

Council Meeting Minutes – March 16, 2023

VIA ZOOM CONFERENCE CALL AND IN-PERSON

Council Members Present: Andrew Kauders; Susan Fattig; Arthur Alexander; Katie Howard; Jeff Blander

Residents and other Attendees: Village Manager: Michael Silliman; Building Administrator: Doug Lohmeyer; Village Attorney: Ron Bolt; Keith Allen (Turner Ln.); Marty Langelan (Chestnut St.); Lorie Mitchell (Cummings Ln.); Susan Kahn (Bradley Ln.); Alison Price (Raymond St.); Peter Kahn (Bradley Ln.); Ben Dunford (Taylor St.); Nancy Ferris (Quincy St.); William LeoGrande (Chestnut St.); Steve Howard (Taylor St.); Alex Ghesquiere (Bradley Ln.); Holly Worthington (Turner Ln.); Larry Wasson (Delfield St.); Lynn Welle (Oxford St.); Naomi Naierman (Quincy St.).

7:32PM; Call to Order: Kauders

Weather Report: Keith Allen said it has been beautiful but expect cold and windy conditions. It has been a dry winter.

Building Administrator's Report: Lohmeyer. Doug Lohmeyer delivered his report. Arthur Alexander asked about the 3500 Raymond St. project.

Opportunity for Council to Hear Residents' Comments.

Nancy Farris asked the Village to arrange sidewalk shoveling for people that need it.

Ben Dunford is against the Charter amendment. Arthur explained his understanding of the outdated nature of the language. Ron Bolt clarified that residency can be defined by the Village for the purposes of voting. There was general agreement that we should have a listening session on this topic.

Larry Wasson said this agenda is being taken up by ethics and other issues, meanwhile our safety of the Village has been ignored. He mentioned flooding, lighting, car thefts, and other issues that remain. He also said the Fire Hydrants haven't been inspected.

Marty Langelan expressed that there is no rush to do this Charter amendment. Also expressed concerns about the definition of resident. She also agreed with Larry that the real stuff we should be focusing on is the safety issues and not the self-inflicted ethics issues. Marty also noted that the Community Engagement Committee made a recommendation to have a community list-serv or other communication structure and didn't see that reflected in the minutes.

Susan Kahn agrees we should have sidewalk snow shoveling. Susan also supports the listening session for the Charter Amendment.

Naomi Naierman reminded everyone that the pedestrian safety committee from several years listed sidewalk snow shoveling as a top recommendation.

8:08PM; Approve Previous Meeting Minutes: Kauders. Arthur moved to approve the previous meeting minutes. Jeff seconded. The minutes passed unanimously.

Discuss Shepherd St. Park: Alexander. Arthur asked if we should move forward. Should VMA get involved in making repairs to the County Park? There was general agreement that this is not a VMA function, but residents and businesses should feel free to get involved.

Committee Updates: Kauders

Community Engagement. Keith Allen talked about the Community Brunch, a huge success with over 200 residents attending. The Committee will now focus on the celebration on the sidewalk event.

Election Committee. Alison Price gave the Committees report, highlighting that the Village is in the process of finalizing the contact with the Election Service Provider. March 22 is the deadline for nominations. A candidate forum will be held afterwards.

Ethics Committee. Lorie Mitchell gave the Committee's Report. Including sharing the Ethics training slides and a chart detailing the timeline of the amendment process, both of these documents are in the packet for tonight's meeting. Lorie then responded to questions that came out of the Ethics listening session which was held on March 14. Lorie asked the Council to include the Committee's written report as an attachment to the minutes for this meeting.

Public Hearing and Possible Adoption of Ordinance (No. 2022-10-1) to amend the ethics ordinance to expand the definition of "official" to include members of all committees and ad hoc committees appointed by the Council. Arthur motioned and Susan seconded. Susan and Andrew voted in favor. Arthur, Jeff, and Katie voted against it. Ordinance No. 2022-10-1 does not pass.

Public Hearing and Possible Adoption of Resolution (No. 2023-1) to amend policy regarding the taking of oaths and disclosure of conflicts of interest to remove the requirement for a notary to administer the oath. Katie moved and Arthur seconded. Resolution No. 2023-1 passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Introduction of a Charter Amendment (No. 2023-1) to amend section 301 of the Village of Martin's Additions Charter. There was general agreement that the Village should hold a listening session about this prior to introduction. Andrew directed the Village Manager to schedule a listening session on this topic.

Discussion and Possible Introduction of Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Budget Ordinance (No. 2023-2) and Tax Rates Resolution (No. 2023-3). Council Treasurer Arthur Alexander delivered the budget presentation which is included in the packet for this meeting. Ron Bolt noted we cannot zero out the real property tax without risking the County's revenue sharing and also that American Rescue Plan Act funds need to be obligated by the end of 2024, so in the FY24 and FY25 budget. Jeff moved to introduce the budget and Arthur seconded. This was introduced unanimously.

Discussion and a possible vote to sign onto a resolution prepared by the Town of Chevy Chase condemning antisemitic acts. Ron Bolt noted this includes a commitment to host educational sessions on the topic. Andrew and Jeff both expressed their gratitude for and support of this effort. Jeff motioned to sign onto this joint resolution and Katie seconded. This passed unanimously.

10:50PM Manager's Report: Silliman. Michael Silliman thanked the Council for their leadership and highlighted the big projects he is hoping to focus on over the next fiscal year. Andrew noted the accomplishments to date by the new Village Manager and thanked Michael for his work.

Opportunity for Council to Hear Residents' Comments

Susan Fattig addressed comments that were made at the ethics listening session related to the 2020 election.

Larry Wasson asked what WSSC and County involvement is in storm drainage. Village Manager Michael Silliman said we will follow up with an update on the storm drainage issue. Larry also commented that curb extensions outside of the Village do not work and take up parking. Lastly Larry noted that Council closed sessions should not be referred to in public.

Marty Langelan thanked everyone for their hard work and asked the Council how to respond to Susan's comments in regard to what transpired during the 2020 Village Elections. There was consensus that this should happen offline.

Naomi Naierman asked what Susan meant by saying that those that expressed support for the aging in place recommendation in the 2022 Community Survey may have completed the survey more than once. Susan did not respond. Naomi also noted Susan's comment that this was Jeff

Blander's first vote for an ethics ordinance was not appreciated. Naomi hopes these types of sly comments stop.

11:12 PM Adjournment: Kauders. Arthur moved to adjourn and Jeff seconded. Adjournment was unanimous.