

55 Mr. Benincasa stated that it should be noted that it hasn't even started yet. He stated they
56 have concerns as well such as handicapped parking. He stated that they have three other
57 plans for consideration.

58 Mr. Silverstein stated he made a mistake voting for it and he wants to correct his mistake.

59 Chief Spencer stated that from their perspective, closing Washington Street, closing the
60 main thoroughfare was not a great idea. Dover and West and Federal and West have had near
61 misses and accidents with the added stop signs. The traffic flow is not going to work and
62 there is a safety issue.

63 President Cook discussed the process and the decision for closing the streets. She stated
64 that the plan had the greatest impact on traffic but was the safest of the plans.

65 Mayor Willey discussed businesses calling and not being in favor of the proposal. He
66 stated the proposal should have been well vetted. Mayor Willey discussed the Fire
67 Department's emergency services. He stated that the proposal should have been tweaked
68 before it got to this.

69 Mr. Jeff Schneider, General Manager Hampton Inn and Board member of Discover
70 Easton stated there have been good points made and people are scared to go out COVID
71 19. He stated that they have been working on this plan for five weeks. Mr. Schneider
72 stated that closing Washington street was not the first consideration; it was decided to
73 implement for safety concerns. He stated that they are just trying to help and there are a
74 lot of people excited for this. Mr. Schneider stated that there are at least five businesses
75 getting ready to close. He stated it is a nasty precedent to consider the pressure from Mr.
76 Prager.

77 Mr. Richard Marks, not a business owner in downtown Easton stated he hopes that this
78 much attention gets paid to overall safety and traffic in town. He discussed humanitarian
79 and fundraising efforts that have shown up on Facebook.

80 Mr. Steve Mangasarian stated he has been downtown for 25 years and lived downtown
81 for 18 years. He stated that closing Washington Street permanently was not discussed
82 with him and he actually feels it hurts businesses in the area. He discussed traffic patterns
83 and concerns. Mr. Mangasarian stated that this has not been thought out. If you want to
84 help businesses, there are other ways to help downtown. Mr. Mangasarian stated he
85 doesn't want Washington Street closed and he doesn't want the extra traffic.

86 Mr. Doug Kirby, General Manager at Washington Street Pub, stated he has been a citizen
87 for 43 years. He stated that fun activities need to be brought to the downtown; things such
88 as St. Michaels and Cambridge are doing. It is an entertainment district and it's time for a
89 change. He stated he has rented tables and ordered \$2,000 in food. He stated that listening
90 to one person is like listening to a terrorist.

91 Captain Wright challenges anyone to say he wasn't vocal about the traffic. He discussed
92 traffic management and stated it was never solved. He stated this project has been rushed.
93 A lot of people are running stop signs. Capt. Wright stated that Washington street is a
94 major corridor and he has stated he has been opposed to this.

95 President Cook asked Capt. Wright if the traffic management obstacles can be overcome.
96 Captain Wright stated that the Police Department has been given two work sessions to fix
97 a problem that deserves a lot more.

98 Mr. Engle stated he was disappointed at the major opposition. Most of the businesses he
99 talked to seemed very positive and this has caught him off guard. Based on the merchants
100 he talked to, they were in favor of the proposal.

101 Mr. Abbatiello stated that the last 24 hours have been very educational in local
102 government. He stated that maybe the idea was rushed. He stated he is learning on the go,
103 and may make mistakes. Mr. Abbatiello stated he should have asked more questions
104 about design and safety. He stated that he hopes the citizens of the town start supporting
105 the downtown as they need to step up and help out.

106 President Cook stated that she feels we need to help downtown businesses. She stated
107 that she has heard complaints from Easton Police Department but feels we need to try
108 something. She stated that other communities are doing this successfully. She stated that
109 she wants to stay flexible and she is not ready to give up on the idea although she feels
110 everything can be improved.

111 Mr. Silverstein stated that the police department has said it's not a good plan. He agrees
112 that businesses need help.

113 Mr. Benincasa stated it's been a tough process. If there's a motion, he wants to
114 immediately have discussions about what would help the businesses downtown.

115 Mrs. Cook asked if there is time to talk to the businesses and get a plan in place.

116 Mr. Benincasa stated there is a financial implication to taking them up and down.

117 Mr. Engle stated he is not in favor of having any type of meeting with not everyone
118 involved.

119 Mr. Paul Prager was present and stated he is in favor of things getting back to how they
120 are. He stated with the proposal, the ambulance has a longer ride to the hospital He stated
121 that s city planning and traffic consultant would be important before a radical decision is
122 made. He asked the council to exercise care and be prudent and thoughtful regarding all
123 the businesses. He stated that the council is required to exercise care and diligence. Mr.
124 Prager asked the council to make legitimate goals with supporting data. He stated that
125 this plan lacks science and it's not safe; it's ugly. The council needs to have the courage
126 to acknowledge the mistake and take it down. Mr. Prager stated he doesn't think the
127 council has done a good job. He stated that the plan is not representative of the care of
128 this community. Mr. Prager stated that he is disappointed in this process and that he has
129 been called a terrorist. He discussed the pandemic and how rules have been established.
130 Mr. Prager stated that the plan has been established by going about it all the wrong way.
131 Mr. Prager stated he deeply loves the community and asked the council to do real
132 planning with real budgets.

133 Mr. Silverstein stated he did vote in favor but is big enough to say he made a mistake.

134 Mr. Silverstein made a motion to remove the barriers, go back to the drawing board and
135 meet with the merchants and see about other ways of assisting them rather than closing
136 the main thorofare thru our community; and if we have to then come back and make
137 some determinations how we can be helpful. The pandemic hopefully will not be here
138 forever and the businesses should be helped with compensation if appropriate because it's
139 not his fault he ordered the food in anticipation of the promenade. He stated he is looking
140 at what the police are telling him and when the public safety experts are saying this is not
141 good and their attorney is going to take a look at the record and come back after us and
142 draining and jeopardize the community. He stated that tomorrow we should start draining
143 and pulling them and come up with different solutions that don't include closing
144 Washington Street.

145 President Cook stated that to be clear, Mr. Silverstein wants to not close Washington
146 Street but continue conversations with businesses for another plan.

147 Mr. Silverstein stated he wants to get everybody, especially business owners in a room to
148 talk about solutions.

149 Mr. Silverstein's motion was seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried 3-0 with President
150 Cook abstaining.

151 At 2:31 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by Mr. Engle and carried
152 unanimously, President Cook adjourned the workshop meeting.

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Respectfully submitted,

155 Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk (approved August 17, 2020)