

Town of Somerset
4510 Cumberland Avenue
Chevu Chase, MD 20815

Minutes for Council Meeting held on May 4, 2020.

Council members present: Marnie Shaul; Barbara Zeughouser; Steve Surko; Franny Peale; Morris Panner; **Mayor:** Jeffrey Slavin; **Town Manager:** Matthew Trollinger; **Town Administrative Assistant:** Linda Williams; **Town Attorney:** Ron Bolt; **Town Arborist:** Dr. Tolbert Feather; **Residents and other attendees:** Julie Greenberg (Falstone Ave.); Jack Frink (Cumberland Ave.); Jeff Mascott (Surrey St.); Robin Barr (Essex Ave.); Kumar Vaswani (Trent St.); Lucy Freeman (Falstone Ave.); Patty Friedman (Grantham Ave.); Phil Young (Greystone St.); Jon Medalia (Surrey St.); Barbara Marenus (Surrey St.); Paige Whitley (Cumberland Ave.)

(NOTE: The recording began at approximately 6:56 p.m.)

7:15 p.m. Council Work Session

The Council discussed the Parks and Natural Resources Committee's proposal to require a replacement plan for all trees that are removed in Somerset. The Council deferred discussion on a welcome letter to the scheduled Mayor's Report. Council member Shaul updated the Council on a proposal for a storage facility on River Road, and Westbard developments.

7:32 p.m. Public Comments

Jack Frink (Cumberland Ave.) requested the Council consider putting LED streetlight funding back into the budget.

7:36 p.m. Motion: To approve minutes from regular Town Council meeting held on March 2, 2020; and motion to approve minutes from special Town Council meeting held on April 15, 2020.

Council member Shaul motioned to approve; Council member Surko seconded; all in favor.

7:37 p.m. Public Hearing/Motion: To approve the following spring tree planting list, as recommended by the Town Arborist and reviewed by the Town's Parks and Natural Resources Committee:

1. 4509 Cumberland Ave, Yellowwood, 2 – 2.5” cal.
2. 4513 Cumberland Ave., Red Oak, 2 – 2.5” cal.
3. 4608 Dorset Ave, White Oak, 6 – 7’ ht.
4. 4709 Dorset Ave., Black Gum, 2 – 2.5” cal.
5. 4910 Essex Ave., Red Oak, 2 – 2.5” cal.
6. 4800 Falstone Ave., Yoshino Cherry, 2 – 2.5” cal.
7. 4906 Falstone Ave., Blackgum, 2 – 2.5” cal.
8. 4707 Trent Ct., American Beech, 2 – 2.5” cal.
9. 4715 Trent Ct., American Beech, 2 – 2.5” cal.

10. 5501 Trent St., October Glory Maple, 2 -2.5" cal.

11. 5511 Trent St., Yoshino Cherry, 2 – 2.5" cal.

Tree #10 was removed from consideration on the request of the resident at that address out of concern for the underground infrastructure. Town Arborist Dr. Tolbert Feather recommended tree #10 be planted in the Town park instead.

Council member Zeughauser moved to approve the plantings with the changes suggested by Dr. Feather; Council member Peale seconded; all in favor.

7:41 p.m. Public Hearing/Motion: To approve the removal of the following Town trees:

1. 4710 Falstone Ave., 2" dia. Flowering Cherry. – tree is dead.

2. 4710 Falstone Ave., 3" dia. Flowering Cherry. – tree is dead.

3. 4819 Cumberland Ave., 21" dia. Sugar Maple. – tree is hollow at base and hazardous.

Council member Zeughauser moved to approve the removals; Council member Shaul seconded; all in favor.

7:43 p.m. Discussion/Motion: To review and confirm Swim Team coaching hires and payment recommendations for 2020 Summer Swim Season..

Mayor Slavin expressed his support for the request from the Swim Team Committee. Swim Team Committee Chair Jeff Mascott introduced the proposal, asking that the Council approve payment to the Head Coach and Assistant Head Coach for the Swim Team, even if the swim season is delayed or cancelled.

Town Attorney Bolt explained that the contract with the Pool Management company (American Pool) may be impacted by the pool opening being delayed or cancelled. Coaches for the Swim Team are technically hired by and paid through the Pool Management company.

Mr. Mascott expressed commitment to developing a sense of community through the swim team, and that the coaches would work with the kids in one way or another, even if the swim team season is impacted.

Council members Zeughauser, Panner, and Surko asked that all kids be allowed to participate. Council member Peale asked about differences in liability if coaches are hired through the Town or hired by American Pool. Town Attorney Bolt suggested an addendum be added to the Town's contract with American Pool that guaranteed the coaches' salaries.

Council member Peale motioned to approve the \$14,000 expenditure within the management contract to hire the Head Coach and Assistant Coach for the 2020 pool season. Council member

Peale asked that if American Pool does not agree to the addendum to the contract, and the Town elects to retain the coaches as independent contractors, that it be placed on a future Town Council meeting agenda. Council member Zeughauser seconded; all in favor.

8:03 p.m. Public Hearing/Motion: To approve the FY2021 Budget and Tax Rates, as introduced at the April 6, 2020 Town Council meeting.

Budget Committee Chair Phil Young (Greystone St.) gave a brief introduction of the budget, noting that it has changed a lot over the course of budget discussions in response to Coronavirus pandemic. Budget Committee members Jon Medalia (Surrey St.) and Robin Barr (Essex Ave.) also made comments on budget. Mr. Barr noted that the Town may not realize budget shortfalls until FY22 because of the timeline in which taxes are collected are reallocated back to municipalities.

Council member Zeughauser suggested making the Budget Committee a full committee and removing the ad hoc title.

Council member Surko suggested the Council develop budget guidance document to explain priorities when austerity measures are no longer needed. The Council may address this at a later meeting with a policy statement addressing priorities. Town Attorney Bolt suggested this be introduced with the budget in future years.

Council member Shaul motioned to approve the ordinance to adopt the budget and property tax rates of \$0.10/\$100 of assessable value. Council member Peale seconded. All in favor.

Council member Shaul motioned to approve quarterly budget meetings in the next fiscal year, as recommended by Phil Young. Council member Peale seconded. All in favor.

8:20 p.m. Discussion/Motion: To confirm the following Mayoral nominees to the Town Environment Committees:

1. Barton Rubenstein, Dorset Ave.
2. Jack Frink, Cumberland Ave.
3. Donna Harman, Dorset Ave.
4. Ralph Wooden, River Rd.
5. David Kathan, Dorset Ave.
6. Bugs Bartley, Cumberland Ave.
7. *Robin Barr, Essex Ave., Chair.*

Mayor Slavin noted that he has been working to put together Committee lists, and may recommend that the Council re-establish now-defunct committees.

Council member Shaul motioned to approve the Environment Committee members. Council member Surko seconded. All in favor.

8:43 p.m. Discussion/Motion: To confirm the following Mayoral nominees to the Town Parks and Natural Resources Committee:

1. Alan Dock, Falstone Ave.
2. Sophia Maroon, Warwick Pl.
3. Patty Friedman, Grantham Ave.
4. Jennifer Marron, Warwick Pl.
5. Dudley Fowlkes, Falstone Ave.
6. Semra Mesulam, Surrey St.
7. Robert Hyman, Falstone Ave.
8. Josh Rosenthal, Surrey St.
9. *Kristen Khanna, Uppingham St., Chair.*

The Council discussed what the criteria are for serving on a committee. Town Manager Trollinger noted that the Mayor is attempting to have residents serve on one committee at a time if other volunteers are available.

Council member Zeughauser motioned to approve the nominees. Council member Panner seconded. All in favor.

8:27 p.m. Discussion/Motion: To confirm the following Mayoral nominees to the Town Tennis Committee:

1. Jim Losey, Essex Ave.
2. Abby Nolan, Surrey St.
3. Matt Fink, Dorset Ave.
4. Steve Shapiro, Surrey St.
5. Kathryn Williams, Warwick Pl.
6. Howard Waltzman, Grantham Ave.
7. *Carrie Wofford, Essex Ave., Chair.*

Council member Shaul motioned to approve the nominees. Council member Zeughauser seconded. All in favor.

8:28 p.m. Discussion/Motion: To confirm the following Mayoral nominees to Town Swim Team Committee:

1. Ann Bolten, Cumberland Ave.
2. Kelly Swain, Trent St.
3. Gayle Horn, Surrey St.
4. Michael Roark, Dorset Ave.
5. *Jeff Mascott, Surrey St., Chair.*

Council member Shaul motioned to approve the nominees. Council member Zeughauser seconded. All in favor.

8:30 p.m. Discussion/Motion: To confirm the following nominee to the Town Communication Committee:

1. Kathleen Kenyon, Grantham Ave.

Mayor Slavin noted that Robin Orseck was mistakenly listed previously, and that Kathleen Kenyon was intended to be the nominee for this committee.

Council member Zeughauser motioned to approve the appointment. Council member Shaul seconded. All in favor.

8:31 p.m. Discussion/Motion: To confirm the following nominees to the Town Pool Committee:

1. Michael Veksler, Warwick Pl.
2. Nate Hurst, Dorset Ave.

Mayor Slavin noted that there was a question last month about two members of the same household serving on a committee. Council member Shaul asked that committees and members be listed on the Town website.

Council member Shaul motioned to approve the members. Council member Peale seconded. All in favor.

8:32 p.m. Discussion: Town Manager Administrative and Fiscal Reports.

Town Manager Trollinger gave his report (included at end of minutes).

8:44 p.m. Discussion: Mayor's Report.

Mayor Slavin gave his time to work session items, and asked the Council to approve of time for public comments.

The Council discussed the welcome letter that was presented by the Mayor's ad hoc committee, and recommended by the Environment and Parks and Natural Resources Committee. Mayor Slavin gave background on the ad hoc committee.

The Council engaged in discussion on the letter, the enforceability of the letter, and to whom it might be sent, or where it might be posted. Town Attorney Bolt recommended that the concerns in the letter would be better addressed through Code changes.

Julie Greenberg (Falstone Ave.) and Paige Whitley (Cumberland Ave.) made comments expressing their belief that the letter would make the building application process easier.

Council member Peale offered to present her comments at the next meeting.

Mayor Slavin told the Council that he would post his proposal for a Town committee to study storm water and the Town's tree canopy on the Town listserv, to be discussed at the June meeting.

9:36 p.m. Adjourn.

Council member Panner moved to adjourn. Council member Shaul seconded. All in favor.

Administrative Report

5/4/2020

Administrative Matters

- - **Budget:** ○ The Town has introduced a FY21 budget; the Council will vote to adopt at the May meeting.
 - ○ Staff is looking into grant opportunities with the County for reimbursement for remote work purchases and attorney fees related to COVID-19.
 - ○ Staff is looking into alternatives to Town's insurance policy with LGIT to see if there are cost-savings opportunities.
 - ○ The state comptroller has reported a 22% reduction of state tax withholding, "a decline never seen before in the history of our state." Town revenues are not expected to fall as much in the near term because the variation of Town revenues appears to follow financial markets more than jobs and wages. If the past is an indicator, we can expect a decline in income that is delayed 9-12 months after the market declines, which means we may not fully realize the impact until July 2021, i.e., FY22.
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- - **Personnel:** ○ Maintenance staff is working on a rotational schedule so that they are better able to "social distance" during the COVID-19 crisis. The foreman, Enrique Cabrera, has expressed that the maintenance staff would be able to work their regular schedules while wearing a mask and keeping a distance, but that additional hours will need to be put in to do the maintenance required for spring, particularly for the pool area.
 - ○ Linda and Matt have been working remotely when possible, and will continue to do so until further notice. Staff is still available via phone and email.
 - ○ Code Enforcement Officer Wayne C. Fowler is working on a limited basis from home during stay-at-home order.
 - ○ Kelley Oklesson of Groundsmith Collective has reached out to staff about beginning work on landscape consultant work, which has been on hold up until now.
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- - **Equipment/Software:** ○ Staff has purchased an additional laptop and cell phones to better enable staff to work remotely. The Town is being set up for calls to Town Hall to route directly to staff cell phones.
 - ○ The Town has a Zoom Account available for Council meetings and other official meetings, which allows for more people to join, and longer meetings, among other capabilities.
 - ○ The Town has renewed its Bill.com membership to allow for invoice approval and check signing digitally.
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- - **Bulk Pickup:** Scheduled for Monday, May 11. A Wider Circle was not able to do its regular donation pickups to accompany bulk trash this time.

- - **Brown Bag lunches:** The Council may want to consider virtual brown bag lunches to make up for missed meeting. The Council had originally approved Brown Bag lunches for the following dates: ○ April 16

- - September 17

- - November 11

- - **Public Space:** ○ The Town Hall, and other public spaces, including tennis courts, basketball court, and batting cages, are closed to the public until further notice by emergency proclamation from the Mayor.

- - The Town Hall has passed final inspections and is now ready for occupancy. The Town is awaiting a final bill from de Marne & Day.

- - **Other Pandemic-related news:** ○ Town Manager has been on a recurring weekly call with County and State officials regarding Coronavirus response and data.

- - The annual MML Conference has been cancelled in Ocean City. MML is looking to convert the meeting to a virtual meeting instead.