



Town Council Workshop Minutes

December 6, 2021

Present: Mayor Jeffrey Schomisch, Vice Mayor Jeannette Ripley, Councilmembers Kathleen Walker and Todd Over, Town Manager Karen Ruff and Chief Robert Liberati.
Excused absences: Councilmembers Joe Williams and Rommel Pazmino
There is a vacant Council seat in Ward 2.

Call to Order

Mayor Schomisch called the Town Council Workshop to order at 7:16 p.m. when a quorum was obtained.

Agenda

After the Call to Order, Vice-Mayor Ripley asked that the Agenda be amended to add Public Works Staffing Hours. It became #8 and the remaining items were renumbered. Mayor Schomisch then asked that "Academy of Excellence for Local Governance" be added as 10.e. All Councilmembers acquiesced to the changes and the Agenda was amended accordingly.

Parking Discussion

Mayor Schomisch called the next item, Parking Discussion, and turned it over to the Town Manager. Town Manager, Karen Ruff, explained the nature of the parking related complaints the Town receives. She provided Council with a packet prior to the meeting that contained applicable provisions of the Town Code, Prince George's County Code and Maryland Annotated Code. Councilmembers discussed parking issues they observe. Chief Liberati addressed parking related issues and the enforcement of the Town Code provisions relating to parking on streets. Mr. Shafner, a Town resident, spoke about parking issues he encounters in Town that he would like to see resolved. After much discussion, Council decided that it wanted the Police Department to make a concerted effort to enforce the Town Code provisions relating to parking. After this effort, if Council decides changes to the Code are necessary, it will direct those changes be made.

Request for Qualifications for Mural Design and Installation

Mayor Schomisch identified the next item, Request for Qualifications for Mural Design and Installation, and explained about the mural, its location and the Arts Committee work. Ms. Ruff explained that the Town Arts Committee has prepared a Request for Qualifications for Mural

Design and Installation based upon RFQs used previously by the Prince George's County Arts and Humanities Council (PGAHC). Ms. Ruff explained the proposed cost of the mural and the process that will be used to select the muralist. Council will select the muralist. Ms. Ruff responded to questions of process, explained use of bond bill funds for the mural, if allowed, use of U of Md students, role of PGAHC and future grants for project. Council did not have any suggested changes to the RFQ.

Investment Policy

Mayor Schomisch introduced the Investment Policy discussion and turned it over to Ms. Ruff. Ms. Ruff explained that a proposed Town investment policy will be brought forward in January. Ms. Ruff then said that a councilmember had suggested that the Town hire a financial advisor and that she would bring financial advisors to Council for interviews if that is how Council would like to proceed. Ms. Ruff then explained that she contacted several municipalities and that none of them have financial advisors. The fees associated with such advisors was one reason identified, as the other municipalities found the interest gained by using a financial advisor was not likely to offset their fees. Most Maryland municipalities, including Landover Hills invest with [spell out] MLGIP. Ms. Ruff did find one municipality on the Eastern Shore that has divided its money among banks. Security, liquidity and rate of return are the three principles used to evaluate investments. The Town Manager sought direction from the Council. Councilmember Over questioned the prudence of not obtaining a higher rate of return because someone somewhere is making money on the Town's investment. Ms. Ruff explained the research that she had done regarding investment vehicles for local governments (including treasury management departments of companies). The Chief suggested contacting Fidelity [full name]. Ms. Ruff also described recent interactions with the bank, which now provides the Town's day-to-day operating account (checking). The Mayor and Council decided to move money from this account to another bank given the lack of service the Town has been receiving. The Mayor and Council also directed the Town Manager to look into investment options.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fund Programs

Mayor Schomisch provided background on the Town's ARPA funding and results of a survey of Town residents. Ms. Ruff provided additional information regarding the survey results. Mayor Schomisch announced a Zoom town hall on January 10, 2022, with residents to see if we can get more information about resident needs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council discussed four programs that are a result of information gained from the resident survey and meetings with Town church and business representatives.

- a. Senior Assistance – Motion to Commit Funds. Upon a review of the program requirements, the Mayor called for a motion to commit funds to the Senior Assistance Program. Councilman Over moved to commit up to \$150,000 for the Senior Assistance Program. Councilwoman Walker seconded the motion. Mayor Schomisch called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously, 4-0.
- b. Business Assistance – Motion to Commit Funds. Two business assistance programs were proposed, a Façade Improvement Grant and a Small Business Assistance Grant program. Mayor Schomisch provided an overview of both programs and what is allowed by the U.S.

Treasury Department. Mayor Schomisch called for a motion to approve the Façade Improvement Grant Program in an amount up to \$250,000. Councilman Over moved approval. Councilwoman Walker seconded the motion. The motion was approved, 4-0. Mayor Schomisch called for a motion regarding the Small Business Assistance Grant program. Councilman Over moved to implement the Small Business Assistance Grant program in an amount up to \$150,000. Councilwoman Walker seconded the motion. Mayor Schomisch called for a vote and the motion was approved unanimously, 4-0.

- c. Childcare Assistance. Ms. Ruff explained that the Town's ARPA consultant has advised that there are many requirements associated with childcare assistance programs that make them time-intensive to administer when the survey had not identified this as a need. The consultant did say the Town could investigate a program that would generally assist the unemployed. Council decided to wait until after the January 10, 2022, resident Zoom town hall to revisit this issue.

2022 [Holiday] Calendar

Ms. Ruff distributed the calendar that is contained in the Personnel Manual with one amendment, the addition of Juneteenth. Mayor Schomisch noted the federal, state and county governments recognize Juneteenth as a holiday. Mayor Schomisch called for a motion to approve the amended Town of Landover Hills 2022 Holiday Calendar. Councilman Over moved approval of the Calendar. Councilwoman Walker seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously, 4-0.

Filling of Vacancy in the Office of Town Councilmember – Ward 2 (Discussion)

Mayor Schomisch announced that the Town received a request from a resident, John Michael Walker, to be appointed to the Town Council to fill the vacant seat in Ward 2. Ms. Ruff explained the Charter requirements for filling Council vacancies and how the vacancy was advertised. There was consensus of Council that the position has been advertised sufficiently without any interest. There was further consensus of Council to move forward with the appointment of John Michael Walker to fill the vacant seat in Ward 2 at the Council's December 20, 2021, meeting.

Public Works Staffing Hours

Councilwoman Ripley stated that she was asked about Public Works employees' hours. A discussion ensued regarding Public Works employees' hours. It was stated that they work from about 5:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. The Council noted that it does not look good not to have Public Works off so early in the day, especially when residents see that they are home so early. They do not need to be working in the dark. Landover Hills Public Works hours should be like other municipal public works departments' hours – 7 a.m. until 3 p.m. Ms. Ruff was instructed to change Public Works' hours to 7 a.m. until 3 p.m. beginning Monday, December 13, 2021.

Upcoming Town Events

Mayor Schomisch announced the Christmas/Santa Parade and Holiday Lights Contest will be on Sunday December 14, 2021, starting at 5 p.m.

Miscellaneous Updates/Announcements

Mayor Schomisch made the following announcements:

- a. Sen. Ben Cardin – Earmark Informational Session for Prince George’s County and Municipal Elected Leaders on December 8, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.
- b. PGCMA’s Legislative Meet & Greet is at Showcase Arena on December 14, 2021, from 6 p.m. until 10 p.m. This is lieu of the annual legislative dinner.
- c. PGCMA’s regular monthly meeting should be December 16, 2021, as there is an election for vice-president and board member.
- d. Town Offices will be closed for the holidays on December 24 and December 31.
- e. Academy of Excellence for Local Government is developing a list and asked all municipal officials who either are in or completed the graduate program (Torchbearer) to let them know their status.

Ms. Ruff announced that the Town received an email from County Councilmember Dannielle Glaros’ office regarding upcoming meetings regarding the new William Wirt and Glenridge Middle Schools on December 8 and 9.

Adjournment

Mayor Schomisch called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Councilman Over and was seconded by Councilwoman Ripley. All voted aye (4-0) and the meeting was adjourned at 9:58 p.m.