

## Town Council Workshop August 23, 2021

Present: Todd Greco, Lee Adams, Frank Vari, Frank Hill, Ed O'Hara, Town Attorney Tom Yeager  
Staff: Town Manager Rob Bernstine, Clerk Tonya Lockwood, Clerk/Treasurer Valerie Walls

Mayor Taylor called the meeting together followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States.

### Old Business

#### Public Response regarding deck at Prime 225

Councilman Vari, O'Hara, the Mayor, and owners Bud and Bobby with their attorney Bob Jones had a productive meeting; cleaned the air between the business and the Town. They do not want the structure indefinitely. They are working to finish the building and the patio in the back.

Councilman Vari: Feels they still owe the Town an apology and to the residents for the stress they've been under. The owners agreed to: not setting an exact deadline, to be reviewed every three months, check what the County Covid rate is, and decide if its' time to remove the structure or to extend the deadline. Once determined to remove, they have 14 days to complete the work; Closing the outside venue at 9p and shutting down by 10:30p. Agreed to clean up the street, sidewalk and adjacent properties, including cleaning up in front of the church. Another trash can be on each side of the venue and a safety barrier, moving closer to the corner. There's a 9" eating venue in street, will be taking it back a foot into the parking area. Once the motion is approved on 9/13 these items, will be completed in ten days. Both sides seemed happy.

Councilman O'Hara felt it was a good meeting. Felt the owners were amendable to suggestions, no fight or argument with what Frank brought to the table. They want to be good neighbors. They proved to him that they want their business to be part of the town, and want to take actions the Town wants them to.

Councilman Hill wants to see progress on the courtyard. He's not so much against it, as long as he sees activity. If it becomes dormant, feels the Council should apply pressure to keep them moving. While he wants to co-operate with them, he wants to see the Courtyard completed and the deck out of the street.

Councilman O'Hara: The biggest reason not seeing work out back is because of the foundation work being done. Councilman Hill understands all that. Councilman O'Hara saw concrete being poured in the basement. Councilman Vari agreed, but stated it's moving slowly. We want to see the courtyard moving forward.

Councilman Adams: likes what he's heard so far, and looks forward to moving ahead and putting this behind us,

Councilman Greco: We've spent a lot of time on this, I'd like to see more of the construction in the back. We already voted to extend the time.

#### New Business

##### Cecil County Government Will Not Mandate Masks

Discussed letter from Kevin Alkinburg. We have followed the State and County guidelines. Councilman Vari asked if we are following the guidelines. The Mayor stated that the policy is: not vaccinated, wear a mask. Town Hall doors remained locked, admitting resident's if they are vaccinated or wearing a mask. These are only the Town Hall rules. Town Hall will not set guidelines for the businesses.

Councilman O'Hara stated that some businesses would like to see mask and/or vaccination requirements. They feel that setting a policy puts them out on a limb. Would the Town put it in place for all businesses, so they are not isolated?

Mayor: Making a motion will only cause more polarizing the Town and Businesses. He hesitates to create a mandate that we can't enforce.

Town Manager stated that there's not consistency in the State or County buildings, either. Councilman Greco added that as Town Hall, they should set the example, but we can't tell people how to run their businesses.

#### Council Comments:

Councilman Vari reminded everyone that August 27<sup>th</sup> we are invited to a walk thru the Elementary School at 10:30am and on Monday 3p will be a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony. On September 2<sup>nd</sup> there's a mixer at the Chesapeake Inn for the Cecil County and New Castle County Chambers of Commerce. On September 7<sup>th</sup> Chesapeake City will be recognized at the Top Recycling Town in Cecil County for 11 years. Saturday, 9/11 starts the campaign of "Just Serve" holding a month long food drive for the party and a town wide clean-up day on 9/25.

#### Public Comment

Elieen Viars: wondering what is happening with the old Elementary School; she has heard a private school has interest in it and Chesapeake City does not have a plan. At this point, there is nothing definite and the County is soliciting input. The Mayor stated that the County would not just give the property to us without a definite plan. The County and us are open to all ideas.

We are not pursuing the plan submitted previously. Most people are indifferent to what goes there. Instead of getting into an advisory position, we've decided to take a pause, cool off and see if there's any potential use of the property.

Eileen Viars: That means you're going to be stuck with whoever the County sells too. Doesn't Council understand with everything we've done for Chesapeake City and we're getting no support? There are several people we help in town. Councilman Greco wanted her to know that no one is opposed to what you do, it's a whole combination of things that have to come together. The Mayor added that we can come up with plans, as we've already done, finding a way to finance and build it is more of a challenge. Need to find a way it can support itself.

Eileen Viars: If you're not carrying the ball, can I go to the county? The Mayor stated she could, but how would the CCEA carry the property? You don't want the County to give you the property. She acknowledged that, and asked why was the plan pulled?

Councilman Adams stated there was a good plan put forward. He liked the Library, Apartments, and CCEA there. They wouldn't compete with businesses already here. There was a lot of opposition and it derailed the plan. We couldn't get our act together and the developer left. And the County knew that.

Councilman Greco said it has to benefit the Town and should not raise taxes. The Mayor believes the Developer would come back if we had a plan.

Councilman Vari felt there were too many housing units. With the library having their own building, County and State offices, everybody had their own ideas, there was too much opposition. We have to make sure, even if they got the grant funds, it is self-sustaining. I didn't feel it was. Cannot put the burden on the Town. One entity cannot run that project.

Councilman Greco: I'm not against the CCEA, I'm against the senior housing forced to take vouchers – long term plans on the Northside didn't work out so well.

Eileen voiced that the cost the CCEA has with two buildings is costing them a fortune. She wants both the CCEA and the Generation Station under one roof.

The Mayor said he would work with the group to find county money for them to build. He would find some grant money to assist or support them.

#### Mayor and Council Comments

Mayor: We've been asked by University of MD to publicize Cecil Garden Fest on September 25<sup>th</sup>, from 11a-3p at Moose Lodge in Cherry Hill. Thanking Rob and Jesse for arranging the removal of a tree on the Verizon line. If the tree had fallen, it would have taken down communications on Boat Yard Rd.

Councilman Hill: Big event in Town, Lions Club Car Show with food and things to do. Pre-registration is bigger than in the past. Signs will be posted to move your cars by 6am on Saturday. Show starts at 8am, awards at 2:30p.

Adjourn: 7:29pm

Submitted:



D. Valerie Walls  
Clerk/Treasurer



Richard L Taylor, III  
Mayor