

**TOWN OF WILLIAMSPORT
MAYOR AND COUNCIL MINUTES
WORKSHOP
April 7, 2014**

A Workshop meeting of the Williamsport Mayor and Council was held on April 7, 2014, at the Williamsport Town Hall in Williamsport, MD at 6:30 p.m.

In attendance were:

Mayor James G. McCleaf II
Asst. Mayor Joan Knode
Councilman Scott Bragunier
Councilman J. Alan Redding
Councilman James Kalbfleisch
Councilwoman Maya Haines
Councilman Bill Green

Also present Town Clerk Donnie Stotelmyer

Mayor James G. McCleaf II called the meeting to order.

Guests

Mayor James McCleaf introduced Mr. Jim Wallord. He is the director of the Williamsport Junior Lions Leo Club that is located at Springfield Middle School. Mr. Wallord was present to ask permission to install a lion water fountain in Byron Memorial Park. The total cost of the water fountain they wish to donate to the Town is \$4,200.00. Councilman Scott Bragunier suggested the Mayor and Council consider this lion water fountain installed by Pavilion #2 by the playgrounds. The Mayor and Council were all in agreement to have the fountain installed. They suggested to have a formal dedication service scheduled on July 4th, 2014.

Mayor James McCleaf introduced Matt Shaffer, town resident. He was present to discuss raising chickens in his back yard. He handed out a copy of an ordinance from Baltimore County, MD where residents are permitted to raise chickens. Mr. Shaffer said the Mayor and Council could use this copy as a guide if they choose to change our current ordinance regarding this matter. Councilman Bill Green stated Washington County does permit county residents to raise chickens. Mayor McCleaf reviewed the following talking points:

Information Regarding Raising of Chickens for Production of Eggs:

The following information is based on a conversation with Jeff Semler, Poultry Expert with the Washington County Extension Office.

- A single family or small farmer is most likely not going to be able to raise chickens to produce eggs for less than retail value. This is because the cost of chicken feed is very expensive unless you are a large farm/organization and can purchase feed in large volume i.e. train car's worth of fee versus a small farmer/family buying a bag at a

- time. He used the analogy of salt for icy roads, as a Town we buy it by truck loads, not single bags, and we are able to do that because we are a large organization.
- Jeff said the majority of people who raise eggs do it as a hobby not to for real money saving.
 - As far as diseases that chickens carry, he said chickens are actually quite clean and don't carry any diseases that are directly transmittable to humans. The #1 disease concern is salmonella, but that is minimized with proper handling of the eggs. Proper care of the chickens is important to cut down on a possible influx of rodents and to manage waste. If the person wanting to raise chickens has a small garden of their own, they could use manure as fertilizer. If not, they should have a plan for how they are going to properly dispose of or utilize the manure/waste.
 - 3 Things the Town should consider in a possible ordinance:
 - No roosters, as this would be very disruptive to neighbors. Roosters are not necessary for the laying of eggs. It is a common misconception that hens lay eggs better with a rooster in the hen house. This is not true.
 - He recommends the size of a single flock be no more than 5 hens.
 - Chickens must be contained in some sort of structure on the property.
 - Average cost of a 50 lb bag of chicken feed is \$8-10.00. For 5 chickens, the person would need ~100lb of food every two weeks. Hens can lay up to 1 egg/day, but sometimes hens go through a molting phase where they do not lay eggs. These are all things to consider. There's also the cost of the hens, the cost of the materials to make the structure to contain the hens, the cost of water to water the hens and other maintenance materials.
 - Surprisingly, a lot of major cities allow people to raise chickens such as Houston, Portland, Brooklyn, and more.

The Mayor and Council reviewed and discussed the information provided. They asked that Donnie Stotemyer call the Maryland Municipal League to see what other municipalities allow raising of chickens and get guidance from them. Councilman Scott Bragunier asked if there is a process to permit this. Mr. Shaffer explained he already discussed this with his neighbors who are both ok with him raising chickens at his home. However, Mayor McCleaf explained that if we changed the ordinance it would affect the entire town. He also stated the Town Attorney would need to be consulted if the Mayor and Council were to pursue changing the ordinance. Councilman Alan Redding asked if the Town decides to change the ordinance, how the Town will enforce/regulate the ordinance regulations. Councilman Scott Bragunier asked if a fee would be imposed for people who did not follow the regulations of the ordinance. The mayor stated they would have to review the County's ordinance for further guidance. No further discussion at this time.

Unfinished Business

The Mayor and Council reviewed the application for temporary use of the public right of way for sidewalk cafes along Williamsport Town Center. Councilman Alan Redding raised

concerns about the proposed application that the applicants had to have 48 inches of clearance from the edge of the object table and the edge of the curb. He said where Desert Rose Café is located there are objects along the sidewalk that would impede their compliance with the ordinance such as trees, a mailbox, etc. Mayor McCleaf stated this ordinance would need to be voted on at the next Council meeting. Otherwise, no businesses in Town would be permitted to have sidewalk cafes. Mayor McCleaf stated that the previous café that resided on that corner, the Blue Moon Café, had smaller tables outside along the sidewalk. Councilwoman Maya Haines stated this ordinance came about to better comply with ADA issues and that if objects were too large it would make it difficult for handicap accessibility. Mayor McCleaf stated this would be an ordinance change. If this is implemented, the businesses in town who want to have sidewalk cafes will now have to go through an approval process through the Town's Planning and Zoning Commission and they would no longer have to come before the Mayor and Council for review. This ordinance will be up for vote at the next Town Council Meeting.

There was a brief discussion held regarding ADA compliance issues for buildings in town and making them more accessible. Donnie Stotemyer, Town Clerk, discussed a recent meeting with a representative from federal highway and how the federal highway administration and the state highway administration are going to build teams of experts to help towns identify and transition these older buildings to become more ADA compliant and how this is something that they are working on. This movement comes as a result of law suits issued by residents in the past that have caused problems for our town and more recently for the City of Frederick, MD.

Councilman Scott Bragunier informed the Mayor and Council the Washington County Fire Plan was recently presented to the Washington County Commissioners. It looks like the County Commissioners may fund about 1/3 of the Fire Plan. He has an idea about how we can help our Fire Company to hire a full time driver. It is very expensive to operate a fire company. He would like to revisit the Town creating a funding source for a paid fire fighter. He is looking at maybe creating a fee to raise money to fund the fire company, such as adding a \$2.00-3.00 fee to the water bills each month. Mayor McCleaf says other jurisdictions have fire taxes, but that is something they would have to look at down the road. Councilman Scott Bragunier has not spoken with any of the administration with the Fire Company about possibly creating an additional funding source for the company. Councilwoman Maya Haines stated she is in support of doing something like this. She stated even though, she and her husband are already strapped financially and she is not looking for any additional fees or burdens on herself or any other member of town, she feels this fire plan is extremely important for the town and its residents. Councilman Bill Green stated would this be an option for residents to pay or not to pay. He says currently the Fire Company sends out a solicitation for a yearly membership and people who pay that are not going to want to also pay a fee towards the fire company. He also said the State of Maryland just passed a gas tax law where we could potentially increase the price of gas in town if permitted within the parameters of the law. This additional income could help us fund the fire company's needs. Councilman Scott Bragunier said he just wanted to start a conversation on this issue to get the Mayor and Council thinking about it. Mayor McCleaf said we could consider charging residents per their EDU to help fund the fire company, but they would have to come up with some agreement.

Mayor told the Council they would have to approve to bid for the Fitness Trail Project in Byron Memorial Park at the upcoming Council Meeting.

Mayor told the Council they would also need to approve to bid for the Billy Doub Field Paving Project at the upcoming Council Meeting.

New Business

Mayor McCleaf discussed the C. William Hetzer billing issue with his water bill. The Mayor and Council were in agreement to remove the late fee for his bill, but they will have vote on it at the upcoming Council Meeting.

Donnie Stotemyer, Town Clerk, explained to the Mayor and Council the Marlow Elementary School has requested permission to utilize Pavilion # 2 in Byron Memorial Park on Tuesday, May 27th, 2014 from 10:00am-1:00pm at no charge. Assistant Mayor Joan Knode explained we do not give anything free to non-profits because we have to pay our employees to maintain these facilities. However, she was ok with letting the school use the pavilion for free. The Mayor and Council were all in agreement.

Mayor reminded the Council they need to approve renewal of the CD at M&T Bank at the upcoming Council Meeting.

Mayor also said we would need to approve acceptance of the following grants from the Project Open Space totaling \$31,915.00:

1. Byron Memorial Park Sign Project for \$3,150.00
2. Byron Memorial Park Sidewalk Project for \$23, 688.00
3. L. Beard Miller Pool Sidewalk Project for \$5,077.00

Mayor told the Council they would have to approve the Washington County Park Board use of Pavilion #3 on July 16th, 2014 for a “Story Telling in the Parks” program at no fee.

Mayor discussed with the Council about Hub City Vineyard wanting to set up a Livestock 2014 event. This is a church sponsored event open to the public to raise awareness of poverty issues. They would like to rent the gazebo, pavilion #1 and possible pavilion #2. They just want permission from the Town to be able to host the event in Byron Memorial Park. This would need to be approved at the next Council Meeting. Councilwoman Maya Haines said didn't the Mayor and Council previously discuss not letting church groups host events in the park because of their different beliefs. Councilman Scott Bragunier said if they're willing to pay to rent the facilities he doesn't see any problem with it. Mayor McCleaf said if they're willing to pay and we do not allow them to use the park, then we open ourselves up to litigation. Councilman Alan Redding also said if they are willing to pay for the facilities they are using we really cannot deny use to a group, no matter what they're affiliation. Assistant Mayor Joan Knode stated there is a “Facilities Use” form that must be completed by any group that utilizes the park for events like these.

Mayor James McCleaf informed the Council a 3.5% sewer rate increase is being passed to the Town by the Washington County Commissioners. There is also a 2.0% water rate increase being passed by the City of Hagerstown. We will have to schedule a public hearing to inform the residents.

Councilman Scott Bragunier says he has received several complaints about children's behavior after school in Byron Memorial Park. Mayor McCleaf informed Donnie Stotemyer, Town Clerk to inform the Washington County Sherriff's Office we will need to have monitoring of the park during after school hours.

Assistant Mayor Joan Knode wanted us to remind the police department to keep a watchful eye on the Springfield Barn where a homeless man has been seen hanging out.

Mayor James McCleaf discussed a recent meeting regarding rewatering of the aqueduct. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how we can raise remaining funds to get this project shovel ready to move forward. A marketing plan was also discussed. C&O Canal is the 9th most visited park in the United States. He said it was very productive meeting.

Citizen Participation

Town Resident Jerry Knode informed the Mayor and Council that people who have access to the museum need to please lock the doors to the museum prior to leaving. Several times, they have found the museum unlocked.

Town Resident David Kirby said he's observing traffic exiting Byron Memorial Park and they are not stopping. Mayor James McCleaf told Donnie Stotelmyer to make sure it was announced in the next Town Newsletter that traffic through Byron Memorial Park should be one way now.

Councilman Bill Green made a motion to adjourn this meeting. This motion was seconded by Councilman Scott Bragunier. With all voting in favor, motion carried.

Mayor & Council workshop meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Donnie Stotelmyer
Town Clerk, Town of Williamsport