

Town of Glen Echo Council Meeting Minutes

Date: April 13, 2026

Time: 7:29pm

Location: Town Hall

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:29pm by Mayor Dia Costello.

Attendance In Person

- **Council Members Present:** Councilmember Dan Spealman, Councilmember Matt Stiglitz, Councilmember Dawn Tanner, Councilmember Julia Wilson
- **Staff/Officials Present:** Town Manager Susan Theis (recording)/Mayor Dia Costello • **Residents:** Gloria Levin (hybrid), Claudia Roussel and Kellan Steele (in-person)

Resident Comment

No public comments were made.

Mayor Updates and Old Business

- Recognition of Outgoing Councilmember Dawn Tanner
The Council recognized and expressed appreciation to an outgoing member for three years of service, with particular acknowledgment of contributions to environmental and sustainability initiatives.
- Volunteer Recognition Event
The recent volunteer recognition event on April 10th was well received. The Council agreed to continue hosting this event annually in April in recognition of Volunteer Month.
- Earth Day / Community Garden Event
A community garden workday was rescheduled in conjunction with Earth Day on Saturday, April 18th from 10am-2pm.
- **Upcoming Event** - Green Team: Plant and Seed Exchange scheduled for May 2, 2026, from 10am-1pm at Town Hall front lawn.
- Community Support Initiative
The Mayor discussed development of a community support initiative to assist residents, particularly seniors or those in need of transportation or meal assistance. Coordination with Montgomery County resources will be explored.

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- Administrative Matters Cleaning Services Contract
The Council reviewed a request from the Town's cleaning service provider, Marcelli Cleaning, to increase rates from \$150 to \$175 per visit, noting no increase in approximately four years, since 2022. The new rate will take effect once the Town has received proof of insurance.
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Old Business Traffic Study: One-Way Harvard Avenue

- The Post Office lease has been renewed for an additional five-year term (January 1, 2027 - December 31, 2031).
- The Council agreed to proceed with planning for a traffic study to make the 6100 block of Harvard Avenue one-way. Additional consideration is the new salon at 7370 MacArthur Boulevard and traffic (& parking) on Bryn Mawr Avenue.

Discussion included:

- Potential street direction changes (e.g., one-way designations)
- Impacts on surrounding streets
- Importance of community engagement. **Action Items:**
- Update and confirm consultant bids from Fall 2025
- Target a decision at the May Council meeting
- Invite contractor to present at Council meeting or host Town Hall event for community input

Pedestrian Signal Timing Issue

Concerns regarding pedestrian signal timing were discussed again on MacArthur Boulevard at Oxford Road. The issue has been reported to the County, and a service ticket is in progress.

New Business

7370 MacArthur Boulevard (Wild Bird Center) – Landscaping and Drainage Proposal

The Council reviewed a proposal from property owners to install drainage improvements and plant native grasses, partially within the Town right-of-way.

Key considerations:

- Property owners responsible for installation and ongoing maintenance
- Requirement for a formal legal agreement recorded with the property deed

Additional discussion points:

- Replacement of a previously removed tree before construction
- Restoration of grass along Town right-of-way
- Need to clearly define maintenance obligations, including replacement of failed plantings and upkeep standards

Council Consensus:

- Proceed with drafting contacting Town Attorney to draft a formal agreement
- Address tree replacement separately
- Retain final approval authority over landscaping design and specifications

Tree Ordinance Review

The Council continued its review of draft materials related to a proposed tree ordinance and associated policies. No vote was scheduled for this meeting.

Documents Presented:

- Draft ordinance amending Articles III and V
- Draft resolution adopting reforestation guidelines
- Revised tree planting plan
- Reference ordinance on tree canopy preservation from neighboring municipality

Key Discussion Points:

Replanting Requirements

Councilmembers discussed whether language requiring replanting “at a time and location approved by the Mayor” provides sufficient clarity. Concerns included site suitability, feasibility of right-of-way planting, and long-term maintenance considerations.

Tree Replacement and Maintenance

Discussion addressed requirements to replace trees that fail within two years, including whether replacement obligations should reset if subsequent plantings fail.

Permit Approval Criteria

The Council examined whether the draft ordinance appropriately defines the Mayor’s discretion:

- The current draft suggests permits may be denied only if a replanting plan is not submitted.
- Members questioned whether this limits the Town’s ability to preserve significant or canopy trees.
- Potential inconsistencies were noted between evaluation criteria and grounds for denial.

Scope of Regulation

“Regulated trees” are defined by size. Councilmembers discussed whether additional factors—such as species, environmental value, or canopy significance—should be incorporated.

Policy Approach

Two general frameworks were considered:

- A permissive model, where permits are generally granted with a replanting plan
- A more restrictive model prioritizing preservation of significant trees

Practical Constraints

Members raised concerns about feasibility on small residential lots, particularly where replanting canopy trees may not be practical.

Public Engagement

Limited public input to date was noted. The Council anticipates increased engagement once a final draft is circulated prior to a vote.

Next Steps:

- Councilmembers will review materials and submit comments by April 24, 2026
- TM Theis will consolidate feedback and coordinate with legal counsel to draft ordinance
- Revised drafts will be presented at the May 11 Council meeting

Approval of Minutes

The Council reviewed prior meeting minutes. A clarification was requested regarding language on dog waste signage and outreach; Mayor confirmed outreach had been completed.

Motion: CM Stiglitz to accept minutes as written

Second: CM Tanner

Vote: 3 approvals; 1 abstain (CM Wilson was not in attendance at March 9, 2026 Council meeting)

Financial Report

The Council reviewed the March 2026 financial report and noted the Town remains under budget for the fiscal year to date, with some apparent surplus reflecting unspent designated funds.

Community Contributions:

- The Council discussed allocation of contributions to community organizations.
- It was noted that a previously issued check to the local fire department had not been cashed in a timely manner.

Consensus:

- Allocate \$2,000 to Glen Echo Park for the current fiscal year
- Revisit future contributions during the next budget cycle **Administrative and Financial Matters:**

- Ongoing banking service issues were discussed, including delays and lack of responsiveness. Council may explore alternative banking options
- Postage and mailing efficiencies were discussed related to *The Echo* newsletter, including updating mailing lists and postage purchases

Motion: CM Stiglitz to accept the March 2026 financial report

Second: CM Spealman

Vote: Unanimous approval

Privacy Considerations in Public Records

The Council discussed privacy considerations related to publication of resident information in meeting minutes and Town communications.

Key points:

- Public records laws require transparency
- Residents may not fully understand that meeting participation is public
- Concerns exist regarding personal data **Potential considerations:**
- Limiting identifying details where appropriate
- Providing clearer notice regarding public disclosure
- Reviewing best practices from other municipalities No formal action was taken.

Budget Introduction – Fiscal Year 2027

The Council reviewed the proposed FY2027 budget.

Discussion included:

- Adjustments to line items (cleaning services, composting, sidewalk repairs)

The budget will remain open for public comment for 30 days.

Motion: CM Spealman to introduce Ordinance 26-01 adopting the FY2027 budget (July 1, 2026

– June 30, 2027) CM Spealman

Second: CM Stiglitz

Vote: Unanimous approval

Tax Levy Resolution

Motion: CM Spealman to introduce Resolution 26-01 approving the levy of taxes on real and personal property for FY2027, as outlined in the proposed budget

Second: CM Stiglitz

Vote: Unanimous approval

Town Ops Report as of April 10, 2026 ADMINISTRATIVE

- ARPA Reporting – due to Department of Treasury on 4/30. 4/7 Attended webinar with MTAP regarding new guidelines for reporting and information on close out.
- Tree Ordinance: Sent all Council renditions of Tree Ordinance to Town Attorney, Ron Bolt and asked to draft all inclusive for Council review. 4/10 Ron is working on draft. I also asked if starting a new would be better vs. amending and have enclosed draft from Chevy Chase Section 3 for Council review and comment.
- Composting Program: To date 39 households have signed up for the pilot program, which includes the 9 previous residents using Compost Crew. Numerous Constant Contact notices have been sent to residents with information on the program and how to sign up. For those residents who signed up by 4/10, compost bins will be delivered to on 4/14. The first curbside collection will begin 4/21.
- Accounting:
 - On 4/10 CM Stiglitz reviewed the March 2026 monthly financial reports in advance of the Council meeting to support accountability. Please note I have a call into LSWG regarding Community Garden account as the account balance should be \$117.25 not 758.16 as shown on Balance Sheet.
 - On 3/10, CM Stiglitz and I met with Cesar Contreras, PNC Bank and Kari Schwartz, PNC Merchant Services for our monthly meeting re: Town banking issues. These meetings have been scheduled for the second Tuesday of every month at 12pm via Teams with the next meeting 4/14.
 - FY 2027 Budget: Proposed draft enclosed with revisions from Council work session on 2/11 and 3/9 Council meeting. 4/6 FY2027 Proposed Budget sent to residents via Constant Contact to date no comments have been received. Also enclosed are an Ordinance to Adopt a Budget for Fiscal Year 2027 and a Resolution to Approve Levying a Tax on Real and Personal Property. I would like to present changes to a few line items (TH Cleaning Services, Legal Fees/Town Attorney, Sidewalk Repair, Cable Franchise Fees) at the Council meeting on 4/13.
- PIA Requests:
 - The Lead Sheet: 2 requests for Town permits issued over last month
- Battery Recycling: 4/2 Constant Contact sent to residents with information and battery recycling bin installed at Post Office. I will check regularly and recycle as the bin is full.
- Post Office Lease Renewal: 9/6/2024 renewal contract was exercised and signed to begin 1/1/2027 through 12/31/2031 at \$37,200 per year in rent.
- LGIT Renewal Workshop: 3/24 Mayor and I met with Royal Plus to discuss inventory of Town assets – how items should be documented, safe & secure records, including backup. I will begin listing and establish an Emergency Manual Plan.
- MCCMA (Maryland City/County Management Association) Conference: I will be attending April 29-May 1 in Gaithersburg.
- MML Summer Conference: I will be attending June 14-17 in Ocean City, MD

INFRASTRUCTURE

- ROW Trees: 4/10 contract with Lee's Tree Service to cutback and remove deadwood after several large limbs came down in resident yard on Cornell.
- Snow Removal Issues: The Town has received a credit from Level Green regarding January and February "snowcrete" invoices (totaling \$18,451.66), which have yet to be paid.
- Level Green Landscaping –contract totaling \$27,857.90 for review for April 2026 to February 2027 (does not include snow). The costs reflect same pricing as last year.
- Town Hall Elevator: 3/26 annual inspection passed with Preferred Elevator and All Safe Elevator, as the required 3rd party vendor, and has been filed with the state. Awaiting certificate in the mail 2-3 weeks.

SOCIAL

- Volunteer Recognition: 4/10 from 5-7pm. 12 residents RSVP'd and will receive a certificate and pin. Light refreshments will be served.
- Green Team: Plant & Seed Exchange – 5/2 from 10am-2pm in front of Town Hall. Thank you to Dawn Tanner for organizing.
- New Idea? Ice Cream Truck/Clay Boys – as a last day of school celebration.
- Set Date for Summer Picnic – Sunday, 8/30 before MCPS schools starts? Same as previous years? If so, more plates & quesadillas from California Tortilla.
- Fourth of July event planning discussed; coordination and leadership to be determined

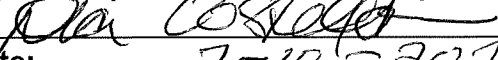
Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:39pm.

Prepared by: Susan Theis

Title: Town Manager

Approved by: Dia Costello Title: Mayor Signature:


Date: 7-10-2026