

The Town of Laurel
Mayor & Council Meeting
November 15, 2021

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held in the Mayor & Council Chambers at the Laurel Town Hall, on Monday, November 15, 2021, beginning at 7:11 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Council Members: Donald Holden, Randy Lee via teleconference, Cheryl Martin via teleconference, and Jonathan Kellam via teleconference. Also, in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Ken West, Public Works Director James Foskey, Alderman Taylor Oliphant, Finance Manager Mary Introcaso, and Town Manager Jamie Smith. It was noted that Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish, Chief Dan Wright, and Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant were absent.

Mayor Shwed opened a public comment session regarding the nuisance ordinance. Mayor Shwed stated the town has provided draft copies of the proposed ordinance drafted by the town solicitor for public review. Mayor Shwed allowed for any public comment pertaining the ordinance. Town Manager Smith gave a brief review on the point systems for violators, where she proposed to access 12 points per violator, which would be effective for 6 months and then erased. Town Manager Smith recommend to include the amended point system in the 1st Reading of Ordinance 2021-6 Chronic Nuisance Ordinance.

The Mayor & Council Regular Session Minutes of October 18, 2021, were presented for review and adoption. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the regular session minutes of October 18, 2021. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

The October 2021 Department Head Reports were presented for review.

- Director of Code Enforcement West stated he had no additions to his report.
- Public Works Director Foskey stated he had no additions to his report.
- Mayor Shwed stated Chief Wright is not in attendance tonight, but submitted his report for Mayor & Council review.
- Alderman Oliphant stated she had no additions to her report. Town Manager Smith advised Judge Ruffin will be remaining with the town to help train the new judge.
- Finance Manager Introcaso stated she had no additions to her report.
- Town Manager Smith stated she had no additions to her report.

Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the October 2021 Department Head Reports. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mrs. Kramer inquired the name of the new Alderman. Town Manager Smith advised Judge Taylor Oliphant.

Mayor Shwed presented the proposed Chicken Ordinance for discussion. Town Manager Smith advised this ordinance has been on the agenda for the past couple of months and per the request of President of Council Calio she drafted a proposed ordinance that mimicked the City of Salisbury's and the City of Wilmington's urban chicken ordinance. Councilman Lee inquired if Department of Agriculture will be called for the collection of chickens if an issue is raised. Town Manager Smith advised if there is a code violation the violator will have seven days to comply. The town would also be working with the Department of Agriculture regarding the collection of chickens, which a cost will be associated with removing the chickens. President of Council Calio questioned the definition of gamecocks in the zoning ordinance to include chickens/hens. President of Council Calio read the definition of chickens/hens according to Websters Dictionary. President of Council Calio referenced section 49.23 Enclosures, which stated enclosures, henhouses and pens may not be closer than five feet to any residence or property line. He proposed enclosures should be no closer than the defined setbacks in the towns zoning ordinance. Town Manager Smith stated that would be fine, but the Town Center District has no setbacks. After a brief discussion, President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the proposed amendment Chicken Ordinance as discussed. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 3-3, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented Resolution 2021-5, where the Town of Laurel recognizes the importance of fair housing for the citizens of Laurel and where the Town of Laurel Supports the goals of the Federal Fair Housing Law. Councilman Lee made a motion to accept Resolution 2021-5. Councilwoman Martin seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented Resolution 2021-6 endorsing the project to be submitted to the Delaware State Housing Authority for funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development authorizing Todd F. Lawson, Sussex County Administrator, to submit application. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept Resolution 2021-6. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the Citizen Participation Certificate of Assurance. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the Citizen Participation Certificate of Assurance. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the Highway Signs Proposal. Town Manager Smith stated AD-ART Proof Designs of the Rt.13 Highway Signs were submitted to Mayor & Council for review. The total costs of the highway's signs will be \$3,700, which doesn't include any other permitting fees. Town Manager Smith advised the signs meet Del-Dot's regulations and proposes to place one sign at the intersection of Johnny Janosiks and the place the second sign near Camp Road's intersection.

Mayor Shwed stated the design of the sign looks nice and the Town of Laurel is one of the few towns who do not have highway signs. Town Manager Smith stated the costs of the signs are budgeted in the towns budget. Mayor Shwed stated to correct the word “comes,” to “come” referring to “Great Things Come Naturally.” Councilwoman Martin made a motion for Town Manager Smith to continue to move forward with the Rt.13 Highway Signs Proposal. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the 1st Reading of Ordinance 2021-6 Chronic Nuisance Ordinance. Town Manager Smith stated we must clearly amend the point value on Pg. 4 Item 4- B and establish the effective beginning date of this ordinance on Pg. 5 Section 115-6. Town Manager Smith proposed an effective beginning date of January 2022. Mayor & Council agreed on the 12-point system with a 6-month period. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the 1st Reading of Ordinance 2021-6 Chronic Nuisance Ordinance. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Councilman Kellam thanked everyone who attended the Mural Dedication at Dunbar on Saturday, November 13, 2021.

Mrs. Anne Davis, resident of Pine Street, inquired if the town allows the breeding of pit bulls in town. Town Manager Smith stated the town code doesn't have anything written regarding the breeding of pit bulls. Mrs. Davis inquired if dogs must be contained either by a fence or a leash. Director of Code Enforcement West advised according to the town code a dog must be under control without roaming free.

Mrs. Davis inquired if there were copies of the proposed highway signs for citizens review. Town Manager Smith stated yes.

Mrs. Jill Kramer inquired if there were always two readings pertaining ordinances. Mayor Shwed stated yes.

Town Manager Smith advised the Christmas Parade Date may need to be changed to Thursday, December 2, 2021, due to the high school football state tournament.

Mayor Shwed stated a positive news article was published regarding the police department helping a woman with a stolen vehicle.

Councilwoman Martin made a motion to hold a closed session to discuss contractual and legal matters. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Regular Session Recessed at 7:46 p.m.

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Regular Session Reconvened at 7:59 p.m.

President of Council Calio made a motion that the Town of Laurel declines the offer of donating town land known as Tidewater Park. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

With there being no further business, Councilwoman Martin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Mayor

President of Council

Town Manager

Recording Secretary