

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS

**TOWN OF NORTH EAST
106 S. MAIN STREET
NORTH EAST, MARYLAND 21901**

May 12, 2021

In order to comply with Governor Larry Hogan's reduced restrictions as part of the State of Maryland's response to COVID-19, and in order to comply with public gatherings during this time, the Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of North East have decided to conduct this meeting in person and virtual for those who wish to attend.

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kline at 7:00 P.M. Present were Commissioners Kelly Benson, Catherine Bernard-Dutton, Hilary Crothers-Moore and Raymond Mitchell. Also present were Director of Finance and Administration Ken Natale, Assistant Town Administrator Robb Carey, Town Administrator Melissa B. Cook-MacKenzie, and Town Clerk Stephanie Racine-Dean. Absent from the meeting, Police Chief Jim Just and Maintenance Supervisor Phil Meekins.

A moment of silence was observed.

-OATH OF OFFICE-

None

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 28, 2021 meeting, as presented, was made by Commissioner Mitchell, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-PUBLIC HEARING-

None

-GUESTS-

None

-APPOINTMENTS-

None

Town Board Approved Minutes May 26, 2021

-PUBLIC COMMENT-

None

-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

Ordinance 2021-05-01 re: Fiscal Year 2022 Budget, Constant Yield Tax Rate, Water and Stormwater Fees

The Public Hearing will be held at the next scheduled Board Meeting, Wednesday, May 26, 2021.

Ordinance 2021-05-02 re: Amend the Code of Ordinance Article 5 re: Economic Development Commission, Section 2-502

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board Ordinance 2021-05-02. An Ordinance for the purpose of amending the Town of North East Code of Ordinances Article 5. Economic Development Commission, Section 2-502. Composition; Appointments; Terms to provide for a Member of the Town Board to be Appointed and Serve as Ex-Officio Member to the Economic Development Commission; Section 2-503. Organization and Procedures to Provide for Selection of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman, Section 2-504. Powers and Duties of the Commission to Stipulate the Duties of the Commission pertaining to previously granted downtown Revitalization Loans.

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

-REPORTS-

Mayor Kline

Mayor Kline reported he attended a meeting with the Town Administrator and Mr. Tom Lofland, Chairman of the North East Economic Development Commission (EDC) on Thursday, April 29, 2021.

Mayor Kline reported he attended a Maryland Municipal League Virtual Meeting on Friday, April 30, 2021 regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mayor Kline reported he attended a tour at the Woodlawn Wildlife Area/New Beginnings on Monday, May 5, 2021, with Commissioner Benson, Town Administrator, Melissa Cook-MacKenzie and Hudson & Karen Benson to gather ideas for Heron Cove.

Mayor Kline reported he attended a Maryland Municipal League Scholarship Committee Virtual Meeting on Thursday, May 6, 2021 and once again on Wednesday, May 12, 2021 to vote who would receive the scholarships.

Mayor Kline reported he attended a meeting on Friday, May 7, 2021 with Ms. Laura Levy, Director of the Cecil County Health Department, Travis Nelson, Maryland State Police (MSP) and the Town Administrator to discuss the Salute to Cecil County Veterans Fireworks on Saturday, July 3, 2021 and the use of the North East Community Park during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mayor Kline reported he attended a meeting on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 with Mr. Jonathan Carter, the new Editor of the Cecil Whig and his associate.

Mayor Kline reported he attended a sneak preview of the Cecil County Farm Museum on Wednesday, May 12, 2021.

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton

None

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

Commissioner Crothers-Moore reported she attended the North East Fire Company Banquet, 210 South Mauldin Avenue, North East on Saturday, May 1, 2021.

Commissioner Mitchell

None

Commissioner Benson

Commissioner Benson reported he attended a tour at the Woodlawn Wildlife Area/New Beginnings on Monday, May 5, 2021, with Mayor Kline, Town Administrator, Melissa Cook-MacKenzie and Hudson & Karen Benson to gather ideas for Heron Cove.

Town Administrator, Melissa B. Cook-MacKenzie

Mrs. Cook-Mac-Kenzie reported she attended the following meetings since the April 28, 2021 Town Meeting:

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended a meeting with Mayor Kline and Mr. Tom Lofland, President of the North East Economic Development Commission (EDC) on Thursday, April 29, 2021.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended a meeting with the Assistant Town Administrator, Robb Carey in regards to the ongoing recruitment process for the North East Police Department.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended a tour at the Woodlawn Wildlife Area/New Beginnings on Monday, May 5, 2021, with Mayor Kline, Commissioner Benson, and Hudson & Karen Benson to gather ideas for Heron Cove.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended their first Department Head Meeting in person since the COVID-19 pandemic on Tuesday, May 4, 2021.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she along with the Assistant Town Administrator, Robb Carey, have met twice with the North East Maintenance Department regarding their daily tasks throughout the town.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended a meeting with the town's engineer, Director of Planning, Betsy Vennell and the Water Superintendent, Ron Carter regarding the Stonebridge Project off Baron Road, North East.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended a meeting with the Economic Development Commission on Thursday, May 6, 2021.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she met with Mayor Kline on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 regarding the opening of the Santa House. Sandy Turner, Director of Cecil County Tourism would like to re-open, for tourism during the summer of 2021.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended a meeting on Tuesday, May 11, 2021 with Mr. Jonathan Carter, the new Editor of the Cecil Whig and his associate

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she has a meeting with Mr. Robert Crouch on Friday, May 14, 2021 regarding the relocation of the Santa House on the "Green", for the safety of the children during the Christmas Holidays.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie asked the Board to please keep the Griffith Family along with the Maintenance Department staff in their prayers due to the loss of their fellow employee, Ronnie Griffith who passed away on Saturday, May 1, 2021.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie asked the Board to please keep, Phil Meekins, Maintenance Supervisor in their thoughts and prayer, he has been in the hospital since Wednesday, April 28, 2021.

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Carey reported he attended the following virtual meetings since the April 28, 2021 Town Meeting:

Mr. Carey reported he attended his first Department Head Meeting on Tuesday, May 4, 2021 since being employed as the Assistant Town Administrator. Mr. Carey stated these meeting will be held twice a month, the first and third Tuesdays going over dialogue, calibration, training and additional projects throughout the town. In addition, Mr. Carey reported he will be meeting with the Town Administrator on the alternative weeks on various projects, to

improve efficiency on getting these items completed and to calibrate on any additional items that he would need to assist with.

Mr. Carey reported, during the absence of Phil Meekins, Maintenance Supervisor, and per his request along with the Mayor Kline's approval, there has been a Maintenance II position posted on the Town's website and social media. Mr. Carey also advised the Board, Tom Berstler, Maintenance II has been recommended for a long overdue promotion to Maintenance I with recommendation by his Supervisor, Phil Meekins. This position will be expedited with the approval of Mayor Kline.

Mr. Carey reported he along with Detective Sergeant, Stephan Yates toured and met with a Security Surveillance Company that is located in New Castle, Delaware. Mr. Carey mentioned the Command Center they toured service several Maryland Municipalities such as the Town of Elkton. With the information they have obtained, they would like to explore what can be done to improve electronic camera surveillance systems and the cutting edge technology for the North East Police Department. Mr. Carey stated they will continue to meet with other security surveillance companies for the town's law enforcement and the safety of our community which is held at a high priority.

Mr. Carey reported he is still working on the recruitment hiring strategy for the North East Police Department and has expanded to a more complex system than just hiring of a single officer. Mr. Carey stated, there is a lateral hire program for officers that are transferring from other agencies who may already be certified or not certified with the State of Maryland. Some may have years of experience with entry level, graduated from an academy or are subject to certification. Looking toward the future, the town is looking into the possibility of investing in a candidate to attend the academy and be guarantee the years of service to the town once they are certified.

Mr. Carey advised the Board, there will be an Open Enrollment meeting for the town staff on Thursday, May 20, 2021 at 1:00 pm. Mr. Carey advised the Board they are more than welcomed to attend.

Director of Finance and Administration, Ken Natale

Mr. Natale entered into the record since the last Board Meeting on April 28, 2021 the April 2021 purchasing card summary.

Mr. Natale reported he has been reviewing the Treasury Guidance for the American Rescue Plan and he will be attending webinars next week by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for a more understanding what the allowable costs are. Mr. Natale stated he was on a virtual call with the White House when the Treasury released the guidance of the town's allocation which should be made public within a week for non-entitlement communities.

Mr. Natale reported he has been working with the town's IT Contractor, Mike Devine, the Department of Homeland Security Cyber Security and the Infrastructure Security Agency to coordinate a Cyber Security Audit of the town's operations.

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

None

-NEW BUSINESS-

2020 Annual Planning Report: Adopted by Planning Commission

Mrs. Cook-McKenzie presented the 2020 Annual Report of the Town of North East Planning Commission. In accordance with the provisions of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Land Use. Section 1-207. The Planning Commission shall prepare, adopt and file an annual report for the previous calendar year with the legislative body. The Town of North East Planning Commission, filing same with the Mayor and Commissioners and the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Planning.

Ridgely Forest, Extension for Occupancy of the Clubhouse and Pool

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented an Extension for Occupancy of the Clubhouse and Pool for WORF, LLC, Ridgely Forest, Elkton.

Mr. Jim Wolf, Owner/Developer WORF, LLC 2301 Rutledge Road, Fallston, Maryland wanted to address the board regarding the request for extension for Occupancy of the Clubhouse and Pool. The first extension request came before the Board on October 14, 2020 and approved the request for the Clubhouse and Pool shall be open by May 31, 2021; if both are not open by this date, the Town shall not process any new home construction authorization permits with the Ridgely Forest Development. Mr. Wolf advised the Board, due to the COVID-19 pandemic there was a delay in receiving and installing the Delmarva transformer box pad. After a 2 month delay that was experienced by their supplier, they are now considerably behind on their service schedule. As of today, the Clubhouse is around 90 percent completed, Mr. Wolf is requesting an additional 30 day extension.

A motion to approve the Extension for Occupancy of the Clubhouse and Pool until June 30, 2021 with recommendation by the Town Administrator and the Planning Office was made by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None

-APPROPRIATIONS-

None

Town Board Approved Minutes May 26, 2021

-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

Mr. Michael Nair, 14 Augusta Loop, North East, Vice-President of the Courts of Mallory Homeowners Association came before the Mayor and Commissioners to request that the Emergency Access Road which has been required between the Courts of Mallory Development and the Ridgely Forest Development be rescinded/removed as a requirement.

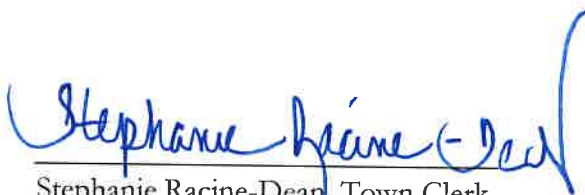
After discussion, Mayor Kline advised when he was on the Board of Appeals, this topic was discussed by North East Fire Department and the Cecil County Department of Emergency Services. Mayor Kline advised Mr. Nair this is a safety issue, and pertaining to Courts of Mallory, without this access point the community only has one way in and one way out. This access is for emergency apparatus is essential. Mayor Kline stated from his standpoint, the Town owns this property, it is a right-away and it is a safety issue. The Emergency Access Road has been approved and is a safety concern, there is no reason for the town to revisit at this time.

-ADJOURNMENT-

With there being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Mitchell, seconded by Commissioner Benson and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:


Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk


Michael Kline, Mayor