

Town Council Workshop/Public Hearings April 24, 2017

Present: Harry Sampson, Tom Morris, Bill Miners, Mayor Dean Geracimos, Frank Vari, Trudy Carter, Town Attorney Tom Yeager

Staff: Town Manager Sandra Edwards, Project Manager Rob Bernstine, Special Lee Adams, Clerk/Treasurer Valerie Walls

Meeting was called to order by Mayor Geracimos, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion for Public Hearing for Ordinance 04.10.2017

MOTION: Harry Sampson made a motion, seconded by Trudy Carter to open the Public Hearing for Ordinance 04.10.2017. All in favor, motion carried.

Town Attorney discussed ordinance indicating it allows the Town to borrow up to \$486,000 for costs with the water town, all of which, including interest will be reimbursed to the Town.

No Public/Council discussion.

MOTION: Frank Vari made a motion, seconded by Bill Miners to close the Public Hearing for Ordinance 04.10.2017. All in favor, motion carried.

The Mayor reminded the audience of the rules for the Public Hearing; Will be call up to speak in order that they signed-in this evening. There is no yielding of time – Council is here to hear you. There is No Debating.

MOTION: Trudy Carter made a motion, seconded by Harry Sampson to open the Public Hearing for Ordinance 01.09.2017. All in favor, motion carried.

PLEASE NOTE: COMMENTS ARE NOT VERBATUM

Mayor Comments: This Ordinance has followed all the proper channel, because it was not done as in the past – it was done correctly. I have been elected three times. Our administration gets things done. We don't do it a certain way because that's how it was done. Council has huge decision – what you have to say is important. I hope comments based on fact. We hope to sort through fact and fiction. No interruptions or disruptions. Council will consider everything presented tonight.

Caroline duPont Prickett –Non-resident, but has been part of many things done in town. Handful approve for economic zone. We are not Ocean City, MD nor do we want it to be. Do we want to be responsible on a downward spiral? This would be the beginning of destruction of our beautiful city.

Bill Campbell- Non-Resident. Asking that Councilman Harry Sampson recues himself. Should not get another vote; he's already voted at Planning Commission meeting. If he gets another vote, he must vote no as he did at the Planning Commission Meeting. Text Amendment was introduced on Jan 9th – the 60 day deadline cited in CDO has passed. There is no room for infrastructure – no traffic study done. Does not belong in TND, will change the neighborhood.

Christine Mullen – The Boutique Hotels will put the B&B's out of business and change the look of the town. Shops get business from the B&B's. If it puts in it will drive out the B&B business. People are coming in to weddings, going to Chesapeake Inn, coming in for a specific activity – an event – come to

the town event and leave town. Will not bother with the shops on Bohemia Ave – parking is a premium. We don't have enough shops to begin with.

Burt Reiver Resident: Lives on the north side, believes nobody on the south side cares about them. This amendment is wrong for the businesses, for the town and the people that elected you. People pay attention to how the Council votes. If you approve it, it will go the public and the public will vote it down (by Referendum).

Carolyn Blevins Resident: Collecting signatures against this text amendment on her own; it has 347 people have signed it. No matter how the Mayor wants to spin this, it's only protects one party. No one in this town wants this. Feels the only thing Council cares about are the tourists. The residents put you in office. We have problems – people complain about speeders, loud music, a lot of problems, none of you address them, you all need to stop and think

Kathran Lynch – Resident July 1, 1995. Cares about town, stores, and the B&Bs. Chesapeake City doesn't need to be fixed. It would alter the Town and threaten the lively hood of the B&Bs. Finds it short sighted that a hotel will benefit the resident's, when did a hotel become a destination?

Susie Campbell – adjoining property owner/Non-resident. Property owner created his own hardship, spending 800K and expects the Town to fix it. Since this has failed at the county level, why would it be right for the Town? It will destroy the Town. We are not Ocean City.

Jayne Ford. Not against anything – for the very best Chesapeake City has to offer. We have a couple choices. Smart Growth – helping the town move ahead in the right direction – and being positive. It is possible for the Town to move ahead without all this negativity going on. It's up to the Town officials. My plea to them is to handle it in a proper manner. This town was turned around with positive thinking. Wishes Alliare duPont was here tonight. We have to do it right. Can't make people angry. You won't get ahead like that.

Andy Vaughn Resident: Born and raised here and I'm opposed to this text amendment.

Caton Vaughn Resident: ditto

Cindy Ortt Resident: Do what you were elected to do; I wouldn't want it near my house and it doesn't belong in TND.

Rebecca Mann Resident. Accept what the Planning Commission recommends. It does not belong here. Has the potential to affect future annexations. Uphold your appointed members commission.

Bill Staker Resident: lived here since 1963. The Ballroom on the Inn was never supposed to be built. Once again we rezoned to do whatever they wanted to do. As a tax base, it's not going to work out. We don't get tax dollars from tourists. The states do; unless the town operates a special tax district, which I doubt. I don't need to tell you what it was like growing up here in the 70s & 80s; you didn't admit to living here. The elders turned it into a historic district. Commercial growth needs to expand slowly,

with a plan on what you want ten years from now. There use to be just shops; most are gone now. Don't destroy the fabric of the town.

Bob Roethke— owns Inn of the Canal. It was my wife & me dreamed to operate this business. It could jeopardize my business. It scares me to death. A big wedding comes into town, they'll be at the hotel. I'm flabbergasted that not everyone sees this; it only benefits a couple individuals.

Lee Hutton: Resident on Planning Commission for 15 years. Read the introduction of vision. It spells out how we wanted the town to grow. It's not growing. I don't believe a boutique hotel follows the vision. Heard a lot of rumors, it can be developed, 150 town homes – it's not going to happen. If not hotel, it will be development. Smart growth lets us grow and keep the vision of Chesapeake City.

Carol Roethke owner Inn of the Canal: It's hard to do business in Town. Need help with marketing and advertising, needs more parking. Doesn't believe it will be any benefit to the town.

Carolo Caccavone Non-resident: I live on Mt. Nebo and I'm totally opposed to it. There are three properties affected, to put a hotel there will change the neighborhood. Not part of the CDO. Moved here in 2006 expecting homes and would welcomes homes, not a hotel.

Gwen Clayton Non-Resident: Please listen to your experts. Your members have a lot of experience. As Lee Hutton and Rob would state, when a town grows too fast, things will go arise. Supports smart growth. Homes would provide more tax base than the hotel would bring. The Planning Commission knows what they're doing. Please consider what they have to say. Residents put you in place, you need to listen to them.

Dwight Thomey attorney representing Chesapeake Inn: Putting hotel on 213 wasn't a good idea in Elkton. Allowing a small hotel, done in quality and better parking will encourage more people in Town. People would stay in both hotel and B&Bs. They would be near banquet facilities with parking out of the way to enjoy the town and shops. This would allow doing it the right way, bring in people to enjoy. Understands the concern for change, but this can be done is a way that is a positive for Chesapeake City and allow more people to come into Town. Will require more services. Keep an open mind and consider this amendment.

GianMarco: Has been part of Town for over 20 years. I love the town –I spend more time here than most residents. Smart Growth? This parcel has been shot down for one thing or another; thinking long term with this property. Think 5-10 years down the road. Been a member of this community for over 20 years. Invested money and time in this Town and yet, I'm still perceived as an outsider. If this town fails, 300 people lose their jobs, I fail. Numerous businesses have failed in this town, I have not. Asked to move the business, but this is my home base. This is where I plan to stay. Proud to be a family business; A member of Chamber for over 20 years; Sponsored many events in this town; a major influence bring fireworks to town. We need more overnight accommodations for people to stay. The guests are going into Middletown and Newark. Shouldn't Chesapeake City get some of that?

Mayor has statement that will not make everyone happy. My job is to do what is best for the town as a whole. My job is to the vision. The petty attacks and emails said he was insignificant has only made me more determined. Incapable uses for this property is bowling, night clubs, etc. What came out to me is the CDO has major short falls. Instructed staff and attorney to draft and amendment forward to the Planning Commission, who in turn rejected. Feels they dropped the ball. They even rejected the Architectural Design Standards and parking that wasn't put in. This amendment is good for tourism and residents. The parking just disappeared. Parking has always been an issue. To say we don't have a problem is comical. Town lacks places for people to stay at peak time; losing tax dollars to enhance our town. Tourism is the town; we need to enhance. Want to make it a wedding destination and conference destination? Can't be a tourist town? Commercial out on 213 not in town, we wouldn't get tax base. Why he supports this so much: duty to the residents. No disrespect, but 53% of the speakers against this amendment are out of town; those that do not pay taxes. My allegiance is to the taxpayers. Parking – number one issue in town, tied to noise. When with other mayors, we don't have parking. We created this mistake. Constantly hears years and years ago, we decided to get shops in here. We came up parking mitigation. The Town created this issue. How do we deal with it and move forward? I believe this amendment is a start. It's a start to help fix this issue.

#2 – I want the small room taxes for the Town. I can't disagree more – most small towns are seeing more growth – you're sold out most weekends. Your weekday business will bring more weekend business. Retired bike clubs, will have places to stay, corporate retreats stay at the hotel, B&Bs would host management. Fill our restaurants. Taxpayers – we have to create smart growth. For the town to remain -remain like the County. I like the Roethkes here, I want to build their business. I do not want us back in the 70s. I don't want to raise taxes or utility rates. A group of people think we do nothing for our residents. We haven't raised taxes, rates – that's not for the residents? Creating trails, good for tourism, benefits residents. Our Highway User Funds have been cut from \$30K to \$7. Doesn't wasn't 150 town homes up there. Parking and a hotel that brings in more business. Homes puts more money into infrastructure. Takes care of parking issues. Another route will increase property taxes. We're at a crucial point this year. Need to make a point. We've gotten over 5 million in grants, it's not going to keep going. With all this being said, heard good modifications. In it's current form, no. It's what's right for residential tax payers and Chesapeake City. I want smart growth. If we don't bring it in, we will be going the other way.

Trudy Carter – no comment

Frank – agrees with mayor, not to pass it in its present state, and sent back to the Planning Commission on each item, so they can look at each item separately. It's wrong to put all in that amendment. Think about what they're doing, residents say they don't want it in its present form. We were put in place to look out for them. In this form – it's not a good thing.

Bill Miners – no comment

Tom Morris – thanks people for coming out.

Harry Sampson – everything has been said that I would say. I am a voting member of both the Planning Commission and the Town Council. I plan on voting as a council member, unless the attorney says otherwise.

Town Attorney– Charter allows the council member that sits on the Planning Commission to vote on both.

Mayor – There is a letter from Christopher Moyer, will be part of the minutes.

MOTION: Frank Vari made a motion, seconded by Harry Sampson to close the public hearing. All in favor, motion carried.

Workshop


Councilman Sampson can abstain from voting, but has the right to vote.

Carol Roethke: Doesn't understand why Council isn't taking care of things that need to be done. What's going on with Tourism?

GianMarco – going back to the Planning Commission taking each thing one thing at a time, I went initially just for parking. I did that. When asked the future plans for the property he told them. 73 weddings have filled this town last year; booked rooms out of town, on average 34+ rooms have been sold outside of this town. This is just for our location.

Meeting adjourned at 8:01pm.

Daleen Wells
Clerk/Treasurer


Dean Geracimos
Mayor