



Town Council Meeting Minutes March 18, 2024

Present: Mayor Jeffrey Schomisch, Vice Mayor Jeannette Ripley, Councilmembers Joe Williams, Todd Over and Glenda Johnson. Also present were Town Manager Rommel Pazmino, Chief of Police Robert Liberati, Town Treasurer Fredy Aguilar, Code Enforcement Michael Thompson, Town Public Works James Schad and Michael Fuentes, Town Attorney Karen Ruff. Councilmembers Michael Walker and Kathy Walker were excused.

Call to Order: Mayor Schomisch called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and asked all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of the Agenda: Mayor Schomisch asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. Hearing none, he called for a motion to approve the agenda as written. Councilmember Williams moved to approve the agenda. Councilmember Over seconded. All voted aye to approve the agenda as written.

Approval of the Consent Agenda: Mayor Schomisch asked if there were any additions or corrections to the Consent Agenda. Since there were no additions or corrections Mayor Schomisch asked for a motion to approve the February 20, 2024, Town Council Meeting Minutes and the March 4, 2024, Town Council Workshop Minutes. Councilmember Williams made the motion and Councilmember Over seconded the motion. All voted aye.

Correspondence and Announcements: Mayor Schomisch said he received a letter from the Prince George's Planning Board dated March 12, 2024, stating that the March 7, 2024, Conceptual Site Plan for 7011 Chesapeake Road has been approved and becomes final in thirty days from March 12, 2024.

Reports:

a. Finance Report: Town Treasurer Aguilar presented the finance report. He explained that there has been no activity in the Bank of America account for the past four months and it is now closed. He stated that there has been a drop in deposits to the TD Bank account. Mr. Aguilar gave an update on the ARPA account.

b. Police Report: Chief Liberati presented the police report. He went over the calls for service in February. He stated that there had been calls for possible drag racers in Town. The calls for service regarding drag racing were mainly in Cheverly and a couple in Riverdale. A few of the vehicles had cut through the Town to get to each event. Chief Liberati announced that the Easter Egg Hunt would be on Saturday, March 30th at 10:30 a.m. He stated that the police department has three new police recruits which will begin academy on April 22, 2024. He said these are brand new officers, two will attend the Prince George's County Police Academy and one will attend the Prince George's Municipal Police Academy.

c. Code Enforcement Report: Code Enforcement Officer, Michael Thompson went over the Code Enforcement Report. He said that he has a date for inspection of a rental property on Varnum Street that has received dog complaints. He said that he has been going to the businesses in Town to check for Use and Occupancy Permits. He said that Prince George's County is four to six weeks behind on issuance of U&O permits. He said that out of the businesses he visited, most did not realize the permits had to be posted. He has given those businesses an extension to post their U&O permits. He said that most of the complaints he is receiving lately are about trash receptacles not being properly stored. He has issued violation letters and citations. Mr. Thompson stated that he has a meeting with himself, Prince George's County States's Attorney's Office and Ms. Ruff, the Town Attorney concerning how municipal cases are being handled.

Vice Mayor Ripley asked Town Attorney Ruff if she has heard anything from other municipalities about problems with fines that are paid not being sent to the municipalities. Ms. Ruff said no but she would check on it.

d. Public Works Report: Mayor Schomisch asked about the playground fence progress. Town Manager Pazmino stated that the proposal that was submitted didn't have pictures. He is waiting for that to be submitted with the specs. Public Works Supervisor Jim Schad stated that he has ordered sound strips that will be put on 71st Avenue that appear to be a speed hump. He spoke to Chief Liberati about them and they feel this will assist in slowing traffic down.

Public Comment:

Chief John Roberts from the Landover Hills Volunteer Fire Department stated that the volunteers have moved out of the Landover Hills Fire station and are now at Riverdale Heights.

Unfinished Business: Mayor Schomisch opened the public hearing and read,

a. Public Hearing Regarding the Annexation Resolution (R-01-2024) - A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF LANDOVER HILLS TO ENLARGE THE CORPORATE BOUNDARIES OF THE TOWN OF LANDOVER HILLS BY ANNEXING INTO THE TOWN CERTAIN PROPERTY CONTIGUOUS

AND ADJOINING TO THE TOWN'S EXISTING CORPORATE BOUNDARIES, CONSISTING OF THOSE PROPERTIES LOCATED SOUTHEAST OF ANNAPOLIS ROAD COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS THE CVS PHARMACY (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-2190536), THE COMMUNITY SHOPPING CENTER (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-2190544 AND TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-2190510), EBENEZER CHURCH OF GOD (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-2190528), ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-3308756), THE POST OFFICE (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-2180230), TACO BELL (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-217072), MEDICAL CENTER (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 202221125), BANK OF AMERICA (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-22131106), PARCEL C (SHA PROPERTY; TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-2170629) AND PORTIONS OF ARDWICK-ARDMORE ROAD (50,683 S.F.), BUCHANAN STREET (41,305 S.F.) AND CHESAPEAKE ROAD (36,744 S.F.), ALL OF WHICH COMPRISES ± 17.2025 ACRES.

Mayor Schomisch asked for comment on the Annexation Resolution (R-01-2024).

Darrell Dockery, Ascension Lutheran Church President, asked if Mayor Schomisch received the letter from Ascension concerning the proposed annexation. Mayor Schomisch stated yes. Mr. Dockery stated that he was unaware of the annexation until he picked up a copy of the Town's newsletter in the vestibule of the church. He spoke to Councilmember Mike Walker that they were unaware and they never saw a letter or anything that was sent to the church. Mr. Dockery said he felt this was done underhanded and no one contacted him.

Vice Mayor Ripley asked why the church doesn't want to be included in the annexation.

Mr. Dockery asked what benefits would the church get from it and what does the Town get from it.

Vice Mayor Ripley stated that the Town doesn't receive any benefit as the church pays no taxes. She posed the question again, why are they against it?

Mr. Dockery said that Ascension does pay property taxes and they rent a space on their property, which creates a small tax. He further stated that he objects to having to get additional permits and additional code requirements.

Vice Mayor Ripley stated she was surprised they didn't receive any of the letters that had been sent.

Mr. Dockery stated that they were lost in the mail. He said he is not totally adverse to the annexation but feels they have been pigeon holed.

Kent Nilsson from Ascension asked if the Town has documentation and if they have met the statutory requirements. He also asked about assessed property value of the church.

Town Attorney Ruff stated that yes they had received verification that the statutory requirements have been met. Ms. Ruff stated that they have the documentation and since the church doesn't pay taxes, it is not part of the assessment.

Mr. Dockery stated that he feels the church didn't receive ample opportunity to work with the Town on the annexation.

Mayor Schomisch asked what are the concerns so the Town can see what can be done. He apologized that he personally did not reach out to the church's congregation.

Mr. Nilsson asked what benefits does the church get and why does the Town need to annex them.

Mayor Schomisch asked what was the cost to take Ascension out of the annexation.

Town Manager Pazmino stated that it would delay the annexation another two months and it would be several thousand dollars to survey.

Vice Mayor Ripley stated that everything has to be resubmitted to the State of Maryland, which would include another survey.

Mr. Nilsson stated that he was sorry but Ascension has said over the years that they didn't want to be part of the Town of Landover Hills.

Vice Mayor Ripley said over the many years she has been on Council, she has no knowledge of Ascension being against being part of the Town. She said she knew the shopping center objected a few years ago but they now want to be included.

Mr. Dockery asked again, what benefits the church would get.

Vice Mayor Ripley said, police service, plowing and paving the streets, etc.

Mr. Dockery stated you would have to do that anyway if you annex the post office.

There was further discussion about apartment project that has been proposed.

Mr. Dockery stated that the church needs time to discuss the annexation.

Councilmember Over said he feels a presentation should be made to the church council and congregation.

Sara Washington from 71st Avenue said she saw the notice of annexation in the newsletter. Would it affect Town taxes?

Mayor Schomisch stated it wouldn't affect residential property taxes but it would increase the commercial property in the Town. Mayor Schomisch asked if Ms. Washington noticed an increase in her property taxes during the 2011 annexation.

Chief Liberati stated that he has worked from south county to north county over the past thirty years. He said there is a noticeable difference in the municipalities and the county maintained parts of Prince George's County. He said that the County doesn't have enough resources to give the attention that municipal areas get. He said with the Purple Line coming you will need more access to police and code enforcement.

Mr. Dockery said he has nothing against Landover Hills but not enough time was given to discuss it. He would like it removed from the annexation until they get a pastor.

Mr. Nilsson stated that the entire congregation is aware of the annexation and the church council needs to address this to the congregation.

Mayor Schomisch asked for a motion to continue the hearing to April 1, 2024, and said no action would be taken until after a meeting between the Town and the Ascension Church Council. Councilmember Williams made the motion and Councilmember Over seconded the motion. All voted aye.

Mayor Schomisch continued with unfinished business by reading:

b. Public Hearing Regarding the Annexation Plan Resolution (R-02-2024)

– A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF LANDOVER HILLS ADOPTING AN ANNEXATION PLAN FOR CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY CONSISTING OF 17.2025 +/- ACRES, CONTIGUOUS TO AND ADJOINING THE TOWN OF LANDOVER HILLS' EXISTING CORPORATE BOUNDARIES, LOCATED ON THE SOUTH SOUTHEAST SIDE OF MARYLAND ROUTE 450/ANNAPOLIS ROAD COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS THE CVS PHARMACY (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-2190536), THE COMMUNITY SHOPPING CENTER (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-2190544) AND TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-2190510), EBENEZER CHURCH OF GOD (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-2190528), ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-3308756), THE POST OFFICE (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-2180230), TACO BELL (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-217072), MEDICAL CENTER (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 202221125), BANK OF AMERICA (TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-22131106),

PARCEL C (SHA PROPERTY; TAX ACCOUNT NO.: 20-2170629) AND PORTIONS OF ARDWICK-ARDMORE ROAD (50,683 S.F.), BUCHANAN STREET (41,305 S.F.) AND CHESAPEAKE ROAD (36,744 S.F.) (“THE ANNEXATION AREA”), WHICH PROPERTY IS THE SUBJECT OF AN ANNEXATION INITIATED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF LANDOVER HILLS VIA ANNEXATION RESOLUTION NO. R-01-2024

Mayor Schomisch asked if there was any public comment. Since there was none, he asked for a motion to continue the public hearing to April 1, 2024. Councilmember Over made the motion and Councilmember Williams seconded the motion. All voted aye.

c. Annexation Resolution - continued until April 1, 2024 meeting.

Adjournment: Mayor Schomisch asked for a motion to adjourn the Council meeting. Councilmember Williams made the motion and Councilmember Over seconded the motion. All voted aye. The Council meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.