

The Town of

GLEN ECHO

Chartered 1904

Town Hall · 6106 Harvard Avenue · Glen Echo · Maryland 20812 · (301) 320-4041

townhall@glenecho.org

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

January 8, 2024

CALL TO ORDER: MAYOR DIA COSTELLO, 7:34 PM

PRESENT

Mayor: Dia Costello

Councilmembers: (CM) Dan Speelman, Julia Wilson (on Zoom), Dawn Tanner, and Matt Stiglitz

Town Clerk: (TC) Emily Parsons

Residents: Aaron Hirsch (University), Mark Brewster (Wellesley), Charlotte Fryar (Vassar)

Guests: Delegate Sara Love

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL TO HEAR RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello offered an opportunity to take comments from residents. There were no comments at this time. The residents came later in the meeting to discuss the community garden.

INTRODUCE DELEGATE SARA LOVE:

Mayor Costello welcomes Delegate Love.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Mayor Costello offered an opportunity to take comments from the Council. There were no comments.

Old Business

Mayor Costello reported that there will be a meeting about the Clara Barton House renovation on Jan 30 and a WMATA meeting in mid-February. The Mayor said that we were still waiting

on County permitting for the demo and construction for 43 Wellesley. She said that she's continuing to talk to her contact at Pepco about converting Town streetlights to LEDs. Mayor Costello gave Delegate Love the backstory on the two Chesapeake Bay Trust grants that the Town has received and the third one it didn't. The Town hopes to get bids for a less over-engineered rain garden for in front of Town Hall and perhaps go back to CBT for another grant. Del. Love said that she could be helpful regarding both CBT and Pepco.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES: ACTION ON NOVEMBER 20, 2023 MEETING

The minutes of the November 20, 2023 Council meeting could not be voted on at the December 11 meeting, because there wasn't a quorum. CM Wilson wasn't at the 11/20 meeting, and so she abstained.

Motion to Adopt 11/20/23 minutes: CM Stiglitz; 2nd CM Spealman. Approved 3-0.

COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES: ACTION ON DECEMBER 11, 2023 MEETING

CM Stiglitz wasn't at the December 11 meeting, so he abstained.

Motion to Adopt 12/11/23 minutes: CM Spealman; 2nd CM Wilson. Approved 3-0.

23-07 VOTE: 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:

CM Wilson reported a resident told her that it seems pointless to enact ordinances in Town without having a mechanism to enforce them. The Mayor responded that if the rule is on the books, then at least they can go to a non-complying resident with those facts.

CM Spealman said the amendments represent more of a clarification of the ordinance than a change. CM Stiglitz flagged that the terms "Town Manager" and "Town Clerk" were used inconsistently. He proposed to amend it so that "Town Clerk" is used throughout.

Motion to amend "Town Manager" to "Town Clerk" in Ordinance 23-07: CM Stiglitz; 2nd CM Tanner. Approved 4-0.

Motion to Adopt Ordinance 23-07 as amended: CM Stiglitz; 2nd CM Tanner. Approved 4-0.

TREE STATEMENT: Spealman

The tree statement is to explain why the Town Council is considering amending the Vegetation Control ordinance (23-05). It will be published on Constant Contact sometime in January after CM Spealman gives it a final edit. The other CMs gave their input. They didn't want the statement to make it sound like the amended ordinance is a foregone conclusion, but they also agree that part of their job as CMs is to look out for the long- and short-term health of the Town's environment. The current language says this is for trees over 10 inches wide, but that may go up to 12 or 14 inches, because of input from resident Holly Shimizu. The Vegetation Control ordinance (23-05) hearing will be held at the February 2024 Council meeting.

COMMUNITY GARDEN: Aaron Hirsch

Aaron Hirsch gave a summary of his vision for a community garden on Town land over by the Irish Inn, so that Del. Love was up to speed. He brought a budget to this meeting that estimates a startup cost of \$11,185 and an yearly operational cost of \$1,050. The most expensive line item is an 8-foot-high deer fence (\$6,877), which would require a variance from the County (\$550). Aaron said that they could possibly cut the fence cost in half if they did a DIY self-install. They estimate they'll enclose 2,500 sq. ft. with 20 plots. The plots would be first for the 20 residents who have already expressed interest and then will move to a wait list. It was agreed that if the wait list is opened up to non-residents, residents will always move to the top. Raising private funds could make a spring 2024 opening possible, and if they need to get grants, a spring 2025 opening is a more reasonable goal. Residents Mark Brewster and Charlotte Fryar are on the organizing committee with Aaron. Mark is looking into grants and Charlotte has set up and run two prior community gardens. Aaron asked the Council to consider giving a "significant portion" of the start-up cost. Mayor Costello responded that it is very hard for them to spend Town funds on something that only benefits a small group of residents. Aaron argued that there would be a small communal plot that any resident could snip an herb from and that non-participating residents today could become participating residents in the future. The Council wanted Aaron to come back to the next meeting with a budget for how much he thinks he can raise privately—from a progressive cocktail fundraiser, private gifts, fees from participants, etc.—and a more concrete idea of how much he's asking the Town for.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER: TC Parsons

The financial reports were generated by LSWG for the first time, so things still need to be ironed out. The report showing actual vs. budget wasn't included, and the CMs were concerned by a "Not Specified" category on the Vendor Expenses list valued at \$9,022. [Our LSWG rep explained later that it included payroll expenses, bank fees, and an \$800 bill from an unnamed catering company—that is, Mr. Omellette for the Holiday brunch.] There was also a very big bill from Fred, the handyman service used at Town Hall, but it covers several bills from November and December. The Council also gave some formatting feedback. They did not feel comfortable approving this month's financial statement until receiving updates about the issues listed above.

Expenses:

Bolt Legal Expense was \$561 for December: employee handbook, new employee contract, submitting fence ordinance to the County

OIPA Expense was \$852 for review of building plans for 43 Wellesley

Motion to Approve the Financial Report: Move to February meeting

OPERATIONS REPORT: Social; Infrastructure; Administrative: TC Parsons

Social:

MLK Day Service Event: January 15, 9-noon in TH

The Mayor met with the youth volunteers on January 7, before they went door-to-door with flyers promoting the event. She said she got no questioning calls from neighbors afterwards as she did last year.

Infrastructure:

Rain Gardens: The next update will be at the February meeting.

Duct Cleaning in TH: After receiving a bid for \$5600 for the work, we had another company come look for a quote. The technician showed the TM and TC inside the ducts and they saw that they are all very clean. No need to do this work at this time. He did recommend that we pull the large filing cabinet away from the wall in the entry (which we did) and consider putting in a filter at that intake spot. We can get this priced with the handyman service.

Elevator: Is currently out of order. Kencor says we need a new electrical board. It's on order. Research will begin on getting bids for replacing the lift.

43 Wellesley Street Signs: They have been installed.

EV Chargers: English Country Dancers have complained about an EV cord across the sidewalk on Harvard. This led to a discussion about if the Council should regulate this as electric vehicles proliferate. Mayor Costello shared that it was expensive to underground her cable and she also purchased a ramped cable protector (\$300) for across the sidewalk in front of her house. Council wants to see how other municipalities handle this growing issue. It was agreed that a cable hanging across a sidewalk is unacceptable and that at minimum residents should be encouraged to follow current Town Law, which prohibits blocking sidewalks, by getting the ramped cable protector.

Administrative:

Auditor Search: Ongoing. January 12 is the deadline. We've gotten three inquiries, one of which came from one of the recommended firms (SEK CPA's and Assoc.).

Permits:

43 Wellesley: Demo and Building still waiting on County permits

OPPORTUNITY FOR COUNCIL TO HEAR RESIDENTS' COMMENTS:

There were no comments.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to Adjourn: CM Stiglitz; 2nd CM Spealman. All in favor. Meeting Adjourned 9:19 pm

Minutes Prepared by: Emily Parsons, Town Clerk

Approved: Dia Costello Date: 3/3/2024

Mayor, Dia Costello