

The Town of Laurel  
Mayor & Council Meeting  
October 18, 2021

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held in the Mayor & Council Chambers at the Laurel Town Hall, on October 18, 2021, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, Council Members Randy Lee, Robin Fisher-Cornish, Cheryl Martin, and Donald Holden. Also, in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Ken West, Public Works Director James Foskey, Chief Dan Wright, Judge Ruffin, Finance Manager Mary Introcaso, and Town Manager Jamie Smith. It was noted that Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, President of Council Chris Calio, and Jonathan Kellam were absent.

Mayor Shwed stated a presentation will be given pertaining a Large Overlay Parcel District (LOPD) RE: Marina Housing, Discount Land Road, Tax Map #232-12.00-65.00. Mr. David Kuklish, from Boehler Engineer, and Mr. Lou Ramunno, the owner of the property, were in attendance tonight to present the proposed development. Mr. Kuklish stated the proposed development is 77 acres located on Discount Land Road that features undisturbed wetlands. The development will consist of future pedestrian connectivity future developing the west of Rt. 13 along Discount Land Road. The proposed development will feature 410 dwellings consisting of 62 single-family homes, 179 townhomes, and 168 condominiums. Mr. Kuklish stated the proposed development has gone through the PLUS Process for review and comment from all state entities, with all recommendations being addressed. Mr. Kuklish advised Del-DOT is completing a Traffic Impact Study, which is a three-step process. He advised water/sewer are both available, which will be extended from the corner of Rt.13 and Discount Land Road. Mr. Kuklish advised the parking exceeds the towns parking space requirements per the towns ordinance the single family homes require 126 spaces, they're proposing 189 spaces, the town homes require 448 spaces, they're proposing 716 spaces and the condominiums require 420 spaces, they're proposing 420 spaces along with 65 on-street parking spaces. Mr. Kuklish highlighted on the Landscape Designs and the Green Area proposed. Mr. Kuklish stated he can answer any questions that Mayor & Council may have regarding the proposed development.

Town Manager Smith stated the proposed development has come before Planning & Zoning Committee with a Concept Plan and a Preliminary Site Plan for approval. In August a public hearing was held where residents who reside within 200 feet of the property received certified mail for public comment. In September the Planning & Zoning Committee voted to recommend for approval the Preliminary Site Plan and the List of Conditions to Mayor & Council. Town Manager Smith advised President of Council Calio recommended to include a bond in the amount 25% of construction to the condition list. Town Manager Smith explained if Mayor & Council approves the recommendation from Planning & Zoning it will then go back to Planning & Zoning for Final Site Plan approval, when all state approvals have been received.

Director of Code Enforcement West advised the proposed development meets all the towns zoning ordinance and requirements.

Mayor Shwed inquired if the proposed development will have HOA's. Town Manager Smith stated yes.

Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish inquired the sale price of each style of homes as presented. Mr. Ramunno stated the single-family homes are estimated around \$300,000-\$350,000 the town homes estimated around \$250,000 – \$300,000, and the condominiums are estimated around \$330,000.

Mr. Sikora, resident of E. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, stated Discount Land Road is a two-lane road that is already a well-traveled road. Mayor Shwed stated the state will be reviewing the road with a Traffic Impact Study to determine if the development can support the road and require any necessary improvements.

A resident of Discount Land Road raised the concern on the impact of Discount Land Road pertaining how people will get in and get out of the development safely. Town Manager Smith highlighted the red portion consists of an entrance and exit for emergency vehicles, which is a condition we submitted to Del Dot.

A resident of Discount Land Road advised she received a certified letter pertaining the development, but her neighbor didn't receive a certified letter. Town Manager Smith advised certified letters are sent to all property owners within 200 feet of the proposed development.

A resident of Discount Land Road inquired if the proposed development is approved how would it impact our schools. Town Manager Smith stated the Department of Education is a part of the PLUS Process and they didn't make any comment.

Mr. Ramunno, the developer, stated he believes this development will be very beneficial to the town by increasing their revenue and helping the town grow by attracting new businesses.

A resident of Discount Land Road inquired if a study was performed to determine how property values on Discount Land Road will be impacted with the proposed development. Mr. Ramunno advised he believes this development will increase the property value due to the market sale price.

Mayor Shwed presented the Nuisance Ordinance for Public Comment. Mayor Shwed stated the town has been working with the towns attorney for 6 months in creating an ordinance to help with the citizens quality of life. Town Manager Smith stated copies of the ordinance were submitted to Mayor & Council for review and copies are available at Town Hall for public review. Town Manager Smith stated the town has received complaints from nuisance properties

but at that time the town couldn't pull their rental licenses per the towns code. The town attorney has drafted an ordinance that is similar to the City of Wilmington's ordinance and the towns proposed 2009 ordinance, which the town couldn't implement at that time due to the discrimination of rentals per the Delaware State Housing Authority. The proposed ordinance is an 8-page ordinance that will be apply to owner occupied homes, residential, and commercial properties. Town Manager Smith stated the ordinance will be utilized as a point system and penalty properties will face a fee. The town attorney recommended to keep the public comment open for 30 days, which the ordinance could go in effect of January 2022 following the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Readings.

The Mayor & Council Regular and Closed Session Minutes of September 20, 2021 were presented for review and adoption. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept the regular and closed session minutes of September 20, 2021. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 4-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish abstaining, President of Council Calio absent, and Councilman Kellam absent.

The September 2021 Department Head Reports were presented for review.

- Director of Code Enforcement West stated Sussex Environmental will be at Dutch Inn this week to be complete an Asbestos Environmental Study in order to begin demolition.
- Public Works Foskey stated he had no additions to his report.
- Chief Wright stated he had no additions to his report.
- Judge Ruffin stated Town Manager Smith submitted report for Mayor & Council's review.
- Town Manager Smith stated the Blessing of Phase 1 at Tidewater Park will be held on Thursday, October 21, at 2:00 p.m. The town's "4<sup>th</sup> Annual Trunk or Treat," will be held at the Laurel Elementary School – Bus Parking Lot on Saturday, October 23, 2021 from 7:00 p.m. -9:00 p.m. The school will be holding their Homecoming Parade on Friday, October 22, 2021 at 7:00 p.m.

Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept the September 2021 Department Head Reports. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, with President of Council absent and Councilman Kellam absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the Chicken Ordinance Discussion. Town Manager Smith stated Mayor & Council received an ordinance amending Chapter 168 for review at September's Mayor & Council Meeting per the request of President of Council Calio. It was agreed to table the discussion until President of Council Calio can be in attendance.

Mayor Shwed presented the Decision of Planning & Zoning Recommendation RE: Marina Housing, Discount Land Road, Tax Map #232-12.00-65.00. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to approve the Planning & Zonings recommendation with the Lists of Conditions for Mayor & Council approval referencing the Marina Housing, Large Overlay Parcel District, Discount Land Road, Tax Map # 232-12.00-65.00. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, with President of Council Calio absent and Councilman Kellam absent.

- **Councilman Lee:** *stated the town wishes to grow and we need people in order to see growth.*
- **Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish:** *stated the proposed development is contiguous to the town's Comprehensive Plan and we need growth for our town.*
- **Councilwoman Martin:** *stated for the town to see growth we must start somewhere, and the town can't continue to raise taxes on the same people.*
- **Councilman Holden:** *stated if you build it they will come, which will help increase the town's revenue.*
- **Mayor Shwed:** *stated the town started several years ago for potential development with voluntarily annexations for additional housing and commercial growth.*

Mayor Shwed presented the Discussion of Altering Fourth Street & Delaware Avenue. Town Manager Smith and Chief Wright have met regarding altering the traffic patterns regarding Fourth Street & Delaware Avenue. Town Manager Smith proposed to make a portion of Fourth Street One-Way east of Central Avenue to Market Street. Town Manager Smith proposed to make the portion of Delaware Avenue between Fourth Street One-Way from North to South. Town Manager Smith stated a committee must be established to determine the pro's and con's. The proposed committee consists of Councilman Holden, Councilman Kellam, and Councilwoman Martin, with Councilman Lee as a back-up.

Mayor Shwed stated Ms. Tasha Cannon the art teacher at the Laurel Middle School was selected by the Department of Education to create ornaments resembling the State of Delaware for the White House.

With there being no further business, Councilwoman Martin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, with President of Council Calio absent and Councilman Kellam absent.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

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Mayor

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President of Council

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Town Manager

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Recording Secretary