

The Town of Laurel  
Mayor & Council Meeting  
March 20, 2023

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held in the Mayor & Council Chambers at Laurel Town Hall, on Monday, March 20, 2023, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Council Members Randy Lee, 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, Chief Dan Wright, Judge Ruffin, Finance Manager Mary Introcaso, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith.

The Mayor & Council Regular and Closed Session Minutes of February 21, 2023, were presented for review and adoption. Councilman Kellam made a motion to accept the regular and closed session minutes of February 21, 2023. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilman Lee abstaining.

Mayor Shwed stated Mrs. Amy Thomas is in attendance tonight to give an update on the St. Phillip's Strawberry Festival. Mrs. Thomas stated the festival has not been held in three years due to COVID-19. The festival will include the same festivities including scrapple sandwiches, strawberry desserts, and vendors. She explained the festival will honor Arm Forces Day as it's the same day as the festival. The Strawberry Festival will take place the third Saturday in May on May 20<sup>th</sup> from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Mrs. Thomas inquired if the town would close Carvel Avenue only as the Hope Lodge will not be participating this year due to limited help. She noted all profits received will be going to a mental health outreach. Mrs. Thomas requested if the town would be willing to issue a rolling permit as the prior years. Town Manager Smith stated yes, as this day also includes One-Laurel Day with festivities including a Plein-Air, Watercolor Bus Painting, and Ballin For God.

The February 2023 Department Head Reports were presented for review.

- Director of Code Enforcement West stated he no additions or changes to his report.
- Public Works Director Foskey stated crews were on-site last week pertaining the Watermain Replacement on West Seventh Street. He stated 10% of the watermain has already been replaced. Mayor Shwed thanked Public Works Director Foskey for fixing a 6-inch watermain break on Short Avenue last week. Town Manager Smith stated public works installed a railway split fence in Tidewater Park today.
- Chief Wright stated he had no additions to his report. Mayor Shwed stated the department added Patrolman Bryan Tinley earlier this month. Chief Wright stated they currently have 3 who will be attending the academy. Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish thanked Chief Wright and his department for coming out to her home to do a welfare check on her and her sister.
- Judge Ruffin stated she has no additions to her report.
- Finance Manager Introcaso stated she had no additions to her report.

- Town Manager Smith stated the town is moving forward with holding a Farmer's Market beginning on Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>. The market will be held at Tidewater Park on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays until August from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Interested vendors are encouraged to pick-up an application/contract from the Laurel Town Hall. Town Manager Smith proposed to move the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Festivities to Janosik Park as the car show attracts large crowds. She proposed to have food vendors located along Laurel Towne, the non-food vendors and the bands located in Janosik Park, and the car show along and up-Front Street and in Azar's parking lot. She explained the town already has permission in utilizing the necessary parking lot. The parade route will go down Delaware Avenue and parade invitation letters will be sent next week. Town Manager Smith stated the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration will take place on Tuesday, July 4<sup>th</sup>.

Councilman Lee made a motion to approve the February 2023 Department Head Reports. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Shwed proposed to defer the 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of Ordinance 2022-5, pertaining Chapter 49, Animals, Article III Dangerous Animals, due to a possible change of government could take place.

Mayor Shwed presented the 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of Ordinance 2023-1, Chapter 87, Housing Standards. Town Manager Smith stated the definition of Dumpster will include 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 advised it shall be unlawful to have a dumpster placed at any residential property, except for apartments, condominiums, and town homes (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. Town Manager Smith stated the reasoning behind this proposed ordinance is due to a large dumpster located on a residential property for several weeks. The town had no code in place pertaining dumpsters on residential properties. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept the 2<sup>nd</sup> and Final Reading of Ordinance 2023-1. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Councilman Kellam inquired if there is a fee if someone keeps a dumpster more than 14 days. Town Manager Smith stated they must get a building permit if they have a dumpster more than 14 days. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Shwed presented the Municipal Election Update 2023. Town Manager Smith advised the Town of Laurel's Mayor & Council Election will be held on Thursday, March 23, 2023 at the Laurel Fire Department's Meeting Room from 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. All eligible voters must utilize the front entrance left of the bay parking pad. The town will utilize the Sussex County's Board of Election Rolls and a Board of Election Representative will be in attendance. The

following seats Ward 1- Carlos Oliveras, Ward 4 – Cheryl Martin, and At-Large Phillip C. Calio will be automatically sworn into office with no-contest per town charter. The following contest of Mayor includes John Shwed and Mark Sikora.

Town Manager Smith presented the Development Updates.

- **30544 Sussex Highway-** Concept Plan was submitted in March 2023 to P&Z Committee for a proposed restaurant site. Property is just north of the former O’Neal Brothers and the property is going to settlement. They could present the Preliminary Site Plan in mid-April to P&Z if everything with the settlement is finalized.
- **Oak Street-** Concept Plan was submitted in March 2023 to P&Z Committee for a proposed residential site. The property is owned by the LRC where they’re proposing 28 units with 14 townhome double units. They have three different cottage styles proposed. They could present the Preliminary Site Plan in mid-April to P&Z.
- **Laurel Dutch Inn:** They have begun construction and are back doing work this week.
- **Rigbie:** The town currently hasn’t received any plans.

Mayor Shwed presented the Town of Laurel’s Comprehensive Plan Update Recommendation. Town Manager Smith advised per state law all Delaware Municipalities must have a Comprehensive Plan written every 10-years with a 5-year review period. Town Manager Smith advised the P&Z Committee reviewed the Comprehensive Plan and they recommended to make no amendments to the plan. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the P&Z’s Committee recommendation of making no amendments to the Town of Laurel’s Comprehensive Plan. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Mayor Shwed presented the Allied Waste Recycling Day Change Amendment. Town Manager Smith advised the trash company is proposing to reduce their number of days in town to 3 days versus 4 days. She explained they’re proposing to change the Recycle Day to Tuesday rather than Thursday and recycle pick-up will still be every other week. She stated they’re proposing to start the week of June 6, 2023 and they will help advertise the change to our residents. President of Council Calio inquired if there will be two trucks in town on Tuesday. Town Manager Smith stated yes. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the proposed Recycle Day change of Tuesday, with recycle still being every other week. Councilman Lee seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Town Manager Smith advised Mayor & Council to review the Upcoming Events Document this spring.

- **March 23, 2023:** Mayor & Council Election – Laurel Fire Department
- **April 2023:** Rock the Block is proposed by Habitat.
- **April 21, 2023:** 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, 2023:** Laurel Little League Opening Day Games.
- **May 20, 2023:** One-Day, One-Laurel – Watermelon Bus Painting, Plein Air and Ballin for God

- **June 10, 2023:** Laurel Library Block Party
- Watermelon 5k Run/Walk have submitted a verbal request.
- Second and Fourth Wednesday – One-Laurel Meetings at 9:00 a.m. at Vital Church.

Councilwoman Martin thanked town staff for their continuing hard work.

Councilman Lee stated a Block Party will be held on Saturday, April 1, 2023, at Centenary Churches parking lot.

Councilman Kellam thanked the town staff for their great job and invited anyone who wishes to attend the One-Laurel Meetings they held the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday at Vital Church at 9:00 a.m.

President of Council Calio inquired if single-family dwellings can be turned into apartments or duplexes. Director of Code Enforcement West stated no, and this code has been in effect since he was with the town.

Mayor Shwed stated there is a lot of good stuff happening in the community.

A resident of Willow Street, inquired if there was an adequate mental health facility or practice within the town. The resident advised she is looking to start a mental health facility. Chief Wright stated the police department has 2 clinicians who started four to five months ago. Mayor Shwed stated the town supports this business venture.

Mrs. Cheri Clark, resident of East 6<sup>th</sup> Street, inquired if the town received an official report of what caused the fire at the Globe Building. Director of Code Enforcement West stated the town isn't privy of that information and the town just receives an Event Report from the Fire Marshall.

Mrs. Anne Davis, resident of Pine Street, inquired if a property owner purchases a house can the property owner sub-rent. Town Manager Smith stated a house is defined based on the size and how many rooms and sub-renting is not allowed. She advised she and Director of Code Enforcement West are aware of the issue of sub-renting and they're working with the town attorney. Director of Code Enforcement West stated there can be no more than 4 un-related individuals within a home and they can't legally ask someone if they're related due to federal law.

With there being no further business, Councilwoman Martin made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 7-0.

Regular Session Adjourned at 7:57 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