

MINUTES
WALKERSVILLE BURGESS & COMMISSIONERS TOWN MEETING
July 11, 2018

The Town meeting of the Walkersville Burgess & Commissioners was called to order on Wednesday, July 11, 2018, at 7:30 p.m. Those in attendance included Burgess Chad Weddle, Commissioners Gary Baker, Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis, Donald Schildt, and Russell Winch, Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver, Public Works Director Bob DePaola, 13 citizens, and Nancy Lavin of the Frederick News Post. Commissioner Debbie Zimmerman arrived late. Commissioner Gary Baker and Town Manager Gloria Long Rollins were absent.

The meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer.

1. MINUTES

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Russell Winch , to approve the Town meeting minutes of June 27, 2018. The motion passed by a vote of 3-0.

2. PUBLIC HEARING ORDINANCE 2018-06 ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT, INCREASE IN TOWNHOUSE HEIGHTS

Planner Hauver presented the zoning text amendment that was proposed by Verdant Development to apply to the Longley Green development. It would raise the allowable height of townhouses in the R-4 zoning district from 35 feet to 45 feet. It would apply to all properties in the R-4 district. Currently, the Longley Green property is the only undeveloped R-4 land in town. The Planning Commission voted to recommend that the text amendment be adopted.

Mr. Richard Brady, 13 Kenneth Drive and chairman of the Planning Commission, said he was unable to attend the Planning Commission hearing. He is in favor of their recommendation. He noted that the Town zoning ordinance requires that height be measured from the grade of the street, not the base of the house.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis asked why 45 feet instead of 40. Mr. Tom Poss, representing the applicant, responded that modern designs of townhomes include 3 complete stories, steeper pitched roofs, 9-10 foot ceilings. The measurement extends from the street centerline grade to the peak of the roof, and house pads will be 5 feet above the street. The houses themselves will be 39 to 40 feet tall, measured from the base of the house.

(Commissioner Debbie Zimmerman arrived)

In response to a question, Ms. Hauver said that the proposed change would not affect the permitted height of buildings in other zoning districts.

In response to a question, Mr. Poss said that the proposed homes in Longley Green will have 2100 square feet of living space.

Commissioner Donald Schildt said that he is not in favor of the change. The existing height standard has been on the books a long time. He is concerned about the impact of the change on potential developments built in the future, if additional land is zoned R-4.

Commissioner Russell Winch said that he does not want to see additional development but wants what is built to be marketable.

Commissioner Debbie Zimmerman said she is in favor of the change. She wants the ceilings to be higher than 8 feet and for a higher priced product to be built.

Commissioner Russell Winch made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis, to approve the proposed zoning text amendment and adopt Ordinance 2018-06. The motion passed on a vote of 3-1, with Commissioner Donald Schildt voting in opposition.

3. DRAFT CHICKEN ORDINANCE

Burgess Chad Weddle noted the email they had received from Mr. Mike Kuster regarding backyard chickens. He plans to send Mr. Kuster's proposals to the Planning Commission for them to develop an ordinance.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis said that they have only received one complaint about chickens. She feels that chickens are not an issue so that an ordinance might not be necessary. Commissioner Russell Winch noted that the Town defers to the County's animal control ordinance which forbids chickens in residential districts.

Commissioners Schildt and Winch expressed their support of backyard chickens.

Ms. Gail Andriani, 25 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, asked whether Mr. Kuster's proposals included a limitation on the number of chickens permitted. She was referred to the back of the paper, which showed limits according to the property size.

4. CHANGE ORDER INFO – RESPONSE FROM WRA

Commissioner Russell Winch noted the reduction in the amount due and that it was worth questioning.

Commissioner Russell Winch made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Donald Schildt to pay the contractor in accordance with the change order. The motion passed on a vote of 4-0.

5. SPEED BUMPS IN SUN MEADOW

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis said she felt they should respond to the concerns raised in an email about speeding in Sun Meadow. She said she is not a fan of speed bumps, but would consider adding yellow lines in the center of the streets as the Town has done on other roads. Commissioner Winch concurred on the striping and suggested portable speed bumps. He noted that the portable speed sign works to reduce the speed of traffic. Commissioner Schildt said he is not in favor of any kind of speed bumps because they make it difficult for emergency vehicles to pass through. He feels that the troopers need to step up patrols. He suggested they sit in the library parking lot.

Commissioner Donald Schildt asked why a crosswalk has not been installed on Polaris Drive in front of the library. Ms. Hauver said she would discuss it with the Frederick County project manager for the construction of the library.

6. USE FOR HERITAGE FARM PARK BARN AND REHAB

Burgess Chad Weddle said that he would like Mr. Joe Lubozynski of Heavy Timber Construction come to a town meeting and present the findings of the assessment of the Heritage Farm Park bank barn.

7. SIDEWALK ASSESSMENT/COST ESTIMATES

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis said she had done some research and found that the USDA, the Federal Highway Administration, the U.S. Department of Transportation all have grant programs for sidewalks. Planner Hauver said there are State grant programs as well.

8. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Commissioner Russell Winch made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Donald Schildt, to pay the attached bills. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

9. COMMISSIONERS' CONCERNS

Commissioner Donald Schildt said the second brick wall at Memorial Park is under construction.

Commissioner Schildt noted tall grass and weeds at the Parkside development construction site. He also thought trees in the forestation area are dying.

Commissioner Schildt announced that the Unified Sports awards would be presented at the August 8, 2018 meeting.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis noted the increase in cost for the spring bulk trash pick-up compared to previous pickups. She would like to monitor the number of mattresses picked at the next pickup, to see if the 152 picked up becomes a trend.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis announced the Shred Event planned for August 10 between 8 am and 12 pm. Commissioner Winch thought it should be on a Saturday instead of a Friday. Commissioner Brodie-Ennis said that Town Manager Gloria Long Rollins wanted to see if participation on a weekday was sufficient to warrant the event, without requiring staff to come in on a weekend. They have observed that the customers tend to be retirement-aged people. If it is not successful on a Friday, it will be a weekend event in the future.

Mr. DePaola reported that the construction trailers for the water treatment plant construction are in place on site this week. He is interviewing the top three applicants for the new maintenance worker position.

Ms. Hauver notified Commissioners that construction of Rutter's will involve a long day of pipe deliveries and installation on July 23. She will update the community via the Facebook page and website. Commissioner Russell Winch said that they should stage the deliveries to avoid trucks stacking on MD 194.

By common consent, Ms. Penny Rife of 1 Pennsylvania Drive was accepted as an election judge. One more judge is still needed.

Commissioners discussed an email from Deborah Clay asking about leash laws and dogs running at large in the parks. It was noted that there are signs in the parks requiring dogs to be on leashes. Otherwise, enforcement is difficult. The idea of adding a dog park to one of the parks was discussed, possibly on the land added to the park from Creekside. It was suggested that the issue be discussed by the Parks Committee with input from a municipality that has one and a liability assessment by our insurance company.

Burgess Weddle said he invited the Health Department to come on July 25, 2018 at 6 pm to provide overdose response training to anyone in the community who is interested. It will be advertised on the Town Facebook page.

The Town time capsule commemorating the Town's 125th anniversary will be buried on July 25, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.

Burgess Weddle reviewed the announcements as follows:

- July 24 – Planning Commission
- July 25 – Overdose Response Training, 6 pm, upstairs meeting room, Town Hall
- July 25 – Time Capsule placement, 7:30 p.m. behind Town Hall
- Aug. 1- Parks Committee
- Aug. 8 – Town Meeting
- Aug 10 (Friday) – Shred Day, behind Town Hall, 8 am - noon
- Aug. 13 – Deadline to file Certificate of Candidacy
- Aug. 22 – Town Meeting
- Aug. 28 – Planning Commission

10. CITIZENS' QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Julio Valcarcel, Chapel Place, Glade Towne, complained about the condition of the sidewalks in Town. The ramps are not in compliance with ADA requirements. He shared information about ADA standards. He said there are funds from the federal government to do ramps. He suggested that the Town hire a contractor to repair and replace sidewalks and bill the residents. He also noted concerns about speeding traffic in Glade Towne, particularly with a lot of young children in the neighborhood.

Ms. Gail Andriani, 25 East Pennsylvania Avenue, reported that speeding is a problem on Glade Road and Pennsylvania Avenue. She mentioned speed humps found in some neighborhoods in Frederick City. They do not hurt cars or plows.

Mr. Mitch Brannen, 56 Maple Avenue suggested that the Town Facebook page be limited to official announcements from the Town government, to give formality to it. Community members could share information through an internal community group. The Town of Middletown has a private group page for the community.

Mr. Michael Bailey, 230 Cobble Way, suggested that the Town install speed cameras as a deterrent to speeding. The Town could generate revenue by the fines collected. Burgess Weddle noted that Maryland law allows speed cameras to be used only in school zones. Montgomery County was granted a waiver of that limitation.

Mr. Dan Yeeles, 201 Greenwich Drive, said having speed cameras would be better than having "dead kids and old people." Speed bumps are needed in Sun Meadow. Temporary speed bumps can break and damage cars. He feels the Town should better utilize the State troopers. He also commented on the need to enforce leash laws in the parks. Finally, he expressed disappointment in Commissioners' approval of the increase in townhouse heights. It will affect peoples' view of the mountains.

Commissioner Donald Schildt asked for an update on the Heritage Farm Park building. Planner Hauver noted that the site plan was at the County for signatures and that ARRO is still working on the building specs after receiving the Town's comments.

Burgess Weddle spoke about the speeding issue, noting that it is a difficult issue. He feels that most people speed and it is difficult to stop. He is not in favor of speed bumps since they present difficulties for plows, fire trucks and ambulances. He emphasized that he is opposed to speeding, but it is a difficult issue to solve.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Hauver
Planning and Zoning Administrator