

**TOWN OF EASTON, MARYLAND
Easton Town Hall
14 S. Harrison Street**

January 3, 2012

PRESENT AT CONVENING

Mayor Robert C. Willey
Council President John Ford
Councilmember Kelley K. Malone

Councilmember Pete Leshner
Councilmember Leonard E. Wendowski, Sr.
Councilmember Megan M. Cook

IN ATTENDANCE

Also in attendance were the Town Manager Mr. Robert F. Karge, Sr., the Town Attorney Ms. VanEmburch, Town Planner Mr. Lynn B. Thomas and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy Ruf.

CONVENING

At 7:00 p.m., President Ford called the meeting to order.

OPENING PRAYER BY MR. WENDOWSKI AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.

Mr. Wendowski opened the meeting with prayer and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 19, 2011 MEETING.

Upon motion by Mr. Leshner seconded by Ms. Malone and carried unanimously, minutes of the December 19, 2011 meeting were approved as written.

ITEMS BY THE MAYOR.

Mayor Willey said that the Crab Drop that occurred on New Year's Eve was mentioned on the front page of the Wall Street Journal.

CHIEF JAMIE MCNEAL TO PRESENT CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION TO RESPONDING POLICE OFFICERS FOR E OAK STREET FIRE.

Chief Jamie McNeal was present to offer congratulations and Certificates of Appreciation to police officers Pfc. Michelle Schuerholtz, Crpl. Eric Kellner, Pfc. Christopher Manno, and Pfc. Stephen Tindall (not present) that responded to a call with residents asleep in a burning house.

Chief McNeal presented year end statistics. He stated a full report will be presented at the EVFD banquet. Chief McNeal stated that Engine 64 has been put in service. The election for the remaining line officers is this evening.

APPOINTMENT OF MR. CARL TANKERSLEY AND MR. HENRY SHEETS, III TO THE EASTON MAIN STREET BOARD.

Upon motion by Mr. Leshner seconded by Ms. Malone and carried unanimously, the appointment of Mr. Carl Tankersley and Mr. Henry Sheets to the Easton Main Street Board were approved.

ITEMS BY THE TOWN MANAGER.

Mr. Karge discussed Brookletts Avenue speeding issues. He stated that there is still some enforcement going on.

Mr. Hause has advised RTC trail construction is scheduled to be completed in a few weeks.

The staff would like to extend condolences to Mrs. Jackie Patchett Knopp due to the passing of her father and Capt. Mark Waltrup due to the passing of his grandmother.

Mr. Wendowski asked about the position for the electrical contractor.

Mr. Karge stated that it is a contractual position.

ITEMS BY THE TOWN ATTORNEY.

Ms. VanEmburch requested a workshop to discuss redistricting and Charter Amendments in February.

President Ford scheduled the workshop for Wednesday, February 8 at 6:00 PM.

ANNEXATION REQUEST FROM COWDREY THOMPSON FOR 9802 AND 9818 OCEAN GATEWAY.

President Ford remanded the Annexation request to the Planning and Zoning for review and recommendation.

MR. GEOFF OXNAM, EASTON UTILITIES VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS TO PRESENT THE CABLE PROGRAMMING COST ADJUSTMENT.

Mr. Oxnam, Easton Utilities Vice President of Operations presented the cable programming cost adjustment. He discussed the background on how the programming is bought and how the costs are passed to the customers. He stated that there have been aggressive negotiations with the cable programmers to get the best deal for the residents.

CONSENSUS ON LOCUST COMMONS PUD MODIFICATION REQUEST.

Mr. Karge advised that the current road for the Locust Commons development does not meet town standards. He discussed the request for trash services. He stated that as proposed, the streets for Locust Commons would remain private streets.

Mr. Wendowski stated that he cannot support waiving the required sidewalks and the development having private streets.

Ms. Malone stated that she shares Mr. Wendowski's concern regarding the streets. She stated that she is willing to look at options such as a warranty bond but she is not comfortable with the current condition of road.

Ms. Malone and Mr. Wendowski stated that they think sidewalks should be extended further on Locust Street.

Mr. Leshar stated that this is the type of development the council has advocated. He discussed infill development.

Mr. Leshar stated that with the Affordable Housing endorsement, he could consider a \$1,000 contribution per unit.

Mr. Leshar stated that the original application has been adjusted in a positive way; architecturally and much more making the development much more amendable to residents in the neighborhood.

President Ford stated that this is a flawed situation and he is in favor of the original sidewalk configuration. He feels that the only issue is with trash pickup. He stated that he is in favor of trash service simply because it makes living there much more attractive.

The consensus was to approve the project with the following conditions: (1) the sidewalk along Locust Lane that was originally proposed must be constructed; (2) Affordable Housing - \$1,000 contribution per house sold up to \$225,000, 1% of purchase price if above \$225,000; (3) Town trash pickup approved, with no parking signs along radius; (4) Warranty bond for 5 years on road; and (5) Incorporate Planning Commission recommendations.

DISCUSSION OF BAN OR MORATORIUM ON LED SIGNS.

Ms. VanEmburch discussed court findings regarding the ban on LED signs. She stated that the existing signs would be grandfathered although conditions could be put on existing signs.

Ms. VanEmburch asked if the Council would like to consider banning future signs and if they would consider grandfathering conditions.

Mrs. Cook stated she is in favor of banning all LED signs.

Ms. Malone would support a complete ban except gas station prices which are not too offensive.

Ms. VanEmburch stated she will send to a request to the Planning Commission to have them look at as part of their amendments.

Mr. Leshner stated that he would prefer that current signs be regulated for brightness.

President Ford discussed the replacement of signs and them conforming to meeting current standards.

The consensus was to ban all new signs (except gas station signs if they can legally be carved out) and impose standards on existing signs. The Council referred it to the Planning Commission to propose the appropriate standards such as brightness on the existing signs.

ITEMS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL.

Ms. Malone wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Mrs. Cook discussed the Martin Luther King Basketball tournament scheduled for January 16 at 8:00 am – 5:00 pm at Easton Middle School and YMCA.

President Ford discussed the Joint Opportunity Initiative which will affect the four block area in the east end. He stated that the Affordable Housing Coalition is trying to incentivize property maintenance in this area. President Ford stated that the four permits in the four block area would be waived for a two year period and town property taxes would be abated based on increased assessments for seven years.

ADJOURN

At 8:53 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Wendowski seconded by Ms. Malone and carried unanimously, President Ford adjourned the regularly scheduled meeting.

Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk