

September 5, 2024

Regular Meeting

Mayor McNinch called the Regular Meeting of the Denton Town Council to order at 6:00 PM on this date, leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor McNinch thanked everyone for coming and asked that the record reflect that Councilman Johnson was absent, and the rest of the Councilmembers were present.

Councilman Lister made a motion to approve the minutes of the August, 1, 2024 Regular Meeting as presented; seconded by Councilman Taylor. The motion passed with 3 votes; Councilman Branson abstained since he was not present at the Aug. 1, 2024 meeting.

Public Hearing

None.

Petitions, Remonstrance's, and Communication

Proclamation – Caroline Goes Purple

Mayor McNinch read into the record a Proclamation recognizing September as Caroline Goes Purple Month in Denton and thank the organizations that educate the residents about the opioid epidemic and how to prevent it.

The Proclamation was presented to Ms. Kristie Thompson, of the Caroline County Safe Station Program.

Ms. Thompson shared information on planned events happening this month.

Ordinances and Resolutions

Resolution #898 - FY2024 General Fund Budget Amendment

A Resolution of the Town of Denton to amend the General Fund Budget for Fiscal Year July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024 was presented and discussed.

Councilman Lister made a motion to adopt Resolution #898, seconded by Councilman Branson, passing unanimously.

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

Agenda #1 – The Residence at Eden Green Presentation

Mr. Andrew Teeters, CEO and Co-founder of Chesapeake Caregivers Management, the new owners of The Residence at Eden Green and The Cottages at Eden Green was present to introduce the Company to the Council. Mr. Teeters was joined by Ms. Andrea Ellen. Mr. Teeters talked about their Company and the improvement plans they have for the former Homestead Manor Assisted Living and the Heritage Community.

Eden Green will continue to provide assisted living care and manage the independent living cottages as was previously available. They are working on adding a Memory Care Unit in one wing and a place to host events.

Mayor McNinch recently attended their open house and shared how impressed she was with the facility; how nice it is and expressed appreciation for their investment in the Denton community.

Agenda #2 – Sharp Road Park Subdivision

The Town Council executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between County Commissioners of Caroline County and the Town of Denton on March 19, 2024, to subdivide Sharp Road Park into three (3) lots. The MOU transfers 7.54 acres to Caroline County for future

park improvements. Lot 3 on the minor subdivision plan to be transferred to the County has been amended to 8.232 acres.

Mrs. Lyndsey Ryan, the Town Attorney, explained that this new acreage of 8.232 acres to be transferred to the County requires the Town Council's approval by motion to be attached to the original MOU.

Councilman Lister made a motion to accept and approve the transfer of 8.232 plus or minus acres as discussed. The motion was seconded by Councilman Taylor, passing unanimously.

Mrs. Ryan shared this will go before the Denton Planning Commission on September 10, 2024 for consideration for approval of the proposed minor subdivision.

Agenda #3 - Apollo Edison Presentation

Mr. Les Katona for the Apollo Edison Company re-introduced himself to the Council regarding the Town's wholesale electric contracts with Freepoint Energy. Mr. Katona asked for consideration for the Council to authorize Mr. Getchell, Town Administrator, to work with him to negotiate a new contract should the market change and competitive opportunities become available in which the Town could save on electric cost. Mr. Katona also mentioned that previously the Town was working with APPI, as the third-party vendor on energy contracts and that they no longer exist, they are now Apollo Edison Co.

Councilman Lister shared that he felt the Council had already given Mr. Getchell permission last year to negotiate future contracts.

Staff will research and follow back up.

Agenda #4 - Partners in Care Maryland, Inc.

Ms. Kathleen Dormody was present to share the services Partners in Care Maryland LLC provides to the community and how they can help bridge the transportation gap for and assist with home repairs for Denton residents.

Agenda #5 - 4th Street Park Shade Sales

Mr. Scott Getchell, Town Administrator, requested approval to proceed with the design and construction of shade sails at the 4th Street Park to cover the new play area. Presenting a recommended proposal from Shore Industries, a company based out of Preston, MD. The total cost for all 3 phases of the installation is \$92,660.

Councilman Lister made a motion to spend the \$92,660 as requested, seconded by Councilman Branson.

Mr. Getchell shared that proposals were solicited from other companies and found Shore Industries products to be the best fit for the park. The proposal is \$10,000 more than budgeted due to discovering when evaluating that the sails will need to be installed higher than originally planned to meet height standards. The overage will be covered using some of the park budget that was planned for items at Wheeler Park.

Mayor McNinch questioned future maintenance of the sails, and Mr. Getchell shared he is waiting on a Maintenance Proposal, to have Shore Industries take down the sails for the winter and store them each season and reinstall annually in the spring.

Mrs. Ryan has reviewed the proposal and recommends seeking a modification to increase the warranty.

Councilman Taylor questioned under the Terms #3, about responsibility for damage when shipped and if shipped directly to the Town.

Mr. Getchell clarified that the sails are being shipped directly to Shore Industries, and they will inspect for damage upon receipt, and then Shore Industries will bring them to the Town when they are ready to install them.

Councilman Lister amended his motion to approve subject to working on the details of the agreement, seconded by Councilman Taylor, passing unanimously.

Agenda #6 - DPD-Training Center & Firearms Range

Chief Bacorn submitted a request seeking approval for a reallocation of funds to assist with improvements to the Caroline County Sheriff's Office Training Center and Firearms Range and to enter into a Training Center / Shooting Range Use Agreement with the Caroline County Sheriff's Office to use the range. The CCSO has recently invested upwards of \$35,000 into the range. The Town's contribution would be in the amount of \$12,000 to assist in completing the firearms range shooting lane paving in exchange for use of the entire facility, which includes a classroom building. Chief Bacorn proposed to use funds budgeted for purchasing mobile radios which has been placed on hold at this time. Previously the Department was using the range in Ridgely, which they are not sure with the changes there if that will be an option anymore.

Captain RJ Helmer of the Caroline County Sheriff's Office and Chief Bacorn were present to discuss the proposal and answer questions.

Councilman Taylor questioned the usage agreement only being for one-year, recommending for that terms to be extended for 3-5 years and inquired if there would be additional contributions sought in the future.

Chief Bacorn said that is what the contract states, but that is not the intent and asked Captain Helmer to speak to the terms.

Captain Helmer shared that under the direction of current Sheriff, beyond the initial contribution from the Town, that there are no expectations for contributions to be necessary in the future, it was a standard agreement that they could work on modifying the terms. Once these additional improvements are completed, the maintenance and upkeep will be minimal and covered by the County.

The alternative to being able to invest and use a range locally, will be to train in Sykesville and Dorchester County. Talbot County is available for a cost. Each of those facilities will result in additional cost incurred for travel, and private ranges do not usually allow the holster drills, necessary for law enforcement.

Mrs. Ryan recommended to establish a set number of years in the initial agreement and to include an automatic renewal and establishing terms for contract termination with a written 30-day notice prior to the renewal should either agency decide to end the contract.

Councilman Lister made a motion to enter a contract that includes an automatic renewal, and to seek up to a 5-year initial term, approving the \$12,000 one-time contribution, seconded by Councilman Taylor.

Capt. Helmer clarified that he would take the changes before the Attorney General for the CCSO for review, who may only want to extend term for the remaining amount of time the current Sheriffs has left in office.

Mr. Getchell shared that there is already a use agreement in place, this is seeking approval for the contribution that was not previously addressed.

Mayor McNinch asked for a vote on the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

Capt. Helmer and he will work with Chief Bacorn, Mrs. Ryan, and the AG for the CCSO to modify the terms for the contribution as discussed.

Agenda #7 - County Legislative Request Letter

Upon receipt of a letter from the Caroline County Commissioners seeking suggestions for state legislative requests and issues of concern from municipalities for the upcoming session; discussion was held.

The Council's top four legislative priorities for the 2025 Legislative Session are: 1) Bond issuance for the Wastewater Treatment Plant for the Sludge Drying Project, which will help the County with future school development. 2) Full restoration and maintaining the Highway User Revenues 3) Seek Bond Bill Funding for the Sharp Road Park Playground. 4) Support for State Funding for the Gay Street / Shore Highway intersection under the safe alternative routes.

Additional discussion was held on seeking modifications to the County Tax Differential Program and are there any updates on the status for the County Comprehensive Plan.

Councilman Branson made a motion for a response to be sent to the Commissioners of Caroline County with the Town's four legislative priorities for 2025. The motion was seconded by Councilman Taylor, passing unanimously.

Reports of Officers, Boards, and Committees

Councilman Taylor stated he did not have any thing to report as there was no Planning Commission Meeting held this month.

Councilman Branson expressed how wonderful Summerfest was and wanted to share how much he appreciates Staff's efforts.

Mayor McNinch added that Summerfest was beautiful this year, it is a Town/County partnership, and inquired how can we improve so it is not so taxing on Town Staff.

Mr. Getchell has been in contact with members of the County, expressing that the County Staff that are involved, in the festival, worked really hard. He is hoping to expand that network so that staff from other county departments are involved to help share the workload.

Councilman Lister shared that the Utility Commission did not meet this month, so there was nothing to report.

Miscellaneous

Mayor McNinch shared that she received correspondence from a resident on Academy Ave with a concern about rats.

Mr. Getchell stated that the Planning & Codes Staff have been investigating the complaints from Academy and have issued letters to all residents explaining what they can do to avoid rodents, and the situation has improved.

Mr. Mark Chandler, Superintendent of Public Works, took a moment to thank and recognize Councilman Lister for the phenomenal signage recently installed at the Fourth St. Park in memory of former Mayor and Councilwoman Carol Stockley.

Chief Bacorn announced that a Free Library Box is being donated to be the Police Dept. which will be placed in the Fourth Street Park.

With no further discussion, Mayor McNinch adjourned the meeting at 7:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

*Karen L. Monteith,
Clerk - Treasurer*