



Town Council Meeting Minutes
August 18, 2021 @ 7:00 pm
Town Hall & CONFERENCE CALL

Town Meetings will be returning to in person format. Residents may choose to attend meetings in person or via electronic means. Townsend Town Hall will be available to the Town Council and those of the public wishing to attend in person. All personnel and visitors entering Town Hall must wear masks and comply with all CDC guidelines, including social distancing guidelines. Those that are sick or who have been exposed to the COVID-19 virus are asked to not enter Town Hall and may attend the meeting virtually. Those wishing to attend virtually may dial **1(301)715-8592**. When directed, provide following meeting ID **827- 6421-7575#** and then the following password **361631#** to enter the meeting. If you choose to access the meeting online click the following link:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82764217575?pwd=aHI4RDhTZ0xiME1HV0ZOcHRxSHZ3QT09>

Residents will be able to view documents posted to the meeting tab on the Town website at www.townsend.delaware.gov or by joining the meeting via computer.

7:00 pm

- I. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Mayor Patrick Miller.
- II. Opening Ceremonies:**
 - a. Roll Call:**
 1. The following Council and staff were present with electronic access available for guests: Mayor P. Miller, Councilwoman E. Clarke, Councilman J. Mertz, Councilman S. Lobdell, Town Manager A. Mangeri, Town Clerk/ Acting Town Manger A. Tantillo, and Financial Officer J. Helms. Councilman E. Dugan was absent from the meeting.
 - b. Pledge of Allegiance:** Conducted in person and virtually
 - c. Recognition of Visitors:** No guests were present.
 - d. Announcements:** N/A
- III. Adoption of Agenda:**
 - a. Mayor Miller asked for all those in favor of adopting the agenda to say "I". Vote: Voice vote of Council- all I's, no nays. Agenda adopted.**
- IV. Approval / Rejection of Minutes from the August 4, 2021, Town Council Workshop Meeting.**
 - a. CM Lobdell made a motion to approve the Council Minutes from the August 4, 2021, Town Council Workshop Meeting. CM Mertz seconded the motion. Vote: Voice vote of Council- all I's, no nays. Minutes approved.**
- V. Mayor's Report:**
 - a. Mayor Miller announced that the Townsend Fire Company has notified the Town of their consideration to reinstate the fire alarm. TM Mangeri will coordinate with the Fire Company.**
 - b. CM Lobdell asks for the Fire Company to use their discretion of when to activate the siren overnight.**
- VI. Reports:**
 - a. State Police:**
 1. CM Mertz shared that CWS Clarke previously requested a written report from the State Police and asked if there was a status update on this. TM Mangeri shared that he coordinated with CW Clarke and that it is unlikely that such a report could be issued, prior to a meeting. They are a State entity that provides services to the

Town. TM Mangeri could ask those on Extra Duty patrol, that are paid by the Town to provide a log for the Town.

b. Town Attorney Fred Townsend III

1. TM Mangeri shared that TA Townsend and TM Mangeri will add to the discussion regarding positive resolves with MS Development to be closed out by the next meeting.

c. Town Engineer Edwin Van-Otoo

1. Mayor Miller asked if TE Van-Otoo would be able to provide an update on his review of Townsend Acres and other Town projects.

d. Town Manager

1. Status update on the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - a. TM Mangeri shared that The Number of new cases in the Townsend area have continued to rise significantly. Townsend area is an area of concern as cases of the Coronavirus have significantly increased. Information specific to our area can be found at <https://myhealthycommunity.dhss.delaware.gov/locations/zip-code-19734>
 - b. The average of daily new cases went from .7 one month ago to an average of 5.3 new cases daily. Yesterday alone there were 9 new cases with approximately 37 new cases in the past 7 days.
 - c. Also there has been a rise in the rate of people testing positive 9.1% positivity rate a month ago to over 56.3% yesterday for an average of over 32.3 positivity in testing on average. This is quite a shift from July 8 when the positivity average was 4.8%.
 - d. Delaware Public Health is reporting that from January 1, 2021, through Mid-July, 99% of reported cases statewide are individuals who are not fully vaccinated. This includes more than 99% of those hospitalized with COVID-19 and just under 99% of fatalities from this disease.
 - e. TM Mangeri shared that unfortunately, our area has suffered the loss of 14 residents from this disease and our hearts go out to the families of those that have passed.
 - f. Mayor Miller shared that the Governor had recently changed the masks mandates for Delaware. TM Mangeri shared that the Governor has now mandated masks for all indoor school activities; including school meetings; are now required to wear masks. Additionally, masks a required in all state buildings as well. TM Mangeri also shared that he was not aware of whether or not the Governors office would allow Town's in high-risk areas to transfer back to virtual meetings or not.
 - g. Mayor Miller shared that he was on the Governors COVID press briefing prior to this meeting and encouraged all to attend. One point that was made, was that the Delta variant is highly prevalent in Sussex County, and also has significant prevalence in New Castle County; including Townsend. Townsend is a hot spot.

2. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible modification of vote on the quotes to repair the chimney in Town Hall.

- a. **TM Mangeri shared that the issue of the Chimney repair needs to be re-discussed.** As previously mentioned, one of the bids was a little low and TM Mangeri had questions out to the contractor. In discussion with the contractor, the Town found out that they had only bid one chimney for repair, but both chimneys are in need of repair. TM Mangeri confirmed with TE Van-Otoo that both chimneys are in need of repair. It looks like these two structures were not restored when the building was restored. The chimney to the east of the building has bricks that are coming loose and beginning to spread. The chimney to the west, allows excessive amounts of water to come into the hearth box. Both items need to be repaired. TM Mangeri asked the company; EDIS to review both areas and re-bid, the contractor did that and provided an updated bid. When compared to the two other bids received, it is still the lowest bid. But this does need to be re-authorized by Council since the originally approved bid amount will not cover it. This bid is for \$13,800 to repair both chimneys. Both chimneys need to urgently be repaired. This work is also guaranteed, in comparison to a bid from another company that did not guarantee their work. TM Mangeri asked for authorization to amend the bid from \$7,000 to \$14,000 to authorize the work.
- b. CM Lobdell shared that water has been coming through in that area and the main concern could be with water damage that cannot be seen, such as on joists or other areas that cannot be seen without repair. TM Mangeri pointed out that another concern is where the water is going from the chimney. TM Mangeri shared that the contractor has reviewed this and believes that removing the mortar, grinding, and restoring and waterproofing it will mitigate the problem.
- c. Mayor Miller asked if it was necessary to have the chimneys. TM Mangeri shared that it may cost more to remove than repair. Additionally, they could not easily be capped off as one serves for the heat.
- d. *CM Lobdell made a motion to amend the previous approval for the chimney repairs to both chimneys and increase the approval amount from \$7,000 to \$14,000 both chimneys. No second to the motion; the motion died.*
- e. CM Mertz asked why the motion was made to authorize \$14,000 instead of the \$13,800. CM Lobdell shared it is common to authorize slightly more than a bid, in the instance of slight additional costs.
- f. *CM Mertz made a motion to motion to amend the previous approval for the chimney repairs to both chimneys and increase the approval amount from \$7,000 to \$13,800 both chimneys. CM Lobdell seconded the motion.*
 1. Mayor Miller summarized the motion that died and the new motion that passed. TM Mangeri summarized the other bids the Town received.
- g. *Votes: Clarke- yea, Lobdell- yea, Mertz- yea. Motion passed.*

VII. Committee Reports

a. **Finance Committee:** Chair: Mayor Miller, Co-Chair: Councilman Dugan

1. No report.

b. **Human Resources Committee:** Chair: Mayor Miller

1. Mayor Miller shared the Chief of Police resumes have been received and are being reviewed by Mayor Miller and TM Mangeri.

c. **Public Works Committee:** Chair: Councilman Dugan, Co-Chair: Councilman Mertz

1. No report.

d. **Land Use and Development Committee:** Chair: Councilman Lobdell, Co-Chair: Councilman Dugan

1. CM Lobdell shared that an update on the Comprehensive Plan and Townsend Acres could be provided at the next meeting.

e. **Veterans Committee:** Chair: Councilwoman Clarke, Co-Chair: Mayor Miller

1. Mayor Miller will coordinate plans for Veterans Day with Councilwoman Clarke.

f. **Public Safety Committee:** Chair: Councilman Mertz, Co-Chair: Councilwoman Clarke

1. No report.

g. **Community Engagement Committee:** Chair: Councilwoman Clarke, Co-Chair: Councilman Lobdell

1. CW Clarke shared that she had the opportunity to meet with Town staff to discuss Town events for 2021. There are a few items identified as possibilities, such as expanding butterfly gardens and assisting Town residents with certifying their own butterfly garden area, possible drive-in movie nights, and the Town Fair. Additionally, CW Clarke and CM Lobdell will discuss the possibility of the Junior Council in the future. More details on all items will be forthcoming.
2. **ACTION ITEM:** Discussion and possible vote to suspend the Townsend Town Fair until 2022.
 - a. CW Clarke and CM Lobdell discussed the possibility of postponing the Town Fair, due to the ongoing pandemic. CM Lobdell shared that a discussion and vote would be needed for the meeting.
 - b. TM Mangeri shared that a decision would be necessary in the next week or so in order to provide vendors with proper notice. The data present at the time, showed an uptick in numbers, with nine new cases the day prior and over thirty new cases in the last week, without schools or colleges back in session. Last year, there was a rise in cases in September and October and that is possible again for this year. Additionally, there is the possibility of other variants entering the area, along with the continuing threat of Delta. The CDC is also looking into a new schedule for vaccines to include boosters eight months from the initial vaccines. TM Mangeri's recommendation would be to postpone the event to the spring possibly.
 - c. CM Lobdell also shared that the dates overlap with the Firefly event which is concerning regarding COVID-19 and spread. Mayor Miller shared that New Castle County was proceeding with a craft fair, but it does not preclude the

Town from discussing the Town Fair. Mayor Miller shared that his larger concern is the possibility of having two fairs next year, one in the spring and one in the fall and they do not necessarily need to be the same event, they could be different.

- d. TM Mangeri shared that an additional concern is vendors. The fair typically has quite a few vendors, but there were only a little over 20 vendors signed up, with only three parade participants signed up: including the Town. TM Mangeri shared that the vendors and turnout would be atypical at this time.
- e. CM Mertz shared that the event is outdoors which is a positive and he was unaware of the CDC changing their guidance on outdoor events. Regarding the smaller number of vendors, CM Mertz shared that he believed this would be a positive to space out vendors now. Additionally, CM Mertz shared that he believes the community needs an event and he would love to see something happen, CM Mertz would like to see something happen, other options than canceling or postponing.
- f. Mayor Miller shared that the first thing that needs to be done is decide to cancel or postpone the event and then Council could decide what other community events could occur. Additionally, if the fair proceeds this year with a low number of vendors, it could impact how future Fair's may proceed. Mayor Miller shared that his only recommendation would be to decide whether to postpone the Fair at this meeting and then proceed with future discussions on how to proceed with a Town event at a later date.
- g. CW Clarke asked what else would be needed to move the idea, as she would like to proceed with postponing the Fair and Parade and proceeding with a drive-in movie night in the fall, to be more COVID compliant.
- h. Mayor Miller shared that he wanted to be clear that a drive-in movie or other event would not be replacing the Fair but could be held at a later date and the movie night would be a separate event. CM Lobdell shared that a motion on how to proceed with the Fair would be needed and a separate discussion at a later date could be held regarding additional events, such as a movie night.
- i. *CM Lobdell made a motion to postpone the 2021 Town of Townsend Fair and Parade to a date in the future due to the rising numbers of COVID and the anticipation that the numbers could continue to rise as schools go back in session. CW Clarke seconded the motion. Votes: Clarke- yea; Lobdell- yea; Mertz-nay. Motion passed with two yea votes and one nay vote. The Town Fair will be postponed to a date to be announced in the future.*
- j. TM Mangeri shared that he will coordinate with the vendor for movie nights to determine his availability and capability for drive-in movie nights.

h. Parks and Recreation Committee: Chair: Councilman Lobdell, Co-Chair: Councilman Mertz

1. CM Lobdell shared that he will meet with CM Mertz to determine if any items are necessary for the next Town meeting.
2. CM Mertz asked TM Mangeri for an update on the landscaping in the Town Park. TM Mangeri shared that the trees of concern have been removed. The weeds have been cut down and sprayed. Additionally, TM Mangeri has reached out to Middletown to see if they could assist the Town with the landscaping and is awaiting a response. TM Mangeri suggests that for the two remaining items, the

Town would not want to seed until the fall or early spring or mulch until the early spring.

i. National Wildlife and Historic Preservation Committee: Chair: Councilwoman Clarke

1. CW Clarke shared that there is a National Wildlife Photo contest hosted by the National Wildlife Federation, through October. Details for the contest have been posted on social media.
2. Additionally, CW Clarke is working to identify shrubs or flowers that could possibly be added to the area behind Town Hall. CW Clarke has corresponded with the Town Engineer to determine what is acceptable in the bio-retention area. TM Mangeri shared that bio-retention area was reviewed with the Town engineer and the area is in compliance. There is a possibility to do some things to make the area more aesthetically pleasing or plant around the area; but equipment cannot be brought into the area as it cannot be cut down or mowed, based on how it was engineered. The TM and engineer reviewed the area between the butterfly garden and bio retention area. TM Mangeri is looking into reviewing the existing solar panel array and the possibility of adding additional arrays. Additionally, they are looking into acceptable shrubs for the area. TM Mangeri will review the area with Town staff.
3. Regarding the Historic Preservation committee, there will be two historian guests at the September meeting to understand Council's expectations for a historic preservation plan. The guests will be Sylvester Woolford and Anthony Johnson.

VIII. Citizens Comments & Participation

- a. No citizens comment.

IX. Adjournment.

- a. CM Lobdell made a motion to adjourn the meeting and CM Mertz seconded the motion. Mayor Miller held a voice vote by asking all in favor to adjourn the meeting by signifying I- All Council members voted yea. No nay votes.
- b. Adjournment at 9:02 pm.