

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS

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

September 25, 2024

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kelly Benson at 7:00 P.M. Present were Commissioners Catherine Bernard-Dutton, Hilary Crothers-Moore, and Kimberly Davis. Also present were Town Administrator Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Assistant Town Administrator, Grant Handley, Police Chief Stephen Yates, Water Plant Superintendent Ron Carter, Director of Finance Vonnie Steman, Director of Planning, Betsy Vennell and Maintenance Supervisor Rich Gregg. Town Clerk Stephanie Racine-Dean was absent from the meeting.

A moment of silence was observed.

-PROCLAMATION-

Mayor Benson presented a proclamation to Mr. Sonny Maurice Tenney, long standing volunteer for the Town of North East, serving on both the North East Planning Commission and the Board of Appeals for over three decades..

-OATH OF OFFICE-

Mayor Benson administered the Oath of Office for the following Board Members:

Mark T. Dobbins, North East Planning Commission, term expires July 19, 2029
Ulysses Grant Demond IV, Board of Supervisors of Elections, term expires October 1, 2025
Ruth Gonce, Board of Supervisors of Elections, term expires October 1, 2025
Russell Polo, Board of Appeals, term expires October 8, 2027
Colleen McCandless, Board of Appeals, term expires October 8, 2025

-PUBLIC COMMENT-

None

-GUESTS-

1. Mark Dobbins, President, Elk and North East Rivers Watershed Association
(ENERWA) 151 North East Isles Drive, North East, Maryland

Town Board Approved Minutes October 6, 2024

Mr. Dobbins expressed his thanks to the Mayor and Commissioners for ten years of support to the Elk and North East Rivers Watershed Association. Mr. Dobbins reported that this organization is very small, yet they are in their fifth year of conducting water sampling on both the Elk and North East River, involving up to twelve water samplers each month. Mr. Dobbins passed out the ENERWA sampling results to the Board along with the 2023 ENERWA Water Quality Report Card, which was sent out to approximately 9,000 residents of the County in 2023. Mr. Dobbins reported on other grants that ENERWA receives, and outlined the costs associated with water sampling, testing and sending out the report cards to residents. Mr. Dobbins stated again how thankful ENERWA is for the support of the Town and indicated that he hopes the partnership will continue for years to come, and he envisions the “old Lock Up, as a physical space to be utilized as housing ENERWA.

Mr. Handley reported that he appreciates the help and assistance that ENERWA conducted with the MS-4 outfall testing and was impressed that the volunteers found three additional outfalls over what the prior engineer has found.

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

September 11, 2024

A motion to approve the minutes of the September 11, 2024 meeting, as presented, was made by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-APPOINTMENTS-

None

-RE-APPOINTMENTS-

None

-PUBLIC COMMENT-

None

-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

Resolution 2024-09-01:

Town Board Approved Minutes October 9, 2024

A resolution to complete the requirements outlined in the Maryland Department of the Environment National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. Due to funds received from a grant, Resolution 2024-09-01 rescinds Resolution 2023-08-01.

A motion to adopt resolution 2024-09-01 was approved by Commissioner Crothers Moore. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis and approved by all. .

-REPORTS-

Mayor

Mayor Benson reported:

- Reviewed a price estimate for the Old Lock Up Building
- Reviewed the Underwood and Associates Designs for the MS-4 requirements.
- The volleyball courts and horse shoe pits have been installed
- Administered the Oath of Office Wednesday morning, September 25, 2024 for the North East Board of Appeals Member, SJ Anderson.
- All Starts Softball Regional Championships will be conducted at the North East Little League Baseball field, south of town's corporate limit, in August 2025. ESPN will cover the event and teams from many locations will be present for the championship.

Commissioner Davis

Commissioner Davis reported she attended:

- September 13, 2024 Second Fridays
- September 20, 2024 Music on the Green

In addition, Mrs. Davis reported:

- Ms. Davis will be teaching at a training course to teach English as a second language in Cecil County as an outreach program, beginning in January 2025.
- Will be attending the October 17, 2024 Maryland Municipal League dinner.
- Ms. Davis sent a sympathy card to Mike Kline

Town Administrator

Ms. Cook-MacKenzie reported:

- Attendance at two Department Head meetings
- Attendance at two meetings with Mayor Benson
- Reviewed the draft Comprehensive Plan language
- Attendance at a meeting with the Grant Writer and Assistant Town Administrator
- Attended a meeting regarding the Old Lock Up, 102 West Cecil Avenue
- Attended a meeting with Underwood and Associates regarding MS-4 projects
- Worked with Mrs. Vennell concerning two projects with potential businesses coming into Town

Town Board Approved Minutes October 9, 2024

- Riverwoods project is moving forward

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Handley reported:

- Volleyball and Horseshoe has been installed at the North East Community Park. The Volleyball league begins playing this Saturday.
- Various rain gardens at the North East Community Park and the municipal parking lot received their Bay Wise certification. The University of Maryland Extension Bay-Wise Program focuses on water quality. It comprises a comprehensive set of environmental topics that affect the quality and quantity of water here in Maryland.
- Various meetings to review and determine the MS-4 projects that the Town will be doing.
- Meeting regarding the restoration of the old Town Lock-Up.
- Continuing to prepare for the Town MS-4 report which is due on October 31, 2024. Reporting that the outfall inspections for the year have been complete, and there is no evidence of illicit discharge.

Director of Finance

Mrs. Steman reported:

- Balance sheet as of August 31, 2024 (pre-audit)
- Revenue & Expenditure YTD as of August 31, 2024 (pre-audit)
- Check register August 22, 2024 through September 19, 2024
- Nothing extraordinary in the financial reports for August 2024.
- Thankful to Ms. Cook-MacKenzie and Mr. Handley for work during 2024 to complete the encumbrance of ARPA funds by December 31, 2024.

Mayor Benson indicated that he and Mrs. Stemen were trying to work with an internal deadline for Town Board approval of the final encumbrance of ARPA funds of November 27, 2024.

Maintenance Supervisor

Mr. Rich Gregg reported:

- He is hoping to get the tin delivered for the pavilions
- The park restrooms were upgraded with a wider door
- He is moving along with projects
- The street sign project: Shannon-Baum Signs still has outstanding items they owe the Town

Commissioner Davis thanked the North East Maintenance Department for their recent assistance with an elderly woman during a driving incident.

Director of Planning

Town Board Approved Minutes October 9, 2024

Mrs. Vennell entered the August 2024 Planning Report into the record and reported the following:

- The Annual North East Chamber of Commerce event, "Tree lighting on the Green" has received re-approval from the Festival/Event Committee for their event on November 29, 2024.

Chief of Police

Chief Yates entered the August 2024 into the record.

Chief Yates also reported:

- The Coats for Kids program has started
- He was sworn in as the Vice President for the Maryland Police Chief's Association
- North East Station property-Homeless situation: He and his officers have met with the owner's representatives of the North East Station concerning the homeless problem, junk and debris on the site behind the North East Station stores. Klein Enterprises have agreed to put up security cameras up, will be installing a fence and will have the trash removed from the site.
- A meeting the North East United Methodist Cemetery was conducted and the Cemetery will be installing solar powered cameras. Concerning the vandalism which occurred in the cemetery, the Police Department have fingerprints from the perpetrators which have been sent to the lab, but they are not back yet.

Water Superintendent

Mr. Carter entered his August 2024 Water Department report into the record.

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

1. State of Maryland Reverse Auction – Purchase Cost of Electricity

Ms. Cook-MacKenzie reported the auction has taken place, at a cost of 3 cents per KWH, which will save the Town several thousand dollars over the next few years.

-NEW BUSINESS-

Town Administrator:

1. North East Police Department Administration Building Renovations Contract 2024-01 – Strayer Contracting \$232,146.00 - ARPA

A motion to award the contract for the North East Police Department Administration Building Renovations to Strayer Contracting, Inc. and to approve requisition R5-00553 in the amount of \$232,146.00 was made by Commissioner Davis. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

2. Westover Place Watermain Upgrade Project PW-2024-001- LECCO Pipe for \$451,317.03 - ARPA

Ms. Cook-MacKenzie reported that LECCO does periodic work for the North East Water Department, and verified with the Town Attorney that the Town entering into a specific contract with LECCO will not create a conflict of interest, since this was a public bid.

A motion to award the Westover Place Watermain Upgrade Project Contract to LECCO Pipe and to approve Requisition R5-00547 in the amount of \$451,317.03 was made by Commissioner Crothers-Moore. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis and approved by all.

3. Water Allocation Request: Bright Tower Properties LLC, 304-306 North Main Street Extended – two (2) Equivalent Residential Units (ERU's)

A motion to approve the water allocation of two (2) ERU's to Bright Tower Properties LLC was made by Commissioner Davis. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

4. Extension of Public Works Agreement (PWA) to September 30, 2025 for Tri-Corner Gemcraft Homes, LLC Lots 34, 35 & 36 within the Chesapeake Club

A motion to approve an extension of the PWA with Tri-Corner Gemcraft Homes, LLC for Lots 34, 35 & 36 until September 30, 2025 was made by Commissioner Davis. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

5. Deed of Conveyance for Water Main & Appurtenances - Ward Communities at Harford County LLC - Plat entitled "Lots 1-5, The Chesapeake Club" recorded at Plat Book PC No. 1122, folio 71 - Value \$12,340.00

A motion to accept the deed from "Ward Communities at Harford County, LLC" for the water main and appurtenances valued at \$12,340.00 was made by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Davis and approved by all.

6. Dewberry Engineering – Compliance Services for MS4 Permit for 2024-2026 for \$80,000.00 ARPA

A motion to enter in an agreement with Dewberry Engineering and to Approve Requisition Approval R5-00554 in the amount of \$80,000.00 was made by Commissioner Davis. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

7. Underwood and Associates – MS-4 Design Services for North East Community Park Restoration/New Kayak Launch area \$55,572.00 and MS4 Design Services for North East Preserve; Stony Run Creek Stream Restoration – \$115,926.00 (total \$171,498.00) - ARPA

Commissioner Davis made a motion to enter in an agreement with Underwood and Associates, Inc. and to Approve Requisition R5-00582 in the amount of \$55,572.00 and Requisition R5-00583 in the amount of \$115,926.00. Commissioner Crothers-Moore seconded the motion and the motion was approved by all.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

Mr. Handley reported that he is attending an event at the Great Wolf Lodge on October 3, 2024 concerning removing biases and discrimination when it comes to housing.

Mrs. Cook-Mackenzie reported that she will be bringing Ordinance Number 2024-10-01 to the Town Board meeting on October 9, 2024. The proposed Ordinance amends the Code of Ordinances of the Town of North East, Article 5. Economic Development Commission. Section 2-502. Composition; Appointment; Terms. The amendment provides for the members to be appointed by the Mayor and Commissioners and there shall be no fewer than ten members, nor more than 12 members.

Chief Yates reported that the town has been notified of Coastal Flooding in the early morning hours of Thursday, September 26, 2024.

-APPROPRIATIONS-

Budget Amendment 2025-003

Revenue: \$90,000.00 Grant from Legislative Bond Initiative

Revenue: \$23,600.00 OPIOID Restitution Fund Targeted Abatement Grant

Expenditure: \$90,000.00 Landmark Engineering Co. re: Phase I Environmental Assessment for the North East Preserve

Expenditure: \$23,600.00 Youth Empowerment Source (YES)

A motion to approve Budget Amendment 2025-003 was made by Commissioner Davis. The motion was seconded by Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

Chief Yates thanked Mrs. Steman for her work on the OPIOID grant, as well as Ms. Cook-MacKenzie and Mr. Handley for their work concerning the North East Police Department Administration building project.

Chris Vanderslice, owner of 203 Walnut Street, North East, Maryland expressed his thanks to the North East Maintenance Department for their assistance in going the extra mile in many different things, including dropping off an additional trash can and providing sand bags.

-ADJOURNMENT-

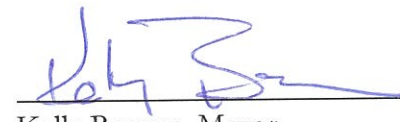
With there being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:



Betsy Vennell, Director of Planning



Kelly Benson, Mayor