

**SHARPSBURG MAYOR AND COUNCIL
WORK SESSION
SEPTEMBER 29, 2025**

The Mayor and Council of Sharpsburg, MD held a work session on Monday, September 29, 2025 at 6:15 P.M. in the Council meeting room of Town Hall located at 106 E. Main Street in Sharpsburg. In attendance were Mayor Russell Weaver, Vice Mayor Jacob Martz, Councilmembers, Joe Kudla, Heather Waters and sworn in during a special session prior to the work session, newly appointed Councilmembers Robbie Waters and Anne-Marie McCullough. Town Administrator Debra Valentine-Smith and Zoning Administrator Tim Lung were also present.

Sharpsburg Community Survey- Patty Hammond presented a community survey prepared by Brianna Candelaria on behalf of the Planning Commission to obtain information necessary to support the Comprehensive Plan. They are requesting the support of the Mayor and Council and staff to distribute the survey to community. **The matter will be placed on the October regular meeting for further discussion.**

Status of Town Museum – Sharpsburgh Museum of History Board Member Gary Candelaria shared a letter with the Mayor and Council regarding the future of the museum stating that the Board of Directors is considering finding a professional museum consultant to assist in developing new operational guidelines, procedures and functions that will include staffing of both professional and volunteers to provide curatorial care and record keeping for the collections and planning for the future.

Zoning Administrator Updates – *Tim Lung*

Historic Preservation Tax Credit MOA w/ County – The BOCC repealed and reenacted the Historic Preservation Tax Credit Ordinance 2024-23 with amendments that will allow municipalities to participate in the program. A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Town and the BOCC will need to be approved by Resolution for the Town of Sharpsburg to become a qualified municipality, thereby expanding the tax credit to eligible owners of historic structures.

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Zoning Ordinance text amendment requirements per new State Legislation - During its 2025 session, the Maryland General Assembly passed HB 1466 (“Accessory Dwelling Units – Requirements and Prohibitions”), which codifies state policy supporting development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), effective October 1, 2025. It also requires that counties and municipalities with planning and zoning authority adopt a local law authorizing ADU development on land with a single-family detached dwelling unit by October 1, 2026.

Big Spring wall restoration project - MDE/Corps waterway construction authorization – all permits and approvals for the restoration of the Big Spring have been obtained. The project is currently waiting on the contractor to establish a timeline for construction.

Green Hill Farm Event Center (GHF)- status of permitting with the County – Mr. Lung stated that over the past several years he had received verbal inquiries from some Town elected officials regarding complaints that were received from constituents concerning the Greenhill Farm event center in terms of noise and traffic. A citizen also made a similar complaint at the Oct 2024 M&C meeting. He added that he nor the Town have jurisdiction over activities occurring on property outside of the Town limits, that’s neither up to the County Zoning Administrator Jill Baker.

Following the October meeting, Mr. Lung stated that he reached out to Jill Baker for information regarding the status of issuance of zoning permits, restrictions on the special exception for the event center, etc. Jill responded by supplying copies of the approved site plan, and BZA opinion. She also stated that they had been issued a

violation letter for the cabins and was in contact with them regarding how to bring them into compliance. She said that there were no current zoning certifications for the property.

This matter came up again at a BOCC meeting at Sharpsburg last December. Jill was at the meeting and reported that a cease-and-desist order had been served on Greenhill Farm and that RB E zoning would be required. The Town asked that it be kept informed of any meetings or hearings regarding the matter. Since that time nothing had been reported by the County. After another event was held on the property in late August, a Town Elected Official asked that I contact Jill regarding the status. I contacted Jill Baker and she replied that Green Hill agreed to not use the cabins and that new state legislation regrading Ag related business essentially eliminated the previous imposed limitations due to Health Dept requirements for sanitation facilities and that because of this, she considers the property in compliance from a County stand point. I related to her that the matter may come up at the Sept BOCC meeting with the Town. I contacted the County and the MET about obtaining a copy of the MET easement agreement and any restrictions. I received those documents just prior to the BOCC meeting. At that meeting Jill repeated what she had told me previously.

Mayor Weaver read the following statement;

During the September 23, 2025 meeting of the Washington County Board of County Commissioners I discussed activities at Greenhill Farms and mentioned that it might be necessary to sue over a perceived lack of enforcement of existing easements. It is reasonable to assume I was considering the Town of Sharpsburg suing Greenhill Farms. I was not. The Town of Sharpsburg does not have any intensions of suing Greenhill Farms and a careful examination of all PIA requests will show that there were no discussions of such a law suit among any council members, staff or legal counsel prior to the commissioners meeting. The topic of our discussion was how do easement fit into county zoning decision making process. At the end of the meeting Gill Baker said when asked about how the easements fit in; she replied the easements are "a legal contract between the property owner and the Maryland Environmental Trust". I replied at that time I get it. I realized that if there is an issue it would be a Trust issue.

Why we and you should care. Sharpsburg is a place that many of us chose because of its small-town charm, rural environment, history, and sense of community. The battle cry has always been keeping Sharpsburg the way it is and not let it become another Gettysburg. Between 1985 and 1995 an easement program was established with MET as the manager. In Washington County there are 52 such easements with the majority (47) in south county bordering the Antietam Battlefield totaling roughly 4,000 acres. If the average easement was just over \$100,000 then the total value of these easements was about \$5 million in 1994 or over \$10 million today. We should all be concerned as to how the MET stewardship program is managed to ensure compliance with the terms of each unique conservation easement. Easement recipients should not be allowed to double dip having both been paid for an easement and then allowed to conduct commercial activity.

How are landowner requests processed?

Does the conservation easement outline the request and approval process or is it somewhere in trust documentation?

Are there standards to be applied to the decision-making process?

How much lead way do the statutes creating and governing MET provide?

These are reasonable questions any affected citizens should ask. If I were an activist/journalist interested in how government works and how government monies are spent, I would dig into the MET process and how decisions for relief are made.

One quick personal note. I was told that one attack line was that I was anti-female business. I would simply remind people my wife owned and operated her own business for 40 years with my total support. Out of the 10 Sharpsburg Businesses 7 are owned and operated by females.

Green Hill Farm (GHF) owner Erin Moshier addressed the Mayor and Council (along with several supporters) stating that she feels that she is being harassed by the town as her property is situated outside of the town's "corporate" limits and she has worked hard to meet the requirements of both MET and the County to make her farm a successful business.

As stated by Ken Buckler, President of Radio Free Hub City; while tensions were high at the meeting, it ultimately seemed to prove constructive, with a consensus seeming to be reached among those in attendance that the real issues at the heart of the matter are not the activities of Green Hill Farm, but transparency and lack of local input regarding the Maryland Environmental Trust. And further research shows that local input may be a significant issue

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra A. Valentine-Smith
Town Administrator