

TOWN COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

Town Hall

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

3:30pm

Mayor Paulin and Councilman Smith met in work session on Wednesday, March 27, 2019 at the Town Hall. Also, in attendance were Town Manager Ryan Hicks, Town Clerk Andrea Brady and Dyotha Sweat of the NAACP. Vice Mayor Sitoula joined the meeting remotely.

Mayor Paulin made a motion to allow Vice Mayor Sitoula to join the meeting remotely due to geographic distance. Councilman Smith seconds the motion. Motion carried.

NLC Service Line Program – Town Manager Hicks recently spoke with an NLC representative about their Service Line Warranty Program and he provided the Council with a letter from Scott Hancock, Executive Director of the Maryland Municipal League endorsing the program, and a marketing agreement for their review. Town Manager Hicks explained that the program basically takes care of everything the Town does not take care of for the utility lines, for example with a sewer back up that isn't the Town's responsibility this program would allow the resident to deal with the company to assist with taking care of the issue. The program would service their exterior plumbing and interior plumbing and there would be a monthly fee to the resident. It is provided through the National League of Cities and the Town of La Plata is currently a part of the program. Correspondence sent out to the residents would have the town seal so they would know it is affiliated with the town. The Council asked to have the Town's attorney Fred Sussman review the agreement, to make sure the Town will not have any obligations should there be any issues. Once Mr. Sussman's response is received it will be forwarded to Council for their review and decision.

Town Vision, Mission & Guiding Principles – While assisting with a budget course for the University of Maryland, Vice Mayor Sitoula started doing research and found that the Town should have a Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles in place. Vice Mayor Sitoula stated that the City of Gaithersburg has this available on their website and suggested it could be used as a resource to move forward with putting this together for the Town. Vice Mayor Sitoula asked that Town Manager Hicks provide a recommendation for review and discussion by the Council at the next work session. Council agreed to move forward with the research process to come up with the Town's Visions, Mission and Guiding Principles, to allow the next Council the chance to review it following the May 14th appointment. Mayor Paulin shared that he has been approached in reference to some of the new developments in Town and thinks an architectural vision would be beneficial with the involvement of stakeholders and should be included while coming up with the Town vision. The gathered information will eventually be made part of an existing Town document such as the Zoning Ordinance or the Comprehensive Plan. Council agreed to move forward with all items discussed.

Proclamation: National Arab American Heritage Month – Council received a request to present a proclamation at the next Town meeting in recognition of National Arab American Heritage Month. The Council agreed to move forward with the proclamation at the April Town meeting. Councilman Smith suggested going through the proclamations done previously and start

rereading them under old business as a reminder of the different recognitions. Mayor Paulin agreed. Town Clerk Brady will review the previously adopted proclamations to provide a list to the Council.

NLC CCC Recap – Councilman Smith shared a recap on the recent National League of Cities conference that he and Vice Mayor Sitoula attended. Councilman Smith spoke about a discussion with the Economic Development Committee on 5G and some legislation going forward on the federal level to push for 5G in rural areas. Councilman Smith stated that he has reached out to the Town’s partners in Verizon and while they have marginal interest in doing 5G they are not doing anymore franchise agreements currently and he feels the Town will need to look into alternatives to use the existing fiber. Councilman Smith also spoke about Water and Waste Treatment funding grants that the Town could possibly leverage to make the treatment facility more Green and stated he will send info to Town Manager Hicks. Councilman Smith expressed that the NLC conference was a good networking event and he feels the Council needs to take advantage of attending the events and being active in the committees. Councilman Smith is currently part of the Economic Development Committee and is potentially going to be involved in the IT committee. Vice Mayor Sitoula stated that he found the event to be very useful and discussed the higher level of youth involvement at this conference. Vice Mayor Sitoula also spoke about a round table session that was held with Federal Government officials, and the grand funding information he received that he will share with the Town Manager.

Mildred Hodges 100th Birthday Town seal – The Council received several requests for Town seals including a request for Kenny Blue District II station clerk who is retiring, the American Legion’s 100th birthday celebration and the Randolph Furey Post 170’s 73 years of service, and a request for a seal to celebrate Mildred Hodge’s 100th birthday. The Council unanimously agreed to move forward with all the requested seals, and they will also do a proclamation for the Legion’s 100th birthday celebration.

April Town Meeting Agenda – The Council asked to add the National Arab American month proclamation to the agenda.

Roundtable:

Mayor – Mayor Paulin recently had a conversation with Dough Meeker of Elm Street Development, who is under contract for the CIRI property and he is requesting the Council’s consideration of waiving the Water Front District impact fee. Town Manager Hicks explained that it is a fee that was put in place by previous Council which he believes was to offset the cost of the Boardwalk. Town Manager Hicks will look into the fee further to provide Council with information for their review prior to making a decision on the request. Mayor Paulin also received an email from Ms. Savoy who is planning the youth led suicide walk on March 30th to find out if the Parks and Rec Commission has color run materials they could donate to be used at the event. Councilman Smith will donate the color run materials on behalf of the Parks and Rec Commission, and he asked that Ms. Savoy email him directly to set up a time to receive the materials.

Vice Mayor – None

Councilman – Councilman Smith asked what the Town’s responsibilities are in reference to the situation at George’s Ribs, which has been a vital part of the Town. The Health Dept is handling the health concerns at the property and the Town will be addressing the parking lot and building issues through code enforcement. Councilman Smith wants to try the trolley program again for Lackey pool for three weekends in July for town residents if the trolley is running. Councilman Smith received an application from Jacqui Jackson who is interested in being appointed to the Parks and Rec Commission. After reviewing the application, the Council agreed to appoint Ms. Jackson to Parks and Rec and the Resolution will be added to the April Town meeting agenda. Councilman Smith received a call to participate in a candidate forum by Dem Vets who plans to use the Black Box. Councilman Smith thought the Council was against organizations using town facilities for candidate forums and brought up the request submitted by the NAACP to use the pavilion, and he asked to know the details for the Dem Vets use of the Black Box, and if the NAACP could use the Black Box as well. Town Manager Hicks explained that since the Black Box handles their own schedule, he does not have the details of their use of the facility, but he did not see why the NAACP couldn’t use the facility as well. Dyotha Sweat, President of the local NAACP explained that she was at the work session as a civil rights leader to request access to the Village Green Pavilion to host a town hall for the upcoming election in May and she had received an email back from Karen stating they could use the facility but they would have to pay the required fee. Ms. Sweat explained that the NAACP has used the facility previously with a waiver of the fee and she is requesting the same consideration. Ms. Sweat explained that the NAACP is in the business of educating the public on who is running, and how they are beneficial to the citizens of the town. Ms. Sweat also spoke about the upcoming 2020 and the importance of getting an accurate count to help bring funding to the area. Town Manager Hicks spoke about his recent meeting with Census representatives. Ms. Sweat explained that the forum will also be used as a means to build a relationship with the residents now prior to the Census so they are not looking at strangers and wanting to know why they are asking questions about their home. The NAACP is asking to have this town hall forum to get the residents out of their homes and into one location not just for the candidates but to also discuss the Census. Vice Mayor Sitoula asked why the Town would we need this event when a meet and greet will be done at the May Town meeting and when he ran in 2015 no candidate forums were held. Vice Mayor Sitoula felt that Indian Head is a small enough town with an event in place where the residents can come in to meet the candidates. Vice Mayor stated that if the forum is being done for the 2020 census, he could understand the use, but he would be opposed to giving the facility for free when for a candidate forum. Ms. Sweat explained the event would be 2 hours. Vice Mayor stated that the candidates already have a forum in May, and he is not for free use, using tax payer money. Town Manager Hicks explained that the meet and greet at the May Town meeting is not really a forum and the Council has granted free use of the facility for other groups in the past. Mayor Paulin and Councilman Smith are both in favor of granting free use of the Pavilion for the 2-hour event. Without a unanimous agreement the Council could not grant the request. Councilman Smith offered to cover the usage fee, and Mayor Paulin and Town Manager Hicks offered to split the fee with him. Ms. Sweat informed the Council that she would be making a statement about the decision since the NAACP was allowed free use before, that she came to the meeting in good faith to discuss what they plan to do, and they are receiving push back for those plans. Following Ms. Sweat leaving the meeting, the Council and Town Manager Hicks discussed the request further and the Council was able to reach a unanimous decision to allow the NAACP free use of

the Pavilion. Ms. Sweat will be informed of their final decision and will be sent the necessary paperwork for the event.

Town Manager – Town Manager Hicks reported that the flood study is moving forward, and a budget amendment will be done. Paving will be done on Poplar between East Poplar and Sixth Street to address the pothole and the paving will take place Thursday, March 28th. Town Manager Hicks explained that they will just overlaying that section at this time and the other areas will be done following the flood study to prevent the need to remove any new pavement once the suggested course of action is received. The pothole was caused by the large amount of rain. Town Manager Hicks has already spoken with Mr. Posey to provide him the updated information. Town Manager Hicks gave the Council a request from Rainbow Construction for a reduction in fees. Vice Mayor Sitoula suggested deferring the decision to Town Manager Hicks since he has the best knowledge of the history behind those fees. Town Manager Hicks will provide the Council with further information before a final decision is made.

Town Clerk – Town Clerk Brady discussed the upcoming MML summer conference and went over Fred Sussman’s questions for Council in reference to their requested furlough Ordinance.

Mayor Paulin adjourned the work session at 4:27pm.


Andrea Brady, Town Clerk