

COMMISSIONERS MEETING

October 11, 2011

LOCATION

Commissioners Meeting was held in the meeting room of the Community Services Building on October 11, 2011. President Dunbar called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

PRESENT

Commissioners present were Peter Dunbar, Carole Abruzzese and R. Gordon Graves. Town Attorney Brynja Booth and a Star Democrat representative were in attendance. There were approximately twenty five (25) people in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of September 27, 2011 were approved as distributed.

MUNICIPAL ELECTED OFFICIALS EVENT

President Dunbar announced that he had attended a day on Capitol Hill on October 4th with Senator Ben Cardin. The meeting was held with the Maryland Delegation. President Dunbar commented that it is a very worthwhile tour to take of the Capitol Visitor Center.

MAINTENANCE REPORT

Scott Delude gave the Maintenance Report that consisted of the following:

1. The new backhoe is in the shop for repairs to the 'extend-a-hoe' feature. All repairs are under warranty and the backhoe should be back in service next week.
2. The refacing of "J Dock" project has been awarded to Living Eco Systems located in Trappe, MD. Work will begin shortly on the pilings and bulkhead.
3. The "Pork Alley" signs have been ordered.
4. The Public Works Department rebuilt the flow valve that controls the lagoon system. This valve has been broken for thirteen (13) years and the flow has been controlled by removal or adding of rings to control the flow. The cost for repairs were \$500 and the valve is working the way it was designed to operate.

President Dunbar requested that Scott call the State Highway District Engineer to schedule a meeting to discuss the work on the ditch in front of the Community Center.

POLICE REPORT

Chief Maxwell gave the Police Report that consisted of the following:

- One Check the Welfare (all o.k.)
- One Suspicious Motor Vehicle (ID and moved on)
- Ten Police Information
- One Alarm (Malfunction)

Chief Maxwell announced that trick/treating will be held on October 31st from 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

1993 Ford

Chief Maxwell commented that a letter was received from the Oxford Fire Company requesting that the 2003 Ford Crown Vic be donated to the fire company. The car would be used for members who attend training, saving mileage on the command vehicle and brush truck. Chief Maxwell presented the Commissioners with two quotes from wholesalers in the amount of \$3000.00 for the car. The 2003 Ford will be out of service on October 14, 2011. Commissioner Abruzzese remarked that since the town has had some unexpected expenses she is concerned that the town could use the \$3000 to help cover the expenses. Chief Maxwell stated that he will verify that the wholesalers are ready to present \$3000 to the town for the car. There was no decision made by the Commissioners at this time as to whether the car should be sold or donated to the fire company. The Commissioners asked Scott to have his department remove the decals from the 1993 Ford.

OXFORD COMMUNITY CENTER

Phyliss Rambo updated the Commissioners on the progress of the Community Center. Ms. Rambo stated that most of the demolition is completed and you should be able to start seeing exterior work being done shortly. Funds are still needed to reach the goal for work being done.

Request to be on Agenda – Paige Bethke, Director of Talbot County Economic Development

Paige Bethke introduced Paul Makosky, Chairman of Economic Development Commission, sub committee on land use. Ms. Bethke stated that Mr. Makosky would share information with the town following her presentation.

Ms. Bethke stated that Talbot County Council asked that the Talbot County Economic Development Commission Report be updated. The update has been completed and information shared tonight is from the updated report. Ms. Bethke stated that the role of EDC is to evaluate economic issues, propose policy and legislation, promote appropriate new businesses to the County, assist in retention of existing businesses, assist with the development of a strategic plan and coordinate with municipal governments. The vision is to have an evolving community committed to the future while grounded in its rich heritage. EDC wants a networked community, a learning community and a sustainable community. Criteria for EDC projects is to provide enhanced employment opportunities, add to commercial tax base, have minimal environmental impact, be consistent with Talbot County Comprehensive Plan and Town Comprehensive Plans and be consistent with Md Smart Growth Policy. Ms. Bethke stated that in spite of our stable tax revenues to date there are challenges facing Talbot County. Career and employment opportunities are limited for young and middle-aged citizens, existing employers have difficulty attracting the technically skilled workforce required for expansion, there is a lack of mid- and high-tech industry, a majority of available jobs are entry-level with little opportunity to move up in pay, once our young people receive an education they cannot find employment that will support the cost of living, so they must choose to live elsewhere and a lack of infrastructure to support an increased demand for commercial and industrial growth. EDC recommends that County Council take a leadership role to fund and execute a joint county/municipal strategic plan for long-term economic development growth and infrastructure investment for Talbot County.

Paul Makosky, EDC chairman of sub committee on land use, stated that there is a lack of land in Talbot County for industrial development. There is a lack of land proximate to infrastructure, a reluctance to use bonding authority to fund infrastructure for industrial development, licensing/permitting process not efficient, negative public image about industry, and an absence of a long term economic development plan to expand the tax base. Mr. Makosky stated that we must provide a long term development plan, identify land and buildings proximate to existing infrastructure for future development, create a united marketing effort to attract business, foster cooperation between the towns and the county in the development process and identify

sources of funds and expertise for development. A task force should be involved to determine the scope of the project, a consultant hired to lead the effort and gather input from: Town and County elected officials, Town and County offices, Chamber of Commerce, Community College, Commercial Realtors and Developers, Private Sector Businesses and Public Stakeholders. This would generate a long term plan for development, stable employment, higher paying jobs, increased revenues, a plan that can be adopted by Town and County Councils and a budget and resource commitment for future investment. Mr. Makosky stated we must create a long term economic plan that fosters town and county cooperation and facilitates future technology development to support the tax base.

Ms. Bethke proposed that the Commissioners look over the information that has been provided. Following the Commissioners review a meeting should be set up with Economic Development to discuss their findings.

Request to be on Agenda – Oxford Garden Club – Blue Star Memorial

Phyllis Gaiti, Oxford Garden Club, presented the Commissioners with a rendering of the Blue Star Memorial By-Way adjacent to the Town Park. Ms. Gaiti requested the use of 160 square feet of park space for placement of brick work and the memorial. The Blue Star Memorial is ready for placement.

President Dunbar suggested the small waterfront park at the Causeway for the location of the memorial. President Dunbar commented that placed in this area it would give the opportunity for use of land that everyone passes to be identified as a Memorial Park. Not only could the Blue Star Memorial be placed here but other memorials to honor the military. With proper landscaping this would be a perfect location.

Ms. Gaiti stated that the location next to the Causeway Parking lot is not acceptable, one issue is flooding. Events could not be planned depending on tides.

Commissioner Graves commented that in looking at the file on the Blue Star Memorial, he found that forty four (44) were in favor of Town Park as the location for the memorial and seventeen (17) against. The Town Park includes 91,000 square feet and the memorial will take up 160 square feet which represents two tenths of one percent of the total area of the park. This would not interfere with other activities in the park. This memorial is to say thank you to veterans past, present and future and would not set a precedent of any kind for memorials in the Town Park.

Commissioner Abruzzese remarked that the Waterman Park next to the Causeway was a good idea but even after a discussion of this location was held sometime ago nothing was done to improve the area, this has gone on too long and a decision needs to be made. Commissioner Abruzzese made a motion to allow the placement by the Oxford Garden Club of the Blue Star Memorial using 160 square feet of land adjacent to the brick sidewalk, as shown on their sketch presented at this meeting, in the Town Park be approved. Commissioner Graves seconded motion. President Dunbar requested that the vote be tabled to allow time to provide details on the Oxford Memorial Park proposed at the previous meeting as an alternative. This was rejected and the vote proceeded. Commissioners voted on this 11th day of October 2011.

Nay – Peter Dunbar

Aye – Carole Abruzzese

Aye – R. Gordon Graves

President Dunbar stated that the reason he voted against the Town Park as the location for the Blue Star Memorial is that the Waterman's Park would create a Memorial Park that would give honor to all veterans.

NEW BUSINESS

Workshop with Historic Commission

The Commissioners were in agreement to set up a workshop on October 19th at 7:00 p.m. with the Historic Commission and the Town Commissioners.

Members for Board of Election

Commissioner Abruzzese announced that John Abruzzese has volunteered to serve on the Board of Elections. At this time the question was raised whether anyone in the audience would be interested in volunteering for the Board of Elections. Pat Jessup and Phyliss Gaiti volunteered. The Commissioners thanked the volunteers and asked if they would attend the next town meeting, October 25, 2011, to take the oath of office.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Disabled Persons Swing

Commissioner Abruzzese made a motion to install the swing for disabled persons in the Town Park. The swing was discussed at the last town meeting and Parks & Recreation are in agreement to have the swing installed. Commissioner Graves seconded motion.

Aye – Peter Dunbar

Aye – Carole Abruzzese

Aye – R. Gordon Graves

Liberty Tree

President Dunbar announced that the town has received \$1100 in donations for Liberty Trees. As soon as the town receives \$1250, \$150 more, a tree will be shipped to be placed in the circle at the Ferry Dock. Judy and Tom Bixler, Captains of the Oxford Ferry, were in attendance and stated that they would make up the \$150 in order to get the tree shipped so that it can be planted this Fall. The Commissioners thanked the Bixlers.

Nancy Wallace urged the Commissioners to make sure the town has room for the trees that residents will be receiving and may want to donate to the town. Persons donating \$50.00 to the Liberty Tree Elm Research will receive a 3' Elm Tree along with credit given toward the Town of Oxford. As soon as donations reach \$1250 the town will receive a 14' Elm Tree that will be planted in the circle at the Ferry Dock. Ms. Wallace is concerned that residents will receive trees that may not be suitable for their yards since the Elm tree is a large tree.

ATTORNEY

ORDINANCE

Attorney Booth suggested that the Commissioners introduce Ordinance 1201 to have short term rental properties inspected under the Property Maintenance Code. The suggestion was made by the town's building inspector to use the Property Maintenance Code since many of the homes being rented are older homes. The Commissioners agreed that Ordinance 1201 should be introduced. Commissioner Abruzzese introduced Ordinance 1201 which is "AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE OXFORD SHORT TERM RENTAL ORDINANCE (ORDINANCE NUMBER 1005) TO REQUIRE THAT SHORT TERM RENTAL PROPERTIES MUST COMPLY WITH THE 2009 EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE, AS ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF OXFORD, INSTEAD OF THE 2006 INTERNATIONAL BUILDING CODE."

Attorney Booth requested an executive session following tonight's meeting to: consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose; consider a matter that concerns the proposal

for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain; consult with counsel to obtain legal advice; and consult with staff, about pending litigation.

Enforcement Powers

President Dunbar reminded everyone that the various boards in the town do not have enforcement powers.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Bixler explained that the Oxford Fire Company would benefit greatly if the town should donate the 2003 Ford to them. The car would be used for transportation to training classes.

Judy Bixler announced that the Picket Fence Auction was a success. The auction was held at Combsberry. An estimate of \$9000 was brought in by the auction.

Nancy Wallace commented that she is concerned that the town has missed an opportunity by allowing placement of the Blue Star Memorial in the Town Park, rather than an area that is more visible such as the Waterman's Park.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The Commissioners voted to go into executive session to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand or remain, consult with counsel to obtain legal advice and consult with staff, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation.

BILLS PAYABLE

The regular meeting was reopened. The Commissioners went to Bills Payable.

Commissioner Abruzzese made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Graves seconded motion.

Aye – Peter Dunbar

Aye – Carole Abruzzese

Aye – R. Gordon Graves

Respectfully submitted,

Lillian Lord
Town Clerk