

**BOARD OF TOWN COMMISSIONERS**

**WORK SESSION**

**March 29, 2022 5:15 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Commissioner Kevin M. Bianca, Chair  
Commissioner Mary F. Chance - via telephone  
Commissioner Paula S. Etting  
Commissioner Erin S. Hughes  
Commissioner Donna L. Kahoe  
L. Jesse Bane, Town Administrator  
Trish Heidenreich, Director of Economic Development  
Stephen Kline, Director of Public Works  
Michael Krantz, Director of Administration  
Lisa Moody, Director of Finance  
Charles Moore, Chief of Police  
Patti Parker, Community & Public Relations Manager  
Kevin Small, Director of Planning

**OTHERS:** Joan Suitt, Recording Secretary

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

The Town Administrator requested additions/corrections to the agenda. The Commissioners approved the agenda as written.

**PRESENTATION:**

Update on the Progress of Harford County Climate Action's Native Plant Initiative by Tracy Waite

Tracy Waite, President of Harford County Climate Action, informed the Bel Air FIVE Project comes from the concern of the Sixth Extinction Decline we are seeing around the world. The following statistics were shared:

- North America's bird population has declined nearly 1/3 since 1970.
- 65% of wetlands present in 1700 has been lost by 2000.

- Eastern Monarch butterfly population has decreased for 2 decades and a rate of 6x faster since 2008 according to a new study by the University of Maryland.

Ms. Waite advised these are only some statistics being gathered. The Western Monarch butterflies wintering in California rebounded to the highest number in 5 years. Ms. Waite is grateful things are being done to save butterflies and the efforts do make a difference.

Solutions to make a local difference:

- Planting native host plants -
  1. Ten Petal Sunflower
  2. Helianthus decapetalus

Ms. Waite notified the iNaturalist app can be downloaded on cell phones. Pictures of butterflies and caterpillars are uploaded to iNaturalist and will be identified by an expert. After confirmation, the sighting will automatically upload to the Maryland Biodiversity Project where people can see the impact of efforts being done.

Ms. Waite advised the butterflies and caterpillars for the Bel Air FIVE Project are:

- Monarch
- Great Spangled Fritillary
- Silvery Checkerspot
- Spicebush Swallowtail
- Unicorn Caterpillar Moth

The following events have been planned:

- April 30<sup>th</sup> at Bel Air Library from 10:00 - 2:00 p.m. Tables with information on the project and activities for children.
- May 10<sup>th</sup> at Bel Air Armory, 6:00 p.m. speaker Doug Tallamy, Entomologist from the University of Delaware.
- May 14<sup>th</sup> at Rockfield 9:00 - 12 noon - Invasive Vine Removal Day.

- May 20<sup>th</sup> Garden Mart at Bel Air Armory from 8:30 - 1:30 p.m.  
Native host plants will be sold.

The Community & Public Relations Manager requested the website. Ms. Waite advised [www.hcclimateaction.org](http://www.hcclimateaction.org) and is also located on the Town's website. A brochure is available about the project.

**TOWN ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:**

Rockfield Barn Addition to Barn Quilt Trail of Harford County

The Town Administrator notified the Department of Public Works hung the 25<sup>th</sup> Barn Quilt in Harford County on the barn at Rockfield. Maryland Public Television has organized a bus tour looking at several Barn Quilts in Harford County on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Contact the Town Administrator if interested in attending.

The Town Administrator informed Duke Thompson, President of the Maryland Conservatory of Music, is putting together a fundraiser concert on May 22<sup>nd</sup> at St. Matthews Church from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. for the people of Ukraine who left their country.

Mr. Thompson is looking for sponsorships from the Town of Bel Air and Harford County. Mr. Thompson is suggesting any funds raised should be sent by the Town and Harford County. The Town Administrator advised this is all preliminary and he will keep the Commissioners posted.

**TENATIVE AGENDA FOR TOWN MEETING (April 4, 2022 at 7:30 p.m.)**

**Presentations:**

Arbor Day Proclamation

The Arbor Day Proclamation will be presented.

Kite Festival Proclamation

The Kite Festival Proclamation will be presented. Allen Ault, founder of the Kite Festival, will be in attendance.

Recognition of Janice Parrino - Retiring Police Communications Operator II

The Director of Administration informed the retirement of Janice Parrino will be recognized.

Appearance and Beautification Committee Awards

The Appearance and Beautification Committee Awards will be presented for Spring/Summer and Christmas.

**Public Hearings:**

Ordinance 808-22 Adequate Public Facilities

Resolution 1181-22 Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Amendment

Ordinance 808-22 and Resolution 1181-22 were introduced during the Town Board meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup> and the Public Hearing is scheduled.

**Unfinished Business:**

Ordinance 802-22 Adequate Public Facilities

Resolution 1181-22 Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Amendment

The Commissioners will vote for approval.

Amendment recommendations:

1. To move the funds for the Pocket Park furniture where it will be funded. There are some possible grant opportunities and want to shift from using Capital Reserve to a proposed grant line.

Chair Bianca inquired will there be delays in ordering the furniture or opening the park. The Director of Finance stated the Town has to wait for the approval of the grant. Chair Bianca asked for the timeline.

The Director of Planning stated the grant board is not meeting until June and the park should be finished at the same time. The Director of Planning advised we might have to order the furniture now.

Chair Bianca mentioned shipping delays and does not want to open the park where people would not have all the amenities. Chair Bianca prefers the furniture be ordered now.

Commissioner Etting wanted clarification if funds were left in grants could the furniture be ordered. The Director of Finance stated typically we should not order unless knowing the grant has been approved. The Director of Finance advised there is a backup funding source.

Commissioner Etting asked if the Town feels the grant will be awarded. The Director of Planning stated the Town may not get all the funds but there is another source.

Commissioner Kahoe wanted to know more about the miscellaneous item. The Director of Finance informed it is a miscellaneous grant line item and is not Federal, State or County. The Director of Finance stated typically we do not want to use Capital Reserve when other opportunities are available. The Capital Reserve should be the last resort. The Director of Finance wants to move forward with applying for the grants as the first source.

Chair Bianca's priority is to order the furniture sooner than later. Commissioner Etting understands there are delays and it would be terrible to lose all the good weather because we did not order furniture.

Commissioner Hughes felt there would be other solutions found and not go into Capital Reserve. Commissioner Hughes understands everyone wants the Pocket Park completed but there are long term consequences when diving into the Capital Reserve if we do not absolutely have to.

Chair Bianca thanked the Director of Finance for finding another method. The Director of Planning stated another backup is using the existing concrete tables already in place.

Chair Bianca suggested having a discussion on the Capital Reserve. The Director of Finance recommends getting through the Police/Town Hall project before that discussion.

2. Remove \$35,000 from FY22 Capital Revenue for the Town's match for the Homestead Park project. The park will not be

completed in this fiscal year and will be using grant dollars. Next fiscal year we will see the \$35,000.

3. ARPA funds - piggyback on Harford County for a Consultant to assist the Town in making sure the money is used properly, reported appropriately, and in accordance with Federal requirements in using funds.

**New Business:**

Resolution 1182-22 Fiscal Year 2023 Town Administrator's Budget

The Director of Finance stated this is a tough budget. The budget books will be distributed at the Town Board meeting and the first budget meeting is Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m.

Harford County - Town Addendum to Sewer Agreement

The Director of Finance reported the Addendum was received from Harford County and all questions answered. This is the FY22 bulk rate Harford County charges to treat the Town's sewage and there is a decrease.

Reappointment to the Tree Committee

Chair Bianca advised Marion McCarron has agreed to another term on the Tree Committee and recommends her reappointment.

**STAFFING UPDATE:**

The Director of Administration reported:

- Deputy Chief of Police - second interview being scheduled.
- Equipment Operator - declined position because starting salary was too low.
- Laborers - interviews were held. Position to be posted again.
- Police Department positions - are internal.

The Director of Administration advised some of the turnover in DPW has been unexpected and the Director of Public Works and staff have shouldered a burden maintaining services in-lieu of being short staffed.

The Town Administrator stated during the budget sessions we will be trying to address the issue of DPW staff but being competitive with the private sector is a problem. The Town Administrator advised the FY23 budget is difficult because of everything going up in price. The Town's priority is looking at a Merit and COLA increase and to take care of DPW staff.

**CALENDAR:**

Calendars were distributed and the Town Administrator asked for additions. The Director of Economic Development informed of a ribbon cutting for Ferrari Frame & Design, which is a graduate from the Marketplace, will be held April 12th at 11:00 a.m.

The Director of Administration reminded:

- Commissioner's Retreat - Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, Town Hall at 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
- First budget session - Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

Update on Building Progress

The Director of Public Works advised there were issues of wet soil and the cold weather slowed down the laying of concrete block. Construction is back on schedule and progressing nicely. The Director of Public Works informed this week mechanical and electrical will be roughed in, light poles and bases erected, and the electric/gas was finally approved by BGE. The payment for hookups was submitted and the contract for new furniture is being finalized. The Director of Public Works informed the exterior wall mock-up will be located behind the marquee and shows what the outside wall will look like.

Restricted Parking by Permit

The Director of Planning informed most of the parking by permits are located around Bel Air High School or commercial areas in downtown. Some of those areas are drifting out of need and some are areas no longer needed. The Director of Planning advised the area being looked at to be released from the permit is Gordon Street where it intersects with Wallace Street to Richardson

Street which is most of W. Gordon Street. The Director of Planning informed there may be some apprehension because of the local micro-brewery and the Ma & Pa Trail where people may extend their parking out into the neighborhood.

The Director of Planning inquired if the Commissioners would like to move forward with the parking issue. Commissioner Kahoe recommends moving forward because the area is not being used since Harford Mutual has its own lot. Commissioner Hughes advised of her only seeing Williams lined up with cars during the BBQ Bash and

Farmers Market. Commissioner Hughes assumes ticketing of cars were limited unless someone called to complain.

Discussion will continue at the next Work Session.

#### Comprehensive Rezoning

The Director of Planning advised the deadline for the Comprehensive Rezoning is next Monday. There are 10 properties that have been submitted, and emails were sent to the Commissioners. The Director of Planning stated the intent is for the Planning Commission to review April 3<sup>rd</sup>, be introduced to the Town Board April 18<sup>th</sup> and the Public Hearing May 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Development Regulations will then be looked at.

#### **COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Kahoe informed the Garden Mart is scheduled May 20<sup>th</sup> at the Armory.

Commissioner Kahoe advised Take a Chance on Art sponsored by the Cultural Arts Commission was a fun event. The Director of Economic Development notified 110 tickets were sold and appreciates the efforts of all artists.

Commissioner Etting stated the Elderly & Needy Citizens Committee recently met and discussed how to reach the elderly who need services. During the meeting, the Bel Air Police Department made a presentation about the LEAD Program. Commissioner Etting advised the next meeting is May 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m.



**ADJOURNMENT:**

With no further comments, the meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Approved: April 18, 2022

Signature on file  
Kevin M. Bianca, Chair  
Board of Town Commissioners

Signature on file  
Michael L. Krantz, Town Clerk