

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

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers on Monday, August 21, 2023, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Council Members Carlos Oliveras, 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. It was noted that Councilwoman Robin Fisher-Cornish was absent.

Mayor Shwed opened the first public hearing at 7:00 p.m. pertaining the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Application (USDA). Mayor Shwed stated the town will file an application with the USDA for financial assistance to purchase surveillance cameras at various locations. A public hearing for comments will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 21, 2023, at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers, 201 Mechanic Street, Laurel, DE 19956 to discuss the proposed project and to provide the opportunity for public comment. Mayor Shwed inquired if all the public hearings were properly advertised. Town Manager Smith stated yes. Town Manager Smith advised the town has been approved for the USDA grant contingent on the public hearing and the Mayor & Council's approval. The total amount of the grant is \$50,000 and the town received \$43,000 in a matching the grant. The grant will go towards installing three security cameras at the following locations: Market Street Square Park, Janosik Park, and Five Points. Mayor Shwed inquired if any members of the Mayor & Council or the public had any questions. Mrs. Valerie Crockett, resident of West Eighth Street, inquired if WBOC did an article pertaining the proposed cameras? Town Manager Smith advised she believes so. Town Manager Smith stated the town would look to apply for additional funding once available to secure more security cameras. With no further comment, Mayor Shwed adjourned the public hearing at 7:06 p.m.

Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Application (USDA) for the purchase of three security cameras installed at Market Street Square Park, Janosik Park, and Five Points. Councilwoman Martin seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed opened the second public hearing at 7:07 p.m. pertaining the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG). Mayor Shwed stated the town will file an application with the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) of \$11,960.00 for financial assistance to purchase a LiftMaster Model InsI24UL. A public hearing of comments will be held at 7:05 p.m. on Monday, August 21, 2023, at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers, 201 Mechanic Street, Laurel, De 19956 to discuss the proposed project and to provide the opportunity for public comment. Chief Wright stated the LiftMaster will be installed at the backside of the police departments future station with a key thumb system to operate the motorized gate. Mayor Shwed inquired if any members of the Mayor & Council or the public had any questions. Mrs. Ann Davis, resident of Pine Street, inquired when the LiftMaster will be installed. Chief Wright stated the town must go through the JAG Grant Application process first before the money is allocated. With no further comment, Mayor Shwed closed the public hearing at 7:10 p.m.

Mayor Shwed opened the Court of Appeals at 7:10 p.m. The purpose of holding the Court of Appeals is to listen to any citizen who wants to appeal the town's tax assessment for the FY 2024. Mayor Shwed stated with there being no further questions or comments he closed the public hearing. The Court of Appeals closed at 7:12 p.m.

Mayor Shwed stated Mr. Don D'Aquila is in attendance tonight to express his concerns pertaining the town's business license. Mr. D'Aquila provided Mayor & Council a handout pertaining his business license concerns for review. Mr. D'Aquila advised he is the owner of the laundromat and car wash in town. He stated the town requires you to apply for a business license, but they also are charging \$15.00 per assessment unit, which applies to his laundry equipment at the laundromat and vacuums at the car wash. Mr. D'Aquila stated he is paying over \$1,100 in business license fees. When presenting he portrayed neighboring towns and cities business license fees and procedures compared to the Town of Laurel. Mr. D'Aquila is requesting the town to re-consider the assessment per unit fee off the business license. Mayor Shwed stated he appreciates Mr. D'Aquila's business in our town. Town Manager Smith advised she will review the packet provided by Mr. D'Aquila.

The Mayor & Council Regular Session and Closed Session Minutes of July 17, 2023, were presented for review and adoption. Councilman Oliveras made a motion to accept the minutes of July 17, 2023. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

The July 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 his report should say the month of July in Septic Receiving instead of the month of June.
- Chief Wright stated he had no additions to his report. Councilman Oliveras advised UPS drivers have been taken short cuts by going down one-way roads in the opposite directions.
- Judge Ruffin stated she had no additions to her report.
- Finance Manager Introcaso stated she had no additions to her report and the month of July was very good in several line items from previous years especially in building permits.
- Town Manager Smith advised there has been a significant amount of trash around town especially at Roger C. Fisher Park. She explained the town requires a Special Event Permit to be submitted to hold outdoor gatherings in town parks. The town isn't having no issues with people who are receiving permits it's the individuals who are not applying and leaving excessive amount of trash in the park. Town Manager Smith advised she spoke with Chief

Wright and if a party doesn't have a permit the police will ask them to leave. She stated public works spends majority of Monday's cleaning up trash.

Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the July Department Head Reports as presented. Councilman Oliveras seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed advised the 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2022-5 pertaining Chapter 49 Animals, Article III Dangerous Animals will be postponed until a full quorum is in attendance.

Town Manager Smith presented the development updates:

- ***Oak Street:*** She advised a Preliminary Site Plan was submitted to P&Z on August 9, 2023 with a proposed 28 units. The next step is to hold a P&Z public hearing in September.
- ***Whaley Property & Discount Land Road:*** She advised she has spoken with the developers of each property and Del-DOT is requiring them to install a connection service road from Georgetown Road to Discount Land Road. She advised she is proposing to draft a letter to Del-DOT re-consider this proposal as this recommendation was never brought up doing the PLUS Process.

President of Council Calio made a motion to allow Town Manager Smith to draft a letter to Del-DOT to reconsider the installation of a connection service road from Georgetown Road to Discount Land Road. Councilwoman Martin seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the FY 21, 22, 23, & 24 Funded Projects Update. Town Manager Smith explained the projects listed are projects that have started and that have been completed. She noted all these projects have been funded without any town involvement. She stated the town has secured closed to 11 million dollars with the help of the state and our local representatives.

Councilman Oliveras congratulated the police department for their hard work.

Mayor Shwed stated he is seeing homes being remodeled and making our town a better community. He complimented the police department for their hard work.

Mrs. Ann Davis, resident of Pine Street, stated there was a committee in previous years about installing an access road on Rt.13 and the town voted it down. Town Manager Smith advised she will review the Del-DOT file.

Mrs. Davis, resident of Pine Street, inquired if the Department Head Reports are available for the public? Town Manager Smith stated yes.

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A resident inquired when the Department Head Reports are made available for the public. Town Manager Smith stated their available the day of the meeting.

Mr. Don D'Aquila, inquired about the possibility of re-paving the one-way street near his property that connects to Rt.13. Town Manager Smith stated it's Daniel Street and it's on the Re-Paving Priority List.

Councilman Kellam made a motion to hold a closed session to discuss personnel and contractual matters. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Regular Session Recessed at 7:51 p.m.

Regular Session Reconvened at 8:35 p.m.

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

Regular Session Adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Mayor

President of Council

Town Manager

Recording Secretary