

The Town of
GLEN ECHO

Chartered 1904

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TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

February 14, 2022
Held Virtually Via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER: MAYOR DIA COSTELLO, 7:01 PM

PRESENT

Mayor: Dia Costello.

Councilmembers: (CM) Mona Kishore, Dan Spealman, Matt Stiglitz, and Julia Wilson.

Town Manager: (TM) Beth Stickler.

Residents: Emily Parsons (The Echo), Andy Malmgren (Wellesley Circle), Holly Shimizu (Bryn Mawr).

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL TO HEAR RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello acknowledged the passing of long time resident Rex Rhein on December 31, 2021. She then offered an opportunity to take comments from the residents. There were no comments.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES: ACTION ON JANUARY 10, 2022 MEETING

Minutes of the January 10, 2022 Council meeting were approved as amended.

Motion to Approve Minutes: CM Kishore; 2nd CM Wilson. Approved 4-0.

GLEN ECHO ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE UPDATE: Shimizu

Holly Shimizu, chair of the Glen Echo Environmental Committee (GEEC), gave an update on the Chesapeake Bay Trust grant. A progress report was submitted February 1st to the Chesapeake Bay Trust. After the GEEC gets the next version of the Greening Urban conceptual plan, she will bring it to the Council. She asked that the Council consider setting aside \$70,000 of the American Rescue Plan funds to implement two Greening Urban recommendations: a raingarden at Town Hall (\$20,000) and a swale on the right of way between Harvard and Bryn Mawr Aves (\$50,000).

The Chesapeake Bay Trust Green Streets application deadline is March 3, which may not be achievable this year. Mayor Costello will ask residents who have grant writing experience to volunteer for future grant applications.

Mayor Costello gave testimony to the Maryland House of Delegates on funding for Sustainable Maryland. CM Kishore will work with Chair Shimizu on the tree ordinance revisions for the March meeting.

IRISH INN PARKING LOT LEASE: Costello

Mayor Costello and TM Stickler met with Irish Inn Proprietor Christy Hughes and the Executive Director of the Glen Echo Park, Katey Boerner. Mr Hughes agrees with the change from one year to six months notice to cancel the parking lot lease. He would like the right of first refusal to buy the parking lot area if the town decides to sell the land. It was suggested that Mayor Costello ask Glen Echo resident Tom Helf his thoughts as he is a real estate attorney.

Regarding the parking issues at the Tulane/Oberlin end of Town, Mr Hughes and Ms Boerner described the lack of clear boundaries to the parking area. They agreed with putting up "Business Parking Only – No Park Parking" signs and adding striping to the streets to show no parking areas. TM Stickler will get a quote for the signs and striping. She will also explore making those streets one way. The Town will ask how long Mr Hughes will continue using part of his parking lot for outdoor dining.

CIP / AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN UPDATE: Spealman

The Council agreed that the Town should take the standard allowance of revenue loss for the entire amount of the ARPA funds. The funds can then be used for government services and this will eliminate a lot of reporting requirements.

CM Spealman noted that giving grants from the funds dramatically increases the administration of the funds and, based on the guidance provided experts, he did not recommend using it for grants to local non-profits or businesses. This recommendation was agnostic on whether the town should choose to give grants and to whom; it was only limited to where the funds for such grants should come from. CM Spealman recommended that if the Town decides to give grants, it should use its own unrestricted funds to avoid the extra reporting requirements that come with ARPA funding.

The Council reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and noted priorities are street name signs, stormwater, and starting on repaving streets that Joe Toomey (Town Engineer) had recommended as priority including University, Harvard, and Bryn Mawr. The elevator is not a priority as it is not used very often and still has 5-15 years until replacement is required. The Council will continue this conversation in the budget work session March 7 and the Council Meeting March 14. The CIP will be kept up to date with each budget cycle.

TOWN AUDITOR CONTRACT

The Town posted an RFP for an auditor, as we ended the three-year contract with LSWG after the FY21 audit. TM Stickler sent the RFP to four firms as well: LSWG, Helen Nelson CPA, Dennis Alexander CPA, and ACPA Firm.

Applicants:

LSWG

LSWG Bid:

FY22 \$7,500

FY23 \$7,750

FY24 \$8,000

Previous Auditing Costs:

FY21: \$7,500 (LSWG)

FY20: \$7,250 (LSWG)

FY19: \$7,000 (LSWG)

FY18: \$11,919 (Dennis Alexander)

TM Stickler spoke with the firm and checked references. LSWG has performed the Town audits for the past three fiscal years (FYs 19-21). TM Stickler has found them very professional and thorough working with them both at the Town of Glen Echo and Village of Martin's Additions.

TM Stickler and Mayor Costello recommended the Council approve the contract with LSWG.

Motion to Approve the Contract with LSWG: CM Kishore; 2nd CM Stiglitz. Approved 4-0.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY (copy attached). TM Stickler

The month of January was an average month in terms of revenue and expenses.

The Town received:

- Income tax of \$486, now at 53% of budget.
- Highway User Revenue of \$2,746, now at 35% of budget.
- Admissions and Amusement Tax Revenue of \$509, now at 216% of budget.
- Property Taxes \$49,707, now at 92% of budget.
- Cable Franchise \$687, now at 44% of budget.

Expenses:

Bolt Legal expense was \$744 for December broken out by categories as follows: 29% 4 Vassar hearing; 46% on Irish Inn Lease; 8% benefits program; .

Joseph F. Toomey Associates: There was no bill for December;

Hughes Landscaping \$3,900 for leaf removal (total of \$5,850 for season; budgeted \$13,650);

Rolling Acres Landscaping \$13,168 for snow services (budget is \$25,000).

Motion to Approve the Financial Report: CM Spealman; 2nd CM Wilson. Approved 4-0.

OPERATIONS REPORT: Infrastructure; Administrative; Social: TM Stickler

Infrastructure:

Fence at Town Hall: The Key Sanitation recycling truck hit the bollard/fence at the exit to the parking lot on February 1. Key Sanitation owner Kenny Shumaker met with TM Stickler and will fix the fence.

Pepco Vegetation Cutback: Pepco contacted Town Hall about the preventative maintenance work in regards to their vegetation management. TM Stickler will discuss the work with them and include CM Kishore and CM Wilson in the process.

Water Main Break: On January 25, there was a water main break in the parking lot in front of the Irish Inn. WSSC fixed it and patched the lot; a permanent patch will be installed in 30-45 days.

WMATA Trestle Bridge Demolition: Mayor Costello has reached out to Jim Ashe – there is no date for starting this demolition.

Social:

Winterlude: The Livable Town Committee hosted Winterlude February 5 at 5:30pm. It included luminaries (\$2 apiece to benefit Greentree Family Shelter), fire pits and baked potatoes, hot dogs and marshmallows. The Town raised \$1000 for the Shelter. The volunteers were great with setting up the luminaries and the clean up.

Administrative:

Budget Work Session: March 7 at 7pm via Zoom.

County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act: Del. Carr introduced a bill streamlining the process by which municipalities can purchase their streetlights. Is enabling legislation intended to streamline the process for local governments considering acquiring utility-owned overhead street lights and assuming ownership and maintenance. Allows local governments that have acquired utility-owned lights to select a maintenance provider of their choice and to partner with the private sector to upgrade lights to a style and technology of their choice if desired. MML and local municipalities including Glen Echo are submitting letters/testimony in support of the bill.

Letter on Expedited Bill 2-22 Tax Duplication: The Mayor sent a letter supporting Expedited Bill 2-22 on Montgomery County Municipal Revenue Program (tax duplication). The Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee of the County Council held a work session on amendments to the bill Thursday, February 10.

Passing out free COVID rapid test kits and masks: On February 3, the Town passed out more free rapid COVID tests received from the County, along with N-95 masks. The Town has more kits and masks for residents.

Town Hall Rental: There have been few rentals of Town Hall recently due to the continuation of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Building Updates & Other Permits:

10 Vassar: Fence

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL TO HEAR RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello announced a closing opportunity for comments by the residents. No residents made comments. The March 7 work session and March 14 council meeting will be held via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn: CM Stiglitz 2nd CM Wilson. All in favor. Meeting Adjourned 8:35 pm

Minutes Prepared by: Beth Stickler, Town Manager

Approved:  Date: 3.15.2022
Mayor, Dia Costello