



Townsend Town Council Reorganization and Meeting Minutes
June 5th, 2024 @ 7:00 pm
VIA CONFERENCE CALL &
Town Hall
141 Main St, Townsend, DE 19734

7:00 pm Re-Organization Meeting

- I. Call to Order: 7 pm
- II. Opening Ceremonies
 - A. Roll Call: Mayor S. Lobdell, Councilman J. Mertz, Councilman J. Bangura, Councilman M. Chapman, Councilman M. Suhr, Financial Officer J. Helms, Town Solicitor L. Hatfield, Town Engineer E. Gruenes, and Town Clerk M. Rivera.
 - B. Pledge of Allegiance: All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance
 - C. Recognition of Visitors:
 1. Mayor Lobdell recognized all visitors present as reflected on the sign in sheet and via zoom: Rick Warfel, John Holmes, Alan C. Emsley, Craig Lynch, Carlton Bowers, Dylan K. Wiggins, James Winfield, Randy Becker, and Bob Taylor.
 - D. Announcements:
 1. CM Mertz thanked everyone who sponsored, donated, attended, and assisted with the Town Fair and Parade event. CM Bangura thanked CM Mertz for the fabulous job organizing the event.
 2. CM Chapman thanked TC Rivera, PWS DiMartino, and Middletown for working on the Hometown Heros banners.
- III. Adoption of Agenda.
 - A. *CM Chapman motioned to strike item 4.e. from the agenda. CM Mertz seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 1. Council removed "ACTION ITEM: Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the May 1st, 2024, Town Council Meeting", from the agenda.
 - B. Mayor Lobdell moved the nomination of Council Member candidate to the regular meeting after the Plan Presentations.
 - C. *CM Chapman motioned to adopt the agenda with changes discussed. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 1. Council adopted the agenda with the removal of action item 4.e. and moving of council member candidate nomination to the next meeting.
- IV. Approval / Rejection of Minutes
 - A. **ACTION ITEM:** Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the April 17th, 2024, Town Council Public Hearing.
 - B. **ACTION ITEM:** Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the April 17th, 2024, Town Council Special Meeting.
 - C. **ACTION ITEM:** Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the April 17th, 2024, Town Council Special Meeting Executive Session.
 - D. **ACTION ITEM:** Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the May 1st, 2024, Town Council Meeting.

- E. **ACTION ITEM:** Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the May 15th, 2024, Town Council Special Meeting.
 - F. **ACTION ITEM:** Approval/ Rejection of Town Council Minutes from the May 15th, 2024, Town Council Special Meeting Executive Session.
 - G. Mayor Lobdell provided a title reading of the minutes for approval or rejection.
 - H. *CM Bangura motioned to approve the listed minutes. CM Mertz seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 - 1. Council approved the minutes from the:
 - a. April 17th, 2024, Town Council Public Hearing.
 - b. April 17th, 2024, Town Council Special Meeting.
 - c. April 17th, 2024, Town Council Special Meeting Executive Session.
 - d. May 1st, 2024, Town Council Meeting.
 - e. May 15th, 2024, Town Council Special Meeting.
 - f. May 15th, 2024, Town Council Special Meeting Executive Session.
- V.** Introduction of Incoming Council Members:
- A. Mr. Scott Lobdell
 - 1. Mr. Lobdell provided a brief explanation and review of the 2024, Election. Noting, he had submitted a packet and CM Mertz did not which means CM Mertz will remain in office until a new appointment has been made, per the Charter.
- VI.** Oath of Office for newly elected Council Member.
- A. No action discussion held, nor oath taken for this agenda item.
- VII.** Oath of Office for newly appointed Council Member.
- A. TC Rivera lead the Council oath of office for Mr. Lobdell.
- VIII.** Nomination and Election of Town Mayor for one (1) year term
- A. *CM Bangura nominated Mr. Lobdell. CM Chapman seconded the motion.*
 - 1. Roll Call Vote of Council: CM Chapman – yea, CM Bangura – yea, CM Lobdell – yea, CM Mertz – yea, and CM Suhr – yea.
 - 2. Council unanimously voted Mr. Lobdell as the Town Mayor for one yea.
- IX.** Oath of Office for Mayor
- A. TC Rivera lead the Mayor's oath of office for Mr. Lobdell.
- X.** Reorganization of Committees by Town Mayor
- A. *CM Chapman made a motion to change title of Social Services Committee to Veterans and Social Services Committee. CM Suhr seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 - 1. Council changed the name of the Social Services Committee to Veterans and Social Services Committee.
 - B. Mayor Lobdell appointed CM Chapman to the Code Review Committee.
 - C. Mayor Lobdell advised committees will be discussed further.
- XI.** Discussion and possible vote of rules for Town Meetings.
- A. Mayor Lobdell noted the rules have been provided for review, as part of the packet. Council agreed to review further.
 - B. *CM Chapman motioned to table discussion and possible vote of rules for Town meetings. CM Mertz seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 - 1. Council tabled discussion and possible vote of rules for Town meetings.

XII. Adjournment of Reorganization Meeting.

- A. *CM Chapman motioned to adjourn the meeting. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
-

1. Council adjourned the reorganization meeting at 7:13 pm.
-

Town Council Meeting

- I. Call to Order: 7:13 pm.
- II. Opening Ceremonies were recognized from the reorganization meeting.
- III. Citizens Comments & Participation
- A. Mr. Emsley raised concern with drivers going over the speed limit on Commerce Street and Main Street.
- i. Council advised with the new officer on patrol they have already noticed a decrease in speeding throughout Town.
- IV. Adoption of Agenda.
- A. *CM Chapman motioned to adopt the agenda with the previously discussed changes. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
- i. Council adopted the agenda as discussed and voted upon during the reorganization meeting.
- V. Plan Presentations:
- A. Discussion regarding Minor Subdivision request for Parcel #: 25-001.00-049, 0 Walnut Street.
- i. Craig Lynch of Landmark Science & Engineering presented the sketch plan for 0 Walnut Street. Mr. Lynch noted the following:
1. There is an existing turnaround and fire hydrant.
 - a. There are no plans to remove these.
 2. There is a paper street currently present and is utilized by neighbors.
 3. The Railroad tracks are behind the proposed parcels.
- ii. Discussion:
1. CM Chapman asked if a cul-de-sac will be put in place instead of a natural turnaround.
 - a. Mr. Lynch advised this is due to a concern for the required buffer and the New Castle County (NCC) parcel which is cornering Railroad tracks as well. Mr. Lynch noted the zoning is R1a.
 - i. Mayor Lobdell advised a 5 ft turnaround is possible and advised Mr. Lynch to discuss further with NCC.
 2. CM Suhr asked if the area would be barricaded or open. Mr. Lynch advised a sign would be installed per DeIDOT standards to note the Railroad tracks and there may be striping added.

3. Mayor recommended a note to be added to the record plans to advise the owners that the buffer areas may not be cleared.
4. Council agreed the minor subdivision may proceed to the next step.
5. Mr. Lynch advised the proposed elevation provided will be similar to the plans.
6. NCC Carter noted this is part of the housing project to provide moderate income housing in an effort to revitalize Townsend.

B. Discussion regarding Major Subdivision with re-zoning request for Parcel #: 25-008.00-002, 100 Karins Boulevard.

- i. Mayor Lobdell recused himself from discussion advising his firm is involved the project and advised the applicant will be presenting their application. Mayor Lobdell assigned CM Mertz to run the meeting in his absence.
- ii. Mr. Winfield presented the Major Subdivision with re-zoning request for Parcel #: 25-008.00-002, 100 Karins Boulevard and noted the following:
 1. The exit is a right-turn only to prevent residents of the proposed development from going into the adjoining community.
 2. No parking on the street.
 3. Construction will be out of the tree line.
 4. A scope meeting was held with DeIDOT regarding the safety issues raised by Council. The applicant is waiting on a second scope meeting.
 - a. LifeHouse Church is not included in these meetings as they will contribute towards the repairs.
 5. Re-zoning is from Commercial to Residential.
- iii. Council raised concern with parking. Mr. Winfield advised there will be signage and no parking will be enforced by the HOA.
 1. Mr. Winfield confirmed there are 54 proposed homes with 15 alternative parking spaces and each home lot to allow for parking of two cars.
- iv. TC Rivera provided recap of items requested by Council:
 1. Traffic control - U-turn at top of the median.
 2. Traffic light needed.
 3. Egress for emergency vehicles; widening of right-turn only lane.
- v. Council requested the following of the applicant:
 1. Take into consideration the traffic concerns.
 2. Egress for emergency vehicles.
 - a. Mr. Winfield advised the exit may be widened for emergency personnel to enter.
 - b. CM Mertz recommended adding a fire lane.
- vi. CM Mertz returned the meeting over to Mayor Lobdell.

VI. Nomination of Council Member candidate(s).

- i. CM Chapman introduced Mr. Dylan Wiggins.
- ii. Mr. Wiggins provided a brief history of himself and advised he is interested in serving the public.
- iii. *CM Chapman made a motion to nominate Mr. Dylan Wiggins to be appointed to CM Mertz seat. CM Mertz seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 - 1. Mr. Wiggins was nominated unanimously by Council to fill CM Mertz seat.
- iv. Council agreed, upon successful background check, Mr. Wiggins will be up for appointment during the July 10th Council meeting which will also include the discussion and vote of the budget.

VII. Reports:

A. Mayor

- i. None.
- ii. Mayor Lobdell thanked CM Mertz, and Town Staff on their joint efforts for the Town Fair and Parade. Noting, the event went well and was well attended.

B. New Castle County Councilman David Carter

- i. NCC Carter thanked Council for the support of the Interfaith Housing project development.
- ii. NCC Carter announced NCC has passed their budget. Noting, the grant need was raised for Fire Companies and EMS
- iii. NCC Carter advised there will be no tax increase until the tax reassessment is completed. Additionally, the Town should review Impact Fees.
- iv. NCC Carter announced an Evacuation Planning Workshop will be held on Monday, June 10th, and advised Council that he has been made aware that there will be a Town representative attending.
- v. NCC Carter announced the Fire Company fundraiser “Extinguish Your Thirst” will be held on September 14th in the evening. 7/15/2024

C. Town of Townsend Police Chief’s Report

- i. Mayor Lobdell advised any questions may be directed to Chief Longo who was unable to attend the meeting.

D. Town Solicitor Lisa Hatfield

- i. TS Hatfield confirmed all is status quo with no reports of concern.

E. Town Engineer Erik Gruenes

- i. Mayor Lobdell noted the Town has a new Town Engineer and introduced Mr. Erik Guenes.
- ii. FO Helms advised the Town Solicitor is working to address the Solar Panel matter. TS Hatfield confirmed a letter has been sent to with a 30-day response time.
- iii. TE Gruenes confirmed the Town received a bid for the Irrigation System from Delaware Environmental Const, totaling approximate \$100k. TE Gruenes advised the final bid documents were just received, June 5th, and is in the process of reviewing. TE Gruenes advised a recommendation letter will be submitted to Council by next week.

1. Mayor Lobdell requested to have TE Gruenes to work with FO Helms regarding fund allocations.

iv. CM Mertz noted the following project priorities for TE Gruenes:

1. Sump Pump concerns
2. Public Works Pole barn

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Finance Committee:

1. Mayor Lobdell advised Council will have budget to discuss the budget in July.
2. Review and possible discussion on the April 2024 Budget vs. Actual Reports.
 - a. CM Mertz the Town is over in revenue.
 - b. FO Helms confirmed, noting this is due to the open position. Additionally, the Town is doing well on budget.
 - c. FO Helms noted there is approximately \$1,400 in revenue to roll over from the Town Fair.

B. Human Resources Committee:

1. No reports.
2. CM Mertz noted the Public Works Seasonal Employee, Rick Boyer, has started.

C. Public Works and Land Use Development Committee:

1. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote regarding 2023 Outdoor Recreation, Parks, and Trails (ORPT) Grant Application.
 - a. TS Hatfield confirmed TC Rivera may present the ORPT 22-227 contract agreement.
 - b. TC Rivera provided a brief reading of the OPRT 22-227 contract agreement.
 - c. *CM Mertz made a motion to allocate \$20k in ARPA (American Rescue Plan) funds to match the OPRT 22-227 grant funds received. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 - i. Council approved ARPA funds allocation in the amount of \$20k to be utilized for the OPRT 22-227 grant match.
2. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote regarding the Townsend Municipal Park Irrigation System.
 - a. No motion made, nor action taken for this agenda item.

D. Public Safety Committee:

1. CM Mertz raised concerns with park not being properly mulched and the giant pile of dirt. CM Chapman advised he will talk to the dad who rent the baseball field regarding the pile of dirt in the, Town Park Parking lot.
2. CM Mertz request TS Hatfield to review and advise the rental process for the Baseball Field with TC Rivera. CM Suhr raised concern with pile of dirt in parking lot.
3. CM Mertz noted the recruit is doing well.

4. CM Mertz thanked the, Townsend, Police and other Police Department organizations that assisted at the Town Fair.

E. Community Engagement Committee:

1. CM Mertz noted the next big event is the Back-to-School event in September.
2. CM Mertz recommended to hold Ribbon Cuttings for grand opening of local businesses.

F. Code Review Committee:

1. None

G. Veterans and Social Services Committee:

1. CM Chapman noted the Committee is looking to hold a raffle for Veterans Day.
2. CM Suhr advised the Committee should budget for the Brian Connley House.
3. CM Mertz approved and advised the Veterans and Social Services Committee to utilize the Community Engagement Committee budget.

IX. Discussion of future agenda items.

- A. Council noted future agenda items have been discussed.

X. Recess Council Meeting to Convene Executive Session.

- A. *CM Mertz made a motion to recess the Council meeting to convene Executive Session. CM Chapman seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 - i. Council recessed at approximately 8:39 pm to convene Executive Session.

XI. Convene Executive Session: Pursuant to 29 Del. C. §§10004(b)(2) and (4), the Town Council will consider a motion to meet in executive session for a strategy session, which will include legal advice or opinions from an attorney-at-law, with respect to potential litigation, as well as discussions that may have an adverse effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the Town, and 29 Del. C. §10004 (B)(9), the Town Council will consider a motion to meet in executive session for a strategy session, to address personnel matters.

XII. Close Executive Session & Re-convene Council Meeting.

- A. Council reconvened the Council meeting at approximately 9 pm.

XIII. ACTION ITEM: Possible vote of Council.

- A. *CM Suhr made a motion to approve making an offer of employment to the candidate discussed, during executive session, contingent on the advisement from the Town Solicitor for the amount discussed in executive session. CM Bangura seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
 - i. Council voted to make an offer of employment to the candidate contingent of the advisement of the Town Solicitor.

XIV. Adjournment.

-
- A. *CM Chapman made a motion to adjourn. CM Mertz seconded the motion. Voice vote of Council: all yea's.*
-

- i. Council adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:15 pm.
-