

The Town of Laurel  
Mayor & Council Meeting  
February 16, 2021

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held virtually by utilizing ZOOM, on February 16, 2021 beginning at 7:26 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Council Members: Randy Lee, Jonathan Kellam, Cheryl Martin, and Robin Fisher-Cornish. Also, in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Ken West, Public Works Director James Foskey, Chief Dan Wright, Alderman Kelly Pettyjohn, Finance Manager Mary Introcaso, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith.

Mayor Shwed stated Mr. Tom Sombar from Sombar Co. is in attendance tonight to present the FY 2020 Audit. Mr. Sombar reviewed the audit documents with the Mayor and Council and explained the different aspects of it. Mr. Sombar explained the different expenses used throughout each department. Mr. Sombar explained the licenses and permits decreased and the government grants increased. Mr. Sombar stated the town had a fairly good year and the town is maintaining equity. Mayor Shwed advised the town's dumping fees were down due to Proximity Malt finding another way to dump their waste. Mr. Sombar advised the town is stable and there is always room for improvement to grow revenue. Mayor Shwed thanked Mr. Sombar for his time and presentation.

Mayor Shwed advised Mr. Bill McGowan is attendance tonight to present the Kayak Business Proposal. Mr. McGowan advised the town recently completed a Nature Tourism Study done in 2016. Mr. McGowan advised the Laurel Redevelopment Corporation (LRC) reached out to Quest Kayak to establish a seasonal rental kayak business on town property at the kayak launch. The LRC has been awarded the Sea Grant from the University of Delaware for the start-up costs. Mr. McGowan explained a 10 by 14 shed will be installed adjacent to the kayak launch. The launch will be staffed during peaked hours and during tours. Mr. McGowan explained individuals may get online to rent their kayak. The season will run from Memorial Day to Labor Day and the hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to dusk. Mr. McGowan advised he's talked to Town Manager Smith and Director of Code Enforcement West about meeting all the town's setbacks. Mayor Shwed inquired if Mayor & Council had any questions or comments for Mr. McGowan. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish inquired if the insurance is the business or town's responsibility. Mr. McGowan stated the business will assume the insurance responsibility. Mayor Shwed stated the business proposal fits in with the town and sounds like a good idea. Mayor Shwed thanked Mr. McGowan for his time and presentation.

The Mayor & Council Regular Session Minutes of January 19, 2021 were presented for review and adoption. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the regular session meeting minutes of January 19, 2021. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Hill absent.

The January 2021 Department Head Reports were presented for review. Director of Code Enforcement West advised he had no additions to his report. Public Works Director Foskey advised he had no additions to his report. Chief Wright advised he had no additions to his report. Alderman Pettyjohn advised she had no additions to her report. Finance Manager Introcaso advised

she had no additions to her report. Town Manager Smith stated the Mill Dam Bridge is now open and the streetlights will be re-installed. She is working with Del-DOT and Delmarva Power regarding the re-installation of the lights. Town Manager Smith advised she is working with DNREC and Del-DOT regarding lighting in the parking lot. Mayor Shwed inquired when the lights will be re-installed. Town Manager Smith advised she is working with Del-DOT to install new lights and they will reach back out to her in two weeks with an answer. Town Manager Smith stated Delaware Avenue Bridge is scheduled to begin in Spring 2021. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept the January 2021 Department Head Reports. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Hill absent.

Mayor Shwed presented Agenda Item Information. Town Manager Smith explained a resident made a concern at the January Mayor & Council Meeting pertaining items listed on the agenda and not allowing for citizen input. Town Manager Smith advised she reached out to the town solicitor and he suggested not to make ordinances available early in cases changes need to be made. Town Manager Smith reached out to President of Council Calio and she proposed to follow what Sussex County does by posting public hearing information documents on the town website and the town Facebook page for residents to review. Town Manager Smith advised if residents are to utilize the town Facebook, they must click the link first and it will take them to the town's website to retrieve documents.

Mayor Shwed presented the Cooper Street Safety Concerns, Discussion, and Recommendation. Councilwoman Martin advised her main concern is boats traveling on the road and with the new boat ramp coming she proposes the bend to be reduced from 25 mph to 15 mph on Cooper Street. Mayor Shwed stated they are very few off street parking spaces and doesn't support taken parking away and believes changing the roadway to one-way would be an inconvenience. Mayor Shwed advised there has been no accidents in 10 years. Councilwoman Martin proposed to change the speed limit to 15 mph around the bend. President of Council Calio stated he's not opposed to reduce the speed at the curve, but not proposed to remove off street parking due to limiting parking. Councilman Lee stated he agreed with the new street sign to slow down traffic. Councilman Kellam inquired about putting a reduced speed sign as Rt.9 has coming into town. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish advised she agrees with installing a sign with reduced speed ahead. Mayor Shwed inquired the recommendation of Town Manager Smith and Chief Wright. Chief Wright proposed to reduce the speed limit to 15 mph from Willow Street to Rt. 24. A general discussion took place regarding the implementation of reducing the speed from 25 mph to 15 mph from Willow Street to Rt. 24. Town Manager Smith proposed to place reduce speed signs on Front Street and Lansing Street. Town Manager Smith advised she will draft an ordinance with the reduction of speed of 15 mph from Willow Street to Rt. 24.

Mayor Shwed presented the Zoning Ordinance Amendment Next Step. Town Manager Smith advised the Zoning Ordinance Amendments must have a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading. Town Manager Smith stated the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading will be held at the March Mayor & Council Meeting.

Mayor Shwed presented the approval of the FY 2020 Audit. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept the approval of the FY 2020 Audit. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Hill absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the Mayor & Council March Meeting Dates. Town Manager Smith advised we will be holding two Mayor & Council Meetings in the month of March. The first meeting will be a closed session held on Monday, March 1, 2021 and the second meeting will be held on Monday, March 15, 2021. Councilman Lee made a motion to accept the Mayor & Council March Meeting Dates. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Hill absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the Kayak Business Proposal Approval. Mrs. Ann Davis, resident of Pine Street, inquired if the individuals are still allowed to launch personal kayaks and where parking will take place. Town Manager Smith stated yes, individuals may launch their personal kayaks and parking will take place on town property at the kayak launch. Mr. Rick McVey, resident of Central Avenue, inquired if Quest is building the structure and containing licensing. Town Manager Smith advised yes, and they will be solely responsible with all costs. Mr. McVey inquired if the business will be staffed all the time. Mr. McGowan advised it will be staffed during peak hours and it will also be a self-serve rental stand. An individual may reserve a kayak online and they will receive a key code to retrieve a kayak. Mr. McVey brought up the concern of what permitted businesses would be allowed there by the town. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept the Quest Kayak Business Proposal. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Hill absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the Del-DOT Repaving Agreement Discussion for Consideration. Town Manager Smith stated Del-DOT has been looking to repave Brooklyn Avenue for several years now, and they will include Madison Street. Town Manager Smith stated the agreement consists of the town being responsible of maintenance of the street from curb to curb and not to include repaving. Town Manager Smith advised if the contract doesn't get sign the street will not be paved. Town Manager Smith explained she wants to see the street be re-paved but doesn't believe Del-DOT's agreement is fair. Mayor Shwed stated for Town Manager Smith to work with Senator Richardson and State Representative Dukes. President of Council Calio advised he won't vote in favor or support the agreement. Councilwoman Martin inquired why the town would take on responsibility when the town has their own roads that need to be maintained. Town Manager Smith stated she will work with the state representatives regarding the town not taken maintenance responsibility of the road.

Councilwoman Martin recognized Mrs. Terry Wright and her heart goes out to her family and she was a great asset to the town.

***Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish exited the meeting.***

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Councilman Kellam stated Mrs. Wright was a nice lady who will be truly missed. Councilman Kellam announced his running for re-election for the Ward 3 Seat.

President of Council Calio stated Mrs. Wright was a joy working with and she had the best interest of the town.

Mayor Shwed advised he participated on the radio station with Mr. Jim Wheeler at the Laurel Junction to promote the town.

Mr. Rick McVey, resident of Central Avenue, advised he received the concept drawings from the students for the Mural at Dunbar. He inquired if he could be listed on the agenda for March's Mayor & Council Meeting.

Councilwoman Martin made a motion to hold a closed session to discuss legal matters. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 5-0, with Councilman Hill and Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Regular Session Recessed at 8:53 p.m.

Regular Session Reconvened at 9:22 p.m.

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

Meeting Adjourned at 9:23 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