

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

June 10, 2026

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kelly Benson at 7:05 P.M. Present were Vice-Mayor Kimberly Davis, Hilary Crothers-Moore and Neil DeMatt. Also present were Police Chief Stephen Yates, Town Administrator Mellisa Cook-MacKenzie, Assistant Town Administrator Grant Handley and Town Clerk Stephanie Racine-Dean. Commissioner Catherine Bernard-Dutton was absent from tonight's meeting.

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

-ROLL CALL-

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

A motion to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2026 Executive Session meeting, as presented, was made by Commissioner DeMatt, seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis and approved by all.

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2026 regular meeting, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner DeMatt and approved by all. Commissioner Crothers-Moore abstained due to her absence from the meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2026 Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget Workshop meeting, as presented, was made by Commissioner DeMatt, seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis and approved by all.

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 20, 2026 Fiscal Year 2026-2027 meeting, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner DeMatt and approved by all. Commissioner Crothers-Moore abstained due to her absence from the meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes of the May 27, 2026 regular meeting, as presented, was made by Commissioner Crothers-Moore, seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis and approved by all. Commissioner DeMatt abstained due to his absence from the meeting.

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-GUESTS-

None

-PUBLIC COMMENT-

None

-PUBLIC HEARING-

Mayor Benson opened the Public Hearing at 7:09 p.m. for Ordinance 2026-06-01, to Amend the Definition of Assisted Living Facility and Group Home; To add a definition for Adaptive Refuse Development

- Article 3. Definitions
- Article 5. District Regulations. Section 5-6. Village Commercial District, Section 5-7. Village Marine District, Section 5-8. General Commercial District
- Article 6. Supplemental Regulations. Section 6-8. Parking Regulations, Section 6-13. Fences, Section 6-19. Restaurants and 6-29. Assisted Living Facilities/Private Group Homes
- Article 9. Administrative Mechanisms. Section 9-5. Section 9-25
- Amending the Table of contents, paragraph re-numbering and re-lettering, appendixes, page numbers and index pages

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie read into the record, Ordinance 2026-06-01. Also reported, the Planning Commission met Tuesday, June 2, 2026 along with David Dahlstrom, Maryland Department of Planning gave his approval after the amendments of Ordinance 2026-06-01. There were no comments from the public nor the Board, therefore, Mayor Benson closed the Public Hearing at 7:17 p.m. with the approval of Vice Mayor Davis, seconded from Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

Resolution 2026-05-09 - Discussion to Wave the Planning and Zoning Scheduled of Fees, Charges and Expenses

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board, for discussion only, Resolution 2026-05-09, to Wave the Planning and Zoning Scheduled of Fees, Charges and Expenses. This was presented at the last Board meeting, Wednesday, May 27, 2026. The only changed on the Resolution that has been presented tonight, Adaptive Reuse Development application. Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie handed out, Planning and Zoning, Schedule of Fees, Charges and Expenses. Per Mayor

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Benson there has been changeover of businesses on South Main Street from retail and other types of services. Mayor Benson reported he has heard, the Town of North East is not business friendly, he would like to get serious, and express the Town of North East is opened for business, send a message, to invest here with the waiver of fees. Mayor Benson, stated he would like discussion with the Board along with the administration, if there are any thoughts or comments. The goal is, to set a period of time, whether it's a one year or two years, this is an important message to get out. The real value to gain from this, is not the fees but the ability to say to the world, North East wants you and the town will make life a little easier for you to invest here. Mayor Benson asked for the Town Administrator to give insight what a common business of these fees typically would be charged along with the exception of waiving:

- Change of Use Permit \$35.00
- Sign Permits \$15.00
- Special Exception (with site plan) \$300.00
- Special Exception (without site plan) \$250.00
- Variance \$200.00

Mayor Benson stressed to the Board, the financial aspect for the town, the amount of revenue and expense that is being put through, throughout the year is minimum. The way he looks at this scenario, the cost to the business owner, when they are trying to get their feet on the ground has much more impact on them than it would the town's budget. This is why we as a town are trying to encourage removing boundaries; to push the needle in a positive direction and we need it to happen now.

Melissa Cook-MacKenzie stated to the Board, she will revise Resolution 2026-05-09 and have them review, at the next board meeting, Wednesday, June 24, 2026. All information that was discussed tonight regarding fees, she will compare what was collected last year along with the budget amount for fiscal year 2026-2027, which goes into effect July 1, 2026.

Ordinance 2026-06-01 – To Amend the Definition of Assisted Living Facility and Group Home; To add a definition for Adaptive Refuse Development

A motion to approve Ordinance 2026-06-01 was made by Vice Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-REPORTS-

Mayor Benson

Mayor Benson reported he attended the following meetings since the May 27, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- 6.3.2026 – Met with the developer of the Chesapeake Club regarding the water allocation request that has been submitted to the town. There will be ongoing

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discussion regarding if the development has the opportunity to become within town limits or stay outside the town limits. Several other small meetings afterwards

- 6.10.2026 - Focused on Human Resources, salary adjustments and promotions. There is a good amount of money leftover in the advertisement fund from fiscal year 2025-2026. The administration along with himself are looking into a plan for the use of the funds to bring additional promotion to the town
- Discussion of Turner Park, Mayor Benson was advocating for Cecil County Community and Recreational Center, located at the North East Middle School, when vacated. The County stated they will not be moving forward with the plan
- Met with the Director of Planning and Zoning along with the Town's Administration regarding change of several Ordinances, mainly signage Ordinances, this will help bring additional visibility to the town's business community

Vice-Mayor Davis

Vice-Mayor Davis reported she attended the following meetings since the May 27, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- 5.27.2026 – 6.4.2026 Visited the North East resident a total of 6 hours through Friendly Visitor Department of Community Services she volunteers for
- 6.1.2026 – 6.2.2026 Finished a volunteer decluttering at a residence home
- 5.30.2026 – Participated in the Maryland's Best Ice Cream Trail. Her first stop, Portside Grill Creamery. This is a program the State of Maryland introduced to promote the farm/milk industry. Her daughter and son-in-law came from Easton to participate along with her friend from New Jersey
- Away in Sherman, Pennsylvania for several days to declutter her sister's residence
- She R.S.V.P. to the intern at Town Hall, Payton Hardy regarding the North East Staff Summer Cookout
- Signed up to volunteer to handout free children's lunches at the North East Public Library June 14, 2026 – August 14, 2026
- Attending 2nd Friday's, June 12, 2026
- Leaving Sunday. June 14, 2026 to the Maryland Municipal League Summer Conference in Ocean City, Maryland
- Will be participating in Cecil Cares in the month of October 2026
- R.S.V.P. to the Town Clerk, for the Maryland Municipal League Quarterly Dinner in July

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

Commissioner Crothers-Moore reported she attended the Planning Commission meeting on June 2, 2026. Main topic, Ordinance 2026-06-01 that was passed at tonight's board meeting. Other discussion, Texas Road House and the North East Retail Shopping Center.

Commissioner DeMatt

Commissioner DeMatt reported he attended the following meetings since the May 27, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

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- 5.29.2026 – Given the opportunity from the Maryland Association of Relators to be the leader of the group to Delegate Kevin Hornberger at 5th Company Brewery, Elkton
- 6.1.2026 – Brief meeting with the North East Fire Company on his concerns on financials
- 6.5.2026 - Attended a meeting with County Executive Adam Streight regarding festivals in the County and Tourism from Oxford and New Castle County

Town Administrator

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie entered into the record her reports since the May 27, 2026, Town Board meeting.

- Participated in a meeting regarding Human Resources, they have been quite productive
- Met with a resident, Race Street regarding the North East Preserve
- Planning Commission meeting regarding North East Retail Shopping Center. There was a letter received today to the town's attorney by their attorney, Maryland State Highway. They are not too happy by the town's request of a right-hand turn lane into the shopping center heading North
- Participated in annexation discussions
- Participated in a call with Maryland Department of Planning regarding Rolling Mill Treatment Plant and funding shortages
- Attended the IKE Foundation Bass Fishing Tournament
- Followed up with budget items with the Director of Finance
- Working with the Director of Planning regarding planning projects
- Working with a resident on West Cecil Avenue at Mayor Benson's request
- Meeting with the Assistant Town Administrator regarding the town's website

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie reported the County will be holding a meeting here at Town Hall, Monday, June 15, 2026, Senior and Military Property Tax Credit Workshop.

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Handley entered into the record his reports since the May 27, 2026, Town Board meeting:

- ARPA and Grant Catalog Completed
- Thanks to Chief and Payton, minor edits and updates have been made to the Emergency Response Plan
- The Wayfinding Signage has now been installed. While a few minor adjustments remain, the signs are already helping to beautify the Town and provide directional guidance to visitors traveling on foot or by vehicle
- Maryland's DGS reverse auction for energy procurement has been completed, and the Town will participate as an enrollee at a rate of \$0.08079/kwh, compared to last year's auction rate of \$0.06135/kWh. This increase is likely attributable to state energy policies and market conditions; however, the awarded rate remains more favorable than procuring energy independently
- Switched HVAC providers to achieve cost savings on routine maintenance. The new contractor will provide two annual inspections of all Town units for approximately

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\$3,000. By comparison, our previous contractor, under new ownership, was charging between \$8,000 and \$9,000, and an additional bid received was in a similar price range. After an extensive review, we found no meaningful difference in the services provided and are excited about the anticipated savings

- Melissa led a discussion regarding opportunities to secure additional matching funds for the Rolling Mill Pumping Station project
- The Tourism Map, which will highlight Town businesses and regional destinations, is nearing completion
- Our intern, Payton, continues to perform exceptionally well and has been a valuable asset to the organization
- Presented the Town's bikeway initiatives to WILMAPCO as a guest presenter
- Continuing to work on compliance with Senate Bill 781 cybersecurity requirements, as well as other regulatory compliance initiatives with MDE
- Participated in the TORCH Run, Tuesday June 9, 2026 along with Chief Yates, intern Payton Hardy and other Police Agencies

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

Water Allocation Request: North East Developers, LLC., Chesapeake Club – 498 Equivalent Residential Units (ERU)

Mrs. Cook-MacKenzie requested for the Water Allocation Request, North East Developers, LLC., Chesapeake Club to be tabled until the next scheduled Board meeting, Wednesday, June 24, 2026.

-NEW BUSINESS-

Water Allocation Extension Request: Mr. Eustace Mita, 12 ERU for residential units, North East Harbors

Mayor Benson requested for the Water Allocation Request, Mr. Eutace Mita, North East Harbors to be tabled until the next scheduled Board meeting, Wednesday, June 24, 2026.

Water Allocation Extension Request: North East Commerce Center II, 60 ERU for a vacant site in the Commerce Center

Mrs. Melissa Cook-MacKenzie presented to the Board, Water Allocation Extension Request, to North East Commerce Center II, for 2 years extension starting from June 30, 2026 with an expiration of June 30, 2031.

A motion to approve the Water Allocation Extension Request, to North East Commerce Center II, 60 equivalent units was made by Commissioner DeMatt, seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis and approved by all.

-MISCELLANEOUS-

Town Administrator reported the last Police Cadet, Erin Mahaffey will be graduating next Thursday, June 18, 2026. Secondly, the town received a resignation from Anthony Williams today, he will work for a State-Owned Correction Facility as a Criminal Investigator.

Town Administrator reported she has been working with Jennifer Goldbach regarding 2nd Friday's which is this Friday, June 12, 2026.

Assistant Town Administrator reminded the Board, there will be a Staff Summer Cookout, Wednesday, July 22, 2026 at the North East Community Park.

Russell Polo, 4 North Main Street, North East thanked the Board, for making it easier for businesses moving to the Town. One thing he has noticed, Morning Glory Café, North East is having County issues regarding their permits. Russell asked for assistance from the Town to help with the process. The Town Administrator advised the Board, the County has a new system and its very cumbersome. The customer service is limited because everything is automated. The Town Administrator has offered assistance to their administration to help rectify the process.

-APPROPRIATIONS-

None

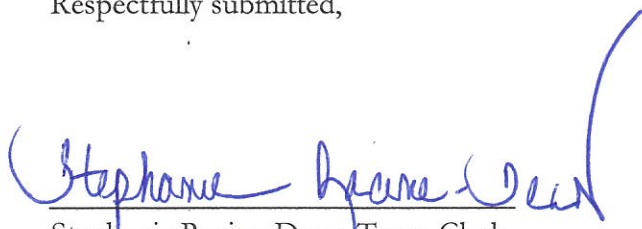
-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

None

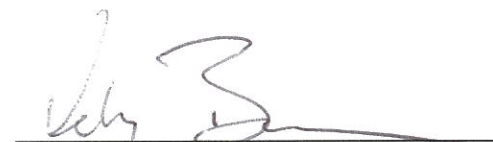
-ADJOURNMENT-

With there being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Vice-Mayor Davis seconded by Commissioner Crothers-and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk

ATTEST:


Kelly Benson, Mayor and or
Kimberly A. Davis, Vice Mayor