

The Town of Laurel  
Mayor & Council Meeting  
September 20, 2021

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held in the Mayor & Council Chambers at the Laurel Town Hall, on September 20, 2021, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Council Members Randy Lee, Cheryl Martin via Teleconference, 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 Public Meeting Notice at 7:00 p.m. Town Manager Smith stated the Town of Laurel is filing an application with the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development for financial assistance to purchase a police vehicle. The grant is a match required grant with the town's match portion being covered by town funds. The town funds are funds made available through the insurance company from a police vehicle that was involved in a motor vehicle accident and totaled as a result of the accident. Mr. Sikora, resident of 4<sup>th</sup> Street, inquired the background of the vehicle accident. Chief Wright stated the town's K-9 officer responded North of Bridgeville to assist when a vehicle crashed into him. Mayor Shwed stated with there being no further questions or comments he was going to close the public hearing. The Public Meeting Notice closed at 7:05 p.m.

The Mayor & Council Regular and Closed Session Minutes of August 16, 2021 were presented for review and adoption. Councilwoman Martin made a motion to accept the regular and closed session minutes of August 16, 2021. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

The August 2021 Department Head Reports were presented for review.

- Director of Code Enforcement West stated he reached out to the owner of Britt's Dutch Inn by mail and by phone for issuing a demolition for final structure with a deadline date of Thursday, September 30, 2021.
- Public Works Director Foskey stated the North Water Tower will be out of service for 6 weeks for internal and external cleaning.
- Chief Wright stated he had no additions or changes.
- Finance Manager Mary Introcaso stated she had no additions or changes.
- Judge Ruffin advised the court is functioning well and we're scanning cases to Court of Common Pleas to save postage. Judge Ruffin stated she's reviewing capias to help allow the town to recover money. Judge Ruffin requested if the court could receive a video phone. Town Manager Smith explained the Court Security Fund can help with the purchase of a video phone.

- Town Manager Smith stated last Friday, September 17, 2021 the groundwork at Tidewater Park began and construction of the playground will begin in the next week or so.

Councilman Lee made a motion to accept the August 2021 Department Head Reports. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the Chicken Ordinance Update Discussion. Town Manager Smith advised Ms. Cheri Clark, resident of East Sixth Street, requested an amendment to the town's ordinance for the allowance of backyard chickens. Town Manager Smith stated Mayor & Council tabled the discussion last month, with Mayor & Council requesting that Town Manager Smith reach out to other municipalities regarding their backyard chicken ordinance. Town Manager Smith advised the Town of Millsboro, the City of Seaford, and the Town of Georgetown do not allow chickens, but the City of Dover does allow backyard chickens. Town Manager Smith advised President of Council Calio requested a typed ordinance for review and discussion that mimics the City of Dover and City of Salisbury's ordinance. Town Manager Smith advised if someone violates the ordinance the costs would be sent to the homeowner for the violation. Councilman Kellam inquired if the property is a rental. Town Manager Smith stated the request for backyard chickens and the violation letter will be the responsible of the homeowner. Mayor Shwed stated he doesn't see any value by amending this ordinance to our community. Mayor Shwed stated no, to the proposed amendment. Councilwoman Martin stated we are trying to attract people to this town and agreed with Mayor Shwed against any amendments. Mayor & Council agreed to review the proposed draft ordinance and the decision will be made at October's Mayor & Council Meeting.

Mayor Shwed presented the Marina House Development Update. Town Manager Smith stated a request of a Mixed-Used Housing Development of 77 acres with a proposal of 410 dwellings located on the Northside of Discountland Road has been submitted by owner Mr. Lou Rammono. A public hearing was held in August 2021 and in September 2021 Planning & Zoning voted to recommend the Large Overlay Parcel District and Site Plan to Mayor & Council for approval. Town Manager Smith stated Mayor & Council will review plans at Monday's, October 18, 2021, Mayor & Council. She explained this will not be a public hearing and with Mayor & Council's approval it will then go back to Planning & Zoning for Final Site Plan approval when all state approvals are received. Town Manager Smith advised the development will be an 8-to-10-year buildout with the proposed construction a year away. Mr. Sikora, resident of 4<sup>th</sup> Street, inquired if the houses are annexed and will they have voting rights. Town Manager Smith advised the property has been annexed, which means property owners will have voting rights.

Mayor Shwed presented the Employee Assistance Program Policy. Town Manager Smith advised she's requesting Mayor & Council to adopt a formal policy pertaining any type of mental health/crisis counseling due to on-the-job related accidents. The town has followed this informal policy when an employee was subjected to an unfortunate incident. Town Manager Smith stated this policy must be adopted in order to be state accredited to receive state funding. President of Council Calio inquired if the formal policy is adopted will the policy come back to Mayor &

Council for amendments. Town Manager advised yes. Councilwoman Martin inquired the costs if the employee needs further therapy. Town Manager Smith stated the town would be liable for the expense since the incident happened on-the-job. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the Employee Assistance Program Policy. Councilwoman Martin seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Trunk or Treat Update. Town Manager Smith stated the Trunk or Treat will take place on Saturday, October 23, 2021 at the Laurel Elementary School – Bus Parking Lot from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. A portion of Evergreen Drive will be closed for trick or treaters for line-up to allow for social distancing and masks will be optionable. Town Manager Smith advised with Mayor & Council’s blessing we can move forward with the planning of the event. Councilman Lee made a motion to accept the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Trunk or Treat on Saturday, October 23, 2021 at the Laurel Elementary School – Bus Parking Lot from 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the Resolution 2021 Halloween Establishment Day. Town Manager Smith proposed Halloween to be held on Saturday, October 30, 2021 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for ages 12 and under, since Halloween falls on a Sunday this year. Councilman Holden made a motion to hold Halloween on Saturday, October 30, 2021 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for ages 12 and under. Councilwoman Martin seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented Resolution 2021-3 USDA Grant. Mayor Shwed stated a resolution for the Mayor & Council of the Town of Laurel DE agreeing to apply for financial assistance with the United States Department of Agriculture, Rural Development to finance the purchase of a police vehicle. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept Resolution 2021-3. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Town Manager Smith presented employee anniversaries to Aaron Gordon for 9 years of service and to Alexis Oliphant for 4 years of service.

Town Manager Smith advised the town attorney has drafted a nuisance ordinance and it will be reviewed at Monday’s, October 18, 2021 Mayor & Council Meeting. Town Manager Smith stated copies will be available for review and a public comment session will be held.

Town Manager Smith stated she has researched Welcome to Laurel Signs on Rt.13 per the Mayor’s Request. She advised the signs must be break away and they must be in a certain area of the median. Town Manager Smith advised she will be moving forward with the sign cost and the design. Mayor Shwed stated it’s important to have high quality design signs on both the north and south side of our community.

Town Manager Smith stated the One-Laurel's Pride & Ownership completed the Mural at Dunbar on August 28, 2021. The project was covered by the Art Council Grant and donations from businesses and neighbors. Town Manager Smith stated One-Laurel will be holding a dedication for all One-Laurel Projects this fall.

Councilman Kellam thanked all the town staff for their hard work and appreciates what they do.

Mayor Shwed congratulated One-Laurel's Pride & Ownership for the Mural at Dunbar. Mayor Shwed congratulated Ms. Layla Gainer and her Sparkle-On Project for their event that was held last weekend. Mayor Shwed encouraged One-Laurel to reach out to our Hispanic Community here in town.

Mrs. Anne Davis, resident of Pine Street, inquired about the tractor trailer cab on 4<sup>th</sup> street. Town Manager Smith stated Chief Wright has talked to the owner regarding moving the vehicle and if the vehicle isn't removed it will be towed.

Mrs. Anne Davis inquired if Perdue Ag-Recycle is expanding their operation. Town Manager Smith advised yes. Mrs. Davis inquired if the town is worried about the extra truck traffic. Town Manager Smith stated the town has reached out to Del-Dot pertaining a Truck Bypass. She explained the town must come up with a route and the town must build sufficient and stable roads. Mayor Shwed encouraged residents to reach out to the state representatives pertaining the Truck Bypass.

Mrs. Anne Davis inquired if the Planning & Zoning Meeting are open to the public. Town Manager Smith stated yes, and they are held on the second Wednesday of each month if needed.

Mrs. Jill, Cramner, resident of Airport Road, had a series of questions pertaining the town regulations and policies. Mrs. Cramner inquired if there will be a cap on funds regarding the health counseling for employees. Town Manager Smith stated no, we currently do not have a cap fund and the town will be responsible for the co-pay. Mrs. Cramner inquired if the USDA Grant is not at the cost of the town. Town Manager Smith stated yes, the town is at no cost. Mrs. Cramner inquired if she could receive the break down of expenditures regarding the budget. Town Manager Smith stated yes, by submitting a FOIA Request either at Town Hall or online. Mrs. Cramner inquired if the Delaware Avenue Bridge will be completed at the end of the month. Town Manager Smith stated it is scheduled to be completed by the end of month, but they've had delays with materials. Mrs. Cramner inquired if the town has received any concerns pertaining the new traffic patterns at Wolfe Street and Cooper Street. Town Manager Smith stated the request to reduce the speed limit and to turn Wolfe Street into a one-way street came from the residents of Wolfe Street. The town has received no concerns of the new traffic patterns of Wolfe Street and Cooper Street. Mrs. Cramner inquired about the 2022 Tax Assessment. Town Manager Smith stated the town currently uses the Sussex County Tax Assessment. Mrs. Cramner inquired about the Bargain Bills, Delaware Storage Shed Site Plan. Town Manager Smith stated they're waiting to receive all state

approvals for Final Site Plan Approval. Mrs. Kramer inquired how many officers does the police department currently have. Chief Wright stated we have 19 officers with one part-time Court Liaison Officer. Mrs. Cramner inquired about the skate park project. Mayor Shwed stated we are looking at potential site at North Laurel Academy and we're working on re-negotiating with the Laurel School District.

Mrs. Leslie Carter, Discountland Road, inquired if the Monday's, October 18, 2021 Mayor & Council is a public hearing. Town Manager Smith stated no, it will not be a public hearing but a presentation by the developer.

Mrs. Cheri Clark, inquired about the draft chicken ordinance submitted to Mayor & Council. Town Manager Smith explained the draft ordinance mimics the City of Salisbury and the City of Dover for Mayor & Council's review. Town Manager Smith stated the Town of Millsboro, the City of Seaford, and the Town of Georgetown doesn't allow chickens.

Councilman Kellam made a motion to hold a closed session to discuss personnel matters. President of Council Calio seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Regular Session Recessed at 8:11

Regular Session Reconvened at 8:49 p.m.

President of Council Calio made a motion to move forward with the appointment of Taylor Oliphant as Alderman to be appointed by the Governor. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:50 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

