

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

March 12, 2025

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kelly Benson at 7:01 P.M. Present were Vice-Mayor Kimberly A. Davis and Commissioner Catherine Bernard-Dutton. Also present were Police Chief Stephen Yates, Town Administrator Melissa Cook-MacKenzie, Assistant Town Administrator Grant Handley and Town Clerk Stephanie Racine-Dean. Commissioner Hilary Crothers-Moore was absent from tonight's meeting.

**SUMMARY OF CLOSED SESSION HELD ON FEBRUARY 26, 2025 AT 5:30 P.M.**

Closed Session Meeting is pursuant to the Annotated Code of Maryland, General Provisions, Section 3-305 (b) (15) "To discuss cybersecurity, if the public body determines that public discussion would constitute a risk to"; (i) "security assessments or deployments relating to information resources technology"; (ii) "network security information that is related to passwords, personal ID numbers, access codes, encryption, security devices, or vulnerability assessments or that a governmental entity collects or maintains to prevent, detect, or investigate criminal activity; or (iii) "deployments or implementation of security personnel, critical infrastructure, or security devices"

**-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-**

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2025 Executive Session meeting, as presented, was made by Vice Mayor Davis, and seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2025 regular meeting, as presented, was made by was made by Vice Mayor Davis, and seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

**-GUESTS-**

None

**-OATH OF OFFICE-**

Town Board Approved Minutes April 9, 2025

Charlene M. Notarcola, Clerk of Circuit Court for Cecil County administered the Oath of Office to Mayor Kelly A. Benson on March 12, 2025. The signed ledger from the Clerk was placed with the signed minutes from tonight's meeting. His term expires March 10, 2027.

Mayor Benson administered the Oath of Office to Commissioners Catherine Bernard-Dutton and Neil M. DeMatt. Their terms expires March 10, 2027.

Mayor Benson administered the Oath of Office to Justine Patterson, 15 Juniper Circle, Elkton to the Board of Appeals. Her term expires March 8, 2026.

**-APPOINTMENTS & OATH OF OFFICE-**

Economic Development Commission

A motion to approve the appointments of the following individuals listed below to the North East Economic Development Commission was made by Vice-Mayor Davis. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

1. Sandra Edwards
2. Sandy Turner
3. Kathy Jamison
4. John Ford
5. Anthony Simpson

Mayor Benson administered the Oath of Office after their approval of appointments to the North East Economic Development Commission. Their terms expire on March 12, 2027. (Sandra Edwards and Anthony Simpson will take their Oath of Office at a later date).

1. Sandy Turner
2. Kathy Jamison
3. John Ford

**-PUBLIC COMMENT-**

None

**-PUBLIC HEARING-**

None

**INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-**

None

**-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-**

None

**-REPORTS-**

Mayor Benson

Mayor Benson reported he attended the following meetings since the February 26, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- 3.4.25 Met with Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and town staff regarding Wayfinding and Signage at Route 40 and 272
- 3.4.25 Met with a hospitality consultant regarding a hotel feasibility study and learning how this process works
- 3.12.25 Met with Jeff Sellers, Commercial Real Estate Broker in regards to being a member of the Economic Development Commission
- 3.12.25 Placer.ai demonstration regarding, software for unprecedented visibility info foot traffic trends in the town
- 3.12.25 Brief introduction with the Director of Finance regarding the budget process

Vice-Mayor Davis

Vice-Mayor Davis reported she attended the following meetings since the February 26, 2025 Town Board Meeting:

- 2.27.25 & 3.6.25 Taught English, “Second Language” classes for Cecil County through United Redeemed Church
- 3.4.25 Attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> Multi Lingual Night Community Fair at Gilpin Manor Elementary School to promote the, “Second Language” English class

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton

Commissioner Bernard-Dutton attended the 4H Bingo Event, Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at Fair Hill Natural Resource Management area

Commissioner DeMatt

Commissioner DeMatt reported he attended the following meetings:

- 3.5.25 Met with the North East Chamber of Commerce
- 3.11.25 Met with the Care Committee from the Board of Realtors to go over the Easter Eggstravaganza which will be held on Saturday, April 12 at the North East Elementary School and “the Green” from 12:00 – 4:00 P.M.
- Attended the 4H Bingo Event, Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at Fair Hill Natural Resource Management area

Town Administrator

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie entered into the record her reports since the February 26, 2025, Town Board meeting:

- Weekly Department Head
- Met with Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) along with Mayor Benson and town staff regarding Wayfinding and Signage at Route 40 and 272
- Attended a County meeting with the County Executive and local residents regarding developments
- Met with town staff regarding long term projects, streets/sidewalks infrastructure plan for next year
- Met with town staff regarding annexation and the next steps
- Virtual weekly meeting with Five Town Partnership
- 4 interviews, 1 for Water Treatment Plant and 3 for the North East Police Department
- Met with Jeff Sellers, Commercial Real Estate Broker in regards to being a member of the Economic Development Commission and other items in town
- Met with the Town's attorney to start the process to acquire property adjacent to the North East Preserve and finalizing language regarding deed restriction for the use of this property

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported she had the intentions of introducing the North East Charter Amendment at tonight's meeting but due to extreme circumstances, it will be introduced at the next Town Board meeting.

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Handley entered into the record his reports since the February 26, 2025, Town Board meeting:

- Work has begun on the exterior of the Old Town Lock-Up, repointing of the bricks, reconstruction and renovation of the windows, and slate roof repairs
- Met with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) along with Mayor Benson and the Town Administrator to discuss various projects
- Meeting with Town Staff regarding mobilizing various annexation efforts
- Assisted Water Plant with various security and camera upgrades/tutorials
- Assisted North East Elementary School with conducting Focus Groups to obtain student feedback on improving the school
- Doing various work behind the scenes to get the new economic development commission operating

**-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-**

None

**-NEW BUSINESS-**

Cybersecurity Upgrades

Mr. Grant Handley presented to the Board information regarding the Cybersecurity policy upgrades from the previous Executive Session that was held at the previous town Board meeting. Mr. Handley along with the Town Administrator and the Director of Finance were given several questions that were asked by the Board. These questions were asked to several insurance companies that provide cybersecurity to their clients, along with the town's Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) and Michael Devine, of Devine Computing. Here are the questions that were directed:

- Employee training in their responsibilities is maintaining the security of the Town's systems and data – *Yes*
- Adding to the Emergency Response Plan to ensure the Town is taking appropriate measures to protect against cyber threats – *Yes*
- Adding Multi-Factor Authentication to email and VPN access, cost \$7,750 – *Yes*
- Adding a Offline Back-up process which includes semi-annual testing cost initial year \$10,800 and subsequent years annual cost \$4,800 – *Yes*
- Adding Active Directory, cost \$9,850 – *No*

A motion to approve the Cybersecurity Upgrades with the recommendation of the above provided letter and by town staff, was made by was made by Vice Mayor Davis, and seconded by Commissioner Bernard-Dutton and approved by all.

**-MISCELLANEOUS-+**

None

**-APPROPRIATIONS-**

None

**-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-**

Marybeth Appio, 18 Bayberry Drive, Elkton, attended a HOA meeting for the Ridgely Forest Community. There was several questions that were asked by the community:

- Stormwater Ponds have garbage in them, is this the town's responsibility? **No, per town staff this is the HOA's responsibility, Ridgely Forest owns the property**

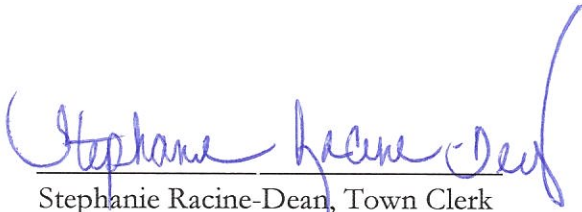
- Can homeowners rent out their property? **Yes** and does the town need a copy of the lease agreement? **No, per town staff (Town Administrator, did specify the property cannot be converted into commercial use)**
- Aspen Property who is their current Management Company stated they had a conversation with Town Hall, deeds of easement are not required by the town? **This will be a flow-up question for the Planning Office who will be in contact with her directly after tonight's meeting**

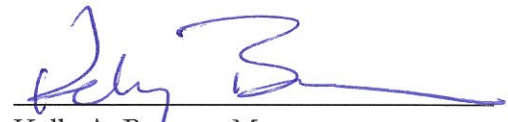
**-ADJOURNMENT-**

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 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:

  
Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk

  
Kelly A. Benson, Mayor