

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES
Town Hall
Wednesday, February 28, 2018
3:30pm

Mayor Paulin, Vice Mayor Sitoula and Councilman Smith met in work session on Wednesday, January 24, 2018 at the Town Hall. Also, in attendance were Town Manager Hicks, Town Clerk Andrea Brady, Judy Lathrop of Atlantic Canoe & Kayak Co., and Maryland Independent reporter, Charlie Wright.

Atlantic Canoe & Kayak Co. Lease & Improvements - Ms. Lathrop wanted to meet with Council to discuss extending the lease and provided an example of the advertising they are planning to do to increase outreach. Ms. Lathrop gave a background on the relationships the company has with other groups who come for classes and other services. Ms. Lathrop is requesting a five-year lease without any changes to the terms. Ms. Lathrop also spoke with the Council about improvements she would like to see at the property. Drainage is one improvement Ms. Lathrop would like to see since she said the current drainage is an issue and can be a hazard. Mr. Hicks stated that he could have ARRO come down and design a plan and have Public Works implement the plans with the approval of the Council. The work would be a couple of months out due to other projects in line before it. The work would come out of the parks fund. Ms. Lathrop stated that her company uses the facility around 6 months out of the year. Ms. Lathrop had proposed to have a heat system put in with the assistance of the County but there has not been movement at this time. Councilman Smith asked what the facility would be used for during the 6 months that the business is inactive. Ms. Lathrop stated that the materials used during the active 6 months remains in the building. Town Manager Hicks asked what it would take to make the business be open a full year. Ms. Lathrop stated that the heating would be the main thing and discussed the plans she had for propane heat. Ms. Lathrop would like to reach an agreement where her company would not be paying for both heat and rent since the winter programs would not be making revenue since they would be nature center activities. Councilman Smith asked if Ms. Lathrop has tracked how many residents have been served, but no tracking has been done. Councilman Smith stated that knowing how many residents are being served would be helpful and show how Southern Maryland is benefiting. Ms. Lathrop stated that they are working with Charles County for camp activities and discussed other programs that have been done locally and provided a summary of programs to the Council. Vice Mayor Sitoula recommended that the Town consider doing a Bond Bill in the future for the benefit and upgrade of the facility and agreed with Councilman Smith that it would be beneficial to keep a log book. Councilman Smith stated that the Town could even work with Charles County Tourism to help promote the location. Ms. Lathrop is hoping to take part in the Taste of Indian Head and offer discounts to help bring people down, and become involved in Astronomy Night to offer sunset trips. Town Manager Hicks reminded Council the three items on the floor are the lease, heat and drainage. Ms. Lathrop is going to reach out to the County again in reference to the heat. The Council agrees to move forward with coming up with a plan for the drainage issue. Councilman Smith suggested that a five-year lease may be too long, and would suggest further discussion amongst the Council. Vice Mayor Sitoula suggested a two-year lease to leave the options open for both Ms. Lathrop and the Council. Ms. Lathrop stated that as a business owner certainty is important and without certainty it makes it harder to try to build the business. Councilman Smith stated that if

the Council wants it to be a recreational facility it would be prudent to do an RFP to include all the things that the Council wants it to be and see who the best candidate to provide those things. Mayor Paulin asked for clarification on what the RFP would be for exactly. Councilman Smith stated that it would be for whatever the Council would like to see the facility be, to be a good steward of the Town's facilities similar to what was done with broadband. Ms. Lathrop stated that with all due respect your previous tenant was there for 7 years without paying rent and did nothing, and that her business has done so much out of the goodness of their heart to provide something to the Town and the County and she would feel inclined to walk if an RFP was going to be put out. Councilman Smith stated that the previous tenant was prior to this Council, and he would like to discuss this further amongst the Council. Ms. Lathrop asked to have an answer in a week if possible and she is willing to do a three-year lease at the lowest. Vice Mayor Sitoula's recommendation is that since the lease has been in place and there has been a positive impact he would be willing to allow a three-year lease. Mayor Paulin agreed that the Council should move forward with a three-year lease under the same terms and rent. Ms. Lathrop asked that if the heat is put in place that the Town consider in the slower 6 months they either paying the heat and they would pay the rent, or her company would pay the heat and the Town would waive the rent. Town Manager Hicks explained that the Town will not cover utilities, and if the Council ends up agreeing to put in a \$7,000 heating system they will need to find a way to see return on investment. Ms. Lathrop will reach out to the County and the Council will discuss the heat further in the future. There will be a three-year lease on the same terms. The Town will move forward with the drainage improvement, and Ms. Lathrop will reach out to the County in reference to the heat.

Fireworks Proposals – Two proposals were submitted, one from Innovative Pyrotechnic Concepts and Fantastic Fireworks. Council unanimously agreed to move forward with IPC since they have consistently provided the Town with an excellent fireworks display without issue.

Healthy Working Families Act Amendment – Town Manager Hicks explained that this came from the Town's attorney, Fred Sussman and it is something the Town has to implement into the personnel policy. Town Manager Hicks asked the Council to review it and decide when they would like to place it on the Town meeting agenda for introduction and adoption. Councilman Smith asked that Town Manager Hicks look into the accrual rate and what is comparable to other municipalities because it looks low and the Council needs to be prepared to make incremental changes to help maintain employees. Town Manager Hicks checked with the Finance Department and reported to Council that the current accrual rate is 1.85 (96 hours a year), employees can carry as much sick leave as they choose but if they leave they only get paid out for 25%. Councilman Smith asked for a mock up on what the numbers look like and a comparison with other municipalities. The Council will review the numbers provided before deciding when to place it on the agenda.

Taste of Indian Head– Town Manager Hicks reported that Karen Williams has sent several emails to the Business Association to attempt to meet and work together on the Taste of Indian Head event, but has received no response and in order for the Town and the Business Association to work as partners in this there needs to be communication. Ms. Williams has done all communication via email to maintain a log of all attempted communication. Town Manager Hicks suggested Mayor Paulin try to bridge the gap to put together a meeting to begin the

discussions/partnership for the event with the understanding that if the partnership does not happen the Council stated that Ms. Williams will be solely in charge of the event moving forward. Council would also like Ms. Williams to continue moving forward with the plans she is working on and if the partnership occurs to integrate the plans with the Business Association plans.

Review of March Town Meeting Agenda – Councilman Smith asked what mechanism is in place to keep track of issues that are brought up at the Town meeting to allow them to be brought up at the next Town meeting. The Council would like to have this addressed under the Town Manager's report. Councilman Smith asked if there is a way to provide more context with the finance report for example current numbers versus last years numbers. Town Manager Hicks said the report is required by the Rules of Engagement, you are required to let the citizens know the status of the finances. The Council discussed the different options for the finance report and Town Manager Hick's had Finance Officer Ginger Foster join the meeting to discuss it further. Ms. Foster explained that the current format for the finance report could be changed to provide a more extensive report with software that is available, but she could put together any comparison they are requesting. Following further discussion, the Council decided that Ms. Foster should focus on completing the financial policies and procedures and the finance report will remain the same at this time. There were no changes to the agenda.

Roundtable:

Mayor – Mayor Paulin forwarded an email to the Council for consideration to rezone 10 Raymond Avenue. AVSI would like to turn the property into a machine shop. The property is currently zoned residential. Councilman Smith asked for clarification on what the machine shop would be and asked if it would violate the Town's noise ordinance at all. Mayor Paulin will schedule a meeting with AVSI to get more information and the Council will discuss the matter further at a future meeting.

Vice Mayor – Thanked Councilman Smith for the wonderful and successful STEAM program and thanked Town Manager Hicks for his work to move the truck that was in River Watch and other vehicles in the Town lot and the HOA is fine with the striping of River Watch Blvd.

Councilman – Councilman Smith discussed a project called Girl Noticed that would like to partner with the Town's Parks & Rec to do a mural on the side of the Black Box Theater facing Indian Head Avenue. They would like to have workshops on June 15th at the Pavilion. Councilman Smith explained that in the program women submit their proposals then the first day would be workshops and the second day would be painting the mural. In the case of inclement weather, the painting would be done in the Pavilion on a canvas and then it would be hung on the building. The organization would like the mural to remain there for 30 to 60 days. Councilman stated this would take place at no cost to the Town. Town Manager Hicks suggested that since it will be painted on the Black Box the Council consider discussing the project with ETC since they are renting the upper level of the building just as a courtesy. The mural would be a portrait. The Council all like the idea and Councilman Smith will work out more details. The mural will include a town resident and Councilman Smith stated that the event should be a big deal for the Town. Councilman Smith will need the 15th and 16th for the event but will not need the 17th. Councilman Smith brought up potential salary increases for the Council and asked Mr. Hicks to

look at a comparison to salaries for other municipalities. Mayor Paulin was not in favor of an increase. The salary was doubled previously. Councilman Smith explained that an increased salary could potentially be an incentive for people to run for office. Vice Mayor Sitoula is not in favor of an increase at this time and would suggest allowing the next Council to take on the topic for the Council that would serve after them. Town Manager Hicks will provide the Council with the information on what other municipalities are being paid. The Council will review the information and discuss the topic further at a later date.

Town Manager -- Town Manager Hicks informed the Council that it is a struggle to keep a skilled workforce in Public Works. The Town does not compete with salary or benefits and may see some turnover. The pipe for Jennifer Drive should get delivered Friday or Monday. The road is partially closed at this time, but work will start as soon as the pipe comes in. Town Manager Hicks informed Council about Ms. Parker's request to have Parker Harley Place serviced due to ruts, but it is not a Town road. In an emergency situation repairs were done in the past as a safety concern only. No Highway User revenue is received for the maintenance of Parker Harley Place and it is a private drive. The Council was unanimous that the Town will not repair the road since it is not Town owned. Town Manager Hicks said budget sessions will be every Wednesday at 1pm through March, with information in the DropBox prior to each weekend.

Town Clerk -- None

Mayor Paulin adjourned the meeting at 4:53pm.


Andrea Brady, Town Clerk