

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60  
61  
62

**TOWN OF EASTON, MARYLAND  
EASTON TOWN HALL  
14 S HARRISON STREET**

**July 20, 2020**

**PRESENT AT CONVENING.**

Mayor Robert C. Willey  
Councilmember Alan I. Silverstein  
Councilmember Donald M. Abbatiello  
Councilmember Ron E. Engle  
Councilmember Megan M. Cook

Also present was the Town Manager Mr. Don Richardson, Town Attorney Mrs. Sharon VanEmburch, Chief David Spencer of the Easton Police Department, and Town Clerk Mrs. Kathy M. Ruf. Also present was Discover Easton/Easton Business Alliance Director Ross Benincasa.

**CALL TO ORDER BY PRESIDENT COOK.**

At 5:30 p.m., President Cook called the meeting to order. President Cook stated that due to COVID restrictions, the Council's Chambers has limited seating. President Cook stated that the meeting can be viewed online on the MCTV Facebook page, Vimeo and Easton Utilities Channel 98 as well as links for all of the above on EastonMD.gov. Comments can be sent to the Mayor and Council electronically. She stated that if you are here for the promenade discussion, there will be limited discussion later in the agenda. She stated that once the business meeting takes place Thursday morning, additional proposals will be considered.

**OPENING REMARKS BY MR. ABBATIELLO AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.**

Mr. Abbatiello gave opening remarks and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**MAYOR WILEY TO ADMINISTER OATH OF OFFICE TO 4<sup>TH</sup> WARD COUNCILMEMBER, REV. ELMER NEAL DAVIS, JR. FOR THE REMAINDER OF A 4-YEAR TERM EXPIRING MAY 2021.**

Mayor Willey administered the Oath of Office to Rev. Elmer Neal Davis, Jr. as Councilmember Ward 4 for the remainder of a four-year term.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JULY 6 COUNCIL MEETING, JULY 8, AND JULY 14, 2020 WORKSHOPS.**

Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, minutes of the July 6, July 8 and July 14 meetings and workshops were approved.

**ITEMS BY THE MAYOR.**

**DISCUSSION OF TOWN OF EASTON NAMING POLICY.**

Mayor Willey discussed a naming policy proposal for members of the community.

President Cook asked if it could be sent to the Park Board before a vote.

Mayor Willey stated that he had spoken briefly with Mrs. Gould, Director of Parks and Recreations and she was ok with the procedure. He stated he will attend the next Park Board meeting to discuss.

Mr. Silverstein discussed the exclusions of the policy and the procedure for the submission of an application.

63 Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle and carried unanimously, the  
64 naming procedure was approved.

65  
66 Mayor Willey read a statement regarding the recent pandemic and a communications lapse  
67 between entities. He discussed the AKRF Study which included a courtyard proposal  
68 behind Washington Street.

69  
70 Mayor Willey stated that he has asked Ms. Natalie Slater to sit in on various Economic  
71 Development meetings and report back to the council. He stated that the council will get  
72 written reports.

73  
74 Mr. Silverstein asked if Ms. Slater would report directly to Mayor Willey and in turn  
75 Mayor Willey will report to the Council. Mayor Willey stated that is correct.

76  
77 Upon motion by Mr. Silverstein, seconded by Mr. Engle, Natalie Slater's position as the  
78 liaison was approved.

79  
80 **ITEMS BY THE TOWN MANAGER.**

81  
82 Town Manager Mr. Richardson offered congratulations to Rev. Davis for his 4<sup>th</sup> Ward  
83 appointment.

84  
85 **ITEMS BY THE TOWN ATTORNEY.**

86  
87 Town Attorney Mrs. VanEmburch stated that she has nothing at this time but will discuss  
88 the Dutchman Lane Annexation later.

89  
90 **RK&K TANYARD BRANCH MODEL PRESENTATION.**

91  
92 Ms. Sierra Crist, Planner/GIS Analyst, on behalf of Rick VanEmburch, Town Engineer  
93 introduced Patrick D. Hager, PE, Director Utilities and Nicholas S. Riley, EIT Engineer  
94 RK&K to discuss the Tanyard Branch Model study which includes about a third of the  
95 town; approximately 880 acres.

96  
97 Mr. Hager stated that the study gives the town the ability to make informed decisions with  
98 this tool when it comes to flooding. It can also be used with proposed developments. Nick  
99 Riley, Hydraulic Engineer discussed the process of how they made the model. He stated  
100 they also looked at impervious coverage which contributes to pooling and flooding. Mr.  
101 Riley discussed the analysis of level of service.

102  
103 Overland flooding was discussed should a severe storm occur.

104  
105 Mr. Silverstein questioned the process to sleeve a pipe.

106  
107 Mr. Hager stated the Tanyard Branch study has been wrapped up.

108  
109 Ms. Crist with the Town can update with more data and when changes and upgrades occur.  
110 She stated that they would like to see all the watersheds studied throughout town.

111  
112 **WASHINGTON STREET DISCUSSION.**

113  
114 Mr. Richardson stated that the town set up the promenade, the closure of the northbound  
115 parking spaces on Washington Street. It was set up in 90 minutes by Public Works.  
116 Breakdown happened early Monday morning in approximately 60 minutes which included  
117 draining the water barriers. Mr. Richardson stated that Chief Spencer is present this  
118 evening should there be any questions regarding traffic or how the event went.

119  
120 Mr. Benincasa reported on the three businesses in the area where the businesses were  
121 affected on Washington Street. He discussed safety concerns from patrons regarding  
122 outdoor seating. Mr. Benincasa stated that they prefer the Rehoboth model which utilizes

123 the parking space for pedestrian access and uses the full sidewalk for dining. EEDC will  
124 facilitate a business meeting on Thursday at 8:00 a.m. at the Waterfowl building with a  
125 virtual component to discuss what the businesses need.

126  
127 Rev. Davis asked for clarification regarding communication components.

128  
129 Mr. Benincasa stated he should have included service-based businesses in the downtown  
130 area and he intends to do a better job of making sure all businesses are included. Mr.  
131 Benincasa stated there was a haste to this plan.

132  
133 Rev. Davis stated that his concern was that there should have been communication with  
134 businesses that may have adverse impact.

135  
136 President Cook stated that a process has been established with the business meeting  
137 Thursday. She asked for a consensus if the council wants to see this carried thru for the  
138 next two weeks or consider a fact-finding mission.

139  
140 Mr. Abbatiello asked if businesses would be heard to share how their weekend went. He  
141 stated he would also like to hear from the Chief of Police.

142  
143 Chief Spencer stated there were no calls for service related to the promenade.

144  
145 Mr. Prager asked if he could make comment. Mrs. Cook stated that public comment would  
146 be heard at the end of the meeting.

147  
148 Mrs. Cook asked for council's thoughts.

149  
150 Mr. Silverstein stated that there was some measure of success and he doesn't have a  
151 problem moving forward for the next couple of weeks. He asked that handicapped  
152 accessibility issues be considered in the walkways.

153  
154 Mr. Abbatiello made a motion to close the parking again 7/25 thru 8/3, the next scheduled  
155 council meeting, and see how it works on a longer period of time while we continue to  
156 investigate further opportunities.

157  
158 Mrs. Cook asked if Mr. Abbatiello wanted the parking spots closed Monday thru Friday.  
159 He clarified yes, just for those restaurants.

160  
161 Mr. Silverstein stated he drove downtown today and there were a lot of people parked in  
162 those parking spaces. He suggested continuing Friday, Saturday and Sunday only and see  
163 how that works out as this was the original experiment.

164  
165 Rev. Davis stated it it's an experiment, he is in favor of continuing Friday, Saturday and  
166 Sunday. He stated he has not heard all aspects and he would like to hear a little more. He  
167 stated he has concerns about safety.

168  
169 Mr. Benincasa stated he has concerns regarding safety as well.

170  
171 Mayor Willey stated he plans to be at EPD during rollcall. He discussed observations  
172 submitted by Lt. Wright. Mayor Willey asked that the motion be withdrawn until we get a  
173 chance what needs to be approved and what the ideas are.

174  
175 Mr. Abbatiello withdrew the motion.

176  
177 Mr. Silverstein made a motion to continue the next two weekends as configured; Friday,  
178 Saturday and Sunday and look at creating a walkway adjacent to the barriers so the tables  
179 can go on the sidewalks; with handicapped accessibility; seconded by Mr. Engle and  
180 carried.

181 Mr. Benincasa stated they work extremely well with EEDC but hearing concerns regarding  
182 if the town can fund two economic development corporations, they have concerns with  
183 someone not being a town employee being the liaison.

184 **PUBLIC HEARING “FOR ANNEXATION AND ZONING FOR PROPERTY**  
185 **LOCATED ON DUTCHMANS LANE AND INCLUDING THE ROADBED OF**  
186 **DUTCHMANS LANE AND CONSISTING OF 7.714 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR**  
187 **LESS AND FOR CLOSING AND DETACHMENT OF A PORTION OF THIRD**  
188 **STREET CONSISTING OF 0.579 ACRES, MORE OR LESS, AND FOR THE**  
189 **ACCEPTANCE OF A PORTION OF DUTCHMANS LANE FROM TALBOT**  
190 **COUNTY, MARYLAND.”**

191  
192 At 6:17 p.m., President Cook opened the Public Hearing.  
193

194 The Town Attorney discussed the proposed annexation which consists of approximately  
195 7.714 acres. She stated that the Covington residents have consented to the annexation. The  
196 Town Attorney stated that the county Planning & Zoning Commission will consider this  
197 August 5. The Town Attorney stated that the county is the petitioner for the annexation and  
198 that the ultimate goal is to transfer Dutchman’s Lane to the town. The easement will be  
199 reserved on Third Street. The Town will maintain Dutchman’s Lane.  
200

201 The Town Attorney stated that the Easton Club residents support this annexation. A letter  
202 has been received from Maryland Department of Planning regarding the annexation as well  
203 as the Critical Area Commission.  
204

205 President Cook asked if there anyone from the state or county that would like to address the  
206 council regarding the annexation. There was no one present.  
207

208 President Cook stated that the public hearing will be kept open until the next council  
209 meeting. Written comments will be accepted until July 30.  
210

211 **RESOLUTION NO. 6119, “A RESOLUTION TO ANNEX CERTAIN LANDS**  
212 **OWNED BY TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND, AND MR. HARRY R.**  
213 **COVINGTON, II, LOCATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE INTERSECTION OF**  
214 **U.S. ROUTE 50 AND DUTCHMANS LANE, CONSISTING OF 7.714 ACRES OF**  
215 **LAND, MORE OR LESS, INTO THE TOWN OF EASTON AND TO PROVIDE**  
216 **FOR THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE ANNEXATION.”**

217  
218 Resolution No. 6119 was introduced June 1, 2020.  
219

220 **ORDINANCE NO. 751, “AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON**  
221 **AMENDING THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO**  
222 **APPLY THE R-10A RESIDENTIAL ZONING DISTRICT TO CERTAIN LOTS OR**  
223 **PARCELS OF LAND ANNEXED TO THE TOWN OF EASTON BY RESOLUTION**  
224 **NO. 6119 LOCATED ALONG DUTCHMANS LANE AND CONSISTING**  
225 **COLLECTIVELY, OF 7.681 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR LESS.”**  
226

227 The Town Attorney stated that this does apply zoning to the annexation.  
228 Ordinance No. 751 was introduced June 1, 2020.  
229

230 **RESOLUTION NO. 6120, “A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF EASTON**  
231 **AMENDING THE CHARTER OF THE TOWN OF EASTON TO DETACH**  
232 **CERTAIN TERRITORY LOCATED TO THE EAST OF ROUTE 50 AND KNOWN**  
233 **AS THIRD STREET AND CONSISTING OF 0.579 ACRES OF LAND, MORE OR**  
234 **LESS.”**

235  
236 Resolution No. 6120 was introduced June 1, 2020.  
237

238 **ORDINANCE NO. 750, “AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON**  
239 **AUTHORIZING THE TOWN OF EASTON TO ACCEPT A PORTION OF**  
240 **DUTCHMANS LANE FROM TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND.”**  
241

242 Ordinance No. 750 was introduced June 1, 2020.  
243

244 **ORDINANCE NO. 753, “AN ORDINANCE OF THE TOWN OF EASTON**  
245 **TERMINATING THE TOWN’S RIGHT TO IMPROVE THIRD STREET, A**  
246 **PARTIALLY UNIMPROVED STREET CURRENTLY IN THE TOWN OF**  
247 **EASTON BUT IN THE PROCESS OF BEING DETACHED FROM THE TOWN**  
248 **OF EASTON BUT RETAINING AN ACCESS AND UTILITY EASEMENT OVER**  
249 **THIRD STREET, AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF**  
250 **QUITCLAIM DEEDS OR OTHER INSTRUMENTS OF CONVEYANCE BY THE**  
251 **TOWN TO NEIGHBORING PROPERTY OWNERS.”**  
252

253 The Town Attorney stated that Ordinance No. 753 will close Third Street although the  
254 town will retain an easement over Third Street but it will not be open to the public.  
255

256 Ordinance No. 753 was introduced June 1, 2020.  
257

258 **PUBLIC COMMENTS.**  
259

260 President Cook stated the meeting is being open for public comments. She read a statement  
261 asking her fellow citizens to be mindful as we are a small highly connected community.  
262 She stated she would like to see the process be continued at the business meeting Thursday.  
263 President Cook asked that comments be kept to a specific topic and that speakers state their  
264 name and address for the record.  
265

266 Mr. Paul Prager, read a statement to the Mayor and Council and stated that they have had  
267 numerous notes of support as well as attacks on line which he attributed to posts from  
268 President Cook and Len Foxwell. Mr. Prager outlined his real estate holdings downtown.  
269 He discussed parking and the loss of spots in the proposed promenade project. Mr. Prager  
270 discussed having a wide range of choice in downtown and bringing visitors that may visit  
271 other shops and possibly invest in real estate. Mr. Prager discussed the personal attacks he  
272 has witnessed on social media. He discussed the lack of planning and stated that Ross  
273 Benincasa doesn’t represent him and has not spoken with him and questioned how the  
274 closing of Washington Street may be detrimental to some businesses. He reminded the  
275 council that their job is to preside over the meetings and be objective. Mr. Prager thanked  
276 Rev. Davis for calling on them.  
277

278 Mr. Scott Egleseder, stated he has no business interest in the Town of Easton. He  
279 distributed a handout shared an idea. He referenced an article from the Washington Post  
280 and shared the information regarding towns that have implemented an idea similar to what  
281 is being discussed. Mr. Egleseder suggested a proposal for restaurants Thursday and Friday  
282 evenings after 5pm and all-day Saturdays and Sundays from 10 – 11.  
283

284 President Cook stated that this proposal would be forwarded to the moderators.  
285

286 Mr. Noah Madden, resident of the Town stated he has no business or financial dealings in  
287 the area of Washington Street. Mr. Madden brought up points he feels are overlooked.  
288 He stated that he thinks the outdoor seating/dining should be a permanent structure of some  
289 sort. He stated that changing traffic patterns proposes more safety concerns. Mr. Madden  
290 discussed outdoor dining in the recent weather conditions and stated he believes this will  
291 need to be instituted for some time. He suggested moving forward as a community and  
292 making change.  
293

294 Mr. Steve Mangassarian, stated he too has been dismayed by the tone of rhetoric going  
295 around town. Mr. Mangassarian stated he is opposing the Washington Street closure. He  
296 stated that percentages can be manipulated but reminded those present that it was a  
297 modified Plein Air weekend. Mr. Mangassarian discussed his restaurant business  
298 experience. He stated that no one asked him about the closing of Washington Street. He  
299 stated that closing streets have failed in numerous places. Mr. Mangassarian discussed the

300 outdoor experiences that have been successful such as preexisting gathering places, captive  
301 users, well planned traffic and parking strategies, destination store or restaurant. He asked  
302 the council to take the time to plan it right and not semi-permanent solutions. Mr.  
303 Mangassarian stated that restaurants need help with finances such as a tax break or a  
304 moratorium on the tax bills coming due. He outlined ways that may help the downtown  
305 such as businesses changing their open hours. Mr. Mangassarian suggested bringing  
306 musicians or entertainment on a regular basis on a particular day or night downtown. He  
307 said there are ways to bring people downtown without closing off a whole block of  
308 downtown.

309  
310 Mr. Doug Kirby, manager at Washington Street pub thanked the Council for giving them  
311 the weekend and the numbers they had. He stated that they were late getting set up but he  
312 appreciates the council offering them the chance to try for two more weeks and looks  
313 forward to coming up with a plan for downtown Easton.

314  
315 **ITEMS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL:**

316  
317 Mr. Silverstein thanked everyone that took the time to come and spoke. Mr. Silverstein  
318 stated he is looking forward to the meeting which will be facilitated by Easton Economic  
319 Development. Mr. Silverstein stated that he appreciates everyone's efforts.

320  
321 Mr. Abbatiello welcome Rev. Davis to the Council. He stated he appreciated all the  
322 comments and looks forward to Thursday. Mr. Abbatiello clarified that closing Washington  
323 Street was made by all members of the Council not one member.

324  
325 Mr. Engle thanked everyone for their opinions. He asked the businesses to make a sincere  
326 effort to be present Thursday. Mr. Engle stated we are trying to go forward.

327  
328 Rev. Davis thanked everyone for coming tonight. He stated that this has been enlightening  
329 on his first council meeting. He stated that going forward, Thursday is his birthday, and  
330 hopes that as we go forward, we are transparent, and make a sound a logical decision for  
331 the betterment of Easton.

332  
333 President Cook thanked everyone for coming and welcomed Rev. Davis for joining.

334  
335 **ADJOURNMENT.**

336  
337 At 7:09 p.m., upon motion by Mr. Silverstein seconded by Mr. Engle and carried  
338 unanimously, President Cook adjourned the regularly scheduled Council meeting.

339

340

341

342 \_\_\_\_\_  
342 Respectfully submitted,  
343 Kathy M. Ruf, Town Clerk