



TOWN OF COLMAR MANOR

A Port Towns Community
3701 Lawrence Street
Colmar Manor, Maryland 20722

Town Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2022, 7 PM
Meeting ID: 826 7950 6698 Passcode: 3611

Call to Order

Motion to open the Colmar Manor Mayor & Town Council meeting at 7:00 pm. 3-0, Councilmember Mendoza absent.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve November 15, 2022, Colmar Manor agenda introduced by Councilmember Bowles and seconded by Councilmember Harding. All in Favor. 3-0. No Discussion. Motion Passed.

Swearing In and Introduction of New Staff

Mayor Casanas noted that Crisitan Ortiz left town employment and introduced new staff members Ylynne Brown, Thalia Merida, and Officer Roderick Brown. Mayor Casanas swore in Officer Brown.

Events

Coffee Ceremony: Mayor Casanas introduced town residents who hosted an Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony for the Town Meeting.

Paul Bogle Commemoration: Councilmember Harding described the candlelight vigil at the Lariscy lot.

Halloween: Mayor thanked volunteers for the Halloween event.

Free Store: Ms. Vivian and the rec council held a free store in memory of Ms. Renee.

Peace Cross Re-Dedication: Mayor and Mr. Holcomb attended re-dedication on November 11th. The Mayor thanked veterans of the community for their service.

Youth Council: The Mayor and Councilmember Harding hosted a “pizza summit” to engage youth from the community and to start a youth council.

Announcements

New Covenant Church: Celebrated its 40th Anniversary, Mayor attended their gala.

Thanksgiving Meals: The Town has partnered with Schebach Ministries to distribute Thanksgiving meal boxes.

Town Holiday Party: The Holiday party and toy giveaway was scheduled for December 10th. Mayor asked residents to donate toys.

Zumba: Zumba is available free of charge to residents on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays.

Resident/Public Comments

- Keith Brooks, expressed concerns over the passage of R-01-2023. Introduced a petition regarding the expansion of voting to non-citizen residents.

- Deborah Williams, expressed concerns over potential interference by the mayor in the petition drive. She thinks the town needs to review the Town Charter and that it needs updating. She further questioned why the town has not appointed an Ethics Committee.
- Julianne Bethea believes that input from the town residents should be sought in determining the expansion of voting to non-citizens. Ms. Bethea also expressed ethics issues and provided a handout of text messages from the mayor.
- Kurt Plumpke, noted he did not know about the petition but would have signed it. His main concern was over cats.
- Mayor Casanas responded to the residents' concerns. She noted that residents she knew who signed the petition were confused about what they were signing. She stated that she did not force people to remove their names, but asked them. She thanked the residents for gathering the petitions. She scheduled a special meeting on November 29, 2022.
- Ms. Dixon stated that it was unfortunate that we are where we are at. She stated that there should have been more communication. She further stated that the petition signers were only registered voters and have some proficiency in English as part of their citizenship test.
- Councilmember Bowles explained his abstention. He stated that he voted that way because he believed the residents should have the right to vote on the issue. He further stated that he believed the Charter should require a super-majority vote on Charter Amendment Resolutions.
- Unknown resident on Zoom, agreed with we need to come together, but there is a lack of communication and causing confusion.

Community/Committee Reports

Green Team: Councilmember Hobbs presented the report, the Green Team will discuss their three-year plan and potentially changing their name at their next meeting

Recreation Committee: Mayor Casanas provided a short report. Thanked volunteers for assisting in the many events the town has, and asked for volunteers.

Garden Club: The garden club will not have a November meeting.

Neighborhood Watch: No report.

Hispanic Outreach Committee: No report.

Foundation of Greatness: No report.

Mayor's Report

Discussed the anti-Semitic graffiti in Montgomery County and stated her opposition to this. She further stated that she is receiving calls regarding dogs running loose. She then noted that she will be plotting specific issues for discussion at an upcoming meeting. Mayor Casanas also noted that parking and speeding are an issue in the community and the town is working on solutions and will be discussing this at upcoming meetings

Mayor Casanas thanked Delegate Fennell for her Thanksgiving Food distribution in North Brentwood.

Council Reports

Councilmember Harding: Expressed that he hopes the town can lead with love and work through their issues.

Councilmember Hobbs: Concurred with Councilmember Harding and stated that there is a lot of polarization and problems in the world. She further expressed concerns regarding cats and stated she would look into catch and release spay and neutering programs.

Councilmember Bowles: Wished everyone a happy holiday.

Councilmember Mendoza: Absent

Staff Reports

Treasurer Dan Baden: Reported on the monthly treasurer's report.

Councilmember Harding moved to accept the treasurer's report, and Councilmember Hobbs seconded. Passed 4-0.

Mr. Baden stated he received a petition regarding R-01-2023 through email and regular mail. He turned over the documents to the Town Administrator for review and processing.

Chief Tracy Stone: Presented the October public safety report. Noted there were 130 calls for service, which is attributed to the increased in traffic stops. Stated he participated in the Comptroller's 10-mile bike ride. In addition, a code enforcement report was included as well, one major issue was an abated nuisance at a vacant residence.

Town Administrator Greg Holcomb: Stated that Attorney Kevin Best was retained to assist in the RedSpeed Contract per the approval at the November Work Session. Mr. Holcomb further stated that the ARPA grant programs for resident assistance and non-profits are ready for review. He noted he met with ArtWorks Now regarding potential partnerships, and met with a couple of groups regarding plans to restore the Port Town's Youth Mural. He stated he has written a document retention policy but is tabled until a new town attorney can review it. Mr. Holcomb further stated he is reviewing technical assistance and flood mitigation grants for the town. Noted he attend the LGIT conference for public documents training and is attending the Governor's annual grant conference next week. Mr. Holcomb discussed the Adtek's work on the permeable pavement project at 43rd and Newark. He noted that the topographic survey was complete and they were awaiting drawings. Mr. Holcomb also stated that the traffic study RFP has received a couple proposals and we are awaiting one more and will have them for the council at the December Work Session. Finally, he updated the council that we are awaiting the new town attorney to finalize the ethic ordinance.

Resident/Public Comments

-Natalie, 43rd Block of Monroe St., stated concerns about speeding on streets and the incident with the dog and expressed concerns about street lighting. She also expressed issues with parking within the town as well.

-Keith Brooks, expressed concern with trash piling on top of dumpsters in the shopping center. He also asked about the expenses related to ARPA.

-Walicia Lee, asked about the voter list and stated the town's were incorrect and how were those lists used in making decisions.

- Mr. Holcomb clarified that the town does not control the voter list, that the county controls the list, and he explained how there could be changes in the list over a period of time.

Appearances

ARPA Analysis and update: Mr. Holcomb discussed the ARPA projects that have not been started. He noted that the sidewalk and street repairs project are beginning with a survey of the streets and sidewalks is underway. He added that there are a couple of lines that are far outside of the budgeted amounts and should be reconsidered.

Mr. Holcomb then stated that there were some savings from previous ARPA lines that could be reallocated.

Resident Assistant Program was presented for mortgage, rent, and utility assistance of up to \$1,000. A past-due bill would need to be presented with the application and meet income requirements.

The Council discussed giving priority to delinquency and the current income guidelines set with a deadline of January 31st. Then the program would open to others in the community.

Councilmember Harding moves to pass the program with amendments of setting a January 31st deadline to open the program up to others outside of the income and delinquency guidelines.

Non-Profit Grant Program stated that there was \$45,000 and we would offer nine \$5,000 grants. He went over the program specifics and whom we would reach out to ask for participation. Mr. Holcomb noted that the Town Administrator is the reviewer of the grants. The Council asked for the Town Administrator to review applications and present the choices to the Council with a January 31st, 2023 deadline.

Councilmember Bowles moved to pass a non-profit grant program with a deadline of January 31st and amending the final sentence to state the program has to service residents of Colmar Manor.

Town Hall Improvements, Mr. Holcomb presented a plan for Town Hall improvement. This included flooring upgrades and a CRM software program to keep track of residents' concerns, parking permits, and other uses. The full request was \$46,000. He stated that there is \$7,000 budgeted in furniture, and recommends reducing existing ARPA lines: sidewalk and street repairs by \$5,000, stormwater management by \$5,000, community programs by \$2,500, and removing the HVAC filters line of \$7,200. He stated that this was \$19,700, the rest of the funds would come from savings of \$3,000 premium pay, \$1,700 from the code enforcement software, and \$3,000 originally allocated to the Brentwood Fire Department, totaling \$42,509. Mr. Holcomb stated that his original request can be reduced to \$42,509.

Mr. Baden stated there needed to be a budget transfer and then the council could move for approval of the items once allocated appropriately.

Mr. Holcomb stated the motion would be to reallocate funds as summarized by the Town Administrator, \$3,000 premium pay, \$1,730 from code software, \$5,000 from the sidewalk and street repairs, \$5,000 stormwater management, \$3,000 unencumbered from the original Brentwood Fire Department donation, \$8,070 street lights, \$2,500 community programs, and \$7,200 HVAC filters, to Townhall Furniture in the amount of \$28,000, CRM Software in the amount of \$5,000 and flooring in the amount of \$6,000. The reallocation amount is \$35,500 plus the original \$7,000 furniture line is \$42,500.

There was a discussion regarding street lighting, what was approved, and where else additional funds could come from to add more streetlights.

Councilmember Harding made a motion as suggested by the Town Administrator to reallocate \$3,000 premium pay, \$1,730 from code software, \$5,000 from the sidewalk and street repairs, \$5,000 stormwater management, \$3,000 unencumbered from the original Brentwood Fire Department donation, \$8,070 street lights, \$2,500 community programs, and \$7,200 HVAC filters, to Townhall Furniture in the amount of \$28,000, CRM Software in the amount of \$5,000 and flooring in the amount of \$6,000, totaling \$35,500. Councilmember Bowles seconded the motion. 4-0 passed.

Councilmember Hobbs moved to approve the furniture, and Councilmember Harding seconded the motion. 4-0 passed. Councilmember Hobbs amended her motion to purchase furniture, software, and flooring seconded by Councilmember Harding. 4-0 passed.

Retreat, the council discussed the various proposals received for a retreat. The Council discussed qualifications, costs, and desired outcomes.

Councilmember Harding moved to accept the Raftelis RFP, seconded by Councilmember Bowles.

Councilmember Bowles moved to transfer \$5,500 from the unreserved funds to a new line item called Council Retreat, Councilmember Hobbs seconds, 4-0 passed.

Holiday Closure, the Council discussed closing down Town Hall for additional days outside of the normal holiday.

Councilmember Harding moved to allow additional time off for December 27 through December 30th, 2022. Councilmember Hobbs seconded the motion. 4-0 passed.

Events: Mayor reminded the community about the Holiday event on December 10th and she proposed celebrating New Years' Eve at Town Hall.

Councilmember Harding moved to approve the New Year's Party, seconded by Councilmember Bowles. 4-0, passed.

ESOL Classes: Mayor discussed partnering with Cottage City for ESOL classes. Mr. Baden stated if the Council is in consensus regarding the programming, we could utilize the translation funding allocated in ARPA. 4-0, voted in consensus.

RFP for Legal Services, Mr. Holcomb explained that Mr. Barr was injured and we needed new legal representation. Mr. Holcomb presented the RFP and noted he would reach out to the attorneys recommended by Mr. Barr. Councilmember Bowles moved to approve the RFP, and Councilmember Harding seconded.

Cottage City Black History Month, Mayor Casanas discussed Cottage City's efforts to bring an actress in to do a Harriet Tubman reenactment. Our cost would be \$700.

Mr. Harding expressed concerns about doing another reenactment, but we should provide more education and remembrance. The council tabled the discussion for the next work session.

The cable Franchise Agreement was explained by Mr. Baden. Noted the new agreement would be for 10 years, provide various services, and provide the town franchise fees.

Councilmember Harding to introduce Ordinance O-03-2023 Cable Franchise Agreement, Councilmember Bowles seconded. 4-0 passed.

Councilmember Bowles moved to enter a closed session regarding a personnel matter and will not return to regular session. 4-0 passed.

Submitted by Greg Holcomb