

MINUTES
WALKERSVILLE BURGESS & COMMISSIONERS TOWN MEETING
March 13, 2024

The Town meeting of the Walkersville Burgess & Commissioners was called to order on Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. Those in attendance included Burgess Chad Weddle, Commissioners Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis, Tom Gilbert, Mike McNiesh, 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 10 citizens. Commissioner Mike McNiesh arrived to the meeting at 7:36 PM. 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 Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis to approve the minutes of February 28, 2024. The motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

2. STATE POLICE REPORT – CORPORAL GARY CONKLIN

Corporal Gary Conklin discussed the 2023 crime statistics and compared them to the previous two years. He also shared some traffic statistics. Commissioners asked questions involving traffic issues, speeding, speed enforcement, areas of concerns with juveniles, and the benefit of the overtime hours being worked by the Troopers. All of the information discussed during the presentation is available on the Town website.

3. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PUBLIC HEARING DISCUSSION

Planning and Zoning Administrator Susan Hauver discussed the upcoming public hearing for the Comprehensive Plan and reviewed the rules the Planning Commission used for their public hearing. This included Maryland State rules, providing the Commissioners all public comments previously provided to the Planning Commission, Planning Commission comments on the Comprehensive Plan, and the steps that will occur that evening. Individual public comments will be limited to five minutes and ten minutes for organizations. All of the previously provided public comments are available on the Town website.

4. SPECIAL ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION

Burgess Chad Weddle discussed the history for why the special assessment was created and discussed a previous Town assessment. Billing Clerk Laura Sassano provided a power point presentation covering water bills, the amount the special assessment covers, and the cost of the Maryland State loan. There was discussion involving the need to reenact the special assessment and potentially raise water rates. Burgess Weddle offered to provide a draft ordinance reenacting the special assessment but renaming it loan repayment fee. All of the information discussed during the presentation is available on the Town website.

5. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Commissioner Tom Gilbert made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen to pay the bills as submitted for the time period. The motion passed 5-0.

6. CHAD UPDATES, STAFF COMMENTS AND COMMISSIONER CONCERNS

Communications Specialist Ashley Bailey promoted the EDC's Pop Up on Penn event and invited local businesses to apply to attend the event on Saturday May 4th.

The star party event scheduled for Heritage Farm Park Friday night is being postponed due to weather.

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

1. Wilson T. Ballard provided town staff a bid package for Green Street storm water and road project to review for any changes and hopefully get it out for bid in next few weeks.
2. Town staff has gone door to door in Glade Town and left door notices regarding water meter replacement. When no one was home, a notice was left. In the last two weeks DPW has replaced approximately 60 meters in Glade Town. Meter placement appointments will be on hold starting the end of March and restarting in May. Water shut offs are scheduled for March 27th with approximately 178 on list for nonpayment as of Tuesday.
3. There was a pre bid meeting held on the March 5th for the sidewalk and road paving contract. A total of three contractors attended. Sealed bids are due in by 2:00 PM on the March 21st. Town staff to review and make recommendations to Burgess and Commissioners for awarding of that contract at first meeting held in April.
4. Parks hours will change starting Friday and will start to close at 9:00 PM but will still open at 7:00 AM. Bathrooms and drinking fountains will be open starting April 1st. Garden plots will be available starting April 1st.
5. The Town's annual cleanup week will occur starting on April 22nd. Additional information will be posted on the Town website.

Town Manager Sean Williams discussed the Homestead Tax Credit, making the Burgess and Commissioners aware that the Town currently has our rate set at 10%, and suggested they consider future discussions for lowering the percentage.

Manager Williams also discussed receiving and forwarding an email from Austin Nelson regarding ongoing concerns with speeding on Glade Blvd. There was a discussion on the cost and use of possible rumble strips. Public Works Dir. Joe Birch advised he would provide additional information at a future meeting.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert discussed the Senior Tax Credit seminar held March 5th at Town Hall. A total of 20 citizens attended.

Commissioner Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis also spoke with Austin Nelson regarding his speeding concerns on Glade Blvd and encouraged him to complete a petition.

Commissioner Mike McNiesh suggested citizens attend the jazz concert at the High School on March 15th.

Commissioner McNiesh suggested following the County schoolboard of potentially allowing public comments prior to new business being held at future meetings.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND CONCERNS/WATERSHED UPDATE

There were no public comments

Burgess Weddle read the announcements

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mon., Mar 25 – EDC Meeting 7pm
Tues., Mar 26 – Planning Meeting 7pm
Wed., Mar 27 – Town Meeting 7pm
Fri., Mar 29 – Town Office Closed – Good Friday
Tues., April 2 – Charter Review Committee 7 pm
Wed., April 3 – Parks Meeting 7pm
Tues., April 9 – Planning Workshop 7pm
Wed., April 10 – Town Meeting 7pm

Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Sean Williams, Town Manager