

MINUTES
WALKERSVILLE BURGESS & COMMISSIONERS TOWN MEETING
March 24, 2021

The Town meeting of the Walkersville Burgess & Commissioners was called to order on Wednesday, March 24, 2021, at 7:30 p.m. Those in attendance included Burgess Chad Weddle, Commissioners Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis, Tom Gilbert, John Zimmerman, and Michael Bailey, Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver, Communications Specialist Samantha Fowle, Public Works Director Joseph Birch, Town Manager Sean Williams, and 5 citizens. Commissioner Michael McNiesh joined the meeting via phone. The meeting was also streamed on Facebook Live.

The meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer remembering the loss of life in Boulder Colorado, Atlanta Georgia and locally Curtis Mason Smith.

1. MINUTES

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner John Zimmerman to approve the Town meeting minutes and Closed Town meeting minutes of March 10, 2021. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

Burgess Weddle discussed a summary of the Closed Meeting Minutes held March 10, 2001.

2. LAW ENFORCEMENT UPDATE – CPL GARY CONKLIN

Cpl Gary Conklin discussed the 2020 Crime Statistics for the Town of Walkersville. The statistics are based on 12 months of patrols, but only 9 months of traffic stops because of COVID. There will be a sixth Trooper added in the near future. There was a brief discussion about traffic speed cameras. National Night Out is still to be decided, the addition of a Trooper will allow for 24-hour coverage, and there may be a drug take back event in the near future.

3. PENNSYLVANIA AVE SIDEWALK ENGINEERING

Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver explained the hope to construct a sidewalk from the area of Pennsylvania Ave near the railroad tracks to the future sidewalk project at Parkside. Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis discussed sinking sidewalks by several storm drains in the area of Glade Towne and inquired if the homeowner would be responsible for these types of issues. Public Works Director Joseph Birch advised they have been conducting a road and sidewalk survey and would check those specific concerns while conducting the survey.

4. MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN JOB POSTING

Town Manager Sean Williams discussed the opening of an additional Maintenance Technician position with a salary range of \$24,000 to \$50,000/yr. Interested applicants can submit an application from the Town website or apply directly on Indeed. Applications will be accepted until Wednesday, March 31st.

5. AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT'S IMPACT ON WALKERSVILLE

Burgess Chad Weddle discussed the recent passing of the American Rescue Plan act will provide Walkersville with an estimated amount of \$5.3 million. Burgess Weddle reviewed the general guidelines written by Senator Ben Cardin for how the funds can be spent before the December 2024 deadline, explained how each of the Commissioners will assist with how the funds are allocated and provided an overview of several projects that could be completed with the provided funds. Some of those projects include completion of the Spring Gardens water main replacement, Deerfield MS4 project, Water meter replacements, assisting local businesses and numerous additional projects. There was additional discussion about different options and ways to spend the future funds.

6. HERITAGE FARM PARK PATH PROJECT

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis and Public Works Director Birch discussed ongoing conversations about replacing a 300-foot existing pathway near the baseball fields at Heritage and creating a new 700-foot pathway by the bridge that was recently removed.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Michael Bailey to spend up to \$15,000 for creating a looped pathway at Heritage and replacing the baseball path at Heritage. The motion passes 4-0.

7. REQUEST TO REDUCE LETTER OF CREDIT – SPRING VIEW ESTATES

Burgess Chad Weddle advised the request to reduce the letter of credit was withdrawn.

8. RIGHT OF WAY PERMIT CHANGE

Public Works Director Joseph Birch requested a fee of \$25 be created for future Right of Way Permits. This would allow the Town to have more control over work being completed in the right of way and potentially avoid issues that have occurred in the past.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner John Zimmerman to approve the new right of way permit and charge a \$25 fee. The motion passes 4-0

9. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Michael Bailey to pay the bills submitted for the time period. The motion passes 4-0.

10. CHAD UPDATES, STAFF COMMENTS, COMMISSIONER CONCERNS

Burgess Chad Weddle advised Town Manager Sean Williams is off the introductory probationary period.

Burgess Weddle discussed a memo containing yearly amounts of \$286,886.62 for the MDE Loan and semi-annual \$35,000-\$40,000 for the General Fund Promissory Note that the Water Fund will need to pay. The current assessment fee of \$25 per bill is set to expire December of 2022 and is generating an additional \$150,000 per year to put towards the two loan payments. Burgess Weddle advised additional recommendations will be made to increase funds and there was additional discussion by potentially increasing the assessment fee, raising water rates, and making sure bills have assessment fee information printed on them.

Public Works Director Joseph Birch advised the crosswalks at Longley Green were completed.

Director Birch advised the sink hole at Mill Run has not been fixed. A contractor has been scheduled, but they have not been able to complete the work yet.

The work that needed to be completed by Town Staff at the new Heritage Building is done.

Director Birch is waiting on ECM for a start date for resurfacing Biggs Ford Road.

Potomac Edison is getting closer to repairing the damaged lights on Sandstone Drive.

Road and Sidewalk evaluations are being conducted by Public Works.

Director Birch advised the mobile speed indicator is currently located on Glade Road.

Town Manager Sean Williams advised the new server has been installed at Town Hall. Website redesign, online bill pay, and potential upgrades to payment software are being researched.

Manager Williams thanked Town Staff and Public Works for all their hard work over the past few weeks with water billing and cutoffs.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver discussed the potential of having an online planning and zoning webinar, but would prefer in person informational meetings. Administrator Hauver also offered to discuss any questions or concerns citizens may have by phone or email. Previous Planning Commission meetings have been recorded and can be viewed on Facebook.

Commissioner Michael Bailey discussed concerns over blighted/vacant properties in Town and provided information on how Frederick City and Hagerstown have tried to solve this issue. Commissioner Bailey suggested drafting a plan, having the Planning Commission view the plan, and move forward with a plan to deal with blighted properties in the Town.

Commissioner Michael Bailey expressed an interest in rejuvenating an Economic Development Commission to help support business and incentivize business to come to the Town. Commissioner Bailey made changes to Chapter 53 of the Town Code for review and future discussion.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis advised the National Guard project to build dugouts at the softball field will need to be delayed because of their deployment at the Capitol. The previous motion to provide GVAA \$1,000 towards that project will be added to next year's budget.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis discussed the future project of resurfacing the existing basketball court at Creamery Park and potentially building an additional half-court with POS funds.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis requested researching making Wi-Fi available in the Town parks.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis discussed the progress being made with the usage agreement being developed for the new Heritage Park Building. Electricity, scheduling, and cleaning concerns were discussed.

Commissioner Michael McNiesh thanked the other Commissioners for their faith in him and allowing him to continue his work as a Town Commissioner.

Commissioner McNiesh expressed the thanks of a citizen for the crosswalks installed at Longley Green.

Commissioner McNiesh was approached by a citizen and asked Town Staff and Public Works to investigate concerns of the bridge near the tennis courts at Community Park. Commissioner McNiesh has received several complaints about the bridge not being handicapped and elderly accessible.

Manager Williams discussed a change order requested by the engineering company WRA for work completed at the new Water Plant. They originally proposed a figure of \$14,850 in charges, but the amount was revised to \$6,600 when some of the previous charges were refuted.

Commissioner Michael Bailey made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis to pay the final bill to WRA in the amount of \$6,600. The motion passes 4-0.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS / WATERSHED UPDATE

There were no public concerns.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (unless changed/cancelled due to Gov. Hogan/CDC recommendations):

- Fri., April 2 – Good Friday – OFFICE CLOSED
- Tues., April 6, 7:30 – Board of Appeals (if needed)
- Weds., April 7, 7:30 – Parks Meeting
- Tues., April 13, 7:30 – Planning Workshop
- Weds., April 14, 7:30 – Town Meeting
- Tues., April 27, 7:30 – Planning Meeting
- Weds., April 28, 7:30 – Town Meeting

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Sean Williams, Town Manager