

MINUTES  
WALKERSVILLE BURGESS & COMMISSIONERS TOWN MEETING  
January 10, 2024

The Town meeting of the Walkersville Burgess & Commissioners was called to order on Wednesday, January 10, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. Those in attendance included Burgess Chad Weddle, Commissioners Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis, Tom Gilbert, Gary Baker, and Betsey Whitmore Brannen, Town Manager Sean Williams, Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver, Director of Public Works Joe Birch, Communications Specialist Ashley Bailey, and a total of 11 citizens. Commissioner Mike McNiesh was absent. The meeting was streamed on the Town's website.

The meeting was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer.

1. MINUTES

*Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gary Baker to approve with corrections the Town meeting minutes of December 13, 2023. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.*

*Burgess Chad Weddle summarized the closed meeting minutes from December 13, 2023. No motions were made during the meeting.*

2. PUBLIC HEARING – ORDINANCE 2023-06 SENIOR TAX CREDIT

Commissioner Tom Gilbert briefly described Ordinance 2023-06 prior to the public hearing.

There were no public comments. The public hearing was closed.

*Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen to adopt Ordinance 2023-06 Senior Tax Credit. There was no discussion. The motion passed 4-0.*

3. SPRING VIEW ESTATES RELEASE OF LETTER OF CREDIT

Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver discussed the request for release of \$69,387.44 held in escrow for surface coat of the roads in Spring View Estates. The one-year warranty period has ended and staff recommends releasing the funds.

*Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gary Baker to release \$69,387.44 for public improvements of the roads in Spring View Estates. There was no discussion. The motion passed 4-0.*

4. PARKSIDE COST SHARE OFFSITE IMPROVEMENTS (BIGGS FORD ROAD)

Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver discussed a future meeting with the Parkside developer regarding funds that were previously agreed to be paid for public improvements including parts of a continuous sidewalk on Biggs Ford Road, an oversized storm pond swale, and the two-acre parcel abutting Community Park. A meeting regarding the final amount for those funds will occur in the near future and the details will be brought back for discussion.

There was a discussion regarding possible future improvements to the sidewalk along Biggs Ford Road, future improvements involving the Walkersville Southern Railroad including an improved crosswalk, and speeding concerns in the area. No motion was made.

5. AWARD ENGINEERING CONTRACT FOR DISCOVERY WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT

Director of Public Works Joe Birch discussed the bid process for the engineering plans for the water main replacement in the Discovery community. The only bid received was from Daft McCune Walker, INC at \$380,000. DMW previously worked with the Town on the engineering plans for the Spring Gardens community.

There was extended conversation regarding the bid process, concerns for the overall cost of the bid, the lack of additional bids, the process for determining what water mains need to be replaced, obtaining additional estimates, the entire bid process, and the details of what will occur with the project. It was agreed to obtain additional information and discuss at the next meeting.

#### 6. CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT DISCUSSION

Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen discussed the option of altering the Town Code and Charter to create offset elections to prevent the Burgess and all five Commissioners being elected at the same time. The terms of the Burgess and Commissioners would need to be increased to four years instead of the current three years. This would allow for elections to be held every two years with the Burgess and two Commissioners being elected one election and the other three Commissioners two years later. There was general support and a discussion of possibly including term limits in the future. No motions were made.

#### 7. TOWN CODE CHAPTER 9 – ANIMAL DISCUSSION

Town Manager Sean Williams discussed a recent complaint regarding the number of animals at a home. The current Code defers to Frederick County's animal code chapter, however the number of domestic animals allowed in a home is in a different chapter of Frederick County's Code. The Town's current Code does not place a limitation on the number of domestic animals that can be in a home. It was agreed to reach out to the Town's legal representation to determine potential fixes.

#### 8. WASTEWATER HANDLING STUDY ARPA FUNDING

Director of Public Works Joe Birch provided previously requested information on a feasibility study for potentially building a micro-sewer treatment plant. The cost of the study is \$28,000 and the request was to use ARPA funding. There was a brief discussion on the benefits of a potential treatment plant.

*Commissioner Gary Baker made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Tom Gilbert to spend \$28,000 for WATEK to conduct a wastewater feasibility study for the Town. Burgess Chad Weddle discussed previous actions by the Town to address the same concern, but understood the desire to reinvestigate a possible solution. Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis asked where the funding for a possible water treatment plant would be billed. Those funds would come from the Town's Water Fund. The motion passed 4-0.*

#### 9. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

*Commissioner Tom Gilbert a motion, seconded by Commissioner Gary Baker to pay the bills submitted for the time period. The motion passed 4-0.*

#### 10. CHAD UPDATES, STAFF COMMENTS AND COMMISSIONER CONCERNS

Communication Specialist Ashley Bailey mentioned that reminder notices were recently sent out by the Town and any resident that needs help paying their bill can contact Town Hall for assistance.

Director of Public Works Joe Birch provided an update on the follow items:

1. Wilson T. Ballard continues to work on the bid package for the Green Street project.
2. Water meter replacement will begin mid-January, weather dependent. Meters will be replaced in Glade Manor I, then moving to Glade Towne. Town staff will go door to door for the meter exchanges and leave notices to schedule an appointment for a meter exchange if they are not home. This is at no cost to the residents and takes about 20-30 minutes to complete.
3. Director Birch requested approval to put out a request for bids for a contract for sidewalk and roadway repairs. There was a brief discussion regarding the need to obtain a contract to avoid making requests of the Burgess and Commissioners for each small project. It was agreed to put the contract out to bid.
4. Public Works is still waiting on additional quotes for a concrete sidewalk grinder. So far only one quote has been obtained at the cost of \$12,617.09.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver discussed an update from Frederick County in regards to the solar installation on Biggs Ford Road and a future Planning meeting to be held. Previously the Town's Planning Commission did send comments when the plans were first discussed at the Frederick County Planning Commission.

Town Manager Sean Williams mentioned the large windows on the second floor of Town Hall have sustained damage due to recent weather events and will need to be addressed.

Manager Williams also discussed a special exception for the watershed property. The Town was granted a five-year temporary exception, but a site plan was required. The Town has already paid \$23,000 for a survey of the property, the application fee, and all attorney fees so far. A Scout representative has offered to volunteer to complete the actual site plan. There are approximately \$4,200 in fees that will be required to submit the site plan. Manager Williams inquired if the Town will pay those fees or if the fees should be paid for by the Scouts. Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis proffered the Scouts should be responsible for at least half the cost of the survey application costs. Ron Layman of 24 W. Frederick Street offered to cover the entire costs of the applications with donations obtained for camping at the watershed.

Ron Layman also discussed the annual Klondike event taking place the following weekend at the watershed.

Burgess Chad Weddle thanked several of the Town committees and the fire police for assisting shutting down streets for several of the recent events held in Town.

Burgess Weddle read all the upcoming announcements.

Commissioner Gary Baker announced that he will not be able to attend the Planning Commission Meeting February 13<sup>th</sup> and Town Meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis discussed requests for GVAA soccer to use temporary lighting in the last two weeks in October and first week of November along with the first weeks of March. There would be a conflict with the closing of the parks in the Spring, but not in the Fall. It was agreed to allow the temporary lighting in the Fall, but not the Spring at this time.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert read part of a Frederick News Post article documenting the end of the Walkersville Kiwanis Club twenty years ago.

Commissioner Gilbert announced he will be absent for the January 24<sup>th</sup> Town Meeting.

## 11. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS/WATERSHED UPDATE

David Ennis of 118 Challedon Drive requested the possible addition of a leash law for Walkersville. Mr. Ennis also noted his support of the feasibility study for the wastewater study and provide the information to the public.

Gary Grossnickle of 8816 Devilbiss Bridge Road noted property that Lonza owns off Biggs Ford Road that could be a possible good location for a parking lot to assist Walkersville Southern Railroad. Mr. Grossnickle also discussed concerns with the lack of sidewalk on Devilbiss Bridge Road and the need for additional safety measures in that location. Mr. Grossnickle also inquired about any recent traffic study for the area of Devilbiss Bridge and inquired if such a study should be conducted.

David Toohey of 113 Hibiscus Court inquired why the Town would replace water mains in the Discovery community. There was a brief discussion about how that occurred in the Discovery and Spring Gardens communities.

Don Schildt of 1 Glade Road thanked everyone for receiving an award at the Veterans program. Mr. Schildt supported the senior tax credit but has concerns about limitation on how citizens are notified. Mr. Schildt had complaints about the Comprehensive Plan not being completed. He additionally had concerns over a lack of police report to citizens.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Mon., Jan 15 – Town Office Closed – MLK Jr Day
- Mon., Jan 22 – EDC Meeting 7pm
- Tues., Jan 23 – Planning Commission Meeting 7pm
- Wed., Jan 24 – Town Meeting 7pm
- Wed., Feb 7 – Parks Meeting 7pm
- Tues., Feb 13 – Planning Meeting 7pm
- Wed., Feb 14 – Town Meeting 7pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Sean Williams, Town Manager