

# Town Council Workshop Minutes

Monday, January 22, 2024

Present: Mayor Rich Taylor, Sarah Ford-Ferrara, Hunter Dann, Frank Vari, Lee Adams, Ed O’Hara, Tonya Lockwood (staff), Rob Bernstine (staff), Tom Yeager (attorney)

Absent:

Vice President of Council, Frank Vari called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, as Mayor Rich Taylor was running a few minutes late, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Discussion Items:

## *Economic Development*

Due to there being several vacant storefronts in the business areas of the Historic District. Ed O’Hara wanted to have a discussion with Council to see if there is anything we can do to encourage new businesses to move into those spaces. The council will discuss the thought of putting funds toward advertising or helping businesses in some financial way during our FY 2025 Budget Sessions.

Ed attended Cecil Night in Annapolis, which was a huge success. There were several Cecil County Business Owners in attendance, along with our Cecil County Elected Officials. Ed spoke with many of them regarding how to help attract businesses to our Town and got a lot of good feedback. He looks forward to continuing those discussions.

Bob Foard, who owns many of the buildings on Bohemia Ave., was in attendance and said that there is a business scheduled to fill the former jewelry store. This would be a candy store, which is not something we currently have. It will mimic Captain Candy from Istanbul, Turkey. His opinion is that retail shops do well during busy times of the year, but struggle when there are not many visitors in Town. We need to figure out how to get more people in Town or how to get locals to support the retail shops, that is how we get more shops. He would prefer to keep the “destination town” atmosphere, rather than a “residential only” atmosphere.

Tom Yeager had a few examples from Chestertown, such as getting professional services like a bakery, dry cleaning, the bank, an accountant, an attorney, a doctor or dentist office, or even the post office, which drives people into town because they are using those services. One idea that has been proposed to Mr. Foard, for one of his properties, was a salon that offers multiple services.

Public Comment:

None currently.

Mayor and Council Comments:

Rob Bernstine – the dredging is back on. MDE has changed their minds about not permitting us to be able to get rid of our spoils in the same location as the Corp.

Rich Taylor – Thanks to Town Staff for the work on the Winter Gala and the Snow Removal.

Adjourn:

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

*\*An audio recording of this meeting is available upon request.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Tonya Lockwood

Richard L. Taylor, III, Mayor