

The Town of Laurel
Mayor and Council Meeting
December 7, 2015

A Mayor and Council Meeting was held in the Mayor and Council Chambers of the Laurel Town Hall on Monday, December 7, 2015, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance: Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Council Members Randy Lee, Cheryl Martin, and Don Phillips. Also in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Ken West, Public Works Director James Foskey, Police Sergeant Adam Hitchens, Alderman Kelly Pettyjohn, Finance Manager Mary Introcaso and Town Manager Jamie Smith.

It was noted Councilpersons Fisher and Kellam were absent.

Ed Lewindowski, of the University of Delaware was in attendance to give an update the Ramble Project. Mr. Lewindowski advised the last update to Mayor and Council was in April and much has happened. He has brought other members of the Ramble Committee to give updates on various aspects of the Ramble. Dr. Jules Bruck, of the University of Delaware, advised grants have been received to complete engineering reports for feasibility studies for storm water management and green infrastructure. The reports are scheduled to be completed in March. The reports will provide the best management practices along the Ramble. Preliminary plans have been drafted for a nature based playground to be installed in Broadcreek Walkway. Dr. Bruck advised she received a phone call from DelDOT. They will be renovating the bridges in Laurel and contacted her to assist with design of the bridges so they coincide with the Ramble. Lewindowski advised in order to show what the Ramble would look like, a group was formed and worked on a Better Block Day. The Better Block is a way of showing what areas could look like when reformed with businesses, residential properties and parks. On September 26th, the Ramble Fall Festival was held along Broadcreek from Delaware Avenue to Laurel River Park. There were food trucks, ice cream trucks, a small farmers market, bike shop, art studio, brew pub, kid's games and musical entertainment. The day was a success and a great way to show what the Ramble will be like when fully developed. Mr. Brian Shannon, of the Laurel Redevelopment Corporation, explained with the studies being completed, Dr. Bruck's work, all the persons, businesses and agencies that assisted with the Ramble Fall Festival, studies, etc. a total of \$235,000.00 has been invested and contributions made in Laurel. Ms. LeeAnn Walling of Cedar Creek Planners, advised she will be preparing the town's new Comprehensive Plan, which is covered by a grant received from DEDO. She attended the PLUS Meeting in November 2015 for the preview of the town's comp plan and is waiting to hear back from state agencies on their comments. She plans to begin in 2016 and will engage the public in an effective manner. She has also worked with Ed Lewindowksi on Chesapeake Water Quality Reports. As part of the Ramble Project she developed a website called Reimagine Laurel and she will use this website as away of engaging the community on the comp plan update. Mr. Dave Wilson of Consultation Community, advised he hosted a Nature Based Tourism Workshop in November. He explained there are many potentials in Laurel for nature based tourism. There are many water ways and ponds for fishing, kayaking, and bird watching and the John Smith Trail runs through Laurel. There are many opportunities to promote Laurel for nature tourism and many assets to draw people. Mayor Shwed thanked all those that gave an update. He advised he is excited about the bridge committee that Dr. Bruck is now involved with. He asked

that she pass on to DelDOT that they consider some type of pedestrian walkway along Poplar Street bridge. Mayor Shwed stated the town needs an infusion of capital and he hopes the concept of all that was presented this evening spurs that.

The Mayor and Council Regular and Closed Session minutes of November 16, 2015, were presented for review and adoption. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, with Councilpersons Fisher and Kellam absent.

The Department Head Reports for the month of November 2015 were presented for review and adoption. Director of Code Enforcement West advised Mid Atlantic Physical Therapy will be opening soon in the Food Lion Shopping Center. The salon to be located next to Laurel Hardware will be opening after the first of the year and the Planning & Zoning Committee will be holding the final site plan approval for the Laurel Elementary School Plans on December 9th. Public Works Director Foskey advised Terra Firma has begun the reconstruction work at the intersection of Oak & Front Streets and are schedule to begin the state maintained road patches next week. Sergeant Hitchens advised as a correction from the last meeting that he stated there were 23 grams of powered cocaine seized in a drug bust, however it was 26.5 grams. Finance Manager Introcaso advised the auditors have begun the financial audit for FY 2015 and they are anticipated to be completed in a couple of weeks. Alderman Pettyjohn advised she has nothing to add to her report. However, the Court is staying consistent and has not slowed down very much. Town Manager Smith advised in regards to the purchase of property the town discussed at the November 15th meeting to be funded through the USDA Project for the installation of well and water treatment system, it was determined the acreage listed in the sales agreement was incorrect, it is actually a little less, so it has been corrected and a new sales agreement will be signed. Settlement will take place on December 29th. With there being no questions or comments, Councilman Lee made a motion to accept the reports as presented. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, with Councilpersons Fisher and Kellam absent.

Town Manager Smith presented for consideration a Franchise Agreement between the Town of Laurel and Chesapeake Utilities Corporation. The agreement is for a fifteen year term and protects the town and Chesapeake Utilities Corporation, as they provide natural gas service within the municipal boundaries. The agreement has been reviewed by the town's attorney and meets his approval. Town Manager Smith advised based on the attorney's recommendation, to move forward with the approval of the agreement. Councilman Phillips made a motion to approve the Franchise Agreement between the Town of Laurel and Chesapeake Utilities Corporation. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, with Councilpersons Fisher and Kellam absent.

Councilwoman Martin thanked the town employees for their continued dedications and work. She also addressed Mayor Shwed stating that she hopes the meeting that is suppose to transpire, transpires. Mayor Shwed advised it would.

Councilman Phillips requested permission to ask Dr. Jules Bruck to also address DeIDOT in regards to the upgrades that they will be conducting at the Mill Dam Bridge. Councilman Phillips advised DeIDOT is part of the Mill Dam Bridge process, however it is owned by Fish and Wildlife, however, everyone felt it was a great idea to have Dr. Bruck to speak about the Mill Dam Bridge as well and how it coincides with Ramble Project.

Mayor Shwed stated as 2015 ends, there are signs of improvement in the town. The new Family Dollar Store has begun construction, there is a new Beauty Salon to open the first of the year, Kidney Dialysis Center is now open, and Atlantic Physical Therapy will be opening soon. He complimented the town staff on doing a great job. Mayor Shwed requested Sergeant Hitchens pass on to his Officers that the town appreciates the great job they are doing, their work is very valuable.

Councilman Lee made a motion to hold a closed session to discuss Personnel Matters and Contractual Matters. President of Council Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, with Councilperson Fisher and Kellam absent.

Regular session recessed at 8:18 p.m.

Regular session reconvened at 8:28 p.m.

With there being no further matters to discuss, President of Council Calio made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, with Councilpersons Fisher and Kellam absent.

Regular session adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Mayor

President of Council

Town Manager