

The Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of Elkton

MINUTES

August 13, 2014

A public meeting (workshop) of the Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of Elkton (“the Board”) was held on this date at 4:00 p.m. with the following persons present: Mayor Robert J. Alt; Commissioners Charles H. Givens, Sr.; Mary Jo Jablonski; Earl M. Piner, Sr.; and Daniel R. VanReenen, Jr.; Town Administrator Lewis H. George, Jr.; and Administration Office Secretary L. Michelle Henson. Also in attendance: Department Managers Jeanne D. Minner, Director of Planning; J. Daniel Handley, Director of Public Works; Chief of Police Matthew Donnelly, Elkton Police Department; Mary Magaw, Director of Parks & Recreation; Laura Brown, Director of Human Resources; and Town Attorney John Downs, Esquire and Associate Lisa Hamilton, Esquire.

Mayor Alt called the workshop to order at 4:00 p.m.

Discussion – Asphalt Sealing

Mayor Alt stated he had been approached by residents of Patriots Glen regarding multiple patches in the streets of the neighborhood. He stated he invited the residents to attend a workshop meeting in order for the Board to discuss the issue.

Messrs. John Betts, Brad Carrillo and Jeff Stanley introduced themselves to the Board. Mr. Betts stated the purpose of their appearance was to discuss and request asphalt sealing of Patriots Way, the main road through the Patriots Glen neighborhood.

Mr. Betts stated he was a resident of Patriots Glen, and added he had experience with paving companies. He stated the process of sealing asphalt improved the aesthetics, as well as extending the life of the road surface, resulting in long-term cost savings. He stated he received a preliminary estimate of \$18,000 to seal Patriots Way.

Mayor Alt questioned if other neighborhoods utilized asphalt sealing. Mr. Carrillo, who stated that he represented Aspen Property Management, a property management firm that provided Homeowner Association services to several Town neighborhoods, answered in the affirmative. He said asphalt sealing had been utilized on parking areas in those neighborhoods where those spaces were privately owned.

Mayor Alt questioned if the sealer was rolled or sprayed. Mr. Jeff Stanley, representing S & M Paving, stated the material was sprayed.

Commissioner Jablonski questioned the service life of the sealant. Mr. Betts answered the sealant should be reapplied every other year. Mr. Carrillo stated other applications could be considered, such as cape sealing or tar and chip. Referring to numerous patches in Patriots Way, Mr. Carrillo stated sealing of the road, using any technique, would provide uniformity to the road surface.

Commissioner Piner stated he agreed sealing would improve the road surface, adding his concern that any subsequent patching activity would not match. He added that funding was also an issue.

Commissioner Piner questioned if the sealant would fade over time. Mr. Betts stated the sealant was a commercial grade, unlike sealant used on residential driveways.

Mayor Alt, referring to the information presented by Mr. Betts, stated he was most impressed with the statement “spend \$1 to save \$6”. He concurred with Commissioner Piner’s statement regarding the limitations of the Town’s ability to fund street repairs. Commissioner Piner added concerns that if the Town sealed one road, other neighborhoods would request the same.

Mr. Betts stated the aesthetic improvements would increase property values in the neighborhood. Commissioner VanReenen questioned if Mr. Betts had a solid foundation upon which to base his statement. Mr. Betts answered in the negative, stating it made sense that the neighborhood would be improved.

Commissioner VanReenen stated that while he wanted to assist the neighborhood with improvements, he had concerns regarding the cost of the product and its relatively short life.

Discussion ensued regarding amending the Town’s road specifications to include sealing on all newly constructed or paved roads.

Discussion – De-Annexation Request – Mr. Mark Nemec

Mr. Mark Nemec introduced himself to the Board. He stated the purpose of his appearance was to request de-annexation of 3 parcels of land he owns adjacent to and west of Delancy Road. He stated 2 of the parcels were undeveloped, and 1 was improved with a house.

Mr. Nemec stated his property was originally purchased as part of a planned development of several parcels of land. He stated he held the mortgage, and foreclosed when the developer defaulted, and the project was halted.

Mr. Nemec provided a graph which illustrated the Town taxes paid on the parcels since annexation. He stated the value of the property remained the same for the past few years, however the property taxes increased by \$2,000. He added the property does not receive water and sewer service, and since none was planned in the near future, requested de-annexation and subsequent removal of Town tax liability on the property.

Mayor Alt questioned if the property received any Town services. Mr. Nemec answered the improved parcel received trash removal services.

Mr. George stated he would consult with counsel regarding de-annexation, as no statutory procedure currently existed. He stated he could draft a Resolution to amend the Town's Charter, removing the parcels.

Mr. Downs, noting full disclosure, stated he represented Mr. Nemeč regarding a boundary issue pertaining to this property several years ago, adding it was unrelated to the topic at hand. He stated he had no relationship with Mr. Nemeč at this point in time.

Mr. Downs stated a Resolution would be the appropriate way to address de-annexation of property from Town limits.

Discussion – Elkton Police Department

Elkton Police Chief Matthew Donnelly provided a Power Point Presentation of the Elkton Police Department (EPD), reviewing Command, Patrol and Civilian staff, the Elkton Police Department facility, and related matters.

Referring to the EPD service area, Commissioner Givens questioned how patrols covered the Town. Chief Donnelly stated the Town was divided into sectors, with patrol details assigned based on calls for service.

Chief Donnelly stated EPD had excellent working relationships with State, County and other local law enforcement partners, as well as Emergency Response agencies.

Chief Donnelly provided a comparison of Police Departments similar to Elkton's jurisdiction, noting EPD's proportionately higher arrest rates.

Mr. George, referring to recent issues involving pedestrians crossing the AMTRAK line near Bow Street, stated he requested placement of fences in the area. He suggested EPD's School Resource Officer coordinate with AMTRAK Police to educate students regarding the dangers of crossing railroad tracks.

Referring to EPD's Records Clerks, Chief Donnelly stated the department was required to maintain 24 hour, 7 day coverage for the department's computer system.

Regarding the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA), Commissioner Givens questioned if accreditation would improve the public's perception of EPD, and if the process would create an upstanding department. Chief Donnelly stated accreditation for the sake of itself did not improve a Police Agency, adding that EPD's Policy & Procedure Manual had been tested in Circuit and Federal Courts, and was successful in both. He added the Town's insurer, the Local Government Insurance Trust, never had an issue with the Policy & Procedure Manual, nor had accreditation been recommended.

Commissioner Givens questioned the makeup of accreditation committees. Chief Donnelly stated the accreditation committees were made up of law enforcement and private sector executives. Commissioner Givens questioned if accreditation improved a Police Department cosmetically. Chief Donnelly answered in the affirmative.

Chief Donnelly stated the EPD applied for many grants, many of which were utilized for reimbursement of overtime costs. He noted grants were also used for equipment purchases, such as personal protective equipment. Commissioner Piner questioned the useful life of protective vests. Chief Donnelly answered the vests were kept for not longer than 5 years however he preferred replacement at 3 years.

Chief Donnelly stated the EPD's storage space was very limited, adding the requirements of records retention storage resulted in increased storage needs.

Discussion ensued regarding records retention and required storage of evidence, reports, etc. Chief Donnelly stated records retention requirements ranged from a year to permanent storage. Commissioner VanReenen questioned if EPD scanned any records. Chief Donnelly answered in the affirmative.

Commissioner Givens, referring to the EPD evidence room, questioned accessibility to the facility. Chief Donnelly stated access to the evidence room was strictly limited to specific individuals.

Commissioner Givens questioned if the EPD recruitment process attempted to match the diversity of Elkton's community. Ms. Brown answered in the affirmative. Discussion ensued regarding bilingual Officers.

Commissioner Givens, referring to physical fitness tests administered to recruits, questioned if EPD Officers were required to maintain those levels of physical fitness. Chief Donnelly answered in the negative, stating some agencies incentivized their Officers to maintain physical fitness.

Mayor Alt questioned the number of Officers assigned to patrol shifts. Chief Donnelly stated the ideal patrol shift consisted of 1 Sergeant and 5 Officers.

Mayor Alt asked Chief Donnelly for his opinion of assigning 2 Officers per patrol vehicle. Chief Donnelly stated assigning 2 Officers per patrol vehicle made sense in larger areas however Elkton's relatively small size enabled Officers to obtain back up support very quickly. He noted EPD's working partnership with State and County law enforcement, stating the positive relationship was the direct result of EPD's Officers.

Chief Donnelly stated that Cecil County municipalities were part of the Central Dispatch Program, meaning all calls for service are directed through the 911 system. Chief Donnelly said citizens were often frustrated that 911 Call Takers were required to ask many questions for all calls for service, and added that the process was under review to increase efficiency.

Commissioner VanReenen, referring to the 3-year accreditation process, stated he understood the initial cost was \$30,000 and \$4,200 per year for the next 2 years. He questioned if accreditation resulted in lowered insurance premiums for the department. Chief Donnelly stated he would provide that information.

Chief Donnelly stated accreditation was supported by some agencies, and not supported by others. He stated the return was not offset by the costs involved in the process. He added that he could have the department's Policy Manual reviewed by counsel as well as the Police Officer Bill of Rights Attorney, if the Board desired.

Mayor Alt queried those in the audience for comments regarding Chief Donnelly's presentation.

Mr. Richard Lemen commended Chief Donnelly regarding his presentation, stating it was well organized and informative.

Mr. Jack Butler suggested the addition of a second K9 unit. Mayor Alt and Commissioner Givens agreed with Mr. Butler's suggestion.

Discussion – Department of Public Works

Mr. Daniel Handley, Director of Public Works, presented an overview of the Department of Public Works (DPW). A copy of Mr. Handley's presentation was placed in the record of the minutes.

Mr. Handley, referring to page 2 of his presentation, noted that staff positions had been cut from 40 to 27 during 2011. He stated he recognized the importance of saving money however the department needed staff to perform efficiently. Mayor Alt stated he understood the affect staff reductions had on DPW.

Mayor Alt questioned if DPW performed cleaning of storm drains. Mr. Handley answered in the affirmative, stating cleaning was performed on an as needed basis.

Mr. Handley stated DPW stated his goal to proactively inspect and maintain the Town's infrastructure, vs. reacting to issues.

Mr. Handley stated the Town's Yard Waste Removal Program was a benefit to Elkton's residents however water and sewer issues should take precedence.

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Commissioner Piner, referring to DPW's Yard Waste pickup schedule, stated employees should be able to pick up yard waste when they see it, as opposed to strictly adhering to the established schedule. Mr. Handley stated that the amount of yard waste that was already loaded could play a role in employees' adherence to the schedule.

Mr. George, referring to a previous presentation by Waste Management, the Town's trash hauler, regarding additional yard waste removal services, questioned the status of the proposal. Mr. Handley stated he had not yet received a proposal from Waste Management.

Commissioner VanReenen questioned if the Town had considered contracting grass cutting services. Mr. George stated the Town previously received estimates of \$100,000 for grass cutting services.

Mayor Alt, referring to a previous presentation by the Town's Stormwater Manager, Mr. Sidney Ojofeitimi, stated he advised the Board of upcoming State of Maryland regulations pertaining to stormwater runoff and stormwater management ponds. He stated his goal of cutting the grass surrounding stormwater management ponds twice per month.

Mayor Alt stated he received a suggestion from a citizen regarding weed control, in which a DPW employee operated a "gator" type cart, outfitted with a tank / sprayer containing weed killer. He stated a second employee could walk behind the cart, spraying sidewalk weeds. He asked the Board to consider the suggestion.

Commissioner VanReenen, referring to the previous staffing reductions, questioned if the open positions had been budgeted in the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget. Mr. Handley answered in the negative.

Commissioner VanReenen questioned if DPW had its own fleet maintenance. Mr. Handley answered in the affirmative. Mayor Alt stated the Town's mechanics maintained a large amount of equipment. Mayor Alt questioned if utilizing local "quick lube" oil changes would be cost effective.

Mayor Alt stated DPW employees were the Town's "front line" and were the most visible of all employees. He asked Mr. Handley to advise the Board what was needed in order for DPW to increase its effectiveness.

Discussion ensued regarding DPW's vending machines. Mayor Alt stated machines could be installed at no cost to the Town. Commissioner Piner expressed support for new vending machines, stating they were a service to staff.

Mayor Alt queried the audience for comments regarding Mr. Handley's presentation.

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Ms. Pat Opal, referring to a project in which a subcontractor for Delmarva Power was installing underground lines, stated the activity led to issues with the water meter valve box on her property. Mr. Handley stated he would address the issue.

Mr. Mark D'Azevedo commended DPW staff for painting the roof of the Farmers Market, as well as weed removal from downtown streets. He suggested that weed removal activity take place in early morning hours in order to avoid issues with traffic. He added he was speaking with a DPW employee, and noted the employee's positive attitude.

Mr. D'Azevedo stated he recently received a visit from Mr. George regarding a trailer which was parked on the street, and said he appreciated the personal touch of a face to face visit.

Mr. Jack Butler requested maintenance of a drainage ditch on Route 40 in the area of Lincoln Avenue. Mr. Handley stated he would request maintenance from the State Highway Administration.

Hearing no additional business to come before the Board, Mayor Alt adjourned the workshop at 6:07 p.m.

L. Michelle Henson
Administration Office Secretary

AN AUDIO RECORDING OF THIS MEETING IS RETAINED AT THE ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE