

MINUTES
WALKERSVILLE BURGESS & COMMISSIONERS TOWN MEETING
October 11, 2023

The Town meeting of the Walkersville Burgess & Commissioners was called to order on Wednesday, October 11, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. Those in attendance included Burgess Chad Weddle, Commissioners Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis, Gary Baker, Tom Gilbert, Mike McNiesh, 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 12 citizens. 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 Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mike McNiesh to approve the Town meeting minutes of September 13, 2023. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0-1 with Commissioner Tom Gilbert abstaining.

2. WALKERSVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY – JIM GRAHAM

Walkersville Volunteer Fire Company President Jim Graham thanked the Town for the donation of \$150,000 made to the company. Those funds were used to help purchase a new utility truck and replace the heating system at the Fire Company.

3. WALKERSVILLE LIBRARY – ROBIN BOWERS

Robin Bowers of the Walkersville Library thanked the Town for donated funds used for the summer lunch program that helped provide almost 5,000 meals in 2023 and the newly installed sun shades.

4. AWARD COMMUNITY PARK PROJECT – PARKING LOT EXTENSION, RESURFACING

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis discussed funds obtained through the Project Open Space grant to extend and resurface the parking lot at Community Park. The following bids were obtained: D&H Paving \$98,400, Ross Contracting \$110,000, and Wastler and Sons \$125,339. Staff recommendation was D&H paving based on being the low bid and having a positive previous experience.

Commissioner Mike McNiesh made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Tom Gilbert to award the Community Park parking lot extension and repaving project bid to D&H Paving in the amount of \$98,400. The Town is hoping the project will start next week, the parking lot will be closed during the project, and may be completed in under a week. The motion passed 5-0.

5. AWARD DEERFIELD ROADWAY PROJECT – EASTFIELD PLACE, PATCHES

Public Works Director Joe Birch discussed the repaving of Eastfield Place and 11 roadway patches in the Deerfield Community. The following bids were obtained: Wastler & Sons, Inc. \$59,600 and Ross Contracting \$67,300. Staff recommendation was Wastler & Sons, Inc. based on being the low bid and having a positive previous experience.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis to award the Deerfield roadway project bid to Wastler & Sons, Inc. in the amount of \$59,600. Work may begin as early as next week. The motion passed 5-0.

6. GREEN STREET ROADWAY OPTIONS

Manager Sean Williams and Public Works Director Joe Birch discussed the previously discussed damage to Green Street and storm water pipe under the road. Wilson T. Ballard provided seven different engineering suggestions ranging from minor repair of the immediate issue, costing an estimated \$25,482, up to replacing all of the storm water pipes from Colony Village to George Street costing an estimated \$1,951,981. Each of the options were summarized and staff recommended the relining of the pipe under Green Street and repairing the road for an estimated \$286,357.

There was extended conversation regarding the pros and cons of some of the options, the level of urgency to complete the project, the possible condition of the existing system, possible MS4 credit, concerns of the price tag of the most expensive option, and additional costs that would increase with completing the project in phases. No motion was made regarding this project and the previously completed storm water study will be provided for review and future discussion.

7. TOWN HALL 2ND FLOOR RENTAL SPACE

Manager Sean Williams discussed the previous use of the second floor of Town Hall by several different community groups prior to COVID and the renovation of Town Hall. Previous discussions involving the use of the second floor of Town Hall included the continued rental of the space, costs, and security concerns. John Matthews of the Frederick Ballroom Dance Group spoke on behalf of the group and requested the use of the space.

An extended discussion involved pros and cons of allowing the second floor to be rented, security concerns with an unlocked door during dances and the lack of restricting the use of the elevator, and the potential need for a staff member to lock up after events. No motion was made regarding the request and a discussion will be made at a future meeting.

8. SIDEWALK ORDINANCE DISCUSSION – COMMISSIONER MCNIESH

Commissioner Mike McNiesh started a discussion to potentially alter Chapter 69 of the Town Code and proposed the Town become responsible for the sidewalks. A possible cost sharing proposal, the desire for equity to taxpayers, homeowners that have already paid to replace sidewalk, potential tax increases, keeping the definition of a damaged sidewalk that is already in the Code, the need for a capital improvement list, the need to have homeowners remain responsible for damage they cause, and determining a process for planning future sidewalk projects were all topics discussed. It was agreed to continue the conversation at future meetings and to make Commissioner McNiesh aware of any possible changes.

9. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen to pay the bills submitted for the time period. There was no discussion. The motion passed 5-0.

10. CHAD UPDATES, STAFF COMMENTS AND COMMISSIONER CONCERNS

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

1. The contractor is currently working the north side of Maple Avenue starting at Pennsylvania Ave and working towards Green Street with pavement restoration. The south side of Maple Ave, to include Maryland Avenue, already has base coat completed. Maple Avenue is currently one way from Pennsylvania Ave to Frederick Street with no parking on the street in the area the contractors are working. There is no access to driveways when the contractors are working in front of those homes.

2. The storm drain inlets on Maple Avenue at Green Street will need to be rebuilt. They are in bad shape and the contractor working on Maple Avenue will provide an estimate for the reconstruction cost. That information will be provided at the next Town meeting in October.
3. A total of thirty-four water customers were shut off for non-payment. There are still ten customers off for nonpayment.
4. 2400 feet of walking paths were either renovated or installed at Heritage Farm Park.
5. Street Sweeping is scheduled to occur November 20th through the 23rd.
6. Meter replacement will start in Glade Towne once the Town receives the additional radio read boxes that have been ordered. These units are on the outside of the houses so town staff will be entering yards for the replacement. Residents can still call Town Hall and make meter exchange appointments if they do not have a radio read meter.

Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver discussed the Planning Commission's review of the Comprehensive Plan

Administrator Hauver mentioned the next Planning Meeting would include the discussion of a possible new business for 25 Maple Avenue.

Town Manager Sean Williams announced that there would be a review of the Town Audit for FY 2023 next meeting.

Manager Williams also discussed a future Town Meeting to discuss the possible removal of fluoride from the Town Water supply.

Manager Williams attended a LGIT meeting earlier in the day regarding new cannabis laws in Maryland and the possible need to update the Town's employee handbook.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert noted concerns with the lack of a stop sign from Walkers Overlook on to MD 194. He inquired about the possibility of having the owner or State Highway notified.

Commissioner Gilbert announced that he will not be present at the October 25th Town Meeting.

Commissioner Gary Baker discussed a new food bank that will be opening up at the Glade Valley Church of the Brethren. Operating hours will be on Wednesday from 4:00 – 7:00 PM.

Commissioner Baker also congratulated the Senior Lunch Group for celebrating their 50th anniversary on Thursday.

Commissioner Mike McNiesh noted that he will be donating his commissioner pay of \$1347 to the Walkersville Future Farmers of America, the Walkersville Historical Society, and the Walkersville High School Music Boosters.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis discussed the Parks Commissions plans for the upcoming Christmas Tree lighting and holiday celebration on Wednesday, December 6th.

The Foot Golf course has been installed at Heritage Farm Park.

The Parks Commission has begun discussion of installing signage to assist emergency medical vehicles to more easily locate individuals inside the park. There will also be additional conversation regarding AED devices inside the Town parks.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis thanked Burgess Weddle and Kitty Baker for participating and winning the Community Show Milk Shake competition. Funds were donated to the Friends of the Walkersville Library.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis discussed the successful tree planting at Trout Park the previous week.

Commissioner Brodie-Ennis announced that she will be absent from the November Town Meeting.

Burgess Weddle read several thank you letters from Linda Spears of the Senior Lunch program, Dick and Jane Brady in reference to the Town's support of the Walkersville Veterans group, and Harold and Roberta Staley for the recent Veterans bus trip.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS/WATERSHED UPDATE

Burgess Chad Weddle read the announcements.

David Ennis of 118 Challedon Drive thanked Susan Hauver for her hard work on the Comprehensive Plan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Mon., Oct 23 – EDC Meeting 7pm
- Tues., Oct 24 – Planning Meeting 7pm
- Wed., Oct 25 – Town Meeting 7pm
- Wed., Nov 1 – Parks Meeting 7pm
- Wed., Nov 8 – Town Meeting 7pm
- Tues., Nov 14 – Planning Commission Workshop 7pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Sean Williams, Town Manager