



Mayor and Town Council
Town of Friendsville
Founded 1765

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Friendsville Town Council Minutes
February 5, 2024

Attendance:

Mayor Spencer Schlosnagle, and Wanda Guard, Administrative Assistant, Clerk-Treasurer.
Council President: Pamela Humberson Council members: Edward Kelley, Sheryl MacLane,
and Robert Sines.

Citizens/Guests: Chad Fike, Lynn Aycock, Ellen Quinn, Pat Hamlin, Jennifer Uphold, Jennifer Schroyer Cook, Wanda Sines, Jamie Spano, GCHD Community Health Outreach Worker, Thomas Vose, Friendsville Library Director, R. Joanne Sheffield, CPA, and Claire Sullivan, The Republican newspaper reporter.

Call to Order: Council President Humberson called February 5, 2024, the general meeting of the Mayor and Town Council to order at 6:00 p.m.

Invocation/Pledge of Allegiance: All attending the meeting recited the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion #1: (Council member MacLane/Council member Sines): Approval to accept the February 5, 2024, agenda. 4 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carries.

Motion #2: (Councilmember MacLane/Councilmember Kelley): Approval to accept the general meeting minutes for January 8, 2024. 4 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carries.

To The Floor:

During the council meeting, Thomas Vose, Director of the Ruth Enlow Library, provided a comprehensive update on the advancements in our new library's construction. He presented designs showcasing the progress of the new library building, including initial furniture concepts that give insight into the future layout and functionality of the space. As construction moves forward, Thomas assured the council that he will keep us informed about any further developments and milestones achieved.

It was noted that the Pawpaw trees will require relocation, along with the bench along the side. Additionally, further investigation is needed regarding the Tinkerbell tree, with updates to follow. In the event that the Pawpaw trees do not survive the relocation, the library is committed to replacing them and maintaining their memorial significance.

It was mentioned that the Governor's capital budget has fully funded the project (90/10) for 2024, and discussions are underway regarding a temporary location during construction, slated to begin in September 2024. Furthermore, plans for a fundraiser in June were announced to support the

project with the purchase of furniture. Furniture has to be purchased through the Maryland Correctional Enterprise (MCE).

Thomas will continue to provide periodic updates to the council as the project progresses.

Jamie Spano, from GCHD outreach, announced that a Valentine's Day event for seniors will be held on February 12th at Sand Spring Church.

Chad Fike spoke to the council, inquiring about the progress and any decisions made regarding the Airbnb, TVR, and VRBO ordinance. He voiced support for maintaining these services, emphasizing their benefit to the community, and raised concerns about potential negative impacts on existing businesses if they were banned. The mayor then outlined the procedural aspects of the ordinance to the assembled group.

Council President, Humberson shared outlined steps for ordinance approval from the work session document to the group:

1. Writing the ordinance.
2. Reviewing with Council & planning commission committee at the Mayor and Town Council meeting
3. Advertise public hearing meeting notice 14 days prior.
4. Public Hearing Meeting at the Mayor & Town Council meeting with 1st reading of the ordinance.
5. Second reading at the next Mayor and Town Council meeting.
6. Adoption of the ordinance, if there are no changes requested or objections.
7. If there are changes to the ordinance, the process will start over.

During the meeting, Lynn Aycock sought clarification on the purpose behind the ordinance's creation. She emphasized that the discussion of grandfathering existing Airbnb/VRBO/TVR properties should be treated separately. Lynn highlighted the absence of such an ordinance in the Town of Friendsville for a considerable duration, emphasizing the necessity for its establishment.

The council President informed the group that another work session will be required, recognizing the significant time and effort needed to navigate the process of drafting the ordinance. They emphasized the importance of a thorough investigation rather than relying solely on emotions. The council is currently examining ordinances from other towns and collaborating with the county circuit rider for guidance. There is a shared goal of encouraging families to buy homes and relocate to the town to bolster its population, safeguarding essential institutions like the school, post office, and bank. The town's efforts aim to protect against potential threats such as the closure of these vital services.

Chad raised concerns during the council meeting regarding the potential threat posed by Airbnb to the town's housing situation. He questioned whether Airbnb's presence could displace residents from their homes. Chad also questioned the rationale behind branding Airbnb for the town. It was noted during the discussion that Deep Creek Lake and Friendsville are distinct locations.

Chad disclosed his personal involvement in converting houses in town into Airbnb accommodations to attract visitors and stimulate local spending. He expressed uncertainty about his future plans if Airbnb were to be banned, mentioning his desire to potentially establish a full-size gym, which could be impacted by such a decision. He emphasized the difficulty of realizing such projects without Airbnb rentals. Additionally, Chad pointed out the potential impact on the town's population figures, given the current low population and the presence of approximately 10-15 Airbnb listings amidst a population of 350-400 residents. He suggested that while addressing the issue might be necessary in the future, it might not be the right time to do so.

Council member Kelley echoed the sentiment of finding a balanced approach in crafting the ordinance, aiming to achieve a satisfactory compromise for all parties involved.

Wanda Sines, a local resident, noted that the mayor had proposed purchasing a property by the river to transform it into an Airbnb. However, she highlighted the challenges faced, despite their enthusiasm, are hindered by limited financial resources. She emphasized that the process of getting the property up and running as an Airbnb is slow and arduous for them.

Pat Hamlin suggested to the group that they explore alternative accommodations such as Airbnb, expressing a preference for this housing option over hotels. They emphasized how Airbnb enables large families to stay together rather than in separate hotel rooms. Drawing from their experience, they observed that in other areas, visitors often fall in love with the locale and return to purchase property or homes. This sentiment aligns with the desired image of our town. The mayor echoed the town's motto, emphasizing the invitation to "Come Visit and Come Stay." It is important to keep Airbnb going and promote tourism for the town.

Ellen Hamlin has urged the Town Council to enhance communication with its residents, proposing the utilization of the "Multiplier" platform, which can disseminate messages through text or phone calls. Currently, information is primarily shared through the Town of Friendsville's website, newsletter, and Facebook page. During the discussion, Wanda noted that comments will be disabled on any Facebook posts. Council President Humberson assured the group that the suggestion will be considered.

Why was the ordinance initiated, and where did it originate? Council member Kelley mentioned that it was proposed due to concerns about our declining population. There's a sense of frustration stemming from the lack of clarity regarding the reasons behind its creation. Lynn presented the business comprehensive plan suggesting that it should be addressed as an ordinance within the next decade.

Council member Kelley reiterated please do not listen to rumors and to come to the council if you have any questions or concerns.

During the meeting, Jennifer Schroyer Cook expressed her concern about a man staying at the house behind hers. Mayor and Council President Humberson acknowledged her concern and advised her to contact the police. Cook also mentioned a stray dog, and it was suggested that she reach out to the police at 301-334-1911, as they can assist with both matters.

During the meeting, Joanne Sheffield delivered the audit report for the fiscal year 2023 (covering the period from July 1, 2022, to June 30, 2023), resulting in a "Clean Opinion." The report, although extended, was submitted to Legislative Services in December 2023 within the designated timeframe. Notably, no new implementations were made by GASB during this period. However, a highlighted weakness is evident in our internal control over financial reporting. This weakness is attributed to our constrained workforce, which prevents the segregation of duties due to inadequate staffing levels. It's worth noting that this staffing issue is a common challenge across all municipalities.

Another agreement will need to be signed for the future.

Motion #3: (Councilmember MacLane/Councilmember Kelley): Approval to accept the June 30, 2023, annual financial statement & independent auditor's report presented by R. Joanne Sheffield.
4 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carries.

Unfinished Business:

The pre-bid meeting for the Concession Stand & ADA restroom project took place on January 22, 2024. Four contractors attended and received the necessary information. Bids for the project are scheduled to be submitted by March 1st and will be opened during the Mayor & Town Council meeting on March 4, 2024.

The Mayor suggested scheduling a work session for next Tuesday, February 13th, to consolidate information for Peggy regarding the ordinance. Council members expressed their support for moving forward with the ordinance creation process. It was emphasized that attendees should come prepared with relevant information and answers to Peggy's inquiries to expedite the ordinance drafting process. A work session is scheduled for Monday, February 12, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.

Wanda informed the group that she has incorporated the revisions from the recent work session into the Town of Friendsville personnel handbook. She has already sent the updated handbook to all council members via email. Those who prefer a printed copy are encouraged to inform her accordingly.

Motion #4: (Councilmember MacLane/Councilmember Kelley): Approval to the Town of Friendsville personnel handbook.
4 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carries.

New Business:

Motion #5: (Councilmember MacLane/Councilmember Kelley): Approval to accept Zachary Trautwein January 8, 2024, resignation letter. 4 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carries.

Motion #6: (Council member Sines/Council member Kelley): Approval to contact James Hook immediately to fill the council vacancy until next February 2025.
4 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carries.

Motion #7: (Council member MacLane/Council member Kelley): Approval to continue the lease as is for The Friend Family Association of America for another year for FY25 (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025) for \$75.00 per month or \$900.00 per year.

4 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carries.

The Arbor Day Celebration is scheduled for Friday, April 26, 2024. During the meeting, Mayor suggested planting a Tinkerbell tree at the Community Park, considering the current status of the tree at the library, which is uncertain per Dred & Clint. It was noted that the Friendsville Elementary 5th Grade students will actively participate in the tree planting activity.

Council Member MacLane brought up the need to plant a Japanese Cherry Blossom tree in memory of Council member Julia Sines. Previous discussions led by Melissa Nash indicated the availability of a tree. Sheryl will follow up with Melissa to confirm the availability of the tree.

Sheryl will also coordinate with Katherine Phillips, the new DNR contact representing the Western Region Urban & Community Forestry, to arrange a meeting for the members of the Tree Committee. This meeting will facilitate discussions and planning for the upcoming Arbor Day Celebration.

Wanda received notification on January 24th about an opportunity to apply for a mini grant from the Garrett County Health Department. Despite the tight deadline, January 26th, she collaborated with Machele Bender & Jamie Spano to prepare the grant for the Town of Friendsville. The grant aims to acquire a commercial outside fillable water bottle station for the community park. Our goal is to educate families and the community about germ prevention, minimizing transmission risks, and the importance of staying hydrated. This educational initiative will be carried out by GCHD outreach workers. Information will be disseminated at events such as the Kendall Trail 5K/3K, Friendsville Elementary School Spring Fling, or Baseball's open day ceremony. Additionally, Wanda plans to share information on the initiative through the organization's website and newsletter. The total cost of supplies including water bottles and hand sanitizers is \$400.00, while the water bottle filling station and installation amount to \$3,815.00, bringing the total cost to \$4,215.00. After receiving approval from the mayor, the grant was submitted on Thursday, January 25, 2024.

The Town of Friendsville will conduct a Public Hearing on Monday, March 4, 2024, to provide information on the progress of Friendsville's Comprehensive Plan. This event will take place in the council chamber room of the Friendsville Mayor and Town Council Meeting, commencing at 6:00 p.m. This update was funded under the Maryland Community Development Block Grant Program which is a federally funded program designed to assist governments with activities directed toward neighborhood and housing revitalization, economic development, and improved community facilities and services.

Mayor Schlosnagle urged the council members to brainstorm potential Program Open Space projects for FY2025. He assessed the ongoing projects and proposed that we consider applying for recreational initiatives. These grants operate on a 90/10 funding basis. Further details of our requirements will be clarified next month. Garrett County will determine after 7/1/2024 if any additional funding can be allocated to the Town.

Mayor's Report:

- The National Police Bloodhound Association will be returning to Garrett County for its 40-hour main-trailing training and certification course. They are set for arrival on Saturday, April 27 and will conclude Thursday, May 2, 2024. Received letter from Lou Battistella on 2/5/2024.

Motion #7: (Council member MacLane/Council member Kelley): Approval to allow The National Police Bloodhound Association to come to the Town of Friendsville on April 27, 2024, through May 2, 2024. 4 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carries.

- The mayor participated in PACE and engaged with the funders, providing updates on the Town of Friendsville's various projects. Regarding the maintenance vehicle, USDA has granted approval for its application. Additionally, discussions were held regarding the new maintenance building, with the Governor committed to submitting a capital funding proposal. Sidewalks and drainage were also addressed. Cindy Stone, representing Community Block Grant, suggested increasing the requested amount to \$140,000-\$150,000, which received positive feedback. Garrett County requested test wells for Friendsville, particularly focusing on the Limestone area. The event spanned two days and was quite successful.
- The Comprehensive Plan committee convened on Tuesday, January 30, 2024, marking its advancement into the conclusive phases. Following this, it will undergo a 60-day review by the State before being disseminated to the public for further scrutiny. Joe Rogers actively participated in the meeting, which proved to be highly interactive and productive.
- The "If I were Mayor" contest involves Mrs. Patterson's 4th-grade class visiting the town hall on Friday, February 16, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. In the event of inclement weather, the visit will be rescheduled to Tuesday, February 20, 2024.
- A seasonal summer worker will need to be hired starting in March. The person will need to be over 18.
- There is an opportunity to do a display at the Garrett County Visitor Center at the Lake. The months of March & November are open. The fee is \$250.00.
- Town of Friendsville brochures have been distributed to visitors' centers.
- The "Local" magazine was shared with the council.

Clerk's Report, Payables, & Receivables

Mayor & Town Council reviewed the January's clerk's summary and QuickBooks expense, income & salary reports.

Motion #8 (Council member MacLane/Council member Humberson): Approval to accept the clerk's report, payables, receivables & salaries for the month of January.

4 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carries.

Committees Reports:

- Buildings: Council member Sines shared that the Old Mill roof is coming off and it should be addressed before it falls in and inquired on the status of the repairs of the FFA museum. As of today, the \$25,000 award for exterior improvements and renovations to The Friend

Family Association Family of American museum, announced in the FY24 State Revitalization Program via a DHCD news release shared by the Mayor, has not been received.

- Safety: Sidewalk at 139 Walnut Street was broken, a resident tripped and fell; Dred & Clint repaired the sidewalk and placed a cone at the area.
- Streets & Sidewalks: Jennifer Uphold from Friendsville Pharmacy raised concerns to the council regarding the street adjacent to the pharmacy, suggesting it should become a one-way alley. She emphasized the obstructed view, noting incidents of the building being struck and vehicles driving onto the sidewalk. Uphold proposed making the alley one way in the upward direction to address these issues.
- Community Park: The tennis court nets were taken down. Nets will go back up in April.
- Trees & Shrub: Friendship Heights trees are taken care of. A tree fell across Bear Creek; Mayor Schlosnagle spoke with Chad, and he is going to take care of removal of the tree.
- Economic Development: Nothing

Concerns of Council Members: Nothing

Next Meeting: The next town council meeting will be on March 4, 2024, starting at 6:00 p.m.

Adjournment:

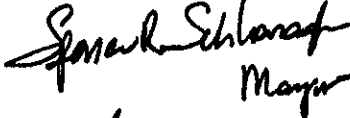
Motion #9 (Council member MacLane/Council member Sines): Approval adjourn the meeting.
4 in favor/0 opposed/0 abstention. Motion carries.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Wanda M. Guard,
Administrative Assistant, Clerk-Treasurer

Approved:

Mayor
3/4/2024

