

The Town of

# **GLEN ECHO**

## **Chartered 1904**

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**TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**  
October 9, 2023

**CALL TO ORDER: MAYOR DIA COSTELLO. 7:30 PM**

**PRESENT**

Mayor: Dia Costello.

Councilmembers: (CM) Dan Spealman, Matt Stiglitz, Dawn Tanner and Julia Wilson.

Town Manager: (TM) Beth Stickler.

Residents: Aaron Hirsch (University), Gloria Levin (University), Emily Parsons (Echo), Mary Parsons (Bryn Mawr)

Guest: Eva Webb, LSWG Auditor

**MAYOR'S COMMENTS**

Mayor Costello read land acknowledgement in regards to Indigenous peoples day.

**Glen Echo Land Acknowledgement Statement**

It is with deference to the past and the original people of the land on which Glen Echo resides, we respectfully acknowledge this land firstly belonged to the Piscataway Conoy tribe and the Susquehanna people.

We recognize these people were disposed of their land by settler colonists unethically, inhumanely, and unjustly.

In making these acknowledgements, we make steps in respecting and honoring this land's true history.

## What is a Land Acknowledgement Statement?

It is a statement to acknowledge the original inhabitants of our land as a sincere effort by Glen Echo to combat racism and inequity by highlighting historical truths and providing accurate education.

## AUDITOR REPORT FY23

Eva Webb from LSWG (auditors) gave a summary of the audit report.

The Town has a “clean” audit.

Total net position increased by \$219,000. It was a good year for the Town financially.

As of June 30, cash balance is \$586,710 and investments is \$889,040

ARPA funds need to be obligated by Dec. 31, 2024 and spent by Dec. 2026. The Town had \$199,131 unspent ARPA funds as of June 30.

The Town budgets conservatively for income tax revenues – Ms. Webb recommends doing that.

Regarding the accounting process, Mayor Costello asked Ms. Webb if she recommends outsourcing. Ms. Webb says there are pros and cons to doing that. It would be expensive to outsource. However it is somewhat risky to have one person doing the financials, especially the receipts. The review of financial reports by the Council monthly is very important. The Council and Mayor will consider outsourcing at the November meeting.

Motion to Approve Audit: CM Stiglitz; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Wilson. Approved 4-0.

## OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL TO HEAR RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello offered an opportunity to take comments from the residents. Aaron Hirsch raised his idea of a community garden on the land at Oberlin Ave. His survey of residents indicated 11 people would like a plot. He has one other volunteer for his committee. The issue is with a water source for the gardens. Mayor Costello will ask Sustainable Maryland for ideas for grants to add a water source, and approach a

business on Tulane as to whether the Town can use their water. Aaron Hirsch will present his idea at the November Council meeting.

Resident Gloria Levin noted that long time resident Nancy Long turns 95 on October 17. The Town will issue a proclamation for her. The Council members will personally pitch in for a cake and not use town monies for the residents of the home in which she lives.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello informed the Council that she will no longer forward Town announcements on Constant Contact to the list serve and will communicate via official Town channels such as Constant Contact and the council meetings. She will remind residents to send issues to Town Hall email and come to the Council meetings. She will consider holding monthly office hours in Town Hall on a Saturday to meet with any residents. The list serve will therefore remain more clearly neighbor to neighbor.

The Minnehaha Creek Clean Up will be rescheduled as the Washington Aqueduct was intentionally releasing water for maintenance into the creek at the original time.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES: ACTION ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2023 MEETING

Minutes of the September 11, 2023 Council meeting were approved.

Motion to Approve Minutes: CM Speelman; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Wilson. Approved 4-0.

23-03 HEARING AND VOTE: AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF ORDINANCES TO CLARIFY AND ADD REGULATIONS AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FENCES, AND TO REQUIRE A PERMIT FOR A REPLACEMENT FENCE: Costello

The ordinance would require permits for replacement fences without a permit fee, to make the process more streamlined so that the TM, Mayor and Council ensure that the town is notified about any new / replacement fences and they are on the resident's property. The Council made some amendments to the ordinance and adopted it. There is no fee for a replacement fence.

Motion to Adopt Ordinance 23-03: CM Stiglitz; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Tanner. Approved 4-0.

23-06 RESOLUTION: PERMIT FEES: Costello

The only change is to add a \$0 fee for replacement fences.

Motion to Adopt Resolution 23-06: CM Wilson; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Stiglitz. Approved 4-0.

23-05 HEARING: AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ARTICLE 3 (BUILDING CODE) AND ARTICLE 5 (VEGETATION CONTROL) TO ADD CRITERIA FOR TREE REMOVAL DECISIONS AND CLARIFY EXISTING PROVISIONS: Costello

The Council amended the ordinance at the meeting and reintroduced it. There will be another hearing at the November 20 council meeting. The Council will add a statement clarifying why the Town needs the ordinance including that the County does not protect Town trees except in some construction projects and the need for stormwater considerations. TM Stickler will investigate the County regulations on private trees.

The reason for this tree ordinance was based on concern regarding being good stewards of our land, regarding preserving tree canopy and abating stormwater issues and neighbors concerned about developers cutting trees down for new homes. There would be no permit fees.

Motion to Re-Introduce Ordinance 23-05: CM Wilson; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Spealman. Approved 4-0.

INTRODUCE 23-07 AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REMOVE THE OFFICE OF THE VEHICLE CONTROL OFFICER; TO PROHIBIT PARKING ON ANY CURB, SIDEWALK, OR DRAINAGE STRUCTURE; AND TO CLARIFY EXISTING PROVISIONS: Costello

Mayor Costello and the Council reviewed the proposed ordinance. The sections on impounding vehicles were discussed and TM Stickler will ask Ron Bolt about whether we can delete that. The Council decided to revise and review it again at the November 20 meeting and reconsider.

TOWN EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK: Costello

Town insurance carrier LGIT wants the Town to have an employee handbook. Most of it is boilerplate from the LGIT template. Ron Bolt reviewed it and approved of it. Some Glen Echo specific pieces related to PTO, holidays and the proposal to add sick days to accrue 8 hours a month, as the Town has never had sick days. TM Stickler will email the draft handbook to the Council for their edits. TM Stickler will ask Ron Bolt about requiring two weeks notice for the employee or employer. The Council will reconsider the handbook in December after a part time employees section is added.

APPROVE SNOW CONTRACT WITH ROLLING ACRES: Stickler

The contract is the same pricing as last year. The Council agreed to continue to approve the brining option for Town streets and around Town Hall, as this cuts down on salt use.

Motion to Approve the Snow Contract: CM Wilson; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Spealman. Approved 4-0.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER: TM Stickler

The month of September was an average month in terms of revenue and expenses.

The Town opened a CD at Sandy Spring Bank for an interest rate of 5.5% for 8 months with \$100,000 from the money market account at PNC Bank.

The signers on the account are Dia Costello and Julia Wilson.

Revenue:

Property Tax: Received \$11,299

Expenses:

Bolt Legal Expense was \$66 for August: 100% correspondence on reasonable accommodation request.

OIPA Expense was \$908 for August: 66% permit review for 30 Wellesley deck permit; 34% for Clara Barton House comments.

Motion to Approve the Financial Report: CM Wilson; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Speelman. Approved 4-0.

OPERATIONS REPORT: Social; Infrastructure; Administrative: TM Stickler

Social:

Flu Shot Clinic September 30 10-2 with CVS # of shots given: 40. The Town is looking into hosting a covid booster clinic with CVS in November however it has been difficult to schedule with CVS.

Town Yard Sale October 14 th from 9am -1pm organized and run by volunteer resident Jan Shaut

Infrastructure:

Yale and University landscaping proposal: The Town got two estimates for the removal of invasives and planting of native grasses along Yale Avenue. Shimizu Landscaping is \$4930 - \$6865 depending on plantings and Level Green is \$3900.

**WSSC reimbursement:** This was approved by WSSC and the Town has received the check. The total cost was \$23,517.20 for repairs at Oxford Road.

Asbestos remediation: The asbestos tile and mastic was abated in the electrical room.

Sprinkler system: The sprinkler system in Town Hall was repaired and parts were replaced.

Repair fence at town hall: The portion of the wooden fence that was leaning over toward 6104 Harvard was repaired.

**Raingarden Installation:** Robin Kogelnik and TM Stickler met with Coastal Resources. They will review bid data and give input.

WMATA Trestle Bridge: Earlier this year NPS proposed an Assessment of Effects for the WMATA Trolley Trestle project (finding that there will be an adverse effect to historic properties if the trestles are demolished). The Maryland State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) requested that NPS provide more information about potential effects, specifically how the demolition project will affect the historic landscape/setting. Over the past couple of months, WMATA has been working on a more extensive Assessment of Effects report that addresses the SHPO's concerns; they are finalizing the report and it will be shared with consulting parties probably in the next couple of weeks. NPS is also working with WMATA to draft a Memorandum of Agreement that describes how WMATA will mitigate the adverse effects of this project. The draft MOA will go out to consulting parties for our review.

Streetlights: Still working with Pepco on cost estimates, unfortunately PEPCO is extremely slow in getting information to the Town as Mayor Costello and the Town Manager have been working on this for nearly 9 months.

Bike Rack at Town Hall: Mayor Costello is looking into this through MC DOT as they will provide and install a free bike rack.

Administrative:

**Sale, use of gas-powered leaf blowers in county banned:** The Montgomery County Council passed legislation on September 26 that will prohibit the sale and use of combustion engine-powered leaf blowers and leaf vacuums in most areas of the county. The effective date of the ban on the *sale* of gas-powered leaf blowers and vacuums is July 1, 2024. The ban on the *use* of gas-powered leaf blowers and vacuums will go into effect on July 1, 2025. The bill amends the law on noise control. We will ensure that Town Landscapers, Level Green, knows and will comply with the use beginning July 2025.

Switched to an iPhone for Town Hall: kept the same phone number. Can now text to and from 301-320-4041.

Job Posting: The Town Manager job will be posted at the end of October.

Vacation: TM Stickler will be away November 1-10.

Next Council Meeting is November 20.

**Permits:**

6004 Harvard: Dumpster permit while the deck is being fixed. The dumpster will need to be on Harvard as there is no driveway.

6008 Bryn Mawr: This house is under contract and TM Stickler is waiting for permit applications.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL TO HEAR RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:**

Mayor Costello announced a closing opportunity for comments by the residents. There were no comments.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to Adjourn: CM Stiglitz; 2<sup>nd</sup> CM Wilson. All in favor. Meeting Adjourned 9:32 pm

Minutes Prepared by: Beth Stickler, Town Manager

Approved:  Date: 11-28-2023

Mayor, Dia Costello