

The Town of Laurel
Mayor & Council Meeting
November 18, 2024

A Mayor & Council Meeting was held at Laurel Town Hall in the Mayor & Council Chambers on Monday, November 18, 2024, beginning at 7:18 p.m. The following persons were in attendance Mayor John Shwed, President of Council Chris Calio, Carlos Oliveras, George Lodato, Jonathan Kellam, and Donald Holden. Also, in attendance were Director of Code Enforcement Ken West, Public Works Director James Foskey, Chief Robert Kracyla, Judge Ruffin, Finance Manager Melissa Cassimore, Recording Secretary Alexis Oliphant, and Town Manager Jamie Smith. It was noted Councilwoman Robin Fisher-Cornish was absent.

The Mayor & Council Regular and Closed Session Minutes of October 21, 2024, were presented for review. Councilman Lodato made a motion to accept the regular and closed session minutes of October 21, 2024. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

The October 2024 Department Head Reports were presented for review.

- Director of Code Enforcement West stated he had no additions to his report.
- Public Works Director Foskey stated letters were mailed out to residents pertaining to lead and copper water supply lines, per an EPA Mandate. He stated if the town is uncertain their water lines contain lead or copper they were on a mailing list and may purchase testing kits.
- Chief Kracyla stated Officers Tindley and Howard both welcomed their newborns this month. The town secured a grant for \$125,000 for cameras for the GVI Initiative. The police department assisted with March for Kylee Walk, handed out Special Olympic Awards, attended the Blessing of Tidewater Park Ceremony, and completed the Police Accountability Committee. He stated the department will be moving into the police department in the next couple of weeks. Councilman Lodato inquired if the Expungement Fair will be held. Town Manager Smith stated it will be held on Wednesday, November 20, 2024, at the Laurel Public Library from 3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.
- Judge Ruffin stated she had no additions to her report.
- Finance Manager Cassimore stated she had no additions to her report.
- Town Manager Smith explained in regards in re-facing the marquee at Dunbar it was determined it was not cost effective. She advised the building will have signage reading “Paul Laurence Dunbar Public Safety Building.” She advised a tentative open house date would be on a Saturday. She received an amended Del-Dot Agreement pertaining TAP Funding for the Ramble, which is scheduled to begin in Spring 2025. She stated the Nanticoke Watershed for Reshore Re-stabilization is scheduled for Spring 2025. She stated the Blessing of Tidewater Park took place on Friday, November

8, 2024, with a well-attended crowd. A sign has been ordered for the park that will list all the sponsor donors' names.

Councilman Oliveras made a motion to accept the October Department Head Reports as presented. Councilman Lodato seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Town Manager Smith presented the Development Updates.

- Wawa: They will be going to settlement by the end of December. Once the settlement is finalized, they will be demolishing the main store front and side building.

Mayor Shwed presented the Update Alleyway between 6th Street and 7th Street. Town Manager Smith advised a resident brought up the concern of the alleyway of being one-way at August's Mayor & Council Meeting. She stated the Fire Chief has no objection. The Street Committee consisting of Councilman Kellam, Councilman Oliveras, and Councilman Holden will be meeting on Tuesday, November 26, 2024, where they will bring their recommendation back to Mayor & Council. Town Manager Smith advised if their any changes a public hearing will be required and notification of residents.

Mayor Shwed presented the 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2024-3, Amending Chapter 157, Utility & Construction Specifications. Town Manager Smith advised the town has policies in place but must have policies in writing to be enforceable. Councilman Oliveras made a motion to accept the amended 2nd and Final Reading of Ordinance 2024-3 as Town Manager Smith presented. Councilman Lodato seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the 2nd Reading of Ordinance 2024-4, Amending Chapter 141, Streets & Sidewalks. Town Manager Smith advised this ordinance will make sure will be in compliance with Chapter 157, Utility & Construction Specifications. Councilman Holden made a motion to accept the 2nd and Final Reading of Ordinance 2024-4. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented the Citizen Participation Certificate of Assurance in regards to the CDBG Application. President of Council Calio made a motion to accept the Citizen Participation Certificate of Assurance. Councilman Lodato seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented Resolution 2024-6, for the CDBG Application. The resolution assumes the Town of Laurel recognizes the importance of fair housing for the citizens of Laurel and where the Town of Laurel Supports the goals of the Federal Fair Housing Law. Councilman Oliveras

made a motion to accept Resolution 2024-6. Councilman Kellam seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented Resolution 2024-7 endorsing the project to be submitted to the Delaware State Housing Authority for funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development authorizing Todd F. Lawson, Sussex County Administrator, to submit application for CDBG Funding. Councilman Lodato made a motion to accept Resolution 2024-7. Councilman Holden seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Mayor Shwed presented Resolution 2024-5, Adoption of Sussex County Hazard Mitigation Plan. Town Manager Smith stated all municipalities must adopt a Mitigation Plan required by Federal law through FEMA. She advised Sussex County pulls all the municipalities together in a meeting and municipalities can sign onto Sussex County's plan to save costs. Councilman Kellam made a motion to accept Resolution 2024-5. Councilman Lodato seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Town Manager Smith stated this year's Christmas Parade will be on Friday, December 6, 2024, beginning at 7:00 p.m., with line-up beginning at 6:00 p.m. on Evergreen Drive. The parade route will go down Central Avenue ending at Maryland Avenue. She advised Mike Lowe will be the M.C. with three judges. She advised she has filled two judge openings with one needing to be filled.

Mayor Shwed presented the Bid Award Recommendation, Poplar Street and Culver Drive Pavement Restoration. Town Manager Smith stated three bids were received with Jerry's Paving being the lowest bid in the amount of \$296,108.46. The town secured funding from bond bill money and CTF funding for this project. Councilman Lodato made a motion to accept the bid from Jerry's Paving in the amount of \$296,108.46 for the Poplar Street and Culver Drive Pavement Restoration. Councilman Oliveras seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Councilman Oliveras wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Councilman Lodato wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving and thanked the residents for attending the meeting.

Councilman Kellam stated the Blessing of Tidewater Park was a great event and day. He thanked all the citizens for attending the meeting. He thanked the town staff for all their hard work.

Mayor Shwed stated the town held their Trunk or Treat this past October which was a well-attended event. He attended the Western Sussex Chamber Program where he presented the Trail Blazer Award to Mr. Brian Shannon of the LRC and presented the Legacy Award to State Representative

Tim Dukes. He attended the Blessing of Tidewater Park and a Habitat House Dedication on 516 Center Street.

Mr. Asa Johnson stated he will be holding a coat drive and Christmas Toy drive with sponsors already secured.

A resident inquired if sidewalks are property owners responsible. Mayor Shwed stated sidewalks are the property owners responsible per our attorney's advice. After a brief, discussion Town Manager Smith advised she will provide documentation to the resident for his concern.

Mr. Alfred Adams, via ZOOM, advised he received his Sussex County Tax re-evaluation and inquired if the towns property tax rates will be adjusted as well. Town Manager Smith advised the town will be adjusting the tax rates once the Sussex County's new assessment list goes into effect.

President of Council Calio made a motion to hold a closed to discuss contractual matters. Councilman Lodato seconded the motion. Vote was 6-0, with Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish absent.

Regular Session Recessed at 8:17 p.m.

Reconvened at 9:04 p.m.

With there being no further business, Mayor Shwed adjourned the meeting as Councilman Oliveras, Councilman Holden, and Councilwoman Fisher-Cornish were absent.

Regular Session Adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Mayor

President of Council

Town Manager

Recording Secretary