

**TOWN OF SNOW HILL, MARYLAND**  
*Life on the River*

TOWN MEETING

SEPTEMBER 11, 2018

A Regular Meeting of the Mayor and Town Council of Snow Hill, Maryland was held at the Train Station at 200 Belt Street on Tuesday, September 11, 2018 with Mayor John Dorman presiding and was called to order at 7:00pm.

**PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Mayor John Dorman  
Councilwoman Latoya Purnell  
Councilwoman Jenny Hall  
Councilwoman Alison Cook

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

Kelly Pruitt, Town Manager  
Trish Goodsell, Asst. to the Town Manager  
Jon Hill, Code Enforcement Officer  
Jordy Kuczak, Economic Development/Events Coordinator  
Randy Barfield, Public Works Director  
Russ Harrison, WWTP Superintendent  
Cindy Byrd, Museum Director  
Tom Davis, Chief of Police

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**SALUTE TO THE FLAG / INVOCATION**

Mayor Dorman called the meeting to order. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, followed by the invocation by Trish Goodsell, Assistant Town Manager.

**MEETING MINUTES**

A motion was given to approve the Town Meeting minutes for August 2018 by Councilwoman Purnell and was seconded by Councilwoman Hall. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried. The results of the vote were: 3 in favor; 0 opposed.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

A motion was given to approve the Finance Report for August 2018 by Councilwoman Hall and was seconded by Councilwoman Purnell. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried. The results of the vote were: 3 in favor; 0 opposed.

**TOWN MANAGER REPORT**

Mrs. Pruitt added that the State Highway Administration will be closing a section of Route 113 from September 28<sup>th</sup> through October 1<sup>st</sup>. Traffic will be detoured to Business 113 in town during this time.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

Mayor Dorman introduced Jordy Kuczak as the new Economic Development and Events Coordinator for the Town. Mrs. Kuczak comes from The Metropolitan Magazine and formerly worked with Encore Events. She voiced her happiness with taking the position and is looking forward to the future.

## **CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT**

Mr. Hill added that his report shows a list of homes that are being looked at for demolition by neglect.

## **PUBLIC WORKS REPORT**

Mayor Dorman thanked Mr. Barfield and his staff for their work to prepare for the upcoming storm. Mr. Barfield advised that the Worcester County Fair and Ride to Sturgis have both been cancelled due to the impending bad weather. The Town Council thanked Mr. Barfield and his staff for their hard work.

## **WWTP REPORT**

Mr. Barfield introduced Russell Harrison as the new WWTP Superintendent. Mr. Harrison comes from The Town of Federalsburg WWTP. Mayor Dorman and the Council welcomed Mr. Harrison, adding that he gets to experience his first storm right away. Mr. Harrison responded that he is prepared for the days ahead.

## **MUSEUM REPORT**

Dr. Byrd reported that despite the bad weather the National Folk Festival was well attended. She will provide a detailed report at the October town meeting.

## **POLICE REPORT**

No questions or comments.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

No old business.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

JoEllen Bynum, Local Administrator for the State Special Loans Program was present to discuss a proposed replacement home loan for 417 W. Market Street. This home will be demolished and rebuilt as a two-bedroom, one bath handicapped accessible rancher. This property is not located in the town's historic district but does fall under the State of Maryland historic district.

Mr. Hill advised that he consulted with Ed Phillips, Jr., Chairman of the town's Historic District Commission who confirmed it is a contributing structure but is of no significant historical value. Nancy Thompson, who serves on the Historic District Commission questioned if the replacement home will look the same as others in the area. Ms. Bynum responded that it would simply be a standard home.

Resident Edward Lee voiced concern regarding “diminishing properties in the black community”. He requested to meet with his church committee and Mr. Hill on this issue.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE MAYOR**

1. Mayor Dorman encouraged everyone to take the most recent edition of the Town newsletter, as it details upcoming events and activities in the town.
2. Mayor Dorman asked Dr. Byrd to bring the latest museum newsletter to the next meeting for the community.
3. Mayor Dorman advised attendees of the bad weather coming and encouraged everyone to stay safe.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE COUNCIL**

1. Councilwoman Purnell and Councilwoman Hall thanked everyone for attending.

### **COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

1. Resident Jan King questioned the status of the adult oriented businesses in town. Mayor Dorman advised that the Town Code will remain the same, which prohibits any adult oriented businesses.
2. Resident Ron Geesey voiced concern that the town government is not transparent enough, citing the example of the embezzlement that occurred over a year ago. He questioned why this issue has not been discussed with citizens, as he estimates that approximately \$200 was stolen from each tax payer. He added that his opinion is that the town has poor financial processes.

Mr. Geesey requested the following information be provided:

- How much was stolen? **Chief Davis responded that the amount was \$169,000.**
- How much has been recovered? **Mrs. Pruitt advised that \$3,000 was recovered.**
- How much was the bonded insurance? **Insurance was for \$50,000.**
- How much will the insurance increase? **Unsure**
- Has Council instructed the Town Manager to implement better processes? Has a certified account reviewed the processes and agrees with them? Have they been implemented? **Council has met with the Town Manager and the accountant. Procedures have been approved and have been implemented at Town Hall.**
- Is the forensic audit available to the public? **Yes.**

Mrs. Brown asked that the minutes be reviewed to see if the theft amount was reported publicly, as she stated the citizens have never been told.

Mr. Geesey pointed out that there was no discussion publicly prior to the purchase of the PNC Bank building. Mayor Dorman advised that the PNC bank building was purchased for the future revitalization of Sturgis Park.

3. Resident Deborah Baines questioned Chief Davis regarding drug activity and prostitution on Dighton Avenue. Chief Davis responded that he cannot comment on any drug investigations but

was unaware of reported prostitution in the area. He asked the community to work with the police department and contact them immediately when they see issues occurring.

Resident Nancy Thompson commented that she does not know the names of any police officers in town.

4. Resident Edward Lee commended Chief Davis, Mrs. Pruitt and Mr. Hill for their assistance with an issue he had regarding a nuisance, advising that information he received today appears to be able to resolve the issue.

Mr. Lee added that he felt he was disrespected and interrogated at the last meeting by Council, stating that it has been a long-standing complaint how the public is treated by the government body and he wants to be respected. He stated that the government has been torn apart and it has leaked out to the community.

Councilwoman Purnell responded to Mr. Lee's statement, advising she feels that his comments were directed toward her. She apologized to him if he perceived her questions to be an interrogation, explaining that she was only asking questions to gain information. She added that she understands he wants to be given respect and she requested that he provide the same to the Council and Town staff.

5. Annette Powell, who owns 550 acres of property on W. Market Street, formerly part of the Summerfield property was present. She stated that she met with the town regarding the 19-acres that her nephew currently lives on and his desire to purchase the home. She stated that they paid for a survey of 3-acres they wished to sell him, took the plans to the Town, which then went to the County. They received notice that they could not subdivide the land due the current annexation agreement the property falls under.

Mrs. Powell stated they came to a work session for discussion, later hearing the town was moving forward with de-annexation and they would need to pay \$4000. She expressed that they have questions that have not been answered, such as other options to de-annexing. She voiced her disappointment in it being September and they do not have answers.

Mrs. Pruitt advised that she spoke with the Town Attorney today who stated he has been in contact with the Powell's attorney and is waiting for his response. She stated that will contact Mr. Karpinski again for more information.

6. Mrs. Brown stated that she has requested for information on the HUD loans and their status but has never received it. Mrs. Goodsell advised that all loans are current, except for the one that required litigation and a judgment has been ordered. A report will be included in next month's report.
7. A resident questioned Mr. Hill regarding additional properties being brought forth for demolition. Mr. Hill advised that there will be more added that are to the condition of demolition by neglect.
8. A resident voiced a complaint regarding the vacant field on Belt Street and the high grass and weeds. Mr. Hill advised this property is owned by Jay Bergey and he will contact him to address this issue.
9. Councilwoman Cook stated that she appreciates everyone in attendance and agrees with comments regarding transparency and respect. She feels that it is disheartening, as well as hurtful

when talking to people and they respond with laughter or snarky comments, adding that she feels they should receive respect in return. Ms. Cook stated that she welcomes feedback and feels she is very approachable to discuss issues. She added that Mr. Lee brought up the concern of division and she feels that the Council has no division and works well together, being involved and aware. Councilwoman Hall complimented Ms. Cook on her words and stated she completely agrees.

Mr. Lee clarified that his comment regarding division was meant to be solely regarding the division between Council and the community.

**Councilwoman Cook gave a motion to enter closed session to discuss personnel and property matters, which was seconded by Councilwoman Hall. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion was carried.**

### **CLOSED SESSION SUMMARY**

Following a motion by Councilwoman Cook, seconded by Councilwoman Hall, the Council voted to meet in closed session at 8:19pm at the Train Station for personnel and property, as permitted under the provision of Section 3-305 of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland. Topics discussed, and actions taken included:

- Personnel discussion – direction given for proceeding on a matter
- Property discussion – will be scheduling a public hearing

Mayor Dorman left Executive Closed Session and re-entered into open session.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 9:42pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Trish Goodsell, Assistant Town Manager