

The Town of Laurel
Mayor & Council Meeting
March 18, 2024

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers on Monday, March 18, 2024, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Carlos Oliveras, Robin Fisher-Cornish via ZOOM, Jonathan Kellam, and Donald Holden. Also, in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Ken West, Public Works Director James Foskey, Acting Chief Tyler Bryan, Judge Ruffin, Finance Manager Melissa Cassimore, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith. It was noted that Councilwoman Cheryl Martin was absent.

Acting Chief Bryan presented the following promotion ceremony for the following officers: Patrolman First Class LaShawn Handy, Patrolman First Class Emily Truitt, and Corporal Kevin Lieber to their new ranks.

The Mayor & Council Regular and Closed Session Minutes of February 20, 2024, and March 4, 2024, were presented for review and adoption. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the regular and closed session minutes of February 20, 2024, and March 4, 2024. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin absent.

The February 2024 Department Head Reports were presented for review.

- Public Works Director Foskey stated he had no additions to his report. Councilman Kellam inquired when the construction will be completed around Eighth Street. Public Works Director Foskey stated they're temporarily patching weekly with all services back in by April. He advised a complete paving will be completed by late spring or early summer.
- Director of Code Enforcement West stated he had no additions to his report.
- Judge Ruffin stated she had no additions to her report.
- Finance Director Cassimore stated she had no additions to her report.
- Acting Chief Bryan stated he had no additions to his report.
- Town Manager Smith stated she had no additions to her report.

Councilman Kellam made a motion to accept the February Department Head Reports as presented. Councilman Oliveras seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin absent.

Town Manager Smith presented the Development Updates:

- **Rt.13/Discount Land Road & Rt. 13/Rt.9 Properties:** Developers are continuing to work together on an infrastructure plan and tie in.
- **Wawa:** presented their Preliminary Site Plan in February to P&Z, which they were not required to do, since the change of use isn't changing.
- **Rigbie:** Owner has received Downtown Development District (DDD) Funding and building plans still need to be submitted for review.
- **Laurel Dutch Inn:** They have begun advertising for hiring.
- **LRC – Oak Street:** They have received permits.
- **Globe Building:** They're finalizing Architectural Plans for towns review.

President of Council Calio inquired if the proposed housing developments above will still be required to install a connecting road through their developments. Town Manager Smith stated no, Del-DOT no longer requires it.

Councilman Oliveras inquired if Wawa is a guarantee. Town Manager Smith stated yes, they're going through the permitting process before going to settlement on the property.

Mayor Shwed presented the Grand-Fathering In Properties Update. Town Manager Smith advised she is following-up a concern that was made last month pertaining a commercial property located down by Link Bank with a Town Center Zoning (T-C). She advised T-C does not permit auto sales. The concerned property is currently zoned Commercial as the property was grand-fathered in when the town adopted the T-C Zoning. Town Manager Smith advised five years ago this concern was made to the town. She advised the towns current attorney at that time advised the town may amend the zoning ordinance not allowing a permitted use under the grand-fathering clause but must allow owners at least 18 months to two years before it's no longer considered a permitted use. She advised if Mayor & Council elected to remove a permitted use under the grand-fathering clause they must make a recommendation to P&Z where it comes back to Mayor & Council for approval. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish inquired if a complaint is needed to be received by the town to amend the zoning ordinance. Town Manager Smith stated no complaint is needed for amendments to the zoning ordinance. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish addressed her concern if an amendment is approved it can affect other businesses in town who operate auto sales. Town Manager Smith advised they're currently two auto sale properties in the T-C zoning that are in question with one being permitted a conditional use. After a brief discussion, Mayor & Council elected the town to work with the towns attorney to determine if the town can limit the number of cars permitted on a property pertaining the properties square footage.

Mayor Shwed presented the Annexation Update RE: Preston & Arlene Conaway, 10969 County Seat Highway, Tax Map #2-32-12.00-68.00. Town Manager Smith advised the town received the annexation request from the family's executor. A Municipal Plan of Service has been sent to the towns engineer for review and once received it will be submitted to the State Planning Office. The Annexation Committee will then need to meet to review the request.

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Mayor Shwed presented the Appointment of Committees RE: Annexation Committee and Personnel Committee. Mayor Shwed stated the Mayor & Council recommend Councilman Oliveras for an appointment to the Personnel Committee to fill such vacancy. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the appointment of Councilman Oliveras to the Personnel Committee to fill such vacancy. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin absent. Town Manager Smith stated the Personnel Committee consists of President of Council Calio, Councilman Kellam, and Councilman Oliveras.

Mayor Shwed stated the Mayor & Council recommend Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish for an appointment to the Annexation Committee to fill such vacancy. Councilman Oliveras made a motion to accept the appointment of Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish to the Annexation Committee to fill such vacancy. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Martin absent. Town Manager Smith stated the Annexation Committee consists of President of Council Calio, Councilman Kellam, and Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish.

Mayor Shwed presented the Request to Change Section of Elm Street to One-Way. Town Manager Smith advised the town received a request from a resident who resides on Elm Street. She advised Elm Street is one-way between West Seventh Street and West Sixth Street. The resident is requesting the section of Elm Street between West Seventh Street and Center Street that runs both ways to be one-way as well. Town Manager Smith advised Public Works Director Foskey and Acting Chief Bryan will meet discuss the request and then Street Committee will meet. The Street Committee consists of Councilman Holden, Councilwoman Martin, and Councilman Kellam.

Town Manager Smith stated the Office of Drinking Water (ODW) sent Public Works Director Foskey a ODW News Blast regarding fake testing kits being used to con water system residents.

Councilman Kellam welcomed Finance Manager Cassimore to the town and thanked the town staff for their hard work.

Mayor Shwed requested Town Manager Smith to write a thank you note to the owners of the Food Lion Shopping Center for upgrading the sidewalks and black top.

Mayor Shwed complimented all the organizations/groups who are trying to make Laurel a better place. He advised he attended the Pop-Up Event at Little Creek and inquired when the Pop-Up Event at Hollybrook is. Town Manager Smith stated a date has not been set.

Mayor Shwed thanked Town Manager Smith for nominating him for the Delaware Recreation Park Society Award at Rehoboth where he received an award for his efforts in the parks/recs in town.

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

Regular Session Adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Mayor

President of Council

Town Manager

Recording Secretary