

The Town of Laurel  
Mayor & Council Meeting  
February 20, 2024

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers on Tuesday, February 20, 2024, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Robin Fisher-Cornish via ZOOM, Cheryl Martin via ZOOM, Jonathan Kellam via ZOOM, 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 Melissa Cassimore, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith.

The Mayor & Council Regular Session and Closed Session Minutes of January 16, 2024, were presented for review and adoption. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the regular and closed session minutes of January 16, 2024. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Kellam absent.

The January 2024 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.
- Judge Ruffin stated she had no additions to her report.
- Town Manager Smith introduced Melissa Cassimore as the new Finance Manager. She advised she started last week and has submitted a report to Mayor & Council for their review. Mayor & Council welcomed Finance Manager Cassimore to the town and wished her well.

*Councilman Kellam entered the meeting at 7:06 p.m.*

- Town Manager Smith stated she had no additions to her report.

President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the January Department Head Reports as presented. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Shwed presented a Retirement Award to Chief Wright for his years of service. Chief Wright was presented thank you cards from the students of the Laurel School District, a Mayor & Council Tribute, and a Plaque for his years of service.

Town Manager Smith presented the Development Updates.

- **Wawa:** presented their Preliminary Site Plan at February P&Z's Meeting, where they received approval. They're also working on bringing in a fast-food chain restaurant to the site.

- **Rigbie:** presented their Final Site Plan at February P&Z's Meeting, where they received approval with their recommended amendments.
- **Laurel Dutch Inn:** Owner is now advertising for employment.
- **Globe Building:** presented their Preliminary Site Plan at February's P&Z Meeting, where they received approval and construction is expected to begin mid-summer.

Councilman Oliveras stated a lady came to the past Mayor & Council Meeting inquiring about adequate lighting in town. Town Manager Smith advised she met with her about reporting street light outages. She also mentioned she reached out to Jim Smith from Delmarva Power, and they're in the process of updating the streetlights to LED.

Mayor Shwed presented a Downtown Development District Expansion Request (DDD) pertaining Laurel Redevelopment Corporation (LRC), 121 Delaware Avenue, Tax Map #232-12.19-29.00. Town Manager Smith stated the town has 89 acres designated to the DDD and they're permitted to have 95 acres based on the town size. The LRC has requested to incorporate 121 Delaware Avenue, which is the Rosemont House that resides on the corner of Delaware Avenue and Maryland Avenue. She advised Mayor & Council must approve the request and she must work with the State Planning Office as well. She recommended increasing the DDD area on Delaware Avenue to include more of the historical homes in town. The DDD has been a huge asset to our town where many property owners have applied for funding. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the Downtown Development District Expansion Request (DDD) pertaining Laurel Redevelopment Corporation (LRC), 121 Delaware Avenue, Tax Map #232-12.19-19.00. Councilman Oliveras seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Councilman Oliveras stated he invited Mr. Nick Little and Mr. Matt Lloyd tonight.

Councilman Kellam thanked Chief Wright for his service and wished him a healthy and blessed retirement. He also thanked the town staff for all their hard work.

Mayor Shwed stated the town has been going through stressful times pertaining youths passings and he thanked the town police and the Delaware State Police for getting the violators to hopefully lead to less youth violence.

Mr. George Ladoto, resident of Lake Drive stated he's attended the meetings for the past several months and he's heard residents speak on how they want to make the town better. He addressed his concerns pertaining unregistered vehicles and un-insured vehicles along Market Street, Fourth Street, and Lake Drive. His packet also included pictures for Mayor & Council review. Mayor Shwed stated allow Town Manager Smith and Director of Code Enforcement West to take time to analyze your report and they will respond back.

Mrs. Ann Davis, resident of Pine Street, stated the Plein Aire Festival will be held on May 10, 2024, and May 11, 2024, at Janosik Park with 30 artists registered. She inquired if the sidewalk at

Janosik Park will be under construction at the time of the event. Town Manager Smith stated at this time no. She inquired if the boat ramp will also be completed at the time of the event. Town Manager Smith stated no it will not be completed.

Mayor Shwed stated the St. Phillip's Strawberry Festival will be held on Saturday, May 18, 2024.

Mr. Nick Little, resident of West Street, handed out a packet of concerns to Mayor & Council for their review. **Listed below are the concerns mentioned:**

- (1.) Speeding motorists along Oak Lane Drive and Rt. 24 heading to Sharptown. To help reduce the speeding they proposed to install more signage, a speed monitor or implement a double fine zone.*
- (2.) Recommend DART Transportation to include benches and covers for the bus stops throughout town to prevent inclement weather for bus goers. He advised the only bus cover bus goers have is the bus stop near the Laurel Senior Center.*
- (3.) He addressed the lack of adequate lighting throughout the town that has already been addressed tonight.*

Town Manager Smith stated to address your first concern regarding signage it depends if the road is a state or town-maintained road, and Oak Lane Drive is a state-maintained road. She advised she can pass his concerns to Del-DOT.

Town Manager Smith advised the public transportation is operated by DART. She advised Tenth Street and Central Avenue are private property where permission would be needed to install a bench and a cover. She stated she will reach out to DART regarding his concern.

Town Manager Smith stated streetlights and poles are maintained by Delmarva Power and they're in the process of replacing the streetlights to LED. She advised if there is a streetlight outage, they can be reported to Delmarva Power Outage or the town.

President of Council Calio made a motion to hold a closed session to discuss personnel matters. Councilwoman Martin seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Regular Session Recessed at 7:46 p.m.

Regular Session Reconvened at 8:21 p.m.

Councilman Holden made a motion to appoint Captain Tyler Bryant to Acting Chief. Councilman Oliveras seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor & Council Meeting  
February 20, 2024  
Page. 4

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

Regular Session Adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

---

Mayor

---

President of Council

---

Town Manager

---

Recording Secretary