

Mayor & Council of Sharpsburg

Meeting Minutes

Monday, July 10, 2023

6 PM

Call meeting to order and pledge-Washington County Commissioner led the pledge, there was a moment of silence for two Sharpsburg residents who recently passed away, (Dallas Churchey and Peg McGraw)

In attendance: Cody Swope, Jeff Cline, Eric Jacobs, Perry Jamieson, Tracey Peyton, Dakota Watkins, Chris Vincent, Jen Bruni, Mia Parsons, Joe Kudla, Jacob Martz, Russ Weaver, Robbie Waters, Ed Beeler and Carrie Estell

Minutes and June expenses approval-June meeting minutes were approved; Robbie motioned and Ed seconded, all were in favor. There was some confusion of the June's financial report-the report was reviewed and will be voted on at the next mayor and council meeting in August.

Sharpsburg Appreciates Jeff Cline-Russ presented Jeff Cline with a citation, shirt and lapel pin in recognition of this commitment and support for everything Sharpsburg.

Tracey Peyton & new deputy -Deputy Peyton will be retiring at the end of the month and Russ acknowledged his service with a card of appreciation. Deputy Peyton introduced his replacement, Deputy Watkins. D. Watkins introduced himself and looks forward to getting to know the town's residents and council.

Public Comments-none

Emergency Discussion Panel

Councilman Kudla summarized the council's need to know what needs to happen when a potential emergency occurs. Joe specifically discussed the local response of some white powder/pollen looking substance that came from the sky months ago.

Representative from Washington County Emergency Services-Eric Jacobs-Mr. Jacobs highlighted his organization's services with specifics regarding the procedures of a 911 dispatch call. Questions the operator asks, and their protocols to designate which agency is to be part of the response team. Sharpsburg Fire Department is almost the first agency to address any issues in the town; the county's hazmat department has units that can detect many substances and Mr. Jacobs praised the County Commissioners for they assisted with this unit's detection system. Calling 911 was the best solution to any issue. As far as sharing with the public any information, the county's PR department sends out information on social media and part of an email system. The town's fire department captain and the duty officer are the point people.

Emergency Management Specialist Cody Swope-Mr. Swope shared that the Emergency Management Department is similar to FEMA but on the local level. His agency emails weather hazards, air quality updates, heating/cooling center information and any type of disaster is shared with on the state level to the governor. They preplan for the known and unknown and try to be proactive. Their programs include public education, emergency kits and he also discussed the county's Hazardous Mitigation Plan. At this time, the plan was sent to the state and the next step is to FEMA and then municipalities can be granted funding based on the needs

of a particular area's hazards.

Tim Lung, Zoning Administrator (via ZOOM-critical items only)

BZA held a public hearing June 27 for the Short-Term Rental Special Exception request for the property at 204 E. Main Street. Citizens testified both in opposition and support of the request. The Planning Commission recommended denial of the request because the owner does not reside in the dwelling. The BZA found that the owner did not sufficiently prove she "resides in the dwelling" and denied the request. The BZA also ruled that the owner may re-apply once she provides adequate proof of residency and would waive the application fee.

Had a pre-application phone meeting with MDE to discuss permitting requirements for the Big Spring wall restoration project. An MDE waterway construction permit will be required. I will be preparing the application. There may be restrictions on what time of year the work may occur based on the review by MDE. The review process generally takes 30-45 days depending on the extent of agency review required. My goal is to have the application filed before the end of the month. County and soil conservation confirmed there was no need for permitting. MDE requires a permit and there are specific times of the year to work on waterways. The end of summer/fall projected date for this project is ideal. Due to the historic nature of this town owned property, the fix of the wall/spring will move forward, grant money is still expected to come through.

Followed up on several tall grass/weed complaints.

The trees have been trimmed on the property at 120 Church St. to improve sight distance at the intersection of Church and Chaplin.

The Planning Commission meet to discuss and approved the 2022 annual report required by the Md. Dept of Planning. The report has been sent to MDP.

Permits have been issued for a new business at 100 E. Main st. Candlelight Soap Company, and a permit for a pool on property on E. Antietam St.

First permit was issued for a temporary container (roll-off dumpster) for a property on E. Main Street

Mayor's Report-organizational announcement/discussion

Projects

Wells6/10/2023 – Agreement signed by County and Town. MDE requirements gathered and bid package being prepared. Look to go to bid later this month.

Town Hall6/10/2023 – Still having serious plumbing issues. Solution on hold pending recommendations from John

Community Park6/10/2023 – New equipment expected this month. Seeking confirmation.

Historic/Pocket Park6/10/2023 – received for word from POS 4400K project was approved. FSA is told to finish engineering work and the Wayside exhibit workshop will be scheduled. Develop a "Wayside Exhibit Proposal" which identifies for each wayside display the topic, theme, location, base style, direction of view, and preliminary list of proposed graphics, images, artwork, or maps.

Big Spring 6/10/2023 - Waiting funding announcement on July 13. Fencing is completed

Boyer House 6/10/2023 – Expect County funding to be approved July 25th. MHCD grant application in for funds to clean up lot and provide stabilization maintenance to property submitted.

Streets & General Maintenance 6/10/2023 - List of projects for rest of FY2022 provided by Joe to be worked off (see Joes report)

Planning 6/10/2023 - Time to kick off comprehensive. Looking for a resource to help. Be actively integrated into and critiquing the County comprehensive plan. Hold session to improve working knowledge of County GIS tools.

Council reports (written reports, need for: financial approval, council input or for council to know)

Ed Beeler-Attendance for June: 97, two new members of SMH, Museum is now a Blue Star Museum. Donations: two plastic bags of pictures and papers from the Boyer House, Founder's Day- had 32 people with one Chapline Descendent. We will be open Friday and Saturday of Battlefield Anniversary weekend in September.

Robbie Waters-Stump removal at the Big Spring for fence install was done, while the grinder was rented, we got rid of some stumps at the pond as well. Playground prep for equipment that is slated for delivery end of July.

Jacob Martz-Attended the grand opening of the Ritchie History Museum at Historic Fort Ritchie in Cascade, MD

Conducted an interview with a reporter from the Herald Mail regarding Jack Myers' 100th birthday.

Gave a tour of Boyer house to representatives from Preservation MD & the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Initiated application process with Suzanne Grobbel for \$250,000 grant from DHC

Joe Kudla-Culvert ownership 104 Church

Signs for the trucks in town-wording and editing will be done to make it easier to understand

Drawings for the intersection/update on the bridge by spring

Contact Linda Puffenberger about the cleaning of walls and placement of the fireman sign

MOU with Butch to address ownership and responsibility of culverts, bridges and such in town

The wall that was recently repaired was damaged again, this occurred at 216 East Main, Carrie will reach out to Deputy Peyton to request a police report to help with getting repairs done correctly by the driver's insurance company.

Joe shared with council a speed monitor and council agreed that this would be a good deterrent to speeding. The cost is around 8k and there's an option for recording that would be very useful. Joe will reach out to the company to check for pricing of this unit. Mia asked about possible theft of the unit; utilizing a chain could be a solution. Joe will have the price for the unit with recording option ready to present to council for August's meeting.

Mia Parsons-

Replacement of Main St. tree hit and removed by tractor-this should be replaced by the person responsible for the accident. Russ mentioned that the fence was already fixed and that the tree will be replaced as well; planting of a new tree similar to size and variety can be done this fall. Amber maple was the tree that was damaged; there was on police report but Rick and Melody Canfield will do the right thing and once the planting gets closer, someone will reach out to the Canfields.

Recognition of citizens volunteering to water trees-Mia wanted to thank the volunteers for their efforts in watering the new trees, this will be an ongoing task; Mia has a great group of folks and will reward their efforts. Carrie will purchase gift cards and there will be a mention in the Town Crier.

Update from Planning-Planning Commission will begin meeting monthly as the comprehensive plan needs revision/update. The monthly meeting will start in September and other issues can be addressed/discussed as well.

Discussion of potential development of approx. 17 acres on farm adjacent to town and implications (stormwater etc.). Tim emailed the deeds and he was confident that development would not occur after a brief read of the document, he stated that the area of land in question is one of the most in protected in the county. Portions of the larger land is a priority preservation area, there are several large lots and there are no provisions to divide into lots. Carrie shared this document with Mia and she, in turn, will share some of her findings with Tim. There was lots of discussion on zoning and the rural business zoning area, Green Hills Farms was also discussed and Jeff Cline mentioned that the county's proposed 10-year comprehensive plans will be open for public review/comment soon.

Community Partners

Officer Tracey Peyton-checks- Antietam Station-7, Park-12, school-7, little league-11. Six hrs. foot patrol
1 trespassing comp, road hazard found, assisted WVSP with driver contact, assisted WCSO w/intoxication test & assisted WCSO w/911 call just outside of town

Chris Vincent-Antietam Advisory board- Battlefield Advisory Committee, met on Wednesday, June 14, 2023.

Members of the committee introduced themselves to Acting Superintendent Corey Wolfersberger. Corey will serve as the acting Superintendent until a new one is selected. The position has not yet been announced on USA Jobs.

The focus of this quarterly meeting was to tour the Visitor Center as it is reaching renovation completion. Entering the lobby through the larger vestibule, the large windows provide natural light, and the overhead lights automatically adjust based on the natural light. The visitor contact station has two point-of-sale fee stations and two flat screen monitors for daily park activities and events displayed. A security camera monitor is based at the station to observe all the security cameras that have been installed inside and outside the building. The restrooms are only accessible from the inside with an additional family restroom added. The large lobby in-

cludes access to the stairs to the observation room, stairs to the exhibit area, the bookstore and an elevator that provides access to all three floors. A display wall of nine flat screen monitors will project pictures of the battlefield and interpretive scenes of the battle. There is also a temporary exhibit display case in the lobby to rotate artifacts.

The bookstore has merchandise shelving areas and cabinets throughout the space with reference to the five universal themes that will tie into their products.

The observation room has a compass rose on the floor and a 3D circular map of the area of operations during the Maryland Campaign. There will be an Indigenous people interpretive area in the room as well.

The auditorium includes new lighting, carpeting, and audio-video system.

The staff area includes a small conference room, two offices, office space for rangers on duty and a break area.

The exhibit area leads visitors through the five universal themes of conflict, terror, survival, memory, and freedom with a goal of telling a bigger story than just the details of the battle. This will include display panels, artifacts, and interactive displays.

The final phases of the project include the walks and the parking area. The walkway and curbs are currently being laid. The walks leading up to the Visitor Center will include granite insert stones with the key events of the Civil War leading up to Antietam with sculpture centerpiece for the Battle of Antietam. The walk from that point will be the major events after Antietam until the war ends.

The current projected move in date is July 17. This is when the exhibits and artifacts will go in and the bookstore will start moving merchandise back in. The soft opening will be August 1. This is when the doors will be open to the public and visitor services will begin operating out of the Visitor Center. A rededication ceremony is scheduled for September 8. The temporary modular buildings will be removed in mid-August and that area restored.

The Strategic Plan for 2023 – 2026 is complete and available for the public. The primary intent of this strategic plan is to articulate an overarching vision for Antietam National Battlefield and to create a framework for setting goals and prioritizing work for the next three to four years. Three main goals the plan will focus on is Safety, Preserve and Protect the battlefield, and Visitor Services and Enhancing Visitor Experience.

Other Projects: HPTC continues to work on the preservation project at the Piper farm with the wagon shed roof and at the David R. Miller house on the windows and porch.

The pavement preservation project will begin on Sept. 12. The public can expect delays and closures as all the park roads will be resurfaced.

National Cemetery rehabilitation is part of the FY27 funding but some of the preliminary steps have begun with some tree removal, pruning, and new planting.

The Salute to Independence cannot be held at Antietam National Battlefield in 2023 due to ongoing construction around the Visitor Center. Contractors will be continuing work on the exterior grading, sidewalk and exterior exhibit installation, landscaping, and reseeding into the summer. The project will not be com-

pleted to allow the area to reopen by July. As to the future of holding the Salute to Independence event, the Park recognizes that the Salute to Independence is a beloved community tradition, and as they continue to engage in conversations about the future of this event with the Maryland Symphony Orchestra and other stakeholders, the National Park Service's focus will be on the visitor experience, including safety of the public and protecting the battlefield's natural and cultural resources.

The next meeting is scheduled for Sept. 13th, 2023

Old Business/ACTIONS:

Town Hall Plumbing-After Jake and Robbie met with PlumbingWurx and both agreed to their proposal. Jake sent out an email to vote. Jake, Robbie, Ed and Joe voted yes, Mia did not respond and John voted no. Russ emailed John and offered a few ways to handle. These suggested options were: 1.) Start all over with meetings with Larry & Sons, PlumbingWurx, Willard and any others you wish to engage, or 2.) Meet with PlumbingWurx to validate their proposal, or 3.) Meet with Jake and Robbie and go over their findings from meeting with PlumbingWurx or 4.) Any method you chose. John is not able to attend this meeting or August's meeting.

Awards/celebrations-Jack Myers 100-year birthday & Jeff Cline honorary citizenship-Jack Myers was in France and came home sick and is booked through mid-July. Carrie mailed his shirt with a birthday card. Jeff Cline's shirt and citation are ready for presentation.

Fire House Signage Agreement-there are a few solutions, the first issuance of the sign was agreed to by council as they interpreted the fire house as a government building, but it is not. The fire house sign is not in compliance with the town's zoning ordinance. The town hopes to have the sign at a different location, this will be a fire house sign and the town can use for events.

Sea Container Ordinance No 2023-001 Signatures needed

FY24 budget approval-Russ discussed the budget and the increase in price of the well drilling, there is still marked covid money and the price to drill a well is 77k, the budget has been discussed. Robbie motioned, Joe seconded and all were in favor.

New Business

Wreaths Across America-Organization reached out needing funding. Carrie put their letter on the town's Facebook page and requested that a blurb be done in the Town Crier through the end of the school year.

Robbie motioned for adjournment, Joe seconded, all were in favor, 7:30 pm, next meeting is slated for Monday, August 6th at 6 pm