

MAYOR AND COMMISSIONERS

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

July 8, 2026

The Town Meeting was called to order by Mayor Kelly Benson at 7:00 P.M. Present were Vice-Mayor Kimberly Davis and Hilary Crothers-Moore. Also present were, Sergeant John Fakner, Director of Planning, Betsy Vennell, Assistant Town Administrator Grant Handley and Town Clerk Stephanie Racine-Dean. Absent from tonight's meeting, Commissioners Catherine Bernard-Dutton, Neil DeMatt, Town Administrator Melissa Cook-MacKenzie and Police Chief Yates.

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

-ROLL CALL-

-APPROVAL OF AGENDA-

A motion to approve the July 8, 2026 agenda as presented, with the exception of the Oath of Office, which was postponed, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-OATH OF OFFICE-

Oath of Office to Patrol Officer, Erin Mahaffrey, North East Police Department., will be administered at a future Board meeting.

-APPROVAL OF MINUTES-

A motion to approve the minutes of the June 24, 2026 regular meeting, as presented, was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-GUESTS-

None

-PUBLIC COMMENT-

None

Town Board Approved Minutes July 22, 2026

-PUBLIC HEARING-

The Public Hearing was called to order by Mayor Benson at 7:06 p.m. Mayor Benson welcomed the public and gave a brief statement. The Director of Planning, Betsy Vennell gave an opening summary: P.L.L. Corporation, officers, Lynn L. Howard and Thomas W. Amrein, requesting annexation of Parcels 0181 and 0393 found on tax map 025E, North East, MD. The North East Planning Commission conducted a Public Hearing on Tuesday, July 7, 2026 and gave their recommendation to the Mayor and Commissioners to proceed with the below Annexation as outlined.

- Annexation Resolution C-2026-05-01-A
- Annexation Plan Resolution C-2026-05-02-A

There were no comments from the public nor the Board; Mayor Benson closed the Public Hearing at 7:10 p.m. An additional motion to close the Public Hearing was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

None

-ADOPTION OF RESOLUTIONS AND ORDINANCES-

Annexation Resolution C-2026-05-01-A & Annexation Plan Resolution C-2026-05-02-A

A motion to approve the Adoption of Resolutions C-2026-05-01-A and Resolution C-2026-05-02-A was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

Resolution 2026-05-09 - To Amend the Planning and Zoning Schedule of Fees, Charges and Expenses

A motion to postpone the Adoption of Resolution 2026-05-09 was made by Commissioner Crothers-Moore, seconded by Vice-Mayor Davis and approved by all.

-REPORTS-

Mayor Benson

Mayor Benson reported he attended the following meetings since the June 24, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- 7.1.2026 - Several discussions regarding the direction of Turner Park. This will be the last project the Town has with the ARPA funds, which need to be spent by the end of 2026

- 7.8.2026 – Met with the developer of Turkey Point Properties and what the future looks like for the development project. Also, had a meeting with Ryan Homes, known as NVR, in relation to the proposed homes in the Chesapeake Club
- 7.8.2026 - The Assistant Town Administrator took several people for a tour of the North East Preserve along the Maintenance cut which was utilized to clean-up the debris out of the Preserve. Also present, were Representatives from, The Department of Commerce and the State Office of Rural Economic Strategy. The town is trying to get on their budget for funding towards the project
- Various conversations regarding Human Resources, Fiscal Year Budgets for 2026 & 2027, along with projects here in town
- Working on several Ordinance changes that will be presented to the Board in the near future. The general scope is modifications to the Signage Ordinances to allow more flexibility for businesses. Secondly, changes to the parks, mainly to the North East Community Park Pier. Mayor Benson would like to set regulations regarding town smoking, tobacco being used in the Town's parks, this is an issue in the Mayor's eyes, typically on the playgrounds

Mayor Benson wanted to thank the VFW Post 6027 and the Salute to Cecil County Veterans volunteers, it is such a wonderful event they put on every year, just fantastic. Mayor Benson thanked Commissioner Crothers-Moore for working the front gate during the extreme heat this year.

Vice-Mayor Davis

Vice-Mayor Davis reported she attended the following meetings since the June 24, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- 6.25 & 7.2.2026 - Volunteer through the Department of Community Services, Friendly Visitor Program. Spent time with her person
- 6.30.2026 - Served free lunches at the North East Library, Mauldin Avenue North East to children under the age of 18 years old. There were around 29 children who attended. This is a great food program for the Summer
- 7.2.2026 - Met with the Town Administrator regarding what she learned from the Maryland Municipal League 2026 Summer Conference and what the town can improve on and use
- 7.3.2026 – Went to the Open House for the Old Lock-Up. What a great opportunity for all to visit. There was a Historian who participated in giving a brief history on the building. The renovations are wonderful and thanked all for their hard work
- 7.3.2026 – Attended the Salute to Cecil County Veterans Dinner at the VFW, Post 6027 along with attending the event afterwards

Commissioner Crothers-Moore

Commissioner Crothers-Moore reported she attended the following meetings since the June 24, 2026 Town Board Meeting:

- Attended the Salute to Cecil County Veterans and volunteered working the gate, Friday, July 3rd.

- Attended the Planning Commission meeting, Tuesday, July 7, 2026, topic, Annexation Resolution C-2026-05-01-A & Annexation Plan Resolution C-2026-05-02-A

Assistant Town Administrator

Mr. Handley entered into the record his reports since the June 24, 2026, Town Board meeting:

- On July 3rd, the Old Lock Up held an open house and welcomed 27 visitors. Coincidentally, today The Cecil Whig ran a story on the Lock Up's reopening, highlighting its history and our efforts to engage community groups with the building
- As everyone is aware, the Welcome to North East sign fell victim to a drunk driver. We are currently working with all involved insurance parties regarding the matter
- Cybersecurity Update: The Town is compliant with Maryland SB871 requirements, and I am now working with our auditors on their IT audit. I do not anticipate any significant issues arising from the process, though there may be minor recommendations from CLA
- A site visit at the NE Preserve occurred today with representatives from the State Office of Rural Economic Strategy and the Department of Commerce to advocate for the Preserve and the opportunities it can bring to our community
- Staff are conducting a formal bid process for snow removal services and contractor rates
- The June Newsletter was distributed last week
- Attended the Salute to Cecil County Veterans event
- Payton Hardy, our intern will be a guest presenter at the next board meeting, Wednesday, July 22nd

-UNFINISHED BUSINESS-

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

A motion to postpone Water Allocation Request, to North East Developers, LLC. was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

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

A motion to approve Water Allocation Extension Request, to Mr. Eustace Mita, 12 residential equivalent units was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all.

-NEW BUSINESS-

None

-MISCELLANEOUS-

None

-APPROPRIATIONS-

None

-BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR-

Ms. Yancy Hernandez, 107 West Cecil Avenue, North East sent a certified letter on May 7, 2026, to the Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of North East. The Town Administrator, Melissa Cook-MacKenzie sent a written response on June 5, 2026 confirming Ms. Hernandez is currently zoned R3, which is not being permitted by the town, due to the limited square footage of the parcel. The letter also explained that her property is proposed for a future zoning change as part of the Comprehensive Plan to Village Commercial (VC). The Director of Planning stated she has spoken with the Town Administrator and she is pulling information regarding the property and it was suggested the town staff sit down and go over any questions from Ms. Hernandez. Mrs. Vennell stated, she thinks she will be very pleased with the new zoning changes that were recently adopted and just came effective, this will be beneficial to your investment. Mayor Benson stated he will be in the office Wednesday, July 15th to follow-up directly with the Town Administrator to make sure a response was made to her requests. Mayor Benson explained the change to the Comprehensive Plan which is a 10-year process and her property is in the time period. He assured Ms. Hernandez there is change happening and it will benefit your property.

Marybeth Appio, 18 Bayberry Drive, Elkton, Maryland wanted to bring to the Board's attention, there has been continues riding of dirt bikes and e-bikes throughout the Ridgely Forest Community, not to mention no helmets are being worn. Mayor Benson, advised, he has a meeting with the town's attorney along with Chief Yates, one of the topics, what you are concerned about. There needs to be a sensible pathway that will impact this issue, this has been a discussion on numerous occasions over the last several weeks.

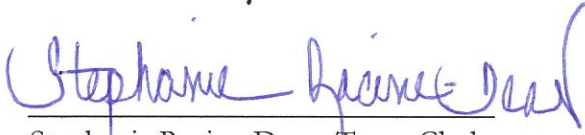
Trista Polo, 4 North Main Street, North East would like to give an official request on behalf of the self-appointed and never voted on but unofficially designated dog Mayor of North East Maryland Bella Victoria Polo who resides at 4 North Main Street, North East. Bella takes daily walks in town during all types of weather and on numerous occasions she is unable to meet dogs in cars, behind fences and on walks through town. Bella is seeking a place to run, sniff and play safely with other K-9 residence inside the town limits. Bella feels that it would be a draw for visitors which will also support our local businesses and new residence in the town. If we were able to put a dog park in Turner Park, she heard rumors when their family first moved to town. On behalf of Bella, I am recording her official comment as an unofficial dog Mayor to endorse and request a dog park installation as part of Turner Park. Thank you.

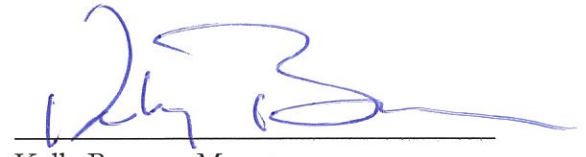
-ADJOURNMENT-

With there being no further business to discuss, a motion to adjourn was made by Vice-Mayor Davis, seconded by Commissioner Crothers-Moore and approved by all. The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

ATTEST:


Stephanie Racine-Dean, Town Clerk


Kelly Benson, Mayor