



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

148 Mr. Silverstein's motion was seconded by Mr. Abbatiello and carried with President  
149 Cook abstaining. The motion passed 3-1.

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

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153 Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk