

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
Town Hall
Wednesday, February 27, 2019
3:31pm

Mayor Paulin, Vice Mayor Sitoula and Councilman Smith met in work session on Wednesday, February 27, 2019 at the Town Hall. Also, in attendance were Town Manager Ryan Hicks, Town Clerk Andrea Brady and Taylor Yewell, Redevelopment Manager for the Charles County Economic Development Department.

January 23, 2019 Closed Session – Wednesday, January 23, 2019, the Mayor and Council held a closed session with Town Manager Hicks at 4:38pm per Statutory Authority for Closed Session Article §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 this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals. The Council discussed Town Manager Hick's contract and decided to extend the contract by 4 years. The closed session adjourned at 4:46pm.

Charles County Economic Development Department – Taylor Yewell, Redevelopment Manager for the Charles County Economic Development Department discussed potential funding sources and new opportunities available based on HUB and Opportunity zone designations.

Mr. Yewell started by discussing Sustainable Community grants, such as financing programs through the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Department of Transportation and the Department of the Environment. Mr. Yewell also discussed tax credit programs and incentives, and Sustainable Maryland Certified incentives. The Council shared that the Town is working towards a Sustainable Community designation. Councilman Smith told Mr. Yewell that the Town is considering hiring a grant writer on a contractual basis, that the Town has the designations but that the staff does not have the resources to go after the available grants. Mr. Yewell stated that the EDD might be able to help the Town with grants on a case by case basis. Mr. Yewell provided the Council with the CDBG program policies and procedures manual. The Town has previously received demolition grants through DHCD. Mr. Yewell discussed the Maryland Bikeways Program and offered to send the Council information for the County's contact in the Department of Transportation.

Mr. Yewell discuss the importance for the Council to figure out the Town's needs and wants and then prioritize them and revisit the funding source information on a case by case basis. Councilman Smith brought up the water quality revolving loan fund, as a possible funding source for the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Town Manager Hicks explained that it is a loan not a grant, but the Town has tapped into water quality funds through a \$30,000 grant each year. The Council discussed that if the Town endeavors to go down the path of a green plant the water quality loan program may be worth considering. Vice Mayor Sitoula asked about well funding. Town Manager Hicks explained that the funds had to be used to replace a screen at the WWTP.

Mr. Yewell and the Council discussed HUB zones, and how they tie into small businesses. Small businesses with a HUB zone designation can compete contracts that have been set aside for that zone. Mayor Paulin shared that AVSI is going through the process to become a HUB designated business. As a HUB zone designated business, you have to have 35% of your employees living within the HUB zone. Mr. Yewell suggested that the owners of AVSI could be used to advise on the HUB zone process.

Mr. Yewell stated that Indian Head qualifies for a lot of CDBG programs. The qualifier is area median income and HUD guidelines. Mr. Yewell explained that if you look at Indian Head overall, the Town is too prosperous for several CDBG programs. However, you can carve out geographies and do a geography specific household survey to qualify for those programs. Town Manager Hicks stated that the Town has utilized that program in Woodland Village previously.

Mr. Yewell recommended identifying projects and put in the ground work now for DHCD funding for 2020 projects. Vice Mayor suggested that the funding may be a good option for the stormwater work on Poplar. Mr. Yewell said that Cindy Wood is the County's contact at DHCD, he would be happy to share her contact information, and she is familiar with Indian Head. Mr. Yewell said the Council can always come to the County, and the County has put in funding for previous projects within the Town.

Mr. Yewell recently met with Charles McPherson of CMI and received an update on the Velocity Center project. Mr. Yewell stated that the Velocity Center does not qualify to take advantage of the Opportunity Zone. Mr. Yewell discussed the investment of capital gains into opportunity funds for Opportunity zones and how taxes are handled with those investments. Mr. Yewell stressed the importance of promoting the Opportunity Zone for any property improvements in Town. Mr. Yewell shared that during his discussion with Mr. McPherson, he mentioned being involved with potential development of the Phillips property. Mayor Paulin spoke about his recent conference in Annapolis where there seemed to be a lot of legislators interested in investing more funds into the Opportunity Zone program. Mr. Yewell shared that the County will be holding their own Opportunity Zone seminar on May 2nd at the Waldorf West library. The Opportunity Zone applies to not only real estate it also applies to businesses. Mr. Yewell said he is open to suggestions on how to promote and market the Opportunity Zone and he plans to add the Velocity Center information to the State website.

The Council thanked Mr. Yewell for attending. Mr. Yewell said a lot of this will be done project by project, but the EDD is happy to help and they are available to answer any questions and will gladly speak with investors to help promote the available incentives. Vice Mayor Sitoula discussed Indian Head's need for a library, asked for Mr. Yewell's help promoting that need.

Velocity Center Update – Mayor Paulin gave an update on the Velocity Center project. The College of Southern Maryland is looking for a letter of support to help them pursue operational dollars via grants and appropriations from the State. The developer has also asked that Council consider future budget funding and utility support for the Velocity Center.

Water Bill Extension Ordinance – Councilman Smith suggested putting an Ordinance in place that will lay out how the utility bills of furloughed employees will be handled, so the plan is in

place in the event of future furloughs. Town Manager Hicks will email the Town's attorney to see what he thinks and find out how he thinks it should be handled. Mayor Paulin discussed the need to set guidelines and timeframes. Town Manager Hicks will reach out to Mr. Sussman for examples and thoughts.

Boardwalk Progress – Town Manager Hicks explained that Mark Harman from ARRO will give updates on the permit process, where they stand currently, what the next step is, and anything else the Council would want information on in relation to the Boardwalk project. Councilman Smith expressed concern over the maintenance of the Boardwalk. Town Manager Hicks explained that there will be man hours that have to be set aside, just like other maintenance areas, but it will add a burden on public works. Councilman Smith feels a support strategy needs to be defined and then presented to the public. Vice Mayor Sitoula asked for the length of construction and suggest also leaving an opportunity for the new Council to have a say in any strategies moving forward. Vice Mayor Sitoula said he has been waiting for this project for 15 years and he is ready to see it. Town Manager Hicks will ask Mark to discuss the design and length of construction. Council agreed to address the maintenance strategy.

Village Green & Pavilion Projects – Councilman Smith asked for a timeline on the Village Green Restrooms project. Town Manager Hicks explained that the Town's match for the grant is in kind services such as running the water and sewer lines. The pavilion area will look similar to the picnic pavilion at Mattingly park and Town Manager Hicks gave a history on the project to this point. Town Manager Hicks will check with SHA to get an update so he can provide an updated timeline to the Council. Town Manager Hicks discussed the smaller project that took place at the memorial where public works power washed and capped it, which extended the life expectancy of the memorial. The Town will be planting trees with the elementary school each year on the Village Green and there are some sidewalk projects that will be done, but they will be done in conjunction with sidewalk projects through Town and the Town could possibly leverage a Sustainable Community grant for the project.

Grant Acquisition Strategy – Councilman Smith explained that he asked Mr. Yewell to come to the work session because as the Town builds their relationship with the County, they have a lot of resources and information that could be helpful. Councilman Smith stated that he applauds the staff on the grants that the Town has been able to get over the years, but with the new designations this is prime time to have an acquisition strategy and he advocates using a third party grant writer, if there is funding to pay them something for their efforts, and if there are grants available that they can leverage payment through. The Council agreed that a list of criteria should be put together before reaching out to potential grant writers. Mayor Paulin asked what the cost would be for a third-party grant writer and how many vendors would the Town need to solicit quotes from. Vice Mayor Sitoula suggested reaching out to the Maryland Municipal League to gather some information on what has been done in the past, and to get an idea of the expected cost. Councilman Smith offered to reach out to the National League of Cities. Town Manager Hicks asked Council to keep in mind that there will still be a considerable amount of work from staff, to help get the information that is needed for any grants that are applied for. Town Manager Hicks will reach out to MML for further information.

March Town Meeting Agenda – No changes.

Roundtable:

Mayor – None

Vice Mayor – None

Councilman – Councilman Smith discussed that the Council consulted the Town's attorney, Mr. Sussman about the plumbing issue at the Black Box and they received the needed guidance that they can use moving forward with any other building rentals. Town Manager Hicks reported that public works will be doing the plumbing repair, and they are currently waiting on the Black Box to remove the stage so work can begin. At this time it looks like the stage should be moved Thursday, and public works will do the work on Friday and Saturday and complete the work the following week. Currently the Black Box is not scheduling anything in the facility until the work is complete and they plan to address the low flow toilet issue. Councilman Smith stated that FEMA has a youth preparedness council and he would like to have information posted on the Town's Facebook page to get the youths in Town to participate. Councilman Smith asked Town Manager Hicks if there were any areas of concern following the additional extension on the audit through March 31st. Town Manager Hicks explained that there are no areas of concern for the audit but having enough help to complete the audit each year is a concern that he will be working on addressing through part-time office help. Councilman Smith told Council that the County is doing an Opportunity Zone podcast. Councilman Smith was not sure where the County is with the development of it, but to stay tuned for that. When Councilman Smith had spoken with Taylor Yewell, he said to have a list ready for the available grant opportunities. The Council will need to understand grant opportunities, get a grant writer and have a list of projects. Councilman Smith stated that Town Manager Hick's list of shovel ready projects could be used for this moving forward. Town Manager Hicks discussed the need for new wells and well repairs, and these projects would only require going to the engineer for fresh numbers. Councilman Smith stated that this past weekend he presented a seal to Ms. Swann on her 93rd birthday, and the family asked that he extend their gratitude to the Council.

Town Manager – Town Manager Hicks mentioned an email that was sent to the Council in reference to community conversation events that are being held by the United Way of Charles County in March at the Senior Center to get the community's input for the proposed Family Enrichment Center. The first community conversation event will be held on March 16th at 10am. Town Manager Hicks received an email from Karen Williams in reference to a request she received from Mr. Ashburn of the NAACP to hold candidate forums for the candidates running in the Town's election sometime in April. Mr. Ashburn is asking for the Council's consideration of allowing use of the pavilion for free for the event. Vice Mayor Sitoula was opposed to free use since the election year has already begun and members of Council may be running for reelection. Town Manager Hicks explained that the NAACP is suggesting holding it here at the Village Green since it would be for the candidates for this Council and the voters in this area. Councilman Smith stated that the NAACP did candidate forums at the County level, and possibly State level and he did not understand being opposed to allowing the use of the Pavilion. Mayor Paulin stated that since he has already filed his candidate packet for the election, he was not sure if it would be considered a conflict of interest for him to vote on the matter and asked

for legal counsel guidance before moving forward with a vote. Town Manager Hicks will have the Town Clerk email the Town's attorney in the morning to check with him on any potential conflict before a decision is made.

Town Clerk – None

Mayor Paulin adjourned the work session at 4:31pm.


Andrea Brady, Town Clerk