

April 20, 2020 Town Council Meeting (held by Zoom Video Conferencing)

- Acknowledged that the Mayor and Council held a test meeting for the Zoom Video Conferencing System on April 14, 2020, 3:00 pm.
- Approved the Town Meeting Minutes of March 9, 2020.
- The Council concurred to hold the Town Election on Monday, June 1, 2020 as scheduled; however, there will be no vote-in-person option. Either an absentee ballot or vote-by-mail alternative will be reviewed with the Town Attorney and discussed further at the May 11, 2020 Town Council Meeting.
- Adopted Ordinance No. O-01-2020 – An Ordinance of the Mayor and Town Council Amending Chapter VI, Article I, “Signs and Solicitors”, Sections 6-101, “Signs”; 6-102, “Town Sign Permit Required”; 6-103, “Signs in the Public Right-of-Way”; 6-104, “Signs on Private Property – CRT, CRN, and Industrial Zones”; and 6-106, “Enforcement and Penalties”, to identify the types of signs that are authorized and are required to be permitted, expand the prohibition on pole signs, to regulate limited duration signs on private property, to clarify that all illuminated signs are regulated in the same manner, and to make conforming changes. The Ordinance will take effect on May 11, 2020.
- Held a Public Hearing on Ordinance No. O-02-2020 - An Ordinance to appropriate and adopt the Fiscal Year 2020-21 (FY21) Budget and to levy a tax on certain real and personal property. The Public Record will remain open until 4:00 pm on Friday May 8, 2020.
- The Town continues to monitor the current financial situation and will take discretion with any expenditures within the current fiscal year (FY20) and for FY21.
- Introduced Ordinance No. O-03-2020 - An Ordinance to amend Chapter II, “Government and Administration”, Article 2, “Elections”, Section 2-202, “Distribution of Absentee Ballots”, Section 2-203, “Procedures of Absentee Ballots”, and Section 2-204, “canvassing of Absentee Ballots” of the Town Code to delete any requirement that a voter provide a reason for voting by absentee ballot. The Public Hearing will be held on Monday, May 11, 2020, 7:00 pm.
- Adopted Resolution No. R-04-2020 – A Resolution confirming appointments made by the Mayor to the Development Review Board.
- Adopted Resolution No. R-05-2020 – A Resolution authorizing the Town Manager to contract for the installation of an additional speed hump along the 3700 block of Farragut Avenue.
- Adopted Resolution No. R-06-2020 – A Resolution authorizing the Town Manager to change the existing One-Way Traffic (east to west) restriction along the 3500 and 3600 block of Decatur Avenue to Two-Way Traffic.

Town Meeting April 20, 2020, 7:07 pm by Zoom Video Conferencing

Mayor Furman, Council Members Bartram, Crimmins, Hill-Zayat, and Rollins; Town Manager Hoffman; and Clerk-Treasurer Engels were present by Zoom Video Conferencing. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, and a moment of silence was observed in honor of Alfred “Al” Veerhoff following his passing.

The Town Meeting Minutes from March 9, 2020 were reviewed and approved. See Council Actions.

From the Mayor and Council

Mayor Furman announced that the Council hosted a test Zoom Video Conferencing meeting on April 14, 2020, 3:00 pm, to review the Zoom application.

Town Election

The Council discussed options for the Town Election and concurred to keep the Election scheduled for Monday, June 1, 2020; however, there will be no in-person voting, as ballots will be cast either by absentee or a vote-by-mail method.

Mayor Furman asked that Council Members Bartram and Crimmins work with Town Attorney Ferguson and staff to review voting options and provide a report at the May 11, 2020 Council meeting.

Development Review Board

Council Member Crimmins provided an update on the proposed Residences at Knowles Station – Phase I (4000 Knowles Avenue), which will feature six townhomes at the intersection of Knowles and Summit Avenues.

Council Member Crimmins noted that the DRB met with the developer, Woodside Ventures, to review changes following recommendations from County Planning, which included reducing the storm water biofiltration, increasing the angle of the development project to provide additional pedestrian safety and reduce traffic speeds. The DRB also discussed with the developer using high quality materials on all four sides of the homes; retaining the existing street trees along Knowles Avenue; adding additional trees and vegetation; installing a sidewalk connection on the southside of Kaiser Place and the east side of Summit Avenue; and a plaza at the intersection of Knowles and Summit Avenues to create a welcoming entrance into the Town.

The concern on vehicles protruding from the driveways and obstructing the street was discussed with County Planning and was determined that the project was shifted southward to allow for more greenspace. It was determined that vehicles could parallel park along Kaiser Place instead of protruding from the driveway.

The project is still under review by County Planning.

Local Advisory Panel (LAP)

Council Member Crimmins provided a historical background of the Local Advisory Panel, which includes Town Residents to review Historic Area Work Permits (HAWP) to ensure they meet certain guidelines. Council Member Crimmins, along with Mayor Furman and Council Member Hill-Zayat met with Helen Wilkes, LAP Chair, to discuss how the Town could support the LAP administratively.

Council Member Hill-Zayat noted that the LAP is a unique body and the Town's involvement should have no control or input on decisions, and only provide the administrative structure.

Councilmember Rollins suggested providing information through the Town's website for historic property owners; and an administrative role was not necessary, as the LAP is an independent resident-based group reviewing applications.

Mayor Furman and Council Member Crimmins stated that the administrative help for the LAP would provide organization and transparency, along with access to the Town's website for information.

Helen Wilkes supported the Town's administrative support to the LAP.

Traffic Committee

Council Member Bartram reported that the Traffic Committee received a petition from the 3700 block of Farragut Avenue requesting the installation of a second speed hump. Although a recent study of speeds along the block indicated that the average speed had decreased from 18 mph to 15 mph since the installation of the pork chop at University Boulevard, the petition was received with overwhelming support from the block. See Resolution No. R-04-2020.

Council Member Rollins supported the speed hump petition but questioned the logistics of two speed humps in one block.

Council Member Bartram reported that the Traffic Committee received a petition from the 3500 and 3600 blocks of Decatur Avenue requesting that the existing 'One Way Traffic' designation be changed to 'Two Way Traffic' between St. Paul Street and University Boulevard. Although the street is currently designated one-way traffic, residents along the street regularly traverse in both directions, and the restriction is not actively enforced. See Resolution No. R-05-2020.

Council Member Bartram discussed the Traffic Committee's recommendation to purchase an Evolis Radar Speed Sign, \$3,440, to replace the Town's speed trailer, which is no longer operable. The Evolis sign is a smaller solar run device that may be installed on a utility pole and provide live speed information to motorists. See Council Actions.

Council Member Rollins noted that he did not support the purchase of the Evolis Speed Sign, as it did not keep with the charm of the Town.

Joe Campbell questioned the measures in place to maintain the new speed device and how it will be deployed; and stated that flashing the current speed of motorists may not be effective to control speed.

Council Member Bartram stated that the Speed Sign can be deployed by the staff in conjunction with traffic concerns; the sign also includes messaging that can be turned off or programmed with other features; and that the device could prove useful along Howard Avenue to help slow traffic.

Pete Fosselman stated that both the County and State have projected large debt due to COVID-19, which will also affect the Town's revenue and suggested that the speed device could be approved but not purchased at this time due to fiscal uncertainty.

Town Manager Hoffman stated that due to undergrounding the utilities at the Modena by Solera Senior Living project, Metropolitan Avenue will be closed over the next six to twelve weeks. St. Paul Street will be used as a Detour during the closing of Metropolitan Avenue.

Council Member Rollins questioned the abrupt ending of the sidewalk on the west end of the project and whether a temporary crosswalk could be installed.

Council Member Rollins stated that Mic's Moving continues to park their vehicles on the greenspace and questioned options available to the Town and requested the status of recycling bins for Howard Avenue.

Mayor Furman suggested that Council Member Rollins review the Code for areas that could be amended and discussed at a future work session.

Council Member Crimmins thanked Tim Stelzig, Kariann Zentz, and Town Manager Hoffman for compiling information for local businesses regarding COVID-19 related grants.

Mayor Furman thanked Council Members Bartram and Crimmins for joining her at the Farmers Market each weekend to help ensure social distancing measures were taking place.

Public Appearances

Jack Gaffey noted that he appreciated the meeting format and two upcoming meteor showers.

Gloria Capron noted that she appreciated the meeting format as well.

Ordinances, Resolutions, Regulations

Ordinance No. O-01-2020 – an Ordinance of the Mayor and Town Council Amending Chapter VI, Article I, "Signs and Solicitors", Sections 6-101, "Signs"; 6-102, "Town Sign Permit Required"; 6-103, "Signs in the Public Right-of-Way"; 6-104, "Signs on Private Property – CRT, CRN, and Industrial Zones"; and 6-106, "Enforcement and Penalties", to identify the types of signs that are authorized and are required to be permitted, expand the prohibition on pole signs, to regulate limited duration signs on private property, to clarify that all illuminated signs are regulated in the same manner, and to make conforming changes was presented for adoption. See Council Actions.

Mayor Furman stated that the Town received a number of comments following the closing of the comment period with regards to limiting banners to 30 days instead of 60 days.

The Council concurred to accept the comments for the public record.

The ordinance will regulate limited-duration signs and allow for the removal of perpetual ‘for lease’ signs by limiting the size, location, and material of limited-duration signs.

Council Member Rollins stated that he did not support 60 days for limited-duration signs and suggested two 30-day periods initially, which could be extended further.

Ordinance No. O-02-2020– A Public Hearing was held on Ordinance No. O-02-2020 to appropriate and adopt the Fiscal Year 2020-21 (FY21) Budget and to levy a tax on certain real and personal property. The record will remain open until Friday, May 8, 2020, 7:00 pm. See Council Actions.

Town Manager Hoffman noted that the FY21 Budget was presented prior to the current COVID-19 pandemic and that the Budget had proposed a 4.9 percent increase in revenues and a 5.0 percent increase in expenses. This included a 4.0 percent merit and cola increase to Town staff, along with increasing the Marketing and Communication Specialist’s position from 20 hours per week to 24 hours per week; increasing Police coverage from 24 hours per week to 27 hours per week; and funding an Assistant to the Town Manager position; along with funding a part-time administration position (10 hours per week) to help with social media. However, Town Manager Hoffman stated that due to the current financial uncertainty from COVID-19, the Town will not be issuing any merit or cola increases, nor will the position of Assistant to the Town Manager, or the part-time administrative position be filled until there is greater clarity on the financial impact COVID-19 will have on future Town revenues.

The FY21 Budget does not propose a property tax increase and the tax rates will remain the same from FY20.

Town Manager Hoffman also noted that the FY21 Budget made a number of changes to help categorize certain expenditures. Specifically, this included creating three subcategories within Economic Development consisting of community grants, marketing campaigns, and community art. Spending for Economic Development is directly related to revenues generated through the personal property tax (business tax). In addition, the FY21 Budget increased anticipated legal fees due to possible development issues, and recategorized the Building Inspector and Actualize Studio (website maintenance) into professional services.

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) also reallocated funds between categories to include proposed capital expenditures that have not been categorized previously.

Council Member Crimmins advocated to keep the increased hours for the Marketing and Communication Specialist’s position, which provided direct support to community businesses, and asked that the Town prioritize resurfacing the walking track at St. Paul Park.

Jon Gerson asked about the projected increase in property tax revenue and the proposed decrease in income tax revenue and also asked about the new category of landscape vegetation management.

Town Manager Hoffman stated the real property tax revenue is taken from the State’s assessment projection for the constant yield, which now includes the newly annexed area; the income tax

revenue was projected prior to the current situation; however, the determination to increase income tax was based on an evaluation of the previous five years. Also, landscaping has been recategorized between vegetation management and street tree maintenance to better track expenses.

Pete Fosselman noted the importance of saving now and not spending money on non-essential things due the current situation.

Joseph Campbell requested clarification on the projected increase in salaries; stated it would prudent to revise the budget to reflect not hiring a replacement and other spending; and reiterated the need for the Town to provide the salaries of five highest paid employees.

Town Manager Hoffman and Mayor Furman noted that the FY21 Budget was presented prior to the current situation and that he was hesitant to make any revisions before the Mayor and Council, along with the public, had an opportunity to provide feedback. In addition, the tax rates must be submitted to the County by May 15th, which did not provide enough time to revise the entire Budget and hold a second public hearing.

Council Member Crimmins stated that he agreed with the Mayor and Town Manager Hoffman to defer hiring the Assistant to the Town Manager and the part-time social media positions, and that the Town will be holding the line on non-essential expenses.

Ordinance No. O-03-2020 - An Ordinance to amend Chapter II, “Government and Administration”, Article 2, “Elections”, Section 2-202, “Distribution of Absentee Ballots”, Section 2-203, “Procedures of Absentee Ballots”, and Section 2-204, “canvassing of Absentee Ballots” of the Town Code to delete any requirement that a voter provide a reason for voting by absentee ballot was introduced. The Public Hearing will be held on Monday, May 11, 2020, 7:00 pm. See Council Actions.

Town Manager Hoffman stated that he was advised by Delegate Carr that the State Legislature passed a regulation in 2018 that prevented Maryland localities from requiring a stated reason prior to obtaining an absentee ballot. The Town’s ‘Oath’ requirement within our Code violates this regulation and Ordinance No. O-03-2020 proposes to amend the Town Code to bring our regulations into compliance.

Council Member Crimmins stated that part of the Oath statement confirms that you are eligible to vote and may need to be kept.

Resolution No. R-04-2020 – A Resolution confirming appointments made by the Mayor to the Development Review Board. Martha Deale, Mike Henehan, and T. J. Monahan were reappointed for a two-year term expiring April 30, 2022. See Council Actions. There were no public comments.

Resolution No. R-05-2020 - A Resolution authorizing the Town Manager to contract for the installation of an additional speed hump along the 3700 block of Farragut Avenue. See Council Actions. There were no public comments.

Resolutions No. R-06-2020 – A Resolution authorizing the Town Manager to change the existing One-Way Traffic (east to west) restriction along the 3500 and 3600 block of Decatur Avenue to Two-Way Traffic. See Council Actions. There were no public comments.

Council Actions

Council Member Crimmins moved to approve the Town Meeting Minutes from March 9, 2020. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Bartram moved to purchase the ELOVIS Radar Speed Sign device. Council Member Crimmins seconded the motion. Council Member Rollins and Hill-Zayat opposed the motion. The Mayor voted to defer purchasing it pending further analysis of finances.

Council Member Crimmins moved to adopt Ordinance No. O-01-2020 - an Ordinance of the Mayor and Town Council Amending Chapter VI, Article I, “Signs and Solicitors”, Sections 6-101, “Signs”; 6-102, “Town Sign Permit Required”; 6-103, “Signs in the Public Right-of-Way”; 6-104, “Signs on Private Property – CRT, CRN, and Industrial Zones”; and 6-106, “Enforcement and Penalties”, to identify the types of signs that are authorized and are required to be permitted, expand the prohibition on pole signs, to regulate limited duration signs on private property, to clarify that all illuminated signs are regulated in the same manner, and to make conforming changes. The motion passed 3 to 1. Council Member Rollins opposed the motion.

Council Member Hill-Zayat moved to close the Public Hearing on Ordinance No. O-02-2020 - an Ordinance to appropriate and adopt the Fiscal Year 2020-21 (FY21) Budget and to levy a tax on certain real and personal property and leave the record open until Friday, May 8th at 4 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Bartram moved to Introduce Ordinance No. O-03-2020 - An Ordinance to amend Chapter II, “Government and Administration”, Article 2, “Elections”, Section 2-202, “Distribution of Absentee Ballots”, Section 2-203, “Procedures of Absentee Ballots”, and Section 2-204, “canvassing of Absentee Ballots” of the Town Code to delete any requirement that a voter provide a reason for voting by absentee ballot and set the Public Hearing for Monday, May 11th at 7 pm. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Rollins moved to adopt Resolution No. R-04-2020 – A Resolution confirming appointments made by the Mayor to the Development Review Board of Martha Deale, Mike Henehan, and TJ Monahan for a two-year term. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Bartram moved to adopt Resolution No. R-05-2020 - A Resolution authorizing the Town Manager to contract for the installation of an additional speed hump along the 3700 block of Farragut Avenue. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Crimmins moved to adopt Resolution No. R-06-2020 – A Resolution authorizing the Town Manager to change the existing One-Way Traffic (east to west) restriction along the 3500 and 3600 block of Decatur Avenue to Two-Way Traffic. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Crimmins moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 pm. The motion passed unanimously.