



Town Council Workshop/Special Meeting¹ Minutes

November 1, 2021

Present: Mayor Jeffrey Schomisch, Vice Mayor Jeannette Ripley, Councilmembers Joe Williams, Kathy Walker, Rommel Pazmino and Todd Over, Town Manager Karen Ruff and Chief Robert Liberati. Dan Baden, a Town consultant, also attended a portion of the meeting via Zoom. There is a vacant Council seat in Ward 2.

Call to Order

Mayor Schomisch called the September 7, 2021, Town Council Workshop/Special Meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The meeting was conducted in person; however, Councilwoman Walker, who was out of town, participated via Zoom.

Approval of the Agenda

Mayor Schomisch asked to amend the Agenda to move Item 8 up to number 3 on the Agenda. Councilman Over moved to amend the Agenda to move Item 8 to Item 3. Vice-Mayor Ripley seconded the motion. Mayor Schomisch called for a vote to approve the amended agenda. The motion was approved 6-0.

Investment Policy²

Mayor Schomisch introduced Item 3 "Investment Policies" recognizing that Dan Baden, the Town's consultant on finances was present to address the item. Town Manager, Karen Ruff, first provided some background on the issue, identifying information provided to the Mayor and Council prior to the meeting (State law, the Town of University Park's Investment Policy, the Town of District Height's Investment Policy and the State of Maryland Investment Policy). Ms. Ruff explained that the Town should re-adopt an Investment Policy. Ms. Ruff then asked Dan Baden to speak to the issue. (At this time, it was noted that there was an audio issue with Zoom. Once the issue was resolved, the meeting continued.) Dan Baden then explained the reason for the State requirement that municipalities have investment policies. Referring to the documents

¹ This meeting is a regularly scheduled Council Workshop Meeting. It is only noted as a Special Meeting because it is also a meeting at which ordinances will be considered for adoption.

² The discussion regarding Item 3, Investment Policy, was interrupted for approximately 9 minutes due to technical difficulties with the Zoom application. Once the item was introduced and discussion began, audio was disrupted and those participating by Zoom could not be heard. Accordingly, the meeting was suspended while the issue was corrected.

provided to Mayor and Council, Mr. Baden explained the various provisions of the investment policies, most of which were similar from one document to another. Mr. Baden suggested that the Town use one of the samples as a template for its policy, noting that he and Ms. Ruff had spoken and believe that University Park's may be the better model to follow given the way it is set out. He further noted that his clients use the Maryland Local Government Investment Pool. He concluded by saying that investment policies are similar from town to town. Mayor Schomisch asked whether specific investments should be identified or whether the Town is limited. Mr. Baden explained the State law reference for approved investments. Town's investments are in the MLGIP. Mr. Baden noted the concern that the Town is not receiving as much of a return on its investments as it would like but noted that the money is held in trust for the public and must be secure. He noted that when the market goes up, the return goes up. Mr. Baden recommended that the Town's regular bank account be collateralized. Council had no questions of Mr. Baden. Councilman Over noted that he would like to do some research and review the materials at greater length. Hearing no further questions from Council, Mr. Baden exited the meeting. Some discussion ensued about obtaining additional information about the Town hiring a financial advisor, someone who can advise about investments, in addition to Mr. Baden. The matter was scheduled for further discussion at the Council's December 6 Workshop.

Ordinances Eligible for Action

- a. Ordinance O-04-2021: Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Landover Hills Amending Chapter 74 "Property Maintenance," §7401 Accumulation of Trash and Tall Yard Growth, Prohibited; Notice to Remove; Removal by Town" and §7402 "Lot Maintenance" to Clarify Residents' Obligations. Mayor Schomisch stated that the Ordinance was introduced and discussed at the Council's October 18 Council meeting and that it is eligible for adoption. He asked if there was any discussion on or questions regarding the Ordinance. No Councilmember having spoken up, the Mayor asked for a motion to adopt Ordinance O-04-2021. Councilwoman Walker moved to adopt Ordinance O-04-2021, which motion was seconded by Councilman Over. No discussion. The Mayor called for a vote. The motion passed 6-0.
- b. Ordinance O-05-2021: An Emergency Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the Town of Landover Hills Amending the Town of Landover Hills FY2022 Budget. Mayor Schomisch stated that the Ordinance was introduced and discussed, line by line, at the Council's October 18 Council meeting and that it is eligible for adoption. He then turned the floor over to Ms. Ruff to discuss the Ordinance. Ms. Ruff stated that she added some clarifying language in the Whereas clauses, but none of the numbers were changed, except on page 12. The total expenses and revenues are correct, but the calculations regarding the difference and the transfer to operating expenses are incorrect. She provided the corrected numbers. She offered that the Council could bring it back for adoption at its November 15 meeting. Council opted to move forward with adopting the Ordinance. Mayor Schomisch asked for a motion to approve Ordinance O-05-2021 as amended at the meeting (with the two corrected numbers). Councilman Williams moved to adopt the Ordinance as amended. Councilman Pazmino seconded the motion. Mayor Schomisch called for a vote and the motion passed 6-0.

November: Municipal Government Works Month

Mayor Schomisch announced that November is Municipal Government Works Month and that to recognize November as such, the Council issued a Proclamation, the Town will post about events that it has been involved with (ie. Faith & Blue, etc.), New Hope Academy will be coming to Town Hall to hear from Town representatives about Town government, and the Town is flying the Maryland Municipal League's Municipal Government Works flag.

Proposed Park Regulations

Mayor Schomisch introduced the item and turned the floor over to Ms. Ruff to explain. Ms. Ruff explained that Public Works requested signs to install in Town parks identifying certain activities that are not allowed in Town parks. The request comes as a result of observations made by Public Works regarding people sleeping in the parks, etc. The Chief requested that the Town have something in its Code that he could cite to when asking people to refrain from those activities. Accordingly, staff requests that the Mayor and Council adopt an ordinance establishing rules for Town parks. Before the Council was a draft of proposed rules. The Mayor shared his comments and suggestions as to revisions to the document (questioning "designee", his/her, watercraft, restrooms, etc.). Councilwoman Walker questioned the use of skateboarding, etc. in the Town Hall parking lot. The Mayor stated it is addressed in the Ordinance.

American Rescue Plan Act Fund Programs

- a. Senior Assistance. Ms. Ruff explained that the response to the Town survey indicates that the seniors in the Town need some assistance to pay for items such as improvements to their houses, increases in the cost of food, energy and gas. Ms. Ruff stated that she was seeking Council approval for this program. Mayor Schomisch pointed out the income limitations in the proposed program.
- b. Business Assistance. Mayor Schomisch advised Council of the meeting that he and the Town Manager had with representatives of Town businesses. Businesses are having trouble getting people in the door. The concept of coupons enticing people to enter businesses is an idea to address the situation. The purpose of the program is not to make people whole, but rather to assist people with recovery. The façade improvement program in Council's packet would help property owners. The Town could try to subsidize pay to employees – ie. make up the difference between what the employer pays and what competitors are able to pay. The Mayor noted that the Town would have to be careful not to duplicate the County program. The Town received a response from about 10% of the businesses in Town. Any coupon program should be done using a booklet with each coupon having an expiration date. Income and residency verification were discussed.
- c. Child Care Assistance. This program would help those who are unemployed to get a job by paying for child care costs for them to go on a job interview and for the first 4 weeks of their job so that they can obtain some income from which to pay child care expenses thereafter. The question has been asked of Mr. Himler whether the child care provided must be licensed.

Upcoming Town Events

- a. Veterans Day - Mayor Schomisch reminded everyone that the Town Veterans Day Ceremony is November 11, 2021 at Rinck Park at 11:00 a.m. Ms. Ruff advised that the County Executive is not able to attend. She then announced the elected officials who will be attending, the guest speaker and the master of ceremonies, Todd Over. Royal Rangers will present the colors. There will be a trumpeter who play a medley of the branches of service hymns and taps.
- b. Christmas – Breakfast with Santa/Parade and Holiday Lights Contest. This Christmas there will be a Parade and Holiday Lights Contest on Sunday December 19 at 5:00 p.m.

Miscellaneous Updates/Announcements

- a. Prince George's County Municipal Association – November 18 Meeting. Mayor Schomisch announced that there will be an election for at least one Board member on that date. The Council agreed to attend the meeting in the usual fashion – at Town Hall with dinner provided at 6:00 p.m. Five of the Councilmembers, the Chief and Town Manager will attend. The meeting is at 7 p.m.
- b. Holiday Closures. Town Hall will be closed on Veterans Day, Thanksgiving day and the day after Thanksgiving, December 24 and December 31.
- c. Clean-up Day Review. Mayor Schomisch stated that the event went well. About 12 vehicles were turned away because the people were not Town residents. Less collected. Not all dumpsters were filled. It would be better to issue newsletter closer in time to the event. Councilwoman Walker stated that newsletter should be more consistent in their issuance and distribution. It should not be sporadic.
- d. Parking regulations were distributed for review by Council. The regulations are Town provisions, County regulations and State law provisions. This matter will be scheduled for discussion at the Council's December 6 Workshop meeting.
- e. Review of Halloween Truck or Treat. Mayor Schomisch described the event and that approximately 40 children attended. Chief Liberati added that the Town vehicles were decorated and that approximately 500 bags of candy and little toys were distributed. Ms. Ruff recommended that the event be longer than 30 minutes next year. Ms. Ruff also stated she thought that there were as many as 65 in attendance. Music next year would nice too.
- f. Town Manager, Karen Ruff, announced that Jackie Villela was hired as the Town's Bilingual Office Assistant.

Adjournment

Mayor Schomisch called for a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Councilman Williams and was seconded by Councilman Over. All voted aye (6-0) and the meeting was adjourned at 9:02 p.m.