

The Town of  
***GLEN ECHO***

Chartered 1904

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TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
March 13, 2023

CALL TO ORDER: MAYOR DIA COSTELLO. 7:32 PM

PRESENT

Mayor: Dia Costello.

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

Town Manager: (TM) Beth Stickler.

Residents: Blair Anderson (Harvard Ave), Maire Hewitt (Wellesley Cir), Robin Kogelnik (Princeton Ave), Emily Parsons (Echo), Martha Shannon (Wellesley C), Jan Shaut (Harvard Ave).

Guests: Ha-Yeon Jeon (Del. Korman representative).

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL TO HEAR RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello offered an opportunity to take comments from the residents. Jan Shaut, Supervisor of Elections, noted that there is one declared candidate and two Council positions. The Town will post the openings on the Constant Contact and the Mayor will post on the Town list serve. Council members will speak to residents to drum up interest. In the fall, the Council will meet to discuss how to encourage people to run.

GEEC UPDATE ON COASTAL RESOURCES INC STORMWATER DESIGN PLANS: Robin Kogelnik

Robin Kogelnik updated the Council on the status of the Chesapeake Bay Trust grant and Coastal Resources Inc. work. The Town will hear in June whether funding for the installation of raingardens at Town Hall and the right of way has been approved by the Chesapeake Bay Trust. The Town could use

ARPA funds to supplement a grant. The Town requested \$108,800 in funds. The request for proposal was posted and bids are due March 31.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES: ACTION ON FEBRUARY 13, 2023 MEETING

Minutes of the January 13 2023 Council meeting were approved.

Motion to Approve Minutes: CM Wilson; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Kishore. Approved 3-0. CM Stiglitz abstained as was absent.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES: ACTION ON FEBRUARY 23, 2023 MEETING

Minutes of the February 23, 2023 Council meeting were approved as amended.

Motion to Approve Minutes: CM Wilson; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Stiglitz. Approved 4-0.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES: ACTION ON MARCH 6, 2023 MEETING

Minutes of the March 6, 2023 Council meeting were approved.

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

INTRODUCE - TOWN ORDINANCE 23-01 – TO ADOPT A BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR JULY 1, 2023 – JUNE 30, 2024 (FY 24): Costello

Motion to Introduce FY24 Budget Ordinance 23-01: CM Stiglitz; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Wilson. Approved 4-0.

The budget hearing will be held at the April 10 council meeting.

INTRODUCE - TOWN RESOLUTION 23-02 – TO APPROVE LEVYING A TAX ON CERTAIN REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY FOR FY 2024: Costello

Motion to Introduce FY24 Tax Resolution 23-02: CM Kishore; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Stiglitz. Approved 4-0.

The Council discussed the impact of reducing the tax rate from \$0.15/\$100 to \$0.14/\$100 of assessable value (fair market value) on real property subject to taxation by the Town. CM Kishore noted it would reduce taxes \$95/household. The Council decided to keep the rate at \$0.15/\$100 but will reconsider when voting to adopt on May 8.

## SAFETY OPTIONS UPDATE: Costello

Mayor Costello discussed safety options that she and TM Stickler have researched. There have been no reported incidents since the weekend of February 20.

Residents can install lighting, security systems, and may be able to apply for grant money after July 1.

The Town researched lighting, signage, policy, security firms, off duty county police patrol, and cameras.

Camera effectiveness would be limited by poor lighting in Town. New LED street lights would cost at least \$71,500. Mayor Costello and TM Stickler will explore this option with Pepco. There are a lot of dark places in the Town. 3000 Kelvin lights would not be much different from 2700 Kelvin lights. This would take about 6 months to a year. Mayor Costello and TM Stickler met with resident Elaine Bodlander who is a street lighting expert and gave some advice about upgrading to LEDs.

Regarding camera installation, before streetlighting is upgraded it may not be cost-effective as it is too dark in Town for cameras to work. The cost is prohibitive: \$150,000 - \$250,000 for 3 or 4 dome lights on each pole on University Ave. They would be a visual deterrent, but would not be real-time deterrents and only help with investigating crime.

The Council discussed posting surveillance signage. The Council was not in favor of this as it seems unfriendly and the Town is not under surveillance at this time so the sign examples present are not accurate.

Mayor Costello noted that security firms want a year long contract for 40 hours a week.

Off duty county police would cost \$75/hour through EMC Security LLC and would work the overnight hours the Town wants. This could serve as a deterrent. Mayor Costello noted that there is concern about the police bringing guns into Town. EMC Security LLC has insurance and would list the Town as additional insured on the certificate of insurance.

A resident asked if the Town would give residents rebates for Ring security cameras. They cost \$100-\$200. A resident asked about asking county police to patrol the Town regularly. CM Stiglitz noted they are understaffed and responding to emergency and other calls.

Next steps:

1. LED Street lights: Mayor Costello and TM Stickler will explore upgrading to LED street lights with Pepco. There would be a portion of energy cost savings. Town residents would have input into this option as the lights would be much brighter.
2. Signs: The Council felt the sign options were threatening and unfriendly. They did not believe they would deter crime.

3. Off duty county police: There is no data on effectiveness. They would give reports each night. If there are no reports then the Council would revisit the need to keep them. The Town is tracking incidents currently. The Council discussed that hiring police on a trial basis would be comforting to residents. This could start in May or June as crime seems to uptick in the warmer months and would be on Saturday and a random weekday. If there is another incident before May it could start sooner. However, if people come in and try car doors this would not be the trigger as it is common. If more abnormal crime occurs, the Council could hold an emergency meeting to decide to move forward on police sooner. The Town would use EMC Security LLC to coordinate the off duty county police.
4. The Town will send messages on Constant Contact reminding residents to lock doors twice a week, varying the message.

Motion to Begin Hiring Off Duty Montgomery County Police Starting in May for a Month Unless there is a Crime Incident and Emergency Meeting Prior: CM Wilson; Motion failed due to lack of a Second.

Motion to Take Vote at the April 10 Council Meeting Regarding Hiring Off Duty Montgomery County Police Through EMC Security LLC Starting in May for a Month: CM Kishore; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Wilson. 2 in favor 2 opposed. Mayor Costello voted in favor; motion passes.

TOWN HALL RENTAL: Costello

When renting the town hall, in the existing contract, the resident must chaperone any event where minors are involved.

The Mayor wants to include a parental waiver with rental contracts that involve minors.

This is to ensure safety and security for all involved. There have been no incidents in Town but the Mayor wants to be proactive.

The parental waiver would protect the Town from any liability. The Council may still consider requiring one resident parent to be present. Council Member Kishore, who has a lot of experience with contracts professionally, offered to edit it. The changes will be sent to the Town Attorney and considered at the April 10 Council Meeting.

The Town has been contacted by the Glen Echo Fire Department as they want to hold their April membership meeting in Town Hall. The Council decided that the Glen Echo Fire Department can pay the \$25 fee for its rental as an allowable user group.

TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE RESOLUTION ON ANTI-SEMITISM: Costello

The Town of Chevy Chase drafted a resolution in response to the rise in antisemitic activities in Montgomery County. The Town Council of Chevy Chase approved the draft resolution and asked if the Glen Echo Council

would consider the Town of Glen Echo becoming a signatory. Chevy Chase is hoping to have a signed resolution from local municipalities to publicize by mid-April.

Motion for Glen Echo to Become Signatory to the Town of Chevy Chase Resolution: CM Wilson; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Kishore. Approved 4-0.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY: TM Stickler

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

Revenue:

Income Tax: Received \$35,306 at 91% of expected.

Cable Franchise: Received \$835 at 54% of expected.

Property Tax: Received \$6990 at 101% of expected.

Expenses:

Bolt Legal Expense was \$155 for January: 40% for Public Information Act request question, 60% question about permit and security camera guidance.

Motion to Approve the Financial Report: CM Wilson; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Stiglitz. Approved 4-0.

OPERATIONS REPORT: Social; Infrastructure; Administrative: TM Stickler

Social:

Volunteer Appreciation: This event occurred on March 12 at Town Hall.

Coffee with a Cop: Officer Demond Johnson will be in Town Hall April 4 8-9:30am to meet with residents.

Infrastructure:

Street Signs: The finials were replaced February 24 with acorn finials per the contract. The placement of one sign was adjusted per Town request.

Crosswalk at Bannockburn and MacArthur Blvd: Montgomery County Department of Transportation informed the Town that a HAWK signal will be put in at this site, but not until 2029. Lighting is being reviewed along MacArthur.

Crosswalk at MacArthur and Clara Barton Parkway: This crosswalk light is too short for walkers/bikers. The Mayor has reported this to the County Department of Transportation.

Administrative:

Election Timeline: Nomination letters due to Jan Shaut by April 11, Meet the Candidates night is April 14, Election is May 1, take office at Council Meeting on May 8.

Copier: A new copier will be delivered on March 14.

Chesapeake Bay Trust Grant Proposal: The Town submitted its grant proposal on March 7, asking for \$108,800. The Town got one bid for this work, so the RFP was posted again with a due date of March 31.

ARPA Funds: The Town was selected by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) for an interview as part of GAO's mandate to report on the federal government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. GAO is reviewing local governments' use and management of the \$130 billion in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) allocated to them in the American Rescue Plan Act. The interview took place March 13 with TM Stickler and Mayor Costello.

The interview was about Glen Echo's experiences with the SLFRF, including challenges and lessons learned. They randomly selected the Town as part of a sample of 18 localities across 18 states. In randomly selecting the sample, they considered factors such as the amount of SLFRF allocations localities received, jurisdiction type (e.g., city, county, non-entitlement unit of local government), and geographic region.

GAO will use summary information from the responses, as well as those from 17 localities to provide critical information to the Congress in a final product later this year.

1<sup>st</sup> Amendment Auditors: Mayor Costello noted that the Town has put up Staff Only signs to help prevent 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment Auditors from entering the workspace. They come to Town Halls and harass the staff, posting videos on social media to raise money. TM Stickler will take a class on this with an attorney from LGIT through Maryland Municipal Clerks Association on March 16.

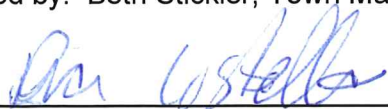
#### OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL TO HEAR RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello announced a closing opportunity for comments by the residents. There were no comments.

#### ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to Adjourn: CM Stiglitz; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Kishore. All in favor. Meeting Adjourned 9:20 pm

Minutes Prepared by: Beth Stickler, Town Manager

Approved:  Date: 4/24/2023

Mayor, Dia Costello