

The Town of Laurel  
Mayor & Council Meeting  
February 21, 2023

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held in the Mayor & Council Chambers at Laurel Town Hall, on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Council Members Robin Fisher-Cornish via ZOOM, Cheryl Martin via ZOOM, Jonathan Kellam, and Donald Holden. Also, in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Ken West, Public Works Director James Foskey, Judge Ruffin, Finance Manager Mary Introcaso, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie. It was noted that Councilman Randy Lee and Chief Dan Wright were absent.

Mayor Shwed stated Mrs. Samantha Bitcliffe is in attendance tonight to present a proposal from 120Water in regards to the federal mandate of Lead and Copper Inventory Requirements. Mrs. Bitcliffe advised she has been meeting with Town Manager Smith and Public Works Director Foskey pertaining the mandate. She stated by October 16, 2024 the town will be required to complete a Service Line Inventory Map that portrays a map of the towns water system and showing the type of line that services each property. The private side verification can be completed by lead check swabs and customer survey postcards, which her company will complete. Mayor Shwed inquired if the EPA rule is implemented for only public work water systems. Mrs. Bitcliffe stated yes, the rule implies to public water systems. Mayor Shwed questioned if the water is being checked for lead or if the pipe within the home is being checked by lead. Mrs. Bitcliffe advised the pipe within the home is being checked by lead. Mayor Shwed inquired if there was any funding available for homeowners who may have a lead pipe. Mrs. Bitcliffe stated federal funding is available for pipe replacements for both public and private. Councilman Kellam inquired if the homeowner declines to install a new pipe. Mrs. Bitcliffe advised the town is required to offer to repair the lead pipe twice to the homeowner, at the homeowners cost. If the homeowner declines twice the town must document the declination with a signature. Mrs. Bitcliffe advised the inventory will be available through a cloud software system by GIS System or Excel. Town Manager Smith advised these services will be listed as a line item on this years upcoming budget. Mayor Shwed thanked Mrs. Bitcliffe for her time and presentation.

Mayor Shwed stated Mrs. Katie Millard and Mr. Kevin Gilmore from Sussex County Habitat for Humanity are in attendance tonight to present an Affordable Housing Presentation. Mrs. Millard explained affordable housing various per person and various the type of housing as well. Affordable housing is housing considered where only 30% or less of your income (pre-taxed) is used for your housing costs. She advised affordable housing has a stigma and stressed the importance that affordable housing is both the population you serve and the housing type. Affordable Housing has several benefits including local economy growth, more money in local businesses, fewer evictions and vacant housing, and an improved government infrastructure. Mayor Shwed thanked Mrs. Millard for her informative presentation and time.

The Mayor & Council Regular Session Minutes of January 17, 2023, were presented for review and adoption. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the regular session minutes of January 17, 2023. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Lee absent.

The Mayor & Council Regular Session Minutes of February 6, 2023, were presented for review and adoption. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the regular session minutes of February 6, 2023. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Lee absent.

The January 2023 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 the down trees at the cemetery between Culver and Delaware Avenue have been cleaned-up. He stated the paving at Hope Hill has been finalized. Mayor Shwed congratulated Public Works Director Foskey on the total income of Septic Receiving in January.
- Mayor Shwed stated Chief Wright is not in attendance, but his report was submitted to Mayor & Council for review.
- Judge Ruffin stated she had no additions to her report. Town Manager Smith stated Judge Nick Mirro is in attendance tonight to introduce himself to the Mayor & Council.
- Finance Manager Introcaso stated she had no additions to her report. Finance Manager Introcaso stated the dumping fees total differs from hers and Public Works Director Foskey due to she is reporting a month behind as he reports on that same month.
- Town Manager Smith stated she had no additions to her report.

Councilwoman Martin made a motion to approve the January 2023 Department Head Reports. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Lee absent.

Mayor Shwed advised he will table the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of Ordinance 2022-5 pertaining Chapter 49, Animals, Article III Dangerous Animals, due to not all members of Mayor & Council in attendance.

Mayor Shwed presented the Municipal Election Update 2023. Town Manager Smith stated the Candidate Filing Deadline was last Thursday, February 16, 2023, She stated the following candidates have filed for office: Ward 1- Carlos Oliveras, Ward 4 – Cheryl Martin, AT-Large – Philip C. Calio, and contest of Mayor – John Shwed and Mark Sikora. The election will take

place on Thursday, March 23, 2023, at the Laurel Fire Departments Meeting Room from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. She stated voters must utilize the front entrance at the fire department to vote. She advised candidates will receive a finalized list of registered voters by Tuesday, February 28, 2023.

Town Manager Smith presented the Development Updates.

- **Marino Development:** The developer has requested his architect/engineer to review the comments from Del-DOT and begin establishing cost estimates for their requirements.
- **Whaley Property:** Developers received approval from Mayor & Council and are now working with state agencies for required state permits.
- **Commercial Site -U.S. Route 13:** Developer has submitted a review for Del-DOT Entrance Permit. The developer is working with the landowner to purchase more land.
- **Residential Site – Central Avenue:** A subdivision has been granted and developer is working with Del-DOT for Entrance Permit.
- **Laurel Dutch Inn:** Owner has begun construction with no timeline of completion.
- **NAPA Building:** Plans have been submitted to the Fire Marshall for review and they're proposing a small grocery store.
- **Globe Building:** Owner is awaiting word from the Insurance Company.

Mayor Shwed presented Resolution 2023-1 Commercial Building Permit Fees. Town Manager Smith advised our current cost is \$0.90 per square foot for new construction. She stated this cost is too high to attract large commercial businesses to the town. She presented to Mayor & Council a handout explaining three proposed fee options. After review Town Manager Smith recommended Mayor & Council to adopt Option #2 with \$50.00 first 1k and \$6 each additional 1,000. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept Resolution 2023-1 Commercial Building Permit Fees Option #2 with \$50.00 first 1k and \$6 each additional 1,000. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Lee absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of Ordinance 2023-1 Housing Standards 87. Town Manager Smith stated the reasoning behind this proposed ordinance is due to a large dumpster located on a residential property for several weeks. She explained the towns code currently has no violations pertaining dumpsters on residential properties. She recommends to include the definition dumpster and temporary dumpster to Chapter 87, Housing Standards, Section 27. Dumpster includes any container, receptacle, compactor unit, trailer, roll-off, or similar unit with or without wheels that is used for temporary storage, containment, or transport of refuse, debris, trash, garbage, food waste, solid waste, recyclable material, incidental demolition debris, or other discarded or like materials. It shall not apply to ordinary household trash cans of a volume of ninety-six gallons or less, recycling receptacles of ninety-six gallons or less. Temporary Dumpster includes a dumpster that is used in connection with construction, demolition, fairs or for similar temporary needs. She stated Chapter 87, Housing Standards, Section 30 will also include it shall be unlawful to have a dumpster placed any residential

property, except for apartments, condominiums, and townhomes (In excess of 6 units). A temporary dumpster may be placed at a residential property for a period not to exceed 14 days, unless a building permit for renovations, construction, etc. is obtained for such property. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the 1st Reading of Ordinance 2023-1. Councilwoman Martin seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Lee absent.

Town Manager Smith presented Upcoming Events 2023.

- **March 23, 2023:** Mayor & Council Election – Laurel Fire Department
- **April 2023:** Rock the Block is proposed by Habitat for Humanity. No date has been proposed as of yet.
- **May 20, 2023:** One Day, One-Laurel -Watermelon Bus Painting, Plein Air, Balling for God, and St. Phillips Strawberry Festival
- **June 10, 2023:** Laurel Public Library Block Party at Market Street Square Park
- **April 21<sup>st</sup>:** Laurel Little League Opening Night parade at 6:00 p.m. Parade route will begin at North Laurel and proceed to the little league.
- **April 22<sup>nd</sup>:** Laurel Little League Opening Day Games.
- One Laurel Meetings held the second and fourth Wednesdays at Vital Church at 9:00 a.m.

Councilman Kellam thanked the town staff for their hard work and welcomed Judge Mirro to the town.

Mayor Shwed stated it has been a privilege and honor in serving this community and is working hard in continuing to serve the community.

Councilman Holden made a motion to a closed session to discuss personnel matters. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Lee absent.

Regular Session Recessed at 8:30 p.m.

Regular Session Reconvened at 9:05 p.m.

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 Councilman Lee absent.

Regular Session Adjourned at 9:06 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