

## Town Council of Centreville

May 18, 2023

7:00 p.m.

### MINUTES

The May 18, 2023 Town Council meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Council President Steven K. Kline at the Liberty Building located at 107 N. Liberty Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room. The following members and staff were present: Steven K. Kline, President; Ashley H. Kaiser, Vice President; Eric B. Johnson, Jr., Daniel B. Worth; and Jim A. Beauchamp, Members; Charles (Chip) Koogler, Town Manager; Clifford (Kip) Matthews, Director of Public Works; Sharon VanEmburch, Town Attorney; Karen Luffman, Finance Officer; and Carolyn Brinkley, Town Clerk.

- Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. Worth made a motion to approve the May 4, 2023 meeting minutes, as presented. Mr. Johnson seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

#### Citizens Forum

Royce Herman, Hope Road spoke about the constant yield tax rate; Joe Leilick spoke in favor of changes to the sign ordinance to allow for digital signs and reaffirm the support of the American Legion.

#### Public Hearing: FY2024 Constant Yield Tax Rate

- Mr. Kline called the hearing to order for the constant yield tax rate at 7:08 p.m.
- Ms. Luffman stated that this year's constant yield tax rate is \$.5247 and the Town's tax rate is \$.535. The Town is required to advertise and hold a public hearing if the current tax rate is higher than the constant yield tax rate.
- Ms. Brinkley verified that the notice of hearing was publicized in a newspaper circulated in Queen Anne's County.
- There being no legal matters relating to the jurisdiction of the Town Council of Centreville nor any objections regarding the Notice of Public Hearing, Mr. Kline asked for comments from anyone in favor of the constant yield tax rate.
- No one spoke in favor.
- Mr. Kline asked for comments from anyone opposed to the constant yield tax rate.
- Mr. Royce Herman stated he had already made his comments in opposition.
- Mr. Johnson made a motion to adjourn the public hearing. Mr. Beauchamp seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. The public hearing for the FY2024 Constant Yield Tax Rate adjourned at 7:10 p.m.
- Mr. Beauchamp stated the constant yield changes are based on new a aggregate of tax rates. He stated it fluctuates based on assessed values so that property owners are not paying more in taxes than the previous year.
- Mr. Worth stated he has been against maintaining the constant yield tax rate because the Town does need the additional revenue. He reported it is a 2.2% difference between the Town's current tax rate and the constant yield tax rate; meaning the Town would need to reduce the tax rate by 2.2%, which is much lower than the inflation rate. Mr. Worth stated that is a \$93,000 difference in the Town's budget.
- Mr. Kline stated the Town has had many budget work sessions and has encouraged everyone to attend. He asked, where does the Council cut? He stated that when capital projects are delayed, the cost increases. Mr. Kline indicated he would love to cut taxes, but they cannot at this time.
- Mr. Johnson stated the Town is blessed with the best department heads when it comes to asks for the budget. He stated Mr. Matthews comes in with a barebones budget and continues to run his department.
- Ms. Kaiser reported that during the budget, she was in favor of the constant yield tax rate. However, when she received the budget, she changed her mind to keep the current tax rate.

#### Old Business

- a. Ordinance 01-2023 – FY2024 Budget – Second Reading – Council President
  - Mr. Kline read Ordinance 01-2023 for the purpose of adopting a budget for the Town of Centreville for Fiscal Year 2024.
  - A public hearing will be held on June 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### New Business

- a. Digital Signage
  - Mr. Johnson made the following presentation:



Centreville Town Council Meeting  
May 18, 2023

## Digital Signage Considerations and Council Recommendation To The Planning Commission

Eric Johnson, Member of Council  
Sharon VanEmburch, Town Attorney

## Overview

1. Limitations – What NOT To Do
2. Benefits of Limited Digital Signage
3. Queen Anne’s County Digital Signage Permitted
4. Text Amendment Options
5. Consensus/Next Steps?

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### 1. Limitations – What Not To Do

- A. No digital signs in the downtown/historic district
- B. No high-resolution color tv-like imagery (alpha and numeric characters only)
- C. No animation, playing of videos or sound
- D. No more than two colors—foreground color and black background
- E. Messaging may not change more often than every five minutes



### 2. Benefits of Limited Signage

- A. Allows critical messaging in high traffic areas
- B. Messaging can be changed via phone-based app
- C. Emergency messaging during police incidents
- D. Consistent with council member campaign platforms to improve communication
- E. Our citizens expect us to maximize efforts and mediums to share information



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Queen Anne's County, MD / Part III: Local Regulations / Zoning and Subdivision Regulations / Site Development Standards  
**Article XII Signs**

### 3. QAC Digital Signage Permitted

- (v) Electronic signs, including light-emitting diode ("LED") signs, are permitted as freestanding signs subject to the following limitations:
- (a) No electronic sign shall exceed 60 square feet of the maximum freestanding sign surface area otherwise permitted pursuant to § 96-84A(C)(3)(i) above, and
  - (b) Surface area copy may not change more frequently than every 30 seconds. [Amended 2/14/2017 by Ord. No. 16-12]
  - (c) Electronic signs shall have no revolving, flashing, moving, scrolling, rotating or similar intermittent lights or features that impede movement.
  - (d) An electronic sign may not be animated, play video or audio messages or blink in any manner.
  - (e) An electronic sign shall consist only of alphabetic or numeric characters on a plain background but may include company or business logos and graphic, pictorial, or photographic images, provided the same are not distracting or distracting. [Amended 2/14/2017 by Ord. No. 16-12]
  - (f) Electronic signs shall not exceed a maximum illumination of 7500 nits during daylight hours and a maximum illumination of 750 nits for the time period between sunset and sunrise as measured from the sign's face at maximum brightness. The applicant shall provide written verification from the sign manufacturer that the sign intensity has been preset not to exceed the levels specified above, and the intensity level is protected from end-user manipulation by password protected software or other appropriate methods.

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### 4. Text Amendment Options

- **Options to Consider:**
  - Option 1: Only allow governmental/institutional uses in non-residential & non-CBD zones
  - Option 2: Only allow governmental/institutional uses in C-2 and C-3 zones
  - Option 3: Only allow in C-2 and C-3 zones
  - All three options subject to the supplemental standards in the zoning ordinance for electronic signs
  - Info: American Legion is zoned C-2
- **Current Standards:**
  - Message can't change more frequently than once every 5 minutes.
    - Change occurs in 2 seconds with no fade in or fade out.
  - Static messages with no movement or optical illusion of movement.
  - Only alphabetic or numeric characters.
  - No graphic, pictorial or photographic image
  - Automatic dimming depending on level of ambient light
  - Maximum brightness of 0.3 footcandle
  - Single color only
  - If adjacent to residential, turned off between 10 pm and 6 am
  - No audio
  - If malfunctions, must freeze static, be blank or turn off

- Ms. Kaiser stated that she is not in favor of digital signage at the high school and the Town needs to get a handle on code enforcement for the current, non-compliant issues.
- Mr. Worth stated the draft comprehensive plan has the Central Business District (CBD) going out to Little Hut Drive.
- Mr. Kline stated he has no issue with the American Legion having a sign but is concerned about the standards not being able to be enforced.
- Mr. Beauchamp suggested restricting the signs to certain zones with the same zone across the street and limiting it to certain roads.
- Mr. Worth suggested non-residential zones on either side of the property or only institutional and government businesses on a State highway with commercial zoning on either side.
- The Council agreed they would still not be permitted in the CBD.
- Mr. Lielick from the American Legion stated he has no issues with what has been suggested so far.
- The Town Council agreed to draft a digital sign ordinance.

#### b. Summer Meeting Schedule

- Ms. Brinkley presented the following memo:

Each year the Town Council moves to a summer schedule in which meetings are held once a month in July and August. The Council also determines if there will be a second meeting June.

Staff is requesting the Council determine the following:

1. Will there be a second meeting in June?
    - Currently scheduled for June 15<sup>th</sup>.
  2. What is the date of the July meeting?
    - July 6<sup>th</sup> and July 20<sup>th</sup> are the normal meeting dates
  3. What is the date of the August meeting?
    - August 3<sup>rd</sup> and August 17<sup>th</sup> are the normal meeting dates
- After some discussion, the Town Council agreed on the following summer schedule:
    - June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting – cancelled
    - July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting – cancelled
    - July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting – scheduled
    - August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting – cancelled
    - August 17<sup>th</sup> meeting – scheduled

#### Reports of Boards and Commissions

- a. Maryland Municipal League
  - Mr. Beauchamp had nothing to report.
- b. Council of Governments
  - Mr. Worth stated that COG met the previous Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, in Sudlersville.
  - Church Hill installed a cell tower to improve cell service for the area.
  - Sudlersville has installed speed cameras on 313.
  - Church Hill is looking at installing speed cameras.
  - Queenstown has limited options for speeding and are making arrangements with the QAC Sheriff's Office to increase patrol.
  - No one from the County Commissioners was present.
  - The next meeting will be held in September.
- c. Economic Development
  - Mr. Johnson reported that the fireside chat took place on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and the video of that meeting is posted on-line which is about 45-minutes. He stated he would have one slide for the next meeting.
- d. Park Advisory Board
  - Ms. Kaiser reported that she has been spending more time at the Town parks and stated how appreciative she is of Town staff for maintaining them.
- e. Centreville Planning Commission
  - Mr. Kline reported that the Planning Commission met the previous night and gave conditional final approval of the new Board of Education building.

#### Reports of Department Heads

- a. Town Manager
  - Met with EPA for the \$2.155 million in federal funds that the Town was approved for. There is a \$500,000+ match required which can include State funds and in-kind. There is no deadline to spend and once submitted for reimbursement, the turnaround time is expected to be approximately 2 months.
  - The Preliminary Engineering Report should be completed in the first or second week of June.
  - The EPA requires a lead and copper pipe survey to be completed. Mr. Matthews submitted a \$52,000 grant to assist in completing the survey. Mr. Koogler stated the Town needs to look at software to help inventory the Town's infrastructure.
  - The City of Baltimore is being required by MDE to cover their drinking reservoir. This is acres of water and millions of dollars.
  - The owner of the Mill was at Town Hall the other day to get a fence permit to put around the Mill to keep people out while they are working on it. Mr. Kline stated he spoke with the Maryland Historical Trust and there is a Society for the Preservation of Old Mills (SPOOM). The Town can help identify

funding options for the landowner.

b. Town Clerk

- Ms. Brinkley reported that Centreville Main Street applied for a grant through the NASCAR Day Giveathon. They have raised \$500 (as of this meeting) and the funds are being raised to pool advertising funds for Centreville businesses, non-profits, and schools. If they raise \$750 or more, they will receive a share of the general funds donated. The event ends on Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 p.m.

Citizen Comments:

Royce Herman, Hope Road, discussed the speeding on Hope Road/305. The Town Council requested the speed trailer be moved to Hope Road.

Council Roundtable

- The Town Council had no additional reports.

Motion to Adjourn

There being no further business, Mr. Johnson made a motion to adjourn the May 18, 2023 meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Carolyn M. Brinkley Town Clerk

Council Action Items:

1. Approved the May 4, 2023 meeting minutes, as presented.
2. The Town Council agreed to draft a digital sign ordinance.
3. The Town Council agreed on the following summer schedule:
  - June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting – cancelled
  - July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting – cancelled
  - July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting – scheduled
  - August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting – cancelled
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