



## **Town Council Meeting Minutes**

November 20, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

**Present:** Mayor Jeff Schomisch, Vice Mayor Jeannette Ripley, Councilmembers Kathy Walker, and Mike Walker. Also in attendance were Town Manager Rommel Pazmino, Chief of Police Robert Liberati and Town Attorney Karen Ruff.

**Call to order:** Mayor Schomisch called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:** Mayor Schomisch said there will be a change on the agenda. Number 4, Approval of the Consent Agenda would be removed for this meeting so that Council can review the minutes. Number 4 will now be a Zoom meeting with Obvio, a company presenting stop sign traffic enforcement.

**Zoom Meeting with Obvio -** Mayor Schomisch turned the meeting over to Chief Liberati. Chief Liberati spoke about a new type of traffic enforcement for stop signs. Dhruv Maheshwari is the CEO of Obvio and will show a video and answer questions. Chief Liberati provided the following information:

- Obvio is a company offering stop sign monitoring through video enforcement and driver education.
- There are two municipalities currently using this company, Town of Cottage City and the Town of Colmar Manor.
- The enforcement equipment is a trailer which houses a video camera, computer and message board. License plate information is gathered. Any stop sign violation shows on the message board to alert the driver that they made either an unsafe stop (rolling) or no stop.
- The video camera runs 24/7, which provides security footage.
- Due to legislation, violations are not issued at this time.
- Warning letters may be issued or officers using real time computer data can stop the offender.
- This is a type of proactive enforcement to promote public education.
- This will help to change driver's habits.
- A video was shown from NBC Channel 4 News. The video showed a vehicle running a stop sign and the message board alerting the driver of their failure to stop.
- Pamphlets were given to the Mayor and Council for review.

- A six week demo can be scheduled at 3 locations or 1 location starting at \$2,900. If the Town decides to purchase this type of system, the \$2,900 will be submitted toward the final cost.

Vice Mayor Ripley asked how long information is stored. Chief Liberati answered, two years. If there is a problem with the camera, who fixes it? Mr. Maheshwari stated that they travel from California to fix it.

Mr. Maheshwari explained how the program works. He said that he would speak with the Chief and determine where problems with stop sign violations are and the demo would start at those locations.

Mayor Schomisch asked how far back do the units set? The units at Cottage City set back 40 feet. Satellite view of the Town streets would be used and reviewed with the Chief to determine set back.

Chief Liberati asked if the information from the tag reader provides make and model. Answer - this is not available yet.

Mayor Schomisch asked if speed detection is available. Answer - not yet but it should be within a couple of months.

Mayor Walker asked if Council had any questions. Councilmember Kathy Walker asked about the cost. Chief Liberati stated that it is in the pamphlet that has been provided. Mr. Maheshwari explained the details of cost.

Councilmember Mike Walker asked if the camera can detect stop sign violations for left or right turns. Answer - Yes and message board can be put on left or right side of the trailer.

Chief Liberati thanked Mr. Maheshwari. Mayor Schomisch stated that there is a definite interest in ways to stop this type of violation.

### **Correspondence and Announcements -**

- Mayor Schomisch stated that there were about 10-15 people in attendance of the PGCMA meeting held at Town Hall in November.
- Castle is doing 5G work but not in our area at this time.
- PGCMA will be meeting at the Show Place Arena on December 7th. Anyone interested in attending should tell Rommel.
- Mayor Schomisch attending a Zoom meeting concerning the County's Bag Bill. There will be no plastic bags, only paper or reusable.

## **Reports -**

**Finance Report** was given by Fredy, the Town Treasurer.

**Police Report** was given by Chief Liberati. He spoke briefly about the children that were struck and killed in Riverdale while going to school.

Chief Liberati stated that an arrest was made for an assault with a knife. Another arrest was made for marijuana. He also added that there was a shooting a Legend's with one arrest made.

Chief Liberati announced that there would be a hearing with the Nuisance Abatement Board concerning 6545 Annapolis Road, DMV Event Center. The police department would be providing video evidence of alcohol use.

Councilmember Kathy Walker asked if the Honda that struck the pedestrian near Ardmore-Ardwick had been found. Chief stated yes. Councilmember Mike Walker asked about the Other Calls on the police report. Chief Liberati explained.

**Code Enforcement Report** - Mike Thompson spoke about the need to update the Code. He explained the problem with expectation of privacy from privacy fences. Judges will not accept pictures if violations are behind privacy fences. They were installed with an expectation of privacy. This is causing a problem resolving some issues in Town.

Mike gave an update on the rat infestation at the Crestview Shopping Center. He stated that he had some difficulty with the new property manager not responding. The manager at 7-11 got their corporate office involved and the property manager started responding. He said that traps have been placed, the burrows have been filled in and there has been a change in dumpsters. He said that there is still a problem with debris behind the shopping center. Mike and an inspector from Prince George's County went to America's Best Wings for an inspection. There was a definite sign of rats, the P.G. County Inspector will be sending out a letter.

Mike stated that there is still a problem with residents obtaining a County permit. Chief Liberati added that there was an eviction on Buchanan Street and Mike did a great job having the debris removed.

Vice Mayor Ripley asked about the leaves in the street. Mike said that Public Works Supervisor, Jim Schad had been in contact with Professional Landscaping and they would be starting to go through the Town in the beginning to middle of December after more leaves had dropped.

Vice Mayor Ripley said that the house at 3808 71st Avenue were putting their leaves in the street. A discussion about people putting leaves in the street continued.

**Public Works Report** - Vice Mayor Ripley pointed out the misspelling of Rinck Park. She complimented the blue meeting signs.

**Public Comment** -

**Joyce Adams, 7010 Taylor St.**, stated she is having issues with a neighbor's dogs. She said they let them out in the front yard which is not fenced. She said that the back yard is fenced. She said she and her family are terrified of these dogs and asked what the leash law stated. The problem dogs are at 7008 Taylor Street.

Mike Thompson stated that the best course of action would be to file a complaint with the Animal Control Commission. The County at this time is not acting on the Pitbull Ordinance due to a pending lawsuit.

Chief Liberati said to call the non-emergency number so that there is a record of the animal complaints.

**Chief Roberts, Landover Hills Volunteer Fire Department**, said that the meeting with the Prince George's County Fire Chief has been delayed due to the holidays. He also stated that as of November 14, 2023, any public safety person living in Prince George's County will receive a property tax credit.

**Unfinished Business** - Mayor Schomisch stated that **Ordinance O-04-2023 Amending the Code of the Town of Landover Hills, Chapter 74 "Property Maintenance," 7402 "Lot Maintenance"** to add restrictions to outdoor storage would be an update to add that you cannot store items outdoors under a tarp. The Mayor turned the topic over to the Town Attorney Karen Ruff. Ms. Ruff stated that this keep up with the Prince George's County which states that items stored outdoors must be under a roof. A tarp isn't under roof and is an unroofed area. Mayor Schomisch asked for a motion to introduce Ordinance O-02-2023. Vice Mayor Ripley made a motion to introduce Ordinance O-02-2023. Councilmember Mike Walker, seconded the motion. All voted aye. This will be introduced in the December 2023 meeting.

**Mayor Schomisch moved onto the next topic, the Personnel Manual Chapter 6 "Leave Policies" update.** He turned over the meeting to the Town Attorney, Ms. Ruff. The current Personnel Manual, Section 6-12 addresses the Family Medical Leave Act. This will be moved to Section 6-13 and Section 6-12 will cover Sick and Safe Leave. A printout of Draft #1 was provided to Mayor and Council. Some of the highlights are:

- This is necessary to align with the State of Maryland.
- It covers some of the FMLA
- It can be used for mental or physical illness, injury, or to obtain medical care for the employee or a family member. It can be used for maternity or paternity leave, or if the

absence of work is necessary due to domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking committed against the employee or family member.

Ms. Ruff explained how it is earned through the number of hours. Councilmember Kathy Walker asked how it would be incorporated with the current FMLA. Ms. Ruff explained.

Vice Mayor Ripley asked if this gives a status that the employee can be off without job loss? Ms. Ruff stated yes.

Councilmember Mike Walker asked if this is a revised version of current manual. Ms. Ruff said correct.

Town Manager Pazmino said so this doesn't affect the sick leave accumulation. Ms. Ruff said correct. She said that the State of Maryland is attempting to protect employees of jobs that don't fall under the FMLA.

Vice Mayor Ripley asked if some are exempt due to their size and the number of employees. Ms. Ruff, said yes.

Ms. Ruff stated that when you decide you want to proceed there is a resolution attached.

Mayor Schomisch said that this seems good and it aligns with the State law. Ms. Ruff affirmed that the current manual already has FMLA and employees are accruing leave and this is an unpaid leave.

Mayor Schomisch said that this will be brought as a resolution at the next meeting.

Mayor Schomisch moved to the next topic of **Animal Ordinance Draft Review**. Ms. Ruff suggested some of the wording (Prince George's County Maryland Code of Ordinances, Subtitle-3. Division 4 Animal Control Enforcement) in the title of 601 to section A.

There was a question about municipal officers enforcing County Code. This will be checked.

Vice Mayor Ripley asked what municipalities have agreements with the County to enforce through zoning authority. It is believed that the City of Bowie, the City of Greenbelt and the City of Laurel do. Discussion continued about enforcement.

Section C has no changes.

Section D addition of danger or a wording is approved.

Section 602 Definitions, the wording the definition of a pet is included as an animal should be removed. The remainder of this section is approved.

Section 603 - add the additional section 12. Under section C correct the spelling of hoarding.

Section 604 - there was a lot of discussion of the number of animals. Ms. Ruff will look into this section and do an analysis of the Town of Landover Hills and Prince George's County Animal Ordinance compare.

Section 605 - There was a lot of discussion on running at large. Ms. Ruff will come up with a definition of confinement.

Section 606 - No change.

Section 607 - Section B, the wording ground glass will be removed and replaced with dangerous materials.

Section 608 - Discussion about bees and beehives. This will be removed from prohibited animals.

Section 609 - No change.

Section 610 - valid and current will be left in.

Section 611 - no change.

Section 612 - no change.

Section 613 - the wording of provided will be removed and changed to required.

Section 614 - no change.

Section 615 - Under Section B notification will be to the Town or County police Department. Town Administrator will be removed.

Section 616 - Discussion about filing complaints. Animal Services Division will be changed to Commission. The civil or criminal charges will be checked into by the Town Attorney. All other changes in red will be kept.

**New Business** -

a) Stop-sign Camera System. The zoom meeting was held under #4 of the consent agenda. Vice Mayor Ripley suggested that this be tabled until March so that the updates the company is trying to do can be accomplished. This will also give time to put it in the newsletter. There was some discussion about changing the speed limit.

b) Police Policy Review Expense Request - Chief Liberati explained that a few of the police department's general orders have been updated since 2016 but the entire manual needs to be gone through. Lexipol will do this over the course of a year, reviewing two policies a week and meeting with the Chief and other staff. Lexipol also offers:

- Updates to keep up new legislation
- All updates will be distributed to officers with verification
- Answer questions about policy changes
- Keep record of all officer verification of receipt of updates
- Offers a training module with numerous topics

Chief Liberati will check into a sole source contract. This will be continued at the next meeting.

Mike Walker stated that he had a copy of an email and a handwritten letter in his meeting packet that was not addressed. Mike Thompson explained that this was in reference to an animal problem on Varnum Street.

Vice Mayor Ripley stated that MML will be holding a State of Municipalities.

Mayor Schomisch accepted motions to adjourn the meeting.