

November 5, 2020

Regular Meeting

Mayor McNinch called the Regular Meeting of the Denton Town Council to order at 7:00 PM on this date, leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Access to the meeting was made available online using Microsoft Teams, in person public access was limited by request only.

Mayor McNinch thanked those joining the meeting in person and virtually and explained how to use the comments section online.

Mayor McNinch asked that the record reflect that Councilwoman Wilson was attending the meeting virtually, and that all other Council members were in attendance in person.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2020 Regular Meeting and the October 26, 2020 Working Session as presented; seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Public Hearing

None

Petitions, Remonstrance's, and Communication

Proclamation – Municipal Government Works Month

Mayor McNinch read and issued a Proclamation proclaiming November 2020 as Municipal Government Works Month in the State of Maryland. The Town of Denton is designated as a Maryland Municipal League Banner City. Along with flying the MML Banner City Flag this month, the Town will continue to promote Municipal Government.

Proclamation – Eagle Award – Liam Welch

Mayor McNinch read and issued a Proclamation to recognize Liam Welch on earning his Eagle Scout Award, by replacing playground equipment at The Denton Church of the Nazarene as his Eagle project.

Proclamation – National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week

Mayor McNinch read and issued a Proclamation to recognize and bring awareness to National Hunger & Homelessness Awareness Week, November 15-22, 2020.

Ordinances and Resolutions

Resolution #879 - Hospice House Community Legacy Grant

A Resolution of the Town of Denton approving the application and receipt of Community Legacy Financing for FY2021 Funds in Denton, Maryland. Seeking \$200,000 to be funded either directly by the Department of Housing and Community Development of the State of Maryland or through other departments or agencies of the State of Maryland to assist in the water and sewer connection and fees for the new construction of the Hospice House in Denton.

Councilman Johnson made a motion to adopt Resolution #879, seconded by Councilman Branson.

In discussion, Mayor McNinch expressed how important it is to the community for the Hospice House Project to be in Caroline County and for the Town of Denton.

Councilman Branson explained why the Town cannot waive the fees for the water and sewer connection for the Hospice Project, however by being able to apply for grant funds, how wonderful it would be if the State can help cover the fees for Hospice.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch asked for a vote on the motion to adopt Resolution #879.

The motion passed unanimously.

Resolution #880 – New Police Car

A Resolution of the Town of Denton approving the purchase of two Dodge Charger Police Cars, fully equipped with emergency equipment installed, not to exceed a total of \$80,000 with financing from Shore United Bank at an interest rate of 2.70%.

Councilman Branson made a motion to adopt Resolution #880, seconded by Councilman Lister, passing unanimously.

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees

Mr. Don Mulrine, Town Administrator, shared that only one bid was received for the sale and disposal of 1105 Market St., this will be on the December agenda for consideration.

Mr. Mulrine announced that Delegate Jeff Ghrist shared that the Board of Public Works approved \$450,000 for the Denton Volunteer Fire Dept. to use toward purchasing a new tanker.

Mr. Chris Drummond, Town Attorney, shared that he is working with Planning & Codes reinitiating property maintenance fines and reactivating two cases that have not complied with previous court orders.

Mr. Mulrine shared that the Planning Commission will be holding discussion on the Comprehensive Plan in January.

Mayor McNinch mentioned that she and a couple of Council members had participated in the Maryland Municipal League Fall Conference virtually.

Unfinished Business

Agenda #1- Ordinance #709 - Vehicles and Traffic – Discussion

Follow up discussion was held on Ordinance #709 which was previously adopted and became effective in October.

Mr. Robert Miron, resident of 210 Briarwood Circle, shared his concerns about the Ordinance making the streets in his neighborhood one-way travel, having to relocate mailboxes will not improve public safety, and did not feel that he received proper notification prior to the adoption of the Ordinance. Mr. Miron requested the Town put it back the way it was.

Mr. Chris Drummond, Town Attorney, shared that discussion on the Ordinance has been ongoing for over a year and that the Town provided adequate public notice online, in the newspaper, and contacted the Sandy Meadows HOA.

Mr. Marcus Parizo, resident of 118 Briarwood Circle, and President of the Sandy Meadows Homeowners Association, spoke on behalf of the Ordinance. Sharing that community notification was readily available on the Town's website, he had minimal cost in relocating his mailbox, and with house numbers on each house, the changes should not affect emergency responses. Mr. Parizo shared that the HOA recognizes that parking on both sides of the streets has been an issue for some time as the streets are not wide enough.

Mr. Gary Smith, resident of 123 Briarwood, mentioned that there are plenty of resources to find information on upcoming changes, stating it is not perfect, but all residents have a choice to be involved.

Councilman Lister acknowledged that everyone's comments are valuable and commented on concerns and how important it is to have safe travel lanes. He asked Staff to continue to research options for having cluster mailbox units installed.

Mr. David Renshaw, Senior Codes Enforcement Officer acknowledged that he is researching grant funding to help offset the cost of installing cluster boxes. Mr. Renshaw shared the concerns being addressed with the Ordinance are to make sure the travel lane width requirements will also accommodate fire trucks and snowplows, and a concern about life when an emergency response is necessary. The other street affected includes a portion of Chesapeake Drive, where on-street parking obstructs the flow of traffic.

Councilman Johnson mentioned that the residents of Chesapeake Drive support the one-way traffic flow and recognize traveling is affected by having on-street parking, it is just that many in the neighborhood have limited off-street parking available.

The Council will be looking to amend ordinances to provide requirements to assist the Planning Commission when approving plans for future developments to avoid similar traffic flow concerns.

Mr. William Nichols, resident of 1230 Fairfield Court, spoke with the Council about the changes to his neighborhood, stating that after listening to the discussion this evening, he realizes more of what was involved in making the decisions and that emergency response time is very important. Mr. Nichols inquired about the timeline for enforcement, asking if there can be some time to work this through before issuing fines.

Acting Chief Bacorn explained that the Police Dept. will work with the residents and provide warnings to help educate before issuing citations.

Staff has spoken with several residents at Fairfield about accommodating additional parking on their lots to help with the parking on the street being eliminated.

Mayor McNinch added that the Town will work to improve and find a better way to reach residents.

For the record, Mr. Mulrine shared emails received with concerns about improving notifications from Ms. Donna Layfield of 1204 Chesapeake Drive and Ms. Lisa Trippett of 1202 Chesapeake Drive. Ms. Trippett wrote that she was opposed to one-way streets expressing that it would greatly increase the volume of traffic by her house.

With no further comments, Mayor McNinch closed the discussion on this topic.

Agenda #2 – Denton Water Main Project – Bids

A request seeking bids on the Denton Water Main Project was advertised and bids were received October 20, 2020. Mr. Mulrine shared that three bids were received and reviewed by the Town Engineer. Based on the bid tabulations, the Engineer and Town submitted a recommendation for awarding the bid to the lowest bidder ECM Corporation for \$1,027,155.00. The project will replace the old nickel/copper watermain and install shut off valves at every intersection.

Councilman Branson made a motion to award the bid to ECM Corporation as requested, seconded by Councilman Johnson.

In discussion, Mr. Mulrine shared the project is anticipated to begin in early 2021, following approval from the State Board of Public Works.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch asked for a vote on the motion to award the bid to ECM Corporation.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda #3 - Holiday Parade

Discussion was held pertaining to holding the 2020 Holiday Parade. Staff shared COVID-19 questions received from the Caroline County Health Department as to how the Town will enforce social distancing and require masks among the spectators and limiting number of participants. Staff will provide a response to the CCHD and continue to explore accommodations.

Agenda #4 - Tax Differential

Discussion was held on the Annual Tax Differential letter to be submitted to the County Commissioners.

Mayor McNinch explained double taxation for those listening to and attending the meeting and encouraged the public to attend the County budget meetings in the spring.

Councilman Lister made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign a letter to the County, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

New Business

Agenda #1 – MDOT 3 Year Salt Contract

Councilman Lister made a motion to authorize the Mayor to sign the Three -Year Salt Utilization Agreement with Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously. The agreement is for a 3-year term at a cost not to exceed \$5,775 during the agreement term.

Agenda #2 – Town Office Exterior Painting

Mr. Phil Clark, Superintendent of Denton Public Works, submitted a proposal obtained for painting the exterior of the Town Office in the spring and recommended awarding to Shoreline Painting for a total of \$8,175.00. They provided the most thorough and detailed quote.

Councilman Branson made a motion to award to Shoreline Painting, seconded by Councilman Johnson.

In discussion, Councilman Lister inquired about how bids were solicited.

Mr. Clark shared that his staff contacted 15 painting contractors and received these three bids.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch asked for a vote on the motion to award the Town Hall painting project to Shoreline Painting.

The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda #3 - Public Works Salt Box Replacement

Mr. Clark submitted a request seeking authorization to purchase a replacement salt box for truck 44. The current salt box purchased in 2009 is wearing out and will be costly to repair. The new box will cost \$6,500.00 at Brass Sales and is to be purchased with Highway CIP funds that was in this year's budget.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve purchasing a new salt box from Brass Sales with a cost not to exceed \$6,500. The motion was seconded by Councilman Johnson, passing unanimously.

Agenda #4 - Tree Removal Request

Discussion was held regarding a letter received from Mr. Wilson Woolyhand, resident of 213 Sharp Road, asking the Town to remove a tree that he believes is on the Town's property and not on his land and he is concerned the tree will fall on his house.

Mr. Drummond shared that the tree is within the Town's right-of-way.

Councilman Lister asked staff to obtain some estimates on what it would cost to have the tree trimmed or removed.

Staff will obtain some estimates and determine if in the Critical Area.

Miscellaneous

Mr. Marcus Parizo, of 118 Briarwood Circle, President of the Sandy Meadows HOA asked for consideration to lower the speed limit in Sandy Meadows to address complaints the HOA is receiving about speeding. Proposing to lower the limit to 15-20 MPH.

Acting Chief Bacorn acknowledged that speed can be changed with the adoption of an Ordinance.

Councilman Johnson shared that the State regulates speed, anything less than 25MPH is hard to enforce.

Mr. Parizo shared some of the other suggestions were to insert speed bumps or other traffic calming devices.

Mayor McNinch recommended to place this on the January Working Session agenda for discussion.

Mr. Mulrine announced that the Wharves at Choptank Visitor Center will reopen to the public on November 17th – Tuesday through Friday.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch adjourned the meeting at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen L. Monteith,
Clerk - Treasurer*