

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES FOR March 18, 2025 (virtual)

CALL TO ORDER: MAYOR DIA COSTELLO, 7:29PM

Mayor: Dia Costello

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

Town Manager: Angie Zeidenberg

Residents: Emily Parsons, Gloria Levin, JoAnne Murray, Patrick Hooper, Jan Shaut, Colleen Perlman, 7316 University Ave Residents, Michele Rosenfeld (Lawyer for 7316 University Ave).

Town Attorney: Ron Bolt

COUNCIL COMMENTS

CM Stiglitz asked about the Irish Inn parking lot payments.

MAYOR UPDATES

Mayor Costello updated the Council on the Irish Inn parking lot payments — currently paid in full through June 2025. Further discussion about a possible increase in monthly rent will be discussed at work session budget meeting on March 27.

Mayor applauded the Livable Committee, especially to CM Wilson and CM Spealman, on their efforts for a successful Winterlude. CM Spealman announced that \$800.00 was raised for the Greentree Shelter and was very pleased with the great turnout for the annual event. There will be discussions about future payment options before the event next year.

The Town Election process was reviewed: open positions (2 council members and 1 mayor), timeline: coffee and conversation with residents on March 22 at 9:00-10:30, declare candidacy by April 15, Happy Hour with town and candidates on April 18, and election on May 5, 2025. There was some discussion on whether candidate bios were required or optional. (will be confirmed by charter). Will need volunteers to help with election process. Encourage residents to run for Council and Mayor positions.

Harvard Avenue — Due to the congestion during Post Office hours and suggestions of making changes to upper Harvard Ave. (one-way traffic; post office vehicles, moving mailbox into further parking area). MCDOT engineer,

Michael Paylor, consulted as a change will affect exit on to MacArthur Blvd. They recommend collecting data by having a resident count the number of cars traveling on Harvard Avenue for one hour at the busiest and least busy times for comparison for preliminary information and share the information then with MCDOT.

RESIDENT COMMENTS

JoAnn Murray raised the concern of smaller post offices being closed.

VARIANCE HEARING - 7316 University Ave

Mayor Costello began by summarizing the reason for the Variance Hearing, noting that a variance was originally granted in October 2020, prohibiting screening on the front Harvard Ave side porch. After three years, transparent screening was installed without notifying the Town which prompted a hearing for an amendment to the variance. Neighbors supported the new screening, and the property owner apologized for failing to notify the town and request an amendment.

Residents Jan Shaut and Collen Perlman, who live directly across from the porch, highlighted the positive impacts of the screening, such as improved privacy, noise reduction, and aesthetic benefits. Michele Rosenfeld, the property owner's attorney, discussed the variance approval process, emphasizing the standards of light, air, neighborhood character, and potential negative impacts on surrounding properties.

Town Attorney, Ron Bolt invited further comments, and resident JoAnn Murray inquired if the variance would apply to future property owners, to which Attorney Bolt confirmed it would, as the variance is recorded and tied to the property. Council Member Stiglitz raised concerns about setting a precedent for future variance requests, but the property owner's lawyer assured that each request is unique.

Council Members Wilson and Spealman expressed support for Glen Echo's neighborly spirit, while also asking questions about the potential impact of future screening requests and whether the porch would need a variance regardless of the screening. Resident JoAnn Murray wanted clarification about the possible change of material used as a screening and was told that it would be required to stay the same. In the end, Attorney Rosenfeld reiterated that the property

owner's request for modification meets the standards for variance provisions in the town code, based on the evidence and testimony presented.

MOTION TO APPROVE THE VARIANCE AMENDMENT:

CM Spealman requested all related town's lawyer fees are paid by the property owners, which Rosenfeld and property owner agreed to.

Motion made for Friendly Amendment for 7316 University Ave owners to pay legal fees in agreement that they can keep up the screening.

Motion made by CM Wilson; 2nd CM Tanner; All in Favor

MOTION TO APPROVE THE FEBRUARY 10 MINUTES

Motion made by CM Spealman; 2nd CM Wilson; All in Favor

MOTION TO APPROVE FINANCIAL REPORTS FOR JANUARY

Motion made by CM Spealman 2nd CM Wilson; All in Favor

TOWN OPERATIONS REPORT

March 27th Budget Work Session

Town Hall elevator is almost near completion

Website changes — Town Hall application, permits and updates with new email addresses to be more efficient for residents.

RESIDENT COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT 9:18PM

CM Tanner; 2nd Spealman; All in Favor

Minutes prepared by: Angie Zeidenberg

Approved:



Mayor, Dia Costello

Date: 4/15/2025