

# Town of Chesapeake City

## Town Council Meeting Minutes

*Tuesday, October 15, 2024*

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

Absent: Tonya Lockwood (staff)

Mayor Rich Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

### Approval of Minutes:

*September 9, 2024, Meeting*

**Motion:** Lee Adams made a motion, seconded by Ed O'Hara to approve the minutes from the January 10, 2024, Meeting. All in favor, motion carried.

*September 2024, No Workshop Held*

### Council Reports:

Lee Adams

Water and Sewer- The WWTP is nearing completion, there are still a few punch list items that are being worked on. Lee read the WWTP flows for last month from the County Report (distributed). The I & I studies/repairs have started and the alley north of Moss St has been completed. We have started the communications upgrades for the Bo Manor, VFW, and Bank Street alarms. The Lead Pipe Inventory is prepared and ready for submission to MDE. A few repairs were needed on the north side on lines damaged by a Comcast Subcontractor.

Planning Commission- The Planning Commission met on Wednesday, October 2, 2024, they reviewed and approved 1 application for a new single-family dwelling at 104 Biddle St. They reviewed a Concept Plan for 68 Villa Style Residential Dwellings on the 15-acre property known as Chesapeake Village Lot 1. Lastly, they introduced the draft Comprehensive Plan and scheduled a joint Public Hearing for November 6, 2024. The Zoning Administrator, Rob Bernstine, approved 1 application this month. He is also in the process of drafting the comment letter for Chesapeake Village II.

Hunter Dann

Public Safety- The Public Safety Committee met on Sept. 17, 2024. They focused on a few key topics, such as, St. Police continuing walk arounds, focusing on speeding tickets again, red lot sidewalk was installed and discussed that lighting still needs to be done (sidewalk was already being used this past weekend), the Biddle and Hemphill stop sign, public parking signs to direct people to the lots under the bridge, signs in alleys, adding yellow striping in areas to highlight no parking areas.

Sarah Ford-Ferrara

Historic District Commission- The Historic District Commission did not meet in September due to a lack of action items.

Ed O'Hara

Economic Development and Tourism- Thanks to Cecil County for the 350<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fireworks. Upcoming events include the Lighted Boat Parade 12/7, Pet Parade 11/23, Horse Parade and Market 12/14, NYD 5k 1/1/25, and the Sip and Stroll 2/19/25

Frank Vari

Public Works- The State completed the paving on George Street, and they will be doing the other areas on the south side in the near future. They will be redoing the curbing and the shoulders out to Rt. 213 when the funding is available. The sidewalk at 2<sup>nd</sup> and Charles has been installed and the conduit installation for lights has been scheduled. The stenciling and signs for the new resident parking has been completed.

Parks and Rec- Minutes from the Parks and Rec Meeting were distributed. The next meeting will be held on November 21. The committee took a tour of Lewis in Bloom on Sept. 21 and got lots of inspiration. They will continue to work on the Town planters and flower beds. The Horseshoe events are still happening. The committee has contacted Milburn Orchards to request a resident discount for our residents.

Rob Bernstine, Town Manager

The Town Manager's Report was distributed to Council. One addition is that we will add an additional part-time maintenance position. An interview was held, and an action item will be added to the agenda.

Brian Hunsberger, Treasurer

The Monthly Financial Reports were distributed and the account balances as of today were read.

Mayor Rich Taylor

We will discuss an email regarding sidewalks, specifically in the 200 block of Bohemia. That area is particularly challenging with no curbs and the tree upheaval. Rich had a discussion with a resident regarding speeding and the running of stop signs. Rich attended one of the Network to Freedom Boat Cruises, which were a huge success. DJ plans to add additional tours next year. Overall, DJ felt he had a great season here in Chesapeake City. Rich, Lee, and Frank will attend the MML Quarterly Dinner on Thursday night. Lastly, he met with a group from the Czech Embassy. They wanted to get reacquainted with the Town and other local establishments, as everything with the name "Bohemia" is named after a province in the Czech Republic.

#### Action Items:

##### *Event Application – Lighted Boat Parade*

This is the second annual Lighted Boat Parade, following last year's successful event. Even given the foggy conditions, the town was bustling with eager parade viewers. If they are in Pell Gardens, they need CCDCA approval. They also need a Resolution if there will be alcohol served.

**Motion:** Ed O'Hara made a motion, seconded by Sarah Ford-Ferrara to approve Event Application – Lighted Boat Parade. All in favor, motion carried.

*Event Application – New Year's Day 5k*

An annual event that is held on the south side of town.

**Motion:** Frank Vari made a motion, seconded by Lee Adams to approve Event Application – New Year's Day 5k. All in favor, motion carried.

*Event Application – Pet Parade*

An annual event held near Pell Gardens. If they are in Pell Gardens, they need CCDCA approval. They also need a Resolution if there will be alcohol served.

**Motion:** Frank Vari made a motion, seconded by Sarah Ford-Ferrara to approve Event Application – Pet Parade. All in favor, motion carried.

*Event Application – Parade of Horses and Christmas Market*

An annual event held near Pell Gardens. The parade is at 10 am and the market opens at 11 am.

**Motion:** Lee Adams made a motion, seconded by Ed O'Hara to approve Event Application – Parade of Horses and Christmas Market. All in favor, motion carried.

*Resolution 2024-007 Christmas Market and Parade of Horses Alcohol*

An annual event held near Pell Gardens.

**Motion:** Ed O'Hara made a motion, seconded by Sarah Ford-Ferrara to approve Resolution 2024-007 Christmas Market and Parade of Horses Alcohol. All in favor, motion carried.

*Flagpole/Flag Installation on Town Dock*

On September 12, 2024, it was brought to the Town Hall Staff's attention that a new flag was installed at the Town Dock on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Overlook. No permission was given for this action, so the flag was taken down. Later an email was sent to us requesting permission to install the flag by three members of the Chamber. The Town needs to be careful with reviewing the "content" of the flag. They need to be consistent and non-discriminatory. We could also take the stance that on Town Property, we will only fly or post the US, the State, and the Town Flags. The Council will not take any action until a zoning application is submitted.

**No Motion Made, no action taken until further documentation is received.**

*Comcast Franchise Agreement Update*

Tom Yeager, Town Attorney and Chris Mulhall from Comcast have been in negotiations on the agreement. The council was given the latest email communication between them and discussed the current status of the agreement. Tom's position is that the gross revenue language should mirror that of the Kent County franchise agreement. That is the direction that local governments are going in, and that is the language that will be included in future agreements with all providers. I know that the cable

industry would like to limit the items that constitute gross revenue, but the reality is that more and more revenue is being realized from these items rather than simply from the costs that are paid by subscribers for monthly service. I believe that the Comcast franchise agreement with Cecil County contains language similar to the one with Kent County. Moving forward, when the Breezeline agreement comes up for renewal, we should also move to add this language.

**No Motion Made, no action taken until further communication between Tom and Comcast is had.**

#### *Part-time Maintenance Position*

Adam Streets interviewed and the personnel committee recommends the hiring at \$15.00 per hour for 20 hours per week. Rob will work out a schedule with the maintenance staff.

**Motion:** Lee Adams made a motion, seconded by Hunter Dann to approve the hiring of Adam Streets at \$15.00 per hour for 20 hours per week. All in favor, motion carried.

#### Discussion Items:

##### *Sidewalks*

We received an email from the property owner of 222 Bohemia Ave. stating that she is having trouble getting insurance due to a property inspection resulting in concerns for the sidewalk located in front of the building, specifically the cracks that were observed. The owner is requesting we evaluate and repair the areas of concern in front of their building. The 200 block of Bohemia in particular, is challenging as there are no curbs and the tree upheaval is tremendous. The Charter states that the maintenance and repair of sidewalks is on the homeowner, however, in recent years the Town has been doing and paying for small projects yearly, to repair sidewalks. Rob will talk to the property owner at 222 Bohemia to see if there is a specific item that will help with their insurance issue and will continue to research the cost of additional repairs throughout town.

##### *Introduction of the Draft Comprehensive Plan*

A Draft of the Comprehensive Plan was sent to the State and other local agencies for review on August 19, 2024, by Woodvalley Community Strategies. Tonight, the Mayor and Council formally introduced the Draft. A joint Public Hearing, with the Planning Commission, will be scheduled for Wednesday, November 6, 2024, at 6:30 pm. An advertisement will be placed in the local newspaper, on the Town Website and doors, on or before October 22, 2024.

#### Public Comment:

Matt Kole – was here to discuss having his boat stored at our dock during the winter months (wet water storage), while DJ is not here. He would not be giving tours on the water at this time, but the boat would be decorated with lights for folks to view. They discussed the cost of electricity or other utilities for the boat and if he would pay those costs. There is a draft lease agreement, and Rob and Matt will work together to update it. They will come back to the Council once complete. He did throw around the idea of partnering with a restaurant to let folks have dessert on the boat, with the cost going to charity.

Karyn Huddleston – having issues with folks coming into the store with open containers of alcohol. We need to keep an eye on it.

Council Comments:

Adjourn:

**Motion:** Sarah Ford-Ferrara made a motion, seconded by Frank Vari to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 pm. All in favor, motion carried.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Tonya Lockwood

Richard L. Taylor, III, Mayor