

BOARD OF TOWN COMMISSIONERS

WORK SESSION TELECONFERENCE

January 11, 2022 - 5:15 P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioner Mary F. Chance
Commissioner Paula S. Etting
Commissioner Erin S. Hughes
Commissioner Donna L. Kahoe
L. Jesse Bane, Town Administrator
Trish Heidenreich, Director of Economic Development
Stephen Kline, Director of Public Works
Michael Krantz, Director of Administration
Lisa Moody, Director of Finance
Charles Moore, Chief of Police
Patti Parker, Community & Public Relations Manager
Kevin Small, Director of Planning

ABSENT: Commissioner Kevin M. Bianca

OTHERS: Joan Suitt, Recording Secretary

The Director of Administration advised the objective of the teleconference is to conduct normal business of the Town of Bel Air during the COVID pandemic and allows for social distancing.

The Director of Administration reviewed the protocol for the meeting and reminded to identify yourself before speaking.

Roll Call

The Director of Administration conducted the roll call. Those present are listed above. Joining the teleconference was Josh Forth, Michelle Ellis, and Elizabeth Janney, from the Bel Air Patch.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

The Town Administrator requested additions/corrections to the Agenda.

Additions:

- Discussion on Sign Issues
- Introduce New Employee - Michelle Ellis

Josh Forth, Technology Manager, advised Michelle Ellis began employment in the Communication/Technology Department last week. Michelle is a graduate of Towson University and is off to an excellent start and is a big help.

Michelle lives in the Town of Bel Air and is happy to be working here. Michelle advised she is learning a lot and has met great people.

The Town Administrator welcomed Michelle to the team.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Recognition of Health Care Workers

The Town Administrator informed Colin Ward from Upper Chesapeake Hospital sent out emails regarding some type of recognition for the hospital workers.

The Town Administrator advised the Town has recognized health workers on the Town's marquee and it may be appropriate to hang a banner in front of the Armory. The Town Administrator looks at the hospital today as a warzone and the staff as soldiers who are putting themselves in harms way.

The Town Administrator would like to honor these heroes and it may be worth going beyond what the Town usually does in situations like this. The Town Administrator advised a letter was sent to the Commissioners and himself from an elected official who attended a meeting with Lyle Sheldon. The elected official is suggesting the Town use ARPA funding to provide money for the hospital to hire staff.

The Town Administrator spoke with Mr. Sheldon and asked what the issues involve. Mr. Sheldon stated that hiring was not necessarily the issue. The Town Administrator recommends talking to other Municipalities, Harford County, and the hospital to see what may be appropriate and make whatever is done a team effort.

Commissioner Chance stated the hospital reaches out to the entire County and we need to reach out to others for partnering input.

The Community & Public Relations Manager spoke to friends who are in the nursing profession who shared they are being treated poorly by people vaccinated or not. The Community & Public Relations Manager does not know if giving money would fix the problem. The Community & Public Relations Manager would like to see the message go out encouraging kindness.

Commissioner Kahoe likes the idea to target what the workers need to help in this situation.

The Chief of Police informed the Police Department has received care packages or food from residents/businesses and was very appreciated.

Commissioner Hughes agrees getting feedback from hospital staff is the best way to go. The hospital staff have dealt with this for two years and would help if the Town could do something that makes a difference.

The Town Administrator will meet with Mr. Ward to discuss what their staff may think is appropriate.

Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Priorities Discussion

The Town Administrator sent an email to the Commissioners asking for their budget priorities for FY 2023. The Director of Finance has been working on the budget and needs this information.

The Director of Finance asked the Commissioners to bring ideas/projects that are priorities to the Work Session on February 1st.

Commissioner Etting inquired about the amount of ARPA funds the Town expects to receive and recommends spending as much ARPA funds as possible on the Police/Town Hall project. The Director of Finance advised the Town will receive just shy of 10 million and will use 3.3 or 3.4 million for the Town Hall addition.

The Director of Finance reported the Town borrowed 8 million for the project and with furniture, fixtures, permits, testing, etc. it brings the cost to it over \$11 million. The Director of Finance stated some Capital Reserve money is available.

The Town Administrator advised the Director of Finance is putting together a priority list from Department Heads on where the ARPA funds should be spent and will be looking for input from the Commissioners.

TENATIVE AGENDA FOR TOWN MEETING (Tuesday, January 18, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.)

New Business:

Resolution 1178-22 Amended Harford County Growth Report

The Director of Planning advised the Town is required to pass a Resolution every six months that is keyed on school attendance areas. The report will come before the Commissioners during the January 18th Town meeting.

Currently, Bel Air Elementary, Homestead/Wakefield Elementary and Bel Air Middle are over capacity or will be within the next three years. The Director of Planning informed our Town Code was adjusted that if the attendance area abuts an under-capacity area there is an ability to

redistrict or receive a waiver. Currently there is no effect on development for the Town. If it becomes an issue, it will affect someone wanting approval for residential development of over 5 units.

STAFFING UPDATE:

The Director of Administration reported:

- Deputy Chief - position posted, and resumes received.
- Part-time Police Communications Officer/Dispatcher - creating flexible staffing to cover Saturday/Sunday plus additional hours to cover vacations/absence or other staffing needs. This will reduce overtime.
- DPW Laborer, Construction Worker, Equipment Operator - to be posted again next week.

The Director of Public Works informed of a meeting Friday to discuss a compensation package for positions the Town is having a hard time to fill.

- Police Officer (2 positions) - looking at internal candidates.
- Promotional processes - for Corporals and Sergeants.
- Accounting Clerk - began employment yesterday.

Commissioner Etting feels it is important to find out how much money people are leaving for and how much more is needed to be competitive.

CALENDAR:

The January/February/March calendars were sent out. Additions/corrections should be sent to Ruth Seitler.

MISCELLANEOUS:

COVID-19 Update

The Director of Administration shared recent announcements/communications regarding COVID with all Department Heads, employees and Commissioners. The Town is keeping a close eye on the OSHA emergency temporary standard and the status with the Supreme Court. The policy was passed for a COVID OSHA standard and Town is moving towards gathering information needed to create a log of vaccination status and those who tested positive. Also, to be created is a policy to test on a weekly basis if not vaccinated. This policy will move forward if the Supreme Court endorses the Biden OSHA emergency standard.

The Director of Administration notified on February 9th the Town will begin PCR testing weekly and thanked the Director of Public Works for creating a testing location away from others. There is a small number of rapid tests available for employees only.

The Town Administrator acknowledged the Director of Administration for his efforts in putting this together.

Cable Television Franchise Fees

Commissioner Etting advised emails went to Commissioners and some staff and recommends it is worth taking a look at auditing. Commissioner Etting advised sometimes cable companies leave out fees. The Town needs to look at the agreement to find out what is the base number that is generated and what addresses the cable company is using to provide money back to the Town.

The Director of Administration informed there is a Verizon franchise agreement, and the Town will be negotiating a new agreement next year. The Director of Administration stated this is important and is happy to help in any way. The Director of Administration recommends looking at this internally first and then determine the need for may need outside assistance.

The Director of Finance stated the rates are audited in both franchise agreements but nothing has been done by the Town in the past. The Director of Finance advised auditing would take an enormous amount of time internally especially with not knowing what to look for. The recommendation is to use consultants because they are the experts. The Director of Finance stated MML may be aware of this consultant or others who municipalities have used. The Director of Finance feels it is worth taking the next step but mentions Bel Air addresses are not just in Town limits and she wants to look into this further.

Commissioner Etting recommends finding out experiences from Maryland, Harford County and municipalities. The Director of Finance advised this can be done and will reach out to MML.

Comprehensive Plan Update

The Director of Planning displayed the Comprehensive Plan. The Planning Commission approved the plan on January 6th, and it has been forwarded to

the Town Commissioners. The Comprehensive Plan is updated every 10 years and is reviewed at the 5-year mark. The Director of Planning stated the final draft is posted on the Town's website and there are a few changes the Planning Commission made that will be updated this week. The Planning Commission had three public meetings during this process. Comments were collected by focus groups, two public input meetings and from GIF. The Director of Planning reviewed some of the feedback.

Commissioner Kahoe inquired about the right hand turn from Bond Street to Rt. 1. The Director of Planning informed that will be studied when looking at transportation. Commissioner Kahoe wanted information on chickens. The Director of Planning advised several cities allow chickens if there is an adequate area for them and the owners have gone through a permitting process. This is a part of sustainability and urban living but few people have made comments over the years.

The Director of Planning reviewed:

Sensitive Areas - not much change. Discussed highlighted areas to protect streams and the Watershed Implementation Plan. There are projects to protect rare, threatened or endangered species. The Sensitive Areas implementation plan was reviewed.

Historic Preservation - additional research made, and more properties were identified for designation. There were also district areas identified around the Court House, Main Street, and an area on Maulsby Street. The Town would like to streamline the HPC review process and expand property tax rebates for improvements to historically designated structures.

Community Facilities - map basically the same.

Priorities:

1. Upper Chesapeake Medical Center
2. Thomas Street - needs improvement and has been on the books for a while.
3. New Park - Northwest Bel Air.
4. Homeless Shelter - homeless shelter is in Belcamp and people come to Bel Air for services and then return to Belcamp. Create small shelter that would accommodate people while in Bel Air.
5. Expand or enhance parks.

Goals:

- Ensure public safety in Town.
- Support development and maintenance of park system.
- Cultural and informational resources and services for youth and seniors.
- Encourage convenient and high-quality medical care for the Town.
- Provide educational opportunity.
- Continued implementation of Community-Based Policing.

Water Resources - difficult to obtain information. Highlighted areas in yellow limits zones because of contamination of wells. The Town will work with Harford County, and this will be a priority. Winters Run Watershed could be a big problem for the Town if something happens to contaminate our water source. The Town needs to make sure the uses and development within the watershed protects our water. A big percentage of this area is in the County and they would have to agree with any type of change.

Stormwater Management - The map shows:

- Uncontrolled areas.
- Red area - regulations from 1984 - 2000.
- Green area - managed from 2000 - 2010.
- Blue area - controlled under current regulations.

The Director of Public Works advised the Town is doing well in stormwater management and moving forward in a positive manner. The Director of Planning informed the Town is way ahead of other municipalities. The Director of Public Works stated the amount of storm water managed will change every year as redevelopment occurs and gave the example of the Sears property.

Sanitary Sewer - map shows

- Yellow dot - location of pumping stations.
- Red circles - two properties that have septic.
- One property certified as Harford County near St. Matthews Church.

Goals:

- Reestablish regular and clear communication with Harford County and Maryland American Water.

- Wellhead and watershed protection.
- Examine stormwater management for Fee-in-Lieu or flexibility.

Vehicle and Transit - comprehensive study completed in 2016 that created improvement areas and some have been completed.

- Short Term (2025)
 1. MD 24 & Bel Air Bypass - On State Highway's Consolidated Transportation Plan. Create double left turn and double left receiving lane going southbound on bypass.
 2. US Bus 1 & Tollgate Road - improvements when the area is further developed.
 3. MD 22 & John Carroll School entrance - traffic problem occurs in morning.
 4. Marketplace Drive & Commercial Entrance - intersections become a roundabout that will help with stacking, but its construction requires cooperation from property owners.
- Medium Term (2030)
 1. MD 24 between Boulton Street & MacPhail Road - general improvements and the possibility of allowing right turns to right throughs.
 2. Connect East & West MacPhail Road - Homestead/Wakefield Schools will be constructed into one facility. This connection has been on the Town's map since 1969 and we would like to see the connection happen because of transporting emergencies not only from the school but down MacPhail Road as well.
 3. US Bus. 1 between MD 24 & Tollgate Road - eliminate some extra turn lanes.
 4. US Bus. 1 & Churchville Road - on State Highways list and addresses what Commissioner Kahoe was speaking to earlier. The Town would like the intersection to go straight and eliminate the north portion of Rt. 1 between KFC and Bond Street. It will create a safer intersection for pedestrians.

Commissioner Kahoe stated there are a lot of children walking and riding bikes to Bel Air High School and know this will be very helpful.

5. Atwood Road & Marketplace Drive - possible roundabout.
 6. US Bus. 1 between MD 24 & Bond Street - reduce access lanes along Baltimore Pike.
- Long Term (2040)
 1. Bel Air Bypass & MD 24 - conduct a flyover.

2. US Bus. 1 Corridor & Kelly Ave Connection - connection one way but residents have opposed in the past.

Road Classification Map:

- Main roads and State roads - want to identify roads that are commercial collectors and residential collectors because of parking issues.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Map:

- Continue to create bike and pedestrian lanes. Work with Harford County for a connection from Town to Harford Community College.
- Connection/ways to Downtown without using cars.
- Working with Police Department for special requirements for enforcement in the pedestrian zone.

Public Parking:

- Parking in Town identified on map.

Permit Parking:

- Map color coded based on restrictions.

Goals:

- Implement US Rt. 1 & MD Rt. 22 Corridor Study recommendations.
- Address practical limitation of parking in Town.
- Restrict parking impacts to residential areas.
- Update 2013 Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan.
- Prioritize pedestrian movement over vehicles when reviewing Traffic Impact studies.
- Encourage the use of alternative modes of transportation - electric and hybrid vehicles.
- Support mass transit - make people aware.
- Review alternatives for individual metered parking. This is done through the telephone and is not a cheap alternative.

The Director of Public Works stated each month there is a fee for the 5G service per meter and stepping up to this would cost the Town a lot. These costs would prohibit the Town moving in this direction.

Housing Map:

- Anything not colored is not residential.
- Yellow - single family.
- Tan color - townhome/duplex.
- Dark brown - multi-family.
- Blue - group homes, halfway house, assisted living, nursing home.
- Bring in mixed use residential in Town.
- Accessory Dwelling Units (cottage housing for family) on property. It needs approval and we will be looking to make it more flexible.
- High density residential - Hickory Avenue (where it meets Moores Mill).
- High density residential - Williams Street (property beyond Spartan Surfaces).
- Homeless Shelter.
- Incentives to provide affordable housing options.

Commissioner Etting asked is there a reason where the homeless shelter is marked on the map. The Director of Planning advised the area is an underutilized parcel and not in downtown. There may be other areas that could provide an opportunity. Commissioner Etting wanted to know if a homeless shelter was in prior Comprehensive Plans. The Director of Planning advised it was written in but never shown on the map.

Commissioner Etting inquired about the number of homeless people residing in Town. The Director of Planning advised the last estimate several years ago was 30-35 people and that may have changed. Commissioner Etting asked if the shelter Harford County provides not sufficient. The Director of Planning stated residents have to leave the shelter each day and take the bus to Bel Air for services.

Commissioner Chance knows the Riverside Shelter created issues when their residents came into Bel Air. Many of those residents would have liked to go back but transportation became too expensive for the non-profit. The Director of Planning advised there was a structure called Rainbow House

that was faith-based and provided a place people could go during the day. This eventually did not work. The Director of Planning can work through the language.

Economic Development map:

- Shows undeveloped or underutilized property. Most properties are underutilized and present an opportunity especially in or around downtown.
- Priority List -
 1. Harford Mall, Bel Air Plaza, Tollgate Plaza, Town Center and retail shops.
 2. Bond Street & Downtown - Bond Street developed.
 3. Ellendale Area - Industrial area developed.
 4. Upper Chesapeake Medical Center
 5. Baltimore Pike Retail/Service - make area more efficient and attractive.

The Director of Economic Development stated the Four Corners area is definitely the priority. The second priority is Thomas/Bond Street to create the connectivity for a walkable nature trail between this area and retail establishments.

Low to Moderate Income Area:

- Now only located in North Bel Air and these limits grant sources.

Main Street Maryland:

- Slight change and includes areas in North Bel Air.

Goals:

- Assist with the enhancement of Harford Mall, Four Corners and Bond Street.
- Promote incentives for new businesses and support existing businesses to remain.
- Review and provide future public parking in downtown.
- Incentives for Mixed Use Development.
- Retention of existing State and County Government services.
- Continue support for the Farmers Market.

Arts and Entertainment District:

- Market Bel Air as a cultural, artistic and recreation destination for visitors and residents.
- Establish artist living quarters in the downtown area.

Tentative Schedule for Comprehensive Plan

- Review at Work Session - January 11th and February 1st.
- Introduction of Resolution - February 7th.
- Public Hearing, review and approve by Town Board - February 22nd.

Director of Planning requested Commissioners to email with any questions or concerns. The Town Board can now make minor changes without sending it back to the Planning Commission.

Construction Update

The Director of Public Works sent out reports on what took place the last two weeks and what will happen the next two weeks. The Director of Public Works stated if the weather cooperates, you will see block going in for foundation, elevator shaft and footers. The Director of Public Works will keep Commissioners up-to-date during Work Sessions. The Director of Public Works is confident in how things are going and the decision made today was not putting slats in the fence so people can see what is being accomplished.

Commissioner's Report

The Director of Finance emailed the current report to the Commissioners. The report gives a snapshot of the Commissioners' budget and will be reviewed quarterly. Email the Director of Finance with any questions.

Sign Issues

Commissioner Etting has some concern regarding duration limits on political signs and informed Baltimore City and Baltimore County stopped enforcing. In 2007, there was a Federal/District Court case where the County lost and they now have a footnote in their law about enforcing.

Commissioner Etting recommends Mr. Keenan look at the Code and move forward from there.

The Director of Planning and the Town Administrator have been talking with Mr. Keenan and concluded the Town should reach out to a higher authority for understanding. Mr. Keenan is reaching out to the Association of Municipal Attorneys and most likely language revision will be needed.

The Director of Planning notified this will come before the Commissioners when the Development Regulations are looked at in the next several months.

Snow Removal

The Town Administrator thanked DPW staff for taking care of the roads during the snow event. Commissioner Etting thanked DPW for the snow clearing and picking up her trash and recycling on time.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

None.

ADJOURNMENT:

With no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Abstained: Commissioner Bianca

Approved: January 18, 2022

Signature on file

Donna L. Kahoe, Vice Chair
Board of Town Commissioners

Signature on file

Michael L. Krantz, Town Clerk