

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS

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

February 26, 2025

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kelly Benson at 7:03 P.M. Present were Vice-Mayor Kimberly Davis, Commissioners Catherine Bernard-Dutton and Hilary Crothers-Moore. Also present were Police Chief Stephen Yates, Maintenance Supervisor Richard Gregg, Water Superintendent Ron Carter, Director of Finance Vonnie Stemen, Director of Planning and Zoning Betsy Vennell, Town Administrator Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Assistant Town Administrator Grant Handley and Town Clerk Stephanie Racine-Dean.

A moment of silence was observed to give thanks to all the men and women that serve and protect us.

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 12, 2025 regular meeting, with an adjustment to the miscellaneous area, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all. Commissioner Bernard-Dutton abstained due to her absence from the meeting.

-APPOINTMENTS & OATH OF OFFICE-

A motion to appoint to the Board of Appeals, Justine Paterson, 15 Juniper Circle, Elkton to a two year term, expiring October 8, 2026 was made by Commissioner Crothers-Moore, seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

-GUESTS-

None

-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

Town Board Approved Minutes March 12, 2025

-REPORTS-

Mayor Benson

Mayor Benson reported he attended the following meetings since the February 12, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- 2.13.25 North East Preserve meeting along with town staff
- 2.19.25 Met with a potential Developer along with the Town's Administration regarding a project off the Route 40 corridor
- 2.19.25 Sent out an Economic Development Study commissioned by the City of Cambridge which has some very interesting parallels similar to the Town of North East. Earlier today the study was reviewed, it will then be built as a working document for a pathway to move forward
- 2.26.25 Met with the Frasier Walker, Cecil County Public Library, in regards to how the North East Library found funding and raised money for their large projects

Mayor Benson reported the Town of North East is welcoming back the North East Economic Development Commission (EDC). The Assistant Town Administrator has been reaching out to various candidates, to volunteer their time to bring the Commission back to the Town of North East.

Vice-Mayor Davis

Vice-Mayor Davis reported she attended the following meetings since the February 12, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- 2.18.25 Attended a webinar which was an orientation for Municipal Officials. Discussed, was rules regarding Charters which falls in place with what the Town Board is doing now regarding the Charter of the Town of North East
- 2.21.25 Taught her first English class as, your "second language", this is considered an intermediate level class

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton

None

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

None

Town Administrator

Mrs. Melissa Cook-MacKenzie reported she attended the following meetings since the February 12, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- Weekly Department Head meeting
- Five Town Partnership (5 Town's) meeting
- North East Preserve Committee meeting along with Mayor Benson
- Separate Water Department meeting
- Assistant Town Administrator along with Grant Writer to go over the status of grant applications. There will be an Emark Project grant application submitted

- Met with the owner of Pat's Pizza, North East regarding the adjoining property behind Sunoco
- Met with David Dahlstrom, Regional Planner, Maryland Department of Planning regarding the annexation process
- Gave an update to ENERWA regarding the North East Preserve and the Old Town Lock-Up
- Participated in the Maryland Route 272 steering committee meeting along with the Director of Planning and Chief Yates
- Conversation with the Cecil County Attorney regarding the Chesapeake Club
- Participated in the Cambridge Revitalization for the North East Economic Development Commission
- Met with the Frasier Walker, Cecil County Public Library, in regards to how the North East Library found funding and raised money for their large projects
- Follow-up meeting with the Town's Consultant along with the Director of Planning regarding the Maryland Route 272 project
- Met with Donald Horton owner of Dollar General, South Main Street, along with town staff regarding the future of the building. Mr. Horton will keep the town up-to-date regarding the future of the building

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Grant Handley reported he attended the following meetings since the February 12, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- Old Town Lock Restoration has begun, including brickwork, roof repairs, and window restoration.
- Main Street Camera Project is expected completion by the end of March. Electricity will be installed in the pedestrian light poles once the weather stabilizes, with camera installation to follow
- Skipjack Martha Lewis lease has been signed and fully executed
- SCADA Upgrades Project at the water plant is moving forward again following the release of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funding
- North East Preserve – Actively pursuing various funding opportunities to support the project
- Shoreline Restoration – Progress continues on the restoration near the park pumping station, working through requirements with the Critical Area Commission
- Veterans Memorial – Approximately 40 additional veterans' bricks are in production and will be added to the memorial upon completion
- Working on getting candidates for the Economic Development Commission (EDC) as mentioned by Mayor Benson

Director of Finance

Mrs. Vonnie Stemen entered in the record the list of payments issued since the last Board Meeting. In addition Mrs. Stemen reported the following:

- Check Register as of 1.15.25 to 2.20.25
- General Fund Balance Sheet as of 1.31.25
- Statement of Revenue and Expenditures ending to 1.1.25 to 1.31.25

Mrs. Stemen reported as of Monday, February 24th was the due date for the Department Heads to submit their budget information for Fiscal 2026. Today was the December quarterly water shut-offs, with a minimum of 30 customers.

Director of Planning and Zoning

Mrs. Betsy Vennell entered into the record the January 2025 Planning and Zoning Monthly report. In addition, Mrs. Vennell reported the following, Planning Office Project Status:

- Major Facility Fees Collected - \$4,100.00
- Connection Fees - \$2,825.00
- Permit Fees - \$205.00
- General Town Inspections – 10
- Code of Ordinance Violation – 4
- Zoning Ordinance Violation - 6

Mrs. Betsy Vennell reported, there has been a Chairman and Vice-Chairman re-elected for the Planning Commission. Election of Chairman is Mark Dobbins and Vice-Chairman is Judy Duffy. Board of Appeals elected, Chairman Sarah J. Anderson and Vice-Chairman is Martha Kline.

Mrs. Betsy Vennell reported, two new addresses have been assigned at the North East Community Park for the Boat Builders building and the Public Restrooms.

Maintenance Supervisor

Mr. Gregg entered into the record the January 2025 Monthly Report for the Town of North East Maintenance Department. In addition, Mr. Gregg reported the following:

Mayor Benson addressed the Board and town staff to see if the North East Maintenance Department can address the trash at the Route 40 corridor. This would be the intersection at Route 40/272, making a left hand turn and going into town. Mayor Benson advised he would volunteer and help pick-up the trash alongside side the Maintenance staff. After discussion, the Maintenance Supervisor will call State Highway Administration (SHA) to see if the town can take over this task.

Chief of Police

Police Chief Yates entered into the record the January 2025 Crime and Traffic Breakdown Report for the North East Police Department. In addition, Chief Yates reported the following:

- Gave the Director of Finance his budget information for Fiscal Year 2026

- Renovation project is going smoothly. They are not working this week, due to, they are waiting for supplies to come in
- North East Police Department passed the certification audit from the Training Commission of the State of Maryland
- There will be 2 candidates interviewed for the North East Police Department next week.

Water Plant Superintendent

Mr. Ron Carter entered into the record the January 2025 Monthly Report for the North East Rolling Mill and Leslie Water Plants. In addition Mr. Carter reported the following:

Mr. Carter updated the Board regarding the slug of water with Magnesium that was coming down from the North East Creek. The water has been tested and the Magnesium is under control with no yellow water complaints. Mr. Carter also stated, he sent an email to Marybeth Appio, 18 Bayberry Drive, Elkton and asked if she has heard anyone complaining in the Ridgely Forest Community regarding the color of their water. Mr. Carter did say, Ms. Appio visited the Rolling Mill Treatment Plant for a few hours to tour and see the water process at the treatment plant.

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported to the Board, there was an encounter with the Westover Place Project. She along with Mr. Carter met with the contractor, the Westover line that ties into Campbell Lane and Cemetery Road was not up to today's standard as far as the depth. There has been a resolution to the problem, a steel plate has been placed over the connection to deflect any future disturbance.

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

Special Event Application: Second Fridays Application – North East Chamber of Commerce

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board a North East Chamber Special Event, on "The Green", Second Friday's from 6:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. The application was review by the Special Events Committee and they have recommended approval of the applications. The dates they are requesting:

- May 9th 2025
- June 13, 2025
- July 11, 2025
- August 8, 2025
- September 12, 2025

A motion to approve the Special Events Application, Second Fridays on "The Green" with the recommendation of the Special Events Committee was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

Executive Session- Update Personnel Matter

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie gave an update on the executive session, personnel matter. As reported at the last meeting, a follow-up would be needed, but unfortunately she is still waiting to receive additional paperwork from the town's attorney.

Mayor Benson asked for an update regarding the Charter Amendments. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie stated she has one final question prior of the introduction, this would be if the election is uncontested, should the election be cancelled for the public to vote? After discussion, the town election will remain the same, residents will vote even if the election is uncontested.

-NEW BUSINESS-

Water Allocation Extension Request: North East Commons One, LLC (Lot 3) and North East Commons Two LLC (Lot 2); Gateway Drive, North East. Requesting one year extension, expires February 27, 2026

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board a Water Allocation Extension Request for North East Commons One, LLC Lot 3 and North East Commons Two LLC Lot 2 Gateway Drive.

A motion to approve the Water Allocation Extension Request for North East Commons One, LLC (Lot 3) and North East Commons Two LLC (Lot 2); Gateway Drive until February 27, 2026 with the recommendation of the Planning Office was made by Commissioner Crothers-Moore, seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

Mayor Benson asked the next steps of the Unfinished Business of the Charter Amendment. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie stated the Board will receive a Resolution which is the only way the Charter can get amended. This will be a legal looking document that the board and staff has already discussed. The Board will see the amendments, you will see the new additions or the deletions. The Resolution will be introduced at a future meeting and the following meeting after that, you will vote, advertising is required.

-APPROPRIATIONS-

-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

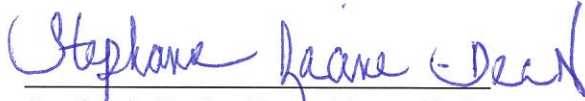
Neil DeMatt, 23 Thomas Avenue volunteered with Route 40 corridor, trash clean-up. He is a member of the Cecil County Board of Realtor Care Committee and in amongst the group there is a committee called the Cat Club, (Citizens Against Trash). Mr. DeMatt stated this club would be happy to help with the clean-up of the intersection of Route 40/272. They have all the equipment and vests to accommodate.


-ADJOURNMENT-

With there being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:


Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk


Kelly A. Benson, Mayor