation because of the fact some people may need medical assistance. One of the things that needs to happen is that when you do your next budget, you need to put a line item in there to address all the post-disaster preparation. The response teams need to continue their training, and emergency response teams should get training twice a year. If between all the municipalities we meet the Talbot County threshold, we can get a disaster declaration, and we can start getting the benefits of funding and other help.

Commissioner Costigan made a motion that we adopt Resolution 2415, a resolution of the Commissioners of Oxford, adopting the Revised Town of Oxford Emergency Operations Plan. Commissioner Greer Seconded the motion, all were in favor and the motion carried.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 2414 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF OXFORD TO AMEND THE FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE TO REVISE THE DEFINITION OF "SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT" REMOVING THE DATE OF "JULY 1, 2013" AND SUBSTITUTING "THE PREVIOUS FIVE (5) YEARS" AND TO REVISE THE DEFINITION OF "AGREEMENT TO SUBMIT AN ELEVATION CERTIFICATE" TO REMOVE THE REQUIREMENT FOR A FLOOD ELEVATION CERTIFICATE UPON PLACEMENT OF THE LOWEST FLOOR AND SUBSTITUTING THE REQUIREMENT FOR WRITTEN CONFIRMATION OF LOWEST FLOOR HEIGHT FROM A LICENSED ENGINEER OR SURVEYOR.

Town Planner Marilyn Williams proposed changes to the floodplain regulations. First is the definition of a substantial improvement. Under floodplain regulations and FEMA guidelines, if the cost of the renovations, additions, repairs for a structure, equals 50% of the value of the structure, then the structure is considered a substantial improvement under FEMA guidelines, and then the structure needs to be brought into compliance with the current floodplain regulations. If you wanted to put an addition onto your house and the cost of the addition is 50% of the value of the existing home, then it becomes a substantial improvement, and the whole building has to comply with the current regulations. That may mean elevating the home, or it may just mean putting flood vents in, but either way, that's what a substantial improvement is. The current regulations have us going back and accumulating repairs and renovations all the way back to the date of July 1st, 2013. I would like to propose that we only go back five years for accumulative work that could then result in a substantial improvement. We would lose 20 CRS points by going to the five-year period versus the 2013 date, but there's enough CRS points that losing that 20 points won't matter. The other thing being proposed for revision to the code is that the code requires three elevation certificates. The flood elevation certificate is a FEMA form. It requires a land surveyor to go out and gather a bunch of information about the structure, mainly looking at confirming that it's in the flood plains, seeing where the finished floor is, where the equipment is located. It takes a surveyor a bit of time not only to gather the information, but then to go back and fill out the form. Right now, we're requiring three. One is the pre-construction. One is what we call a foundation check. Once the foundation is up, checking to make sure that it's high enough. The third one is an as-built, when everything is done. The middle one is the one that I would like to convert to only a written confirmation from a surveyor as to the height restriction. I'm proposing that we have pre-construction flood elevation certificate, written confirmation from a land surveyor, email from surveyor and a flood elevation certificate in the end for an as-built.

Commissioner Costigan made a motion to introduce Ordinance 2416, an ordinance of the town of Oxford, to amend the floodplain management ordinance and to revise the definitions that Marilyn has brought to us. Commissioner Greer seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Public hearing scheduled for October 22, 2024.

Unfinished Business

Commissioner Greer made a motion to support the accommodation tax moving from 4 to 6 percent for Talbot County. Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all were in favor, and the motion carried.

Commissioner Greer gave an update on the Strand and the orange fence. The orange fence was put up to keep people off the dunes while the plantings were taking root. I went out with Bob Burgner, and looked at all the plantings and decided that much of the fence can be removed. There are certain sections from 501 Strand to the parking lot that will need some sort of fence to preserve it. At Tractor Supply, there is a wood fencing. We start at the Sommerlatte property to keep them off of that, and move it through the parking lot. I'm envisioning that both Public Works and maybe some volunteers could do this. We also have the need to fertilize the grasses that are on the beach, and I was hoping we could get some Osmocote, some volunteers, and fertilize those grasses. It's approximately \$900.

Commissioner Greer approved the brochure for Baker Tilly. Went live on Monday. There was a stakeholder survey that was sent out. Responses needed by October 5th.

New Business

Commissioner Bell gave a report on how letters are to be submitted for Public Comment. Commissioners of Oxford encourage public engagement, participation, and communication. Individuals may provide public comment during the public comment period at regular commissioner meetings or by submitting a letter or email to the commissioners and/or town office at least five days prior to the scheduled commissioner meeting. Letters or emails that are intended to be public comments should reference public comment. Individuals may submit emails, letters, or requests to the town office for consideration, which communications are not intended as public comment and will not be made a part of the meeting record. Communications that are received that do not reference public comment will be treated as communications that will not be referenced in the commissioners meeting or posted with the meeting. These communications will be stored at the town office as part of the town's public records and subject to review or disclosure.

Commissioner Greer requested permission to submit an accessibility grant to the Christopher Reeves Foundation. We are not in compliance on the strand for ADA accessibility. I went down to Assateague and saw these Moby mats, and we can install them and roll them out. One of the things that came out of the MDOD meeting is that they gave us the Moby mat solution, but also pointed us to the Christopher Reeves Foundation, which provides for a grant for between \$5,000 and \$25,000 to do just this.

Commissioner Greer made a motion that the town apply for the Christopher Reeves grant for the purpose of installing ADA-accessible Moby mats on the Strand Beach. Commissioner Costigan seconded that motion, all were in favor, the motion carried.

Town Planner Marilyn Williams asked for approval to hire a consultant for Building and Floodplain permits. With me leaving, there will not be a qualified person to be able to review building permits and ensure compliance with all the zoning regulations, critical areas, and floodplain regulations. I am recommending that you consider hiring a consultant to review and approve your building permits for you, because without hiring a consultant, there will be an immediate backlog. She recommended AECOM. The company could be another resource for engineering, design, and project management services.

Commissioner Greer moved to accept the AECOM contract subject to our town attorney's review for the purposes of having an outsourced permitting process. Commissioner Costigan seconded the motion, all in favor, motion carried.

Commissioner Greer stated we do not have a town engineer on staff. What many smaller municipalities do is they do just like they do with AECOM in terms of planning and permitting. We have the second part of the Steward Project coming up, and that is to elevate the roadway two feet going back to Stewart and then all the way across the parking lot. It's important that Underwood & Associates has some drawings, but we want to make sure that our town is protected by having the proper grade and crowding of that roadway so water is unobstructed out to Town Creek. We're going to look at Bayland, and we're going to vote on sending the drawings to Bayland for instruction. They gave us a rate, and it's not to exceed \$5,000. I think this is a good first step with that, and then we can identify

other engineering firms to act as our town engineer. The recommendation came to me from the DNR. We might want to investigate two firms. The FEMA house elevation is a completely other animal, and we might look at someone to administer that who's more in the AECOM field. Bayland mostly does stormwater, floodwater, hydrology, et cetera.

Commissioner Greer made a motion to send the Underwood phase S and phase Y, the parking lot raise, and the private parcel infill to Bayland for review. Commissioner Costigan seconded that motion, all in favor, the motion carried.

Letters Received

There were six letters received. Letters regarding Meeting Procedures, 1 letter. Letters regarding Meeting Rule Proposal, 1 letter. Proposed Rules For Public Comment, 1 letter. Letters regarding Oxford Revised Meeting Policy, 1 letter. Letters regarding Meeting Procedures, 1 letter. Letters regarding purpose of meeting, 1 letter.

Commissioners Comments

Commissioner Greer proposed talking about an interim town manager for the next meeting.

Commissioner Costigan made a maintenance report on behalf of Matt Ozman.

A new bubbler valve for the drinking fountain at the dugout park has been installed. There's a board there for posting notices. Wooden benches were brought back to the shop to be refurbished. Watering efforts are continuing. Thank you to all the residents who helped. There were dying trees in town park and one at the basketball court that have been removed. He wants to seek commissioners' input on what species of trees they would like to see put back. His suggestion is hybrid elms, maples, and oaks. Once we get what species we would like to purchase, I will submit price quotes. He's also put in a request for trash cans. I would like to set up a three-year plan to invest in new plastic heavy-duty trash cans and dome lids. In this three-year plan, it will cost roughly \$1,200 a year, to replace all 21 cans plus spares to keep in stock for events and replacements. I'm proposing 10 cans and 10 lids per year to completely phase out the metal barrels and lids.

Commissioner Costigan stated Matt and I went to Cambridge, and we met with their engineering team down there. They have installed something like this, (presents object as an example) only on a much larger scale. It is a waste stop. Matt is requesting that we authorize the installation of two of these. If we can install two, we'll know whether this works or not. We can have them installed next week. The cost of doing two will be \$7,000 a piece.

Commissioner Costigan made motion to approve the purchase of two Wapro check valves for installation at the end of Caroline Street and one at the tide gate on the causeway in front of the tennis courts. Commissioner Greer Seconded that motion, All were in favor, the motion carried.

Commissioner Costigan stated he received an email from Pam Baker talking about our election process, and she had some recommendations for us to consider. She made a recommendation that we meet with the election board in a workshop to see what we can do to make our election process as good as it can be. I talked with Pam about some timing on this. My suggestion would be to do this workshop on November 19th.

Commissioner Bell stated that this meeting and workshops are the only time that the board, the commissioners, have where we can do work. We can't do work in private. I am sensitive to the need of public input, but we were having a discussion. That's why I acted as quickly as I did to try to stop the content of the comments.

Public Comments

Debbie Krolicki gave commissioners a copy of the constitution. Asked Commissioners to look at Amendment No. 1. She reminded commissioners that when they became commissioners they put their hand up and made an oath to uphold the constitution. She also expressed concern over receiving policy the same day it was introduced.

Dave Donovan expressed his disagreement for the opportunity to speak at the end of the meeting, after it's been voted on. Grateful to see that what you've enacted today no longer includes the prohibition on the commissioners addressing at the meeting matters raised by the public at the end of the meeting.

Deborah Pulzone requested that a PIA be posted somewhere on a monthly basis. When rumors are being spread, she would like to be able to read the facts. Retroactive to January.

Bob Burgner expressed concern over transformers encapsulated by branches, and branches laying in transformers on West Strand Street. He is wondering if a contractor can go out to the islands to remove the logs at high tide with a barge. Therefore, we're not damaging the vegetation that's already been planted.

Bob Burgner stated Underwood did plant the islands at reasonable density, but they haven't planted any additional plants along any of the other sections of the Strand. The problem with that is we don't start out with the number of plants based on the specifications. They are supposed to be planted 18 inches on center. Does that mean that if we don't allow the contractor to take care of his responsibility, that the town is going to be responsible for maintaining 85% density?

Bev Lavoie expressed her appreciation for a workshop. Will we be able to ask questions there at that workshop? Expressed everybody wants transparency, but everybody wants to understand what's going on. Appreciates the opportunity to make comments.

Emily Knud Hanson thought the procedure about the resolution was unfair. I think you try to put a resolution together, consider all of the comments, and make a nice cohesive document that makes sense to everybody.

Russ Gray expressed concern over an email from Commissioner Greer that was not sent to everyone. Because so many of us have discussed the desire for transparency and openness, he questioned whether the approach to this meeting is out of sync with the Open Meeting Act requirements that needed to be followed.

Adjournment of Open Session

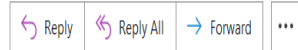
Commissioner Costigan motioned to go into closed session for the purposes of its personnel and discuss an investigative proceeding. Commissioner Greer Seconded that motion, all were in favor, motion carried.

Meeting procedures and public comments



Mail Customer Services <patchettsmith@atlanticbb.net>

To: oxfordclerktreasurer@goeaston.net; nbell@goeaston.net; kgreer@goeaston.net; tcostigan@goeaston.net



Tue 9/17/2024 3:08 PM

Common sense changes should be made to the proposed draft regarding public comments.

All residents/taxpayers should have the opportunity to speak prior to any vote on an item.

Voting by the commissioners on any agenda item should not take place until after the public is asked to comment.

If any resident/taxpayer has a question on any subject concerning the town (whether or not it is on the agenda) and the commissioners have the ability to answer, they should answer all questions.

And finally it seems undemocratic to require residents/taxpayers to pre-register to comment or to allow the President to decide who, when and how long a resident/taxpayer can speak. A reasonable time limit would be adequate and fair to all.

Thank you,

Donna Patchett

106 Riverview Ave

September 18, 2024

To the Oxford Commissioners and Town Officials:

Rather than encourage citizens to share their thoughts on various issues, the proposed Meetings Policy includes so many rules of behavior, it will stifle participation. In a town of 700, most over the age of 60, it is an insult to have our elected officials produce such a condescending proposal better directed at first graders.

The “purpose” as stated makes me question who’s in charge. Isn’t it the President’s job to “create an atmosphere {for those present} to see our government “attend to business efficiently, fairly and with full participation.”?

It is certainly fair to have a Meeting Policy that explains the order of business and when public comments are appropriate. But to prohibit every sort of vocal response (applause seems to be banned along with cheering, booing, etc.) is an insult to the taxpayers of Oxford. These proposed rules are a knee-jerk response to the very few people who generally behave with rude remarks and a desire to hear themselves talk. They certainly have been effective.

Please distinguish between written notes to be entered into the record, and a chance to speak up at a meeting. You want to see all remarks in writing two days before? I have no idea what I might want to say at a Commissioners meeting, much less ask permission to say it. But I certainly have the right to speak about any town issue during the public comments period. A three-minute limit is reasonable, but it would be less intimidating if a microphone was put on a stand rather than require people to sit at a table.

The agenda could simply state the meeting rules at the bottom of the page. *The public is asked to withhold comments or questions as town business is conducted. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated, including verbal and physical unwarranted interruptions, and a refusal to abide by rules of public participation and common courtesy. The Commissioners reserve the right to unanimously require an offender to leave.*

It is unreasonable to discourage public participation when there are so few opportunities for the public to address their fellow citizens and town officials. If the Commission cannot run a civil, organized meeting to serve the citizens of Oxford, please find someone who can.

Respectfully,

Emilie Knud-Hansen

215 Bonfield Ave, Oxford

104 E Strand POB 31
Oxford, MD 21654
(202) 236-9040

September 5, 2024

Commissioners of the Town of Oxford
Norm Bell, President
Tom Costigan, Commissioner
Katrina Greer, Commissioner

Commissioners,

Thank you for your attention to the importance of allowing public participation in Oxford Commissioners meetings, as noted by the issuance of proposed rules for public comment. While I am now a resident and registered voter in Oxford, I grew up in New England, where many decisions about local governance are made in town meetings in which residents actively deliberate policies and budget proposals, and town officials listen and answer questions. New England's town meetings have been described as the "purest form of democracy." I spent many hours growing up listening to my neighbors and our elected officials engage in mostly civilized – but sometimes highly contentious – debates over the direction of the town at these meetings. I am not suggesting that the Town of Oxford adopt a town meeting format for its Commission proceedings, but the town in all its commissions should encourage public comment and allow for elected and appointed officials and town staff to respond immediately when possible to residents' questions and concerns.

The public comment proposal issued this week includes a number of provisions that appear intended to limit public discourse, rather than encourage it, and I would suggest that the new procedures begin with a preamble that public comments are welcome (see example of [Takoma Park City Council website](https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/meetings-and-documents/current-and-past-agendas/public-comments-at-city-council-meetings/)¹, screenshot below). Listening and responding to constituents' concerns is an essential part of a government official's job, and therefore the public comment period of a public meeting is as important as the other items on the Commission's agenda. In no way should you distinguish the conduct of regular business from the solicitation of public input when describing the Commission's mission

¹ <https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/meetings-and-documents/current-and-past-agendas/public-comments-at-city-council-meetings/>

“to do the work of the people.” I suggest removing any references to “the work of the people” from this document.

I would also urge you to allow staff and elected officials to respond to residents’ comments immediately when possible. The public interest is not well-served if you allow easily answered questions, as many residents ask at Oxford meetings, to go unanswered. I suggest deleting the bullet related to questions and answers.

The Commission’s proposal for public comment at your meetings also contains some provisions that seem contrary both to the town’s Charter and to court rulings concerning citizens’ First Amendment rights at public meetings. The Charter states that “all meetings of the Commissioners shall be open to the public, and the rules of the Commissioners shall provide that residents of the Town shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard at any meeting *in regard to any municipal question.*” The proposed process for public comment states that “comments must be related to relevant public business,” which is contrary to the Charter language. Furthermore, public comment periods at government meetings are considered “designated public forums” in which the government should not make content-based restrictions on First Amendment speech. This does not preclude you from preventing disruptive conduct or setting time limits for speakers, but the Commission should not limit the topics on which a speaker provides comments. I suggest deleting any requirement that Oxford residents must only speak on matters “related to relevant public business”.

The proposal includes the possibility of requiring residents to pre-register and limit the total time for comments. Both of these provisions should be deleted. Regarding pre-registering, residents in the audience who develop questions or concerns about current business before the Commission *during* the meeting should not be prohibited from speaking during the public comment period, which pre-registering would do. This is especially important if you prevent any back-and-forth with residents for clarification during the business meeting. An overall time limit for public comment would in effect disenfranchise some residents from providing comments if there are matters before the Commission that generate significant public interest.

If the Commission decides to adopt a time limit for public comment, I suggest that the town invest in a timer designed for public meetings that is visible to the Commission, the speaker, and the audience. This timer would ideally have red, green and yellow lights to alert the Commissioners and speaker when the time limit has expired. A small timer for a

podium is around \$200, although timers with larger digital faces may be more expensive.² The meeting chair should be the enforcer of any time limits. Your final procedure should note that if residents need more than the time limit to express their views, they should provide their comments in writing.

Finally, rules for public comment must be applied evenhandedly. The last clause of the proposal (“Obey the direction of the President as to when and how long you may speak”) is unnecessary if the new rules describe when the public comment period occurs in the meetings, how speakers queue up to provide comments, and how long they can speak. I urge you to drop this clause.

Thank you for your consideration of these suggested edits.

Sincerely,



Karen G. Wayland, Ph.D.

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(202) 236-9040



² https://www.bhphotovideo.com/c/buy/presentation-timers-displays/ci/20585/N/4034387043?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwxY-3BhAuEiwAu7Y6szoxceTtCJH2j8ZKSF8bnQe3aoMHUDHvwyeLix01Bg4u8FGDfEcixoCnAAQAvD_BwE



Barbara Paca, Ph.D., O.B.E.
101 and 103 Mill Street
Oxford 21654

15 September, 2024

Oxford Commissioner President Norm Bell
cc: Lindsay Ryan, Esq, Commissioner Katrina Greer and Tom Costigan
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OXFORD REVISED MEETINGS POLICY

Dear Commissioners,

I live in a quaint town in the United States. Or at least so I thought, until I received new guidelines re. (poorly written) revised protocol for Oxford Commissioner Meetings.

Is there a new unwritten prerequisite requiring staff to write directives to try to further swindle the population responsible for paying their salaries out of basic truths and the fundamental American right of requesting so when they are merely requesting transparency?

These bizarre amendments are not only counterproductive, they are un-American!

With All Good Wishes, Yours Sincerely,

Barbarapaca.

Dr. Barbara Paca, O.B.E.

N.B.: For some reason, members of Oxford staff appear to be unable to respond to letters with even the most basic courtesy of a "received" or "noted." Perhaps one is unfamiliar with etiquette/professional practice, therefore I must insist that this letter be made a part of the Town Minutes at the next meeting. Kindly confirm receipt and state your intention as to whether or not this commission plans to follow professional protocol re. documenting letters written by concerned citizens.

David R. Poe
301 N. Morris Street
P.O. Box 163
Oxford, Maryland 21654

September 19, 2024

Commissioners of Oxford
PO Box 339
Oxford, MD 21654-0339

RE: Comments On Proposed Meeting Procedures Circulated at the
Commissioners' Meeting of September 10, 2024

Dear Commissioners:

The following represent my comments as an individual to the proposed Meeting Procedures that were circulated at the last Commissioners' meeting on September 10, 2024.

First, the fundamental approach of having meetings of the Commissioners being driven by an agenda published ahead of time is sound and consistent with the Maryland Public Information Act. There should be an established cut-off date by which agenda items may be proposed so that the agenda may be made available to the public by posting/publication. This procedure will allow all interested citizens to be aware of items coming before the Commissioners for decision, and to express their views to the Commissioners before the meeting during which the items are to be considered. Of course, there needs to be provision for the Commissioners to consider items on an emergency basis, without prior publication, but that should be only if exceptional, unforeseeable circumstances require it.

The preferred method by which citizens should pose their questions and/or state their concerns regarding Town government should be in written form, either in written documents or emails, addressed to all Commissioners. Again, this is consistent with the Maryland Public Information Act. Of course, the Commissioners have the discretion to schedule meetings for the purpose of receiving public oral comment, or to allow a portion of any regular Commissioner meeting to be devoted to receiving such public comment. However, the proposed Meeting Procedures have it essentially right that the regularly scheduled Commissioner meetings should be mostly for the open process of Town government to operate: i.e. to receive information relevant to the needs of the

Town, to consider solutions to the issues presented and to make decisions in the Town's best interests.

Third, reasonable restrictions on personal conduct of members of the public attending meetings of the Commissioners are not only appropriate but necessary. There are dozens if not hundreds of meetings, at all levels of government within Maryland, in which the public is permitted if not encouraged to attend, and most of them have rules of public conduct. Some are judicial, such as the various courts, some are legislative and some are administrative. But all require that public participation and dialogue not be disruptive. In all that I am aware of, the presiding officer has the authority to rule on the orderly conduct of individuals and exclude from further participation those whose conduct is determined to infringe on the rights of others in attendance. Without commenting on the specifics of the public conduct provisions of the proposed Meeting Procedures, I wholeheartedly support the concept.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David R. Poe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "P".

David R. Poe

Members of the Commission:

Comments on the PURPOSE OF THE COMMISSIONER'S MEETING:

#1. Is this document an Ordinance; a Resolution; a Policy?

#2. As to the stated purpose of the proposed changes-the regulations concerning the Personal Video/Audio Taping are reasonable.

#3. The suggested Decorum at the Meeting are acceptable EXCEPT the last statement.

In America, citizens obey the law-not individuals.

PUBLIC COMMENT section would appear to be inconsistent with the Town Charter:

- a. Section C3-4 "the rules of the Commissioners shall provide that the residents of the Town shall have a reasonable opportunity to be heard at any meeting in regard to ANY municipal question."
- b. All citizens should use a standing microphone located in the aisle of the meeting room. All citizens-both in person and streaming- will have a better opportunity to hear the comments.
- c. The statement should be limited to 3 minutes to move the meeting forward in a timely fashion.

Town Charter (Section C3-4)

The only power/responsibility of the elected President is to "preside over the Commission meeting":

Therefore, the President should exercise this responsibility by ensuring the meeting progresses in a timely fashion.

Dorothy Tenenick
Sept. 18, 2024

I present these facts in the hope that they will be considered during any considerations of the future of Oxford.

In 2010, the town of Oxford had a population of 652 taxpayers, 3 Commissioners, 2 staff members in the Town Hall, 2 policemen and 4 maintenance men and 0% population growth. A water bill for a 2-person household was \$89.00 a quarter.

In 2015, the Oxford population was 618 with -0.64% population growth.

In 2020, the Oxford population was 608 with a 0% population growth.

On September 1, 2024, the town of Oxford had a population of 597 taxpayers, 3 Commissioners, 4 staff members (3 on payroll, one slot in process of recruitment) in the Town Hall, 3 policeman and 5 maintenance men with a projected -0.05% population growth. A water bill for a 2-person household is \$318.00 a quarter.

In 2029, the projected population will be 584 taxpayers with a projected -0.34% growth rate.

Given the continuing decline in population-estimated at 1.6% annually - perhaps it is an opportune time to consider the current spending/hiring patterns of the Oxford administration.

Dorothy Fenwick, PhD; 211 Tred Avon; taxpayer since 1987

Statistics based on latest US Census estimates (released May 2024). The last official US Census in 2020 recorded the population at 608. *

2010	652 taxpayers	0% growth
2015	618 taxpayers	-0.64%
2020	608 taxpayers	0%
2024	597 taxpayers	-0.03%
2029	584 taxpayers	-0.34% (projected)

Additional data from the World Population Review ([.com/us-cities/maryland/oxford](https://www.worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/maryland/oxford))