

The Town of
GLEN ECHO

Chartered 1904

Town Hall · 6106 Harvard Avenue · Glen Echo · Maryland 20812 · (301) 320-4041
townhall@glenecho.org

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
May 8, 2023

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

PRESENT

Mayor: Dia Costello.

Councilmembers: (CM) Dan Spealman, Matt Stiglitz, Dawn Tanner and Julia Wilson.

Town Manager: (TM) Beth Stickler.

Residents: Rita Pin Ahrens (Bryn Mawr), Gloria Levin (University), Emily Parsons (Echo), Jan Shaut (Harvard).

Guests: Zach Poe (Del. Korman representative).

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL TO HEAR RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello offered an opportunity to take comments from the residents. There were no comments.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello offered an opportunity for the Council to comment. CM Wilson discussed the parking issues at the Glen Echo Park Carousel Day event April 29. The Park did not have flaggers for parking on the grassy area near the lot. TM Stickler will touch base with the Park regarding upcoming events to remind them flaggers are needed.

The Council and Mayor discussed how old a resident needs to be to make a comment at a Council meeting. TM Stickler will research this.

Mayor Costello announced that TM Stickler will be resigning her position in May of 2024.

SWEARING IN OF COUNCIL MEMBERS: Costello

Mayor Costello swore in incoming Council Member Tanner and re-elected Council Member Wilson.

RESULTS OF TOWN ELECTION HELD MAY 1, 2023: Shaut

Mayor Costello discussed disparities over the past 20 years on how election results were recorded in the minutes and the Echo. In many cases the tallies of votes were not reported.

Jan Shaut, Supervisor of Elections, announced the election results:

101 voters including 16 absentee voters

Julia Wilson had 83 votes

Dawn Tanner had 66 votes

Blair Anderson had 48 votes

The Mayor and Council thanked Jan and noted that it was a great turnout, great volunteers, and ran smoothly.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES: ACTION ON APRIL 13, 2023 MEETING

Minutes of the April 13, 2023 Council meeting were approved as amended.

Motion to Approve Minutes: CM Wilson; 2nd CM Spealman. Approved 3-0. (CM Stiglitz abstained).

PROPOSING CHARTER CHANGES AROUND ELECTION PROCEDURES: Costello

The Mayor proposed amending the Charter to clarify election procedures.

- Clarify that the Town Clerk will announce the tallies of the votes per candidate, and number of voters, within 24 hours of the election.
- Discuss whether to hold an election if it is uncontested
- Discuss changing the hours of the election from 5-9pm

The Council agreed with clarifying the announcement of election results.

The Council suggested holding uncontested elections and add a space for write in candidates on the ballot

The council discussed changing the time of voting to allow for more flexibility. There was no consensus.

TM Stickler will ask Ron Bolt, Town Attorney, to draft language for the Charter Amendment after further discussion by the Council.

The elected governing body of a municipality must first pass a resolution to effect a charter change in the same fashion that they would normally approve a formal resolution. The resolution must contain the exact wording of the proposed amendment or amendments. Each amendment must address a single subject and appear in a format set out in law to describe new language to be added to the charter and existing language to be deleted from the charter.

Notifying the Public Municipal government officials must post an exact copy of the charter amendment resolution at the city or town hall or some other public place for at least 40 days after passage of the resolution. The law further requires the municipality to publish a "fair summary" of the proposed amendment not less than four times at weekly intervals in a newspaper of general circulation in the community.

Effective Date Unless an approved charter amendment is petitioned to referendum, an amendment becomes effective 50 days after a municipal governing body passes a charter amendment resolution. The effective date is delayed if a petition for referendum is received by the municipality on or before the fortieth day after initial passage of the charter amendment resolution.

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

The budget spreadsheet was amended to fix the revenue amount from FY23.

Motion to Approve Ordinance 23-01: CM Spealman; 2nd CM Stiglitz. Approved 3-0. (CM Tanner abstained).

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

Motion to Approve Resolution 23-02: CM Wilson; 2nd CM Stiglitz. Approved 4-0.

NPS UPDATES ON TRESTLE BRIDGE DEMOLITION AND CLARA BARTON HOUSE: Costello

Mayor Costello and TM Stickler attended a consulting parties meeting with NPS on May 1st regarding the plans for the Clara Barton House. As of now, they have gone back to the drawing board with the architectural plans and are also considering the historical interpretation piece. Any construction would not start until October 2024 at the earliest. They will not put an elevator into the building. The Town's priority is the construction process and its impact on residents. NPS is looking for a partner as GEPPAC is no longer a partner.

Mayor Costello reported that draft comments on the WMATA Wilson Trestle Bridge demolition are due May 10 to NPS. The Town will forward resident emails to NPS as well. TM Stickler will discuss with Ron Bolt whether

the Town can refuse access through our streets and right of way. The Town will ask Ron Bolt to assist with amending the Code of Ordinances to deal with this project. The Town will require a permit and bond payments.

The Council advised that the comments to NPS should be stronger in stating the Town's opposition to the demolition project due to its impact on the residents, environment, and history. The Town will list alternatives to demolition including caging off the entire bridge and/or not demolishing the abutments.

Mayor Costello asked the Council to look over the draft letter again by May 9.

STREET LIGHTING: Costello

Mayor Costello and TM Stickler have been consulting with Elaine Bodlander, a lighting expert who lives in Glen Echo. She has been educating them on LED streetlight conversion options. There are two LED streetlights at Oxford and University that are 20 watts and 3000 Kelvin. The main reason to convert to LED is safety – providing better lighting throughout the Town. The Town would prefer cobra heads at 2700 Kelvin which are not available through Pepco. Cobraheads have the advantage of aiming the light at the street and not the sky, and can use blockers so light will not cast into houses. The conversion would cost around \$80,000 and ARPA funds can be used. The Council asked what the electricity cost savings will be; TM Stickler will follow up.

The Council will meet with Elaine via Zoom one Monday in June to learn more about street light conversion.

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO CODE REGARDING FENCE, TREE AND PATIO PERMITS: Costello

Mayor Costello discussed the current Town permit requirements for fences, if they are replaced like for like in the same place and the original fence has a County and Town permit, a permit is not required by the County or Town. She asked the Council to consider requiring a fence permit in all cases, even for replacement fences. TM Stickler will ask Ron Bolt to develop a code amendment to require a Town permit for all fences, even replacement fences.

She also asked the Council to consider requiring a permit for patios. Currently neither the County or Town require a permit.

The Town will change the neighbor notification process when a permit is applied for, by sending a letter from the Town to all abutting and adjacent neighbors.

Mayor Costello also asked the Council to consider changing the tree removal permitting process. Currently there is no list of circumstances when the Council could refuse a permit. TM Stickler will review other local Town tree removal ordinances and report back. Ron Bolt (Town Attorney) had given some guidance previously.

REPLACEMENT FENCE ON ROW AT BRYN MAWR: Costello

A resident replaced a 20+ year old fence on the ROW at Bryn Mawr Ave. The Mayor will move this item to the June 12 Council Meeting agenda so that the residents can attend.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL: TM Stickler

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

Revenue:

Property Tax: The Town received:

\$2,684 in real estate property taxes and is now at 104% of budget.

\$1,169 in personal property taxes – corporate and is now at 134% of budget.

\$491 in public utility taxes and is now at 124% of budget.

Expenses:

Bolt Legal Expense was \$527 for March: 92% for Town Hall rental application and waiver form; 6% for guidance on employee political activity; 11% on 5 Vassar real estate inquiry.

Oyster, Imus, Petzold & Assoc: Expense was \$743 for March: 96% for Columbia Ave repaving; 4% for permit review of 6106 Bryn Mawr fence.

The Council asked about the accounting process for the ARPA funds. TM Stickler will ask the auditor to explain the method for the Council.

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

OPERATIONS REPORT: Social; Infrastructure; Administrative: TM Stickler

Social:

Coffee with a Cop: Officer Demond Johnson was in Town Hall April 14 to meet with residents.

Election: A Meet the Candidates night was held April 14 from 5-630, on the Town Hall Lawn

Summer picnic/pie contest date in July and caterer: It is held 5-7pm, outside, California Tortilla caters, and has a water slide. The Council decided to hold the party on July 23.

Infrastructure:

Infrastructure Projects: At the bottom of Harvard the Town replaced cracked & uneven curb/sidewalk and the storm drain gutter.

Town Hall Painting: TM Stickler proposes painting the outside town hall, just in areas where paint is chipping off. This is near the front door which is unsightly, and a place in the rear.

Administrative:

ARPA Report submitted prior to April 30 to Treasury: For funds spent between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023. The Town has spent \$63,381 of the total funds (\$267,488.)

Chesapeake Bay Trust Grant: The final report is due 5/15/23.

Elevator inspection: The elevator was inspected on April 17. The alarm button needs to be replaced before it will pass inspection. Kencor Elevator informed TM Stickler about the lack of replacement parts for this elevator eventually. The Town also will need to upgrade the emergency landline phone in the elevator.

Class Action Lawsuit: The Town received a check for \$17,414.03 from a class action lawsuit. The Town was informed in July 2022 that it has been identified as an eligible party in the class action lawsuit, brought by the City of Baltimore and others against the Monsanto Company, and its affiliates.

Ron Bolt, Town Attorney, advised that the lawsuit concerns damages resulting to waterways and water supplies (including the Potomac River) from the manufacturing of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) from the 1930's to 1977.

Class action parties are eligible for a share in the settlement amount based on certain formulas, as determined by counsel, certain experts, and a Special Master. The settlement sums are apportioned through 4 funds (Monitoring Fund, TMDL Fund, Sediment Sites Fund, and Special Needs Fund).

An application is required to receive funds from 2 of the 4 funds (Sediment Sites and Special Needs), and eligibility is limited for the TMDL funds to those jurisdictions implementing total maximum daily load regulations.

The Town, as a Phase II party, received funds under the Monitoring Fund.

The Monitoring Fund payments are "intended to pay for PCB sampling and/or any other mitigation efforts in [the Town's] sole discretion, as part of compliance with applicable law". Perhaps the Town could discuss a potential use with the Park Service, or with the County, or use it for drinking water testing.

TM Stickler will look into what the fund can be used for.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL TO HEAR RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello announced a closing opportunity for comments by the residents.

6008 Bryn Mawr has a notice posted that it is abandoned. TM Stickler will contact the resident regarding his status.

Gloria Levin (University) asked that the Town put up signs regarding the dog leashing requirement.

She also asked the Council to consider how to support Nancy Long, a long time resident and Council Member.

Rita Pin Ahrens (Bryn Mawr) said she is in the process of getting a permit for a new fence and arbor. She noted that the dead end of Wellesley Circle has wood piles and a boat. TM Stickler is aware and is working with the residents to clear it out. There are two other boats in town on town streets that do not have permits for parking long term. The Town will address this with the residents.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to Adjourn: CM Stiglitz; 2nd CM Spealman. All in favor. Meeting Adjourned 10:10 pm

Minutes Prepared by: Beth Stickler, Town Manager

Approved:  Date: 6-21-2023

Mayor, Dia Costello