

# **The Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of Elkton**

## **MINUTES**

February 10, 2021

In order to comply with Governor Larry Hogan's declaration of a State of Emergency as part of Maryland's response to COVID-19, and in order to limit public gatherings during this time, the Mayor and Commissioners of the Town of Elkton (the "Board") conducted a virtual workshop meeting on this date at 12:00 p.m. The following persons participated via computer and/or telephone: Mayor Robert J. Alt; Commissioners Jean A. Broomell, Charles H. Givens, Sr., Robert M. Massimiano and Earl M. Piner, Sr.; Town Administrator Lewis H. George, Jr.; Assistant Town Administrator Joseph V. Zurolo; Finance Director Steven H. Repole, CPA; Planning Director Jeanne D. Minner; Director of Public Works J. Daniel Handley, P.E.; Zoning Administrator Charles A. Bromwell; Chief of Police Carolyn Rogers; Police Lt. Lawrence Waldrige; Senior Administrative Specialist L. Michelle Henson; and Town Attorney John P. Downs, Esquire.

Mayor Alt called the virtual workshop meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

### **Discussion - Council Hall Adaptive Reuse Feasibility Study Update Stephanie Schaefer, Buchar Horn, Inc.**

Ms. Minner stated the Town received a grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development for reuse and redevelopment of the former Town Hall site at 101 East Main Street. She stated the project bid was awarded to Architectural firm Buchar Horn, Inc. Ms. Minner stated the project consists of three phases, including site visit, reuse and redevelopment.

Ms. Schaefer reviewed the current physical condition of the building and needed upgrades to modernize the property and meet ADA accessibility requirements.

Ms. Schaefer stated public input is being elicited regarding potential uses of the building, such as a café, arts and entertainment, etc. Ms. Minner stated surveys are being utilized to obtain the public's opinion. She stated the survey has been posted on the Town's website at [www.elkton.org](http://www.elkton.org). Mayor Alt asked everyone in attendance to complete the survey.

Mr. George requested a written report regarding Ms. Schaefer's findings.

Mayor Alt queried Ms. Schaefer's opinion regarding a suitable use for the property. Ms. Schaefer stated the property provides opportunities for partnerships with the hospital, Cecil College, or public dining and/or entertainment.

Mayor Alt expressed his desire to have the building's exterior renovated to reflect its previous use as a fire station.

**Discussion - Wetlands Mitigation - Southfields PUD  
Andy Stansfield, Geo-Technology Associates, Inc.**

Mr. Andy Stansfield, Vice President, Geo-Technology Associates, Inc. (GTA), introduced himself to the Board. He also introduced Mr. Steve Moore, representing Southfields of Elkton Capital Development, and Messrs. Daniel Synoracki, GTA Senior Wetland Scientist and Max Potember, GTA Project Wetland Scientist.

Mr. Stansfield stated the purpose of his appearance is to discuss utilization of the former hatchery ponds at McKinney Commemorative Park for a wetlands mitigation project. He stated the goal of the project is to create 10 acres of wetlands to offset the same acreage of wetland disturbance associated with the Southfields Planned Unit Development (PUD) parcels "I" and "D".

Mr. Stansfield stated GTA has been in discussions with the Maryland Department of the Environment and the Army Corps of Engineers regarding the project, adding that both entities approved the hatchery site.

Discussion ensued regarding additional recreational opportunities as part of the wetlands project.

Mr. Stansfield stated the project, if approved by the Board, will begin with boring 5-inch diameter holes in various locations around the hatchery area to determine if the soils are suitable for the project. He said if the soils are suitable, the next step will be delineation of the wetlands area.

Discussion continued regarding removal of the individual berms between the former ponds in order to create one large area of wetlands and the installation of infrastructure connecting the area to the Big Elk Creek.

Mayor Alt stated his vision of incorporating trails and observation areas as part of the project.

Commissioner Piner questioned if the project would impact the nuisance flooding of Delaware Avenue. Mr. Stansfield answered in the negative, stating the project will only affect the delineated mitigation area.

Commissioner Broomell questioned the size of the former hatchery ponds. Mr. Stansfield stated the area is about 10 acres.

Mr. George questioned the amount of existing wetlands at the former hatchery site, stating they cannot be used to offset disturbed area acreage. Mr. Stansfield stated the delineation phase will determine the extent of existing wetlands, for which will the State may consider partial credit in the mitigation process.

Discussion ensued regarding utilization of the park entrance on Delaware Avenue for equipment associated with the project.

Mayor Alt expressed support for initiation of the project, stating it can enhance the legacy of the commemorative park. Commissioner Broomell echoed Mayor Alt's support.

Mr. Downs, noting the recreational restrictions associated with the park, stated creation of the wetlands can enhance citizen's experiences as well as improve plant and animal habitats.

Mr. George questioned the use of the soils that will be removed from the existing site in order to create the pond. Mr. Stansfield stated the soils will be removed and redistributed within State regulations.

Commissioner Massimiano questioned the depth of the proposed wetland area. Mr. Stansfield stated the project will not create a pond, adding that the goal of the project is to create saturation of 10 to 20 inches, depending upon soil profiles.

Discussion ensued regarding location of infrastructure for discharge to Big Elk Creek. Mr. Stansfield stated existing infrastructure will be evaluated, adding that there will be multiple discharge points.

Mr. Stansfield, noting that Mr. McKinney was an outdoorsman and waterfowl carver, stated a waterfowl habitat can be created to enhance the commemorative nature of the park.

### **Discussion - Major Facility Fees and Future Waivers**

Mayor Alt, referring to the Board's previous approval of a waiver of Major Facilities Fees in order to spur residential development in Elkton, stated the current waiver period expires in May, 2022, the month of the next Municipal Election. He stated the current expiration date was established in order to provide potential new Board members the opportunity to decide to extend or eliminate the waiver.

Regarding the proposed Southfields Planned Unit Development (PUD), Mayor Alt stated he understood and appreciated staff concerns regarding the potential long-term reduction in Major Facilities-related revenue that was requested for this project, noting that residential build-out will not take place until well after 2022.

Mayor Alt reiterated his confidence in the success of the PUD project, and requested the Board's support for extending the waiver via an agreement between the builder of the planned single-family homes and the Town.

Commissioner Piner stated the Board initiated the waivers in order to encourage development and investment in Elkton, and expressed support for extending the waiver to the developer building the single family homes associated with the PUD.

Commissioner Broomell stated she supported the PUD in theory, adding that she has concerns regarding the projected long-term real property tax revenues associated with the development, stating the housing and commercial development markets could take a downturn at any point.

Commissioner Broomell expressed concerns regarding increased operating costs at the Water and Wastewater Treatment Facilities once the PUD is completed.

Commissioner Broomell suggested decreasing Major Facilities Fees by half vs. a total waiver.

Commissioner Givens stated he appreciated the opinions of his fellow Commissioners, stating the PUD is an opportunity for Elkton to grow in a positive way.

Commissioner Givens questioned if a building permit has an expiration date. Mr. Bromwell stated a building permit expires in 6 months if construction is not initiated.

Mr. Bromwell noted that current building codes prohibit building permits from being issued until the lots have been duly recorded, adding that the lots cannot be recorded until the water and sewer infrastructure are in place.

Mayor Alt stated he appreciated Commissioner Broomell's concerns regarding completion of the single family homes, noting that the developer may initiate building the apartments first, resulting in Major Facilities revenue.

Discussion ensued regarding the parameters of a development agreement between the builder of the single family homes and the Town.

### **General Discussion**

Chief Rogers and Lt. Waldrige requested a discussion regarding the request from the Elkton Alliance to close a portion of Main Street for St. Patrick's Day activities.

Lt. Waldrige stated the closure of Main Street involved the intersection of North Street, which is under the jurisdiction of the State Highway Administration (SHA). He stated the request from the Alliance was outside of the SHA's 60-day requirement for requested closure.

Lt. Waldrige suggest a possible alternative was to provide the municipal lot at 117-119 West Main Street in addition to outdoor seating on Main Street. He stated this configuration provides for social distancing and eliminates the need for excess Town staff during the St. Patrick's Day events. He noted use of the municipal lot also provided parking closer to the festivities. He stated he will discuss his suggestion with Ms. Jessica Price, Executive Director of the Elkton Alliance.

Discussion ensued regarding the requirements from SHA for road closure requests.

Commissioners Givens and Piner expressed support for Lt. Walldridge's suggestion.

Chief Rogers, referring to previous email correspondence regarding an amendment to the EPD facial hair policy which will permit Officers to grow mustaches and/or beards, queried the Board for comments or concerns. Mayor Alt stated he had no issues with the change in the policy. Commissioners Givens and Massimiano expressed support for the change in policy, noting that any facial hair must be trimmed.

Hearing no additional comments or questions, Mayor Alt adjourned the virtual workshop meeting at 1:25 p.m.

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L. Michelle Henson  
Senior Administrative Specialist

A VIDEO RECORDING OF THIS MEETING RETAINED AT THE ADMINISTRATION  
OFFICE