



MIDDLEBURG TOWN COUNCIL
Special Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, June 24, 2020



PENDING APPROVAL

PRESENT: Mayor Trowbridge M. Littleton
Vice Mayor Darlene Kirk
Councilmember J. Kevin Daly
Councilmember Morris "Bud" Jacobs
Councilmember Peter Leonard-Morgan
Councilmember Philip M. Miller

STAFF: Danny Davis, Town Administrator
Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk
William M. Moore, Deputy Town Administrator
A.J. Panebianco, Chief of Police
Jamie Gaucher, Business & Economic Development Director
Estee LaClare, Planning & Project Associate

ABSENT: Councilmember Chris W. Bernard
Councilmember Cindy C. Pearson

The Town Council of the Town of Middleburg, Virginia held a special meeting, on Wednesday, June 24, 2020 for the purpose of receiving a briefing from the Chief of Police on the Unity March scheduled for June 27th. Due to Governor Northam's executive order requiring that people social distance, the Council meeting was held remotely with most members of the Council and the Town staff participating from their respective homes/offices. The roll was called at 9:00 a.m.

Mayor Littleton explained for the viewing audience that it was the Council's responsibility to conduct essential public business despite the COVID-19 pandemic; however, it recognized the need to do so safely, not only for its members but also for the Town staff and members of the public. He further explained that to that end, in accordance with the Council's resolution declaring a local emergency and its ordinance implementing emergency procedures and effectuating temporary changes to address the continuity of governmental operations, the Council would hold its meetings via remote access until such time as the Governor rescinded his executive orders. Mr. Littleton advised the viewing audience that copies of the agendas were available on the Town's website and that the meetings would be livestreamed and recorded for viewing on the website. He explained that anyone wishing to participate in the meetings during the public comment periods or the public hearings could do so by dialing (540) 339-6355. Mr. Littleton reviewed the process that would be utilized for the remote meetings.

Mayor Littleton noted that Governor Northam announced that Virginia would move into Phase 3 effective July 1st. He further noted that Northern Virginia would be included unless it requested otherwise.

Discussion Item

Briefing on Unity March on June 27th

Mayor Littleton reminded Council of the Unity March scheduled for June 27th and advised that Chief Panebianco would brief the Council on the details. He expressed hope that everyone would be able to attend.

Chief Panebianco advised that this would be a good event and noted that the organizers were anxious to show unity in Middleburg. He reported that he recently met with two of the organizers to walk the path that would be taken. Chief Panebianco advised that it would begin at 11:00 a.m. at the Asbury Church and would travel from Jay Street to Marshall Street to Madison Street to Route 50. He advised that the participants would cross Route 50 at the Post

Office crosswalk and walk back down Route 50 to Jay Street, at which point they would cross and return to the Asbury Church. Chief Panebianco noted that the Walk would occur completely on the sidewalk. He reported that the organizers anticipated there would be one hundred participants. Chief Panebianco further reported that at the conclusion of the Walk, four people would speak at the Asbury Church including Mayor Littleton and himself. He advised that the other speakers were unconfirmed at this time.

In response to inquiries from the Council, Chief Panebianco confirmed this would not be a protest but rather was a Unity Walk. He advised that police vehicles would be located behind the participants for their protection from traffic. Chief Panebianco acknowledged that the businesses would be opening at this time; however, he advised that he did not believe the Walk would impact traffic. He noted that police officers would be stationed at the crosswalks to ensure traffic stopped when the walkers crossed the street. Chief Panebianco advised that the organizer was Mahreen Mahmood, a local resident. He noted that she was proud to show that the Middleburg community was unified in its stance against racism. Chief Panebianco further noted that the plan started with a small number of participants; however, it had grown. He advised Council that he monitored threats daily; however, there were no known threats associated with the Walk. Chief Panebianco confirmed he was comfortable with its safety. He opined that the Walk would offer a good message that needed to be shared.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Chief Panebianco reported that he planned to prohibit parking from Pickering to Liberty Street and advised that he would release it in the event it turned out the crowd was small and could be maintained on the sidewalk. He noted that it would be easier to block it off and release it as circumstances allowed, as it was impossible to block it off once motorists started parking in the spaces. Chief Panebianco reported that the participants would use whatever on-street parking remained in the area, as well as a private parking lot which they had been given permission to use. He advised that the Walk would be held on a hot day; therefore, the desire was for the walkers to park close to the Asbury Church to minimize any heat related issues.

Councilmember Daly reported on behalf of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church that they were volunteering the use of their parking lot as well.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Mayor Littleton suggested the members walk with family and/or friends rather than walking together as a group.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Chief Panebianco confirmed he did not have firm numbers as to the size of the crowd and reported that the estimate was one hundred or less. He advised that he was comfortable he had a sufficient number of officers and vehicles to assure the walkers could cross the street safely. Chief Panebianco noted that he planned to post a notice on the message boards at the entrances to Middleburg to alert motorists of an event in town.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Chief Panebianco confirmed the walkers would be encouraged to wear face masks. He reiterated that it would be hot that day and reported that he purchased bottles of water that would be distributed to the crowd once they returned to the Asbury Church. Chief Panebianco noted that participants were being encouraged to bring their own bottles of water; however, they would probably drink them during the Walk. He advised that it would be up to the organizers to determine how to distribute them.

Council suggested the Town also provide hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes for those distributing the water.

In response to an inquiry from the Council, Chief Panebianco confirmed the organizers were bringing a loudspeaker system so people could hear the speeches. He noted that he also had a bullhorn/microphone that could be used if needed.

The Council held considerable discussion about the proposal to eliminate parking, including the effect on those businesses that have been struggling because of the COVID pandemic. They debated whether from a safety perspective, it would be better to have cars parked on the street to help keep the walkers on the sidewalk and to serve as a protective barrier. It was noted that the only time parking was prohibited was during Christmas in Middleburg, which had ten thousand participants. They asked the staff to identify alternative parking lots and notify the businesses of them so they could direct their customers to them. It was noted that the Middleburg Charter School was making their parking lot available as needed.

In response to an inquiry from the Council regarding where the participants would stand while listening to the speeches, Chief Panebianco reported that they would be in the green space, as well as the parking area for the Asbury Church. He opined that people would spread wherever they could. Chief Panebianco advised that officers would be in the area to direct traffic.

After further discussion, the Council agreed to proceed with the plan as proposed by Chief Panebianco to eliminate parking initially and to release it as early as possible if the crowd size allowed. They asked that the staff physically talk with the business owners that would be impacted to let them know of the Unity Walk and where their customers could park, as their participation was needed. Chief Panebianco committed to opening the parking as early as feasible.

There being no further business, Mayor Littleton declared the meeting adjourned at 9:53 a.m.

APPROVED:

Trowbridge M. Littleton, MAYOR

ATTEST:

Rhonda S. North, MMC, Town Clerk

June 24, 2020 Middleburg Town Council Meeting

(Note: This is a transcript prepared by a Town contractor based on the video of the meeting. It may not be entirely accurate. For greater accuracy, we encourage you to review the video of the meeting that is on the Town's website – www.middleburgva.gov)

Bridge Littleton: All right, I guess we're ready we'll call the meeting to order these now nine o'clock. Rhonda, did you want to do a roll call?

Rhonda North: Sure. Mayor Littleton.

Bridge Littleton: Here.

Rhonda North: Vice Mayor Kirk.

Darlene Kirk: Here.

Rhonda North: Council Member Bernard. Council Member Daly.

Kevin Daly: Here.

Rhonda North: Council Member Jacobs.

Bud Jacobs: Here.

Rhonda North: Council Member Leonard-Morgan.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Here.

Rhonda North: Council Member Miller.

Philip Miller: Here.

Rhonda North: Council Member Pearson. Absent.

Bridge Littleton: Okay, hold on, let me pull up the agenda here real quick, Rhonda and I will read the statement. Oh, boy, on a cell phone, too. It is the Middleburg Town Council's responsibility to conduct essential public business matters. Despite the COVID 19 pandemic, however, it recognizes the need to do so safely, not for only its membership, but also for the town staff and members of the public. To that end, in accordance with the resolution confirming the declaration of a local emergency and the ordinance to implement emergency procedures and effective temporary changes to address continuity of government operations during COVID19, the town council will hold its meeting via remote access until such time as the governor rescind his emergency order prohibiting the gathering of more than 10 individuals and mandating social distancing. Copies of the previously referenced documents are available on the town's website for those who wish to view it. Okay, so. And real quickly, I don't know if everybody saw I think it was yesterday. The governor intends for Virginia to go to phase three on July 1st, which is one week from today. I did call one of the folks at NVRC and ask them if they had any insight that the governor was going to treat North Virginia differently than the rest of the state. And what they heard was that only if Northern Virginia requests to be treated differently. Will he then treat us differently. So. Okay. So quick background as I think everyone's probably aware now. We have a unity walk planned for Middleburg on Saturday morning. And the goal here is just to sort of give everybody the heads up on what that looks like, who's helping put it together. The overall, I guess I would call our program, but, you know, list of activities, time frames. And then as a town, how AJ and his staff are, you know, aligned to be prepared and to make sure that public safety is taken in consideration. So with

that, I think what we'll do is, A.J., if you want to just give a quick download on your discussions with I know you've been working hand in hand with all the organizers and then sort of what your plan is and then from a council perspective. Number one, I hope everybody can attend if you're here. I know some folks are on vacation. And the number two, if anybody has any questions, you know, A.J. and Will are here as well and we can just go from there. So unless there's any initial questions, Mr. Panebianco.

A.J. Panebianco: All right. Sounds good. Well, kind of excited because I believe it's going to be a good event for the town. And talking with the organizers, they are anxious to show unity in Middleburg and they want to call this a unity walk. That's what they presented to me. And so we're excited to acknowledge that there is unity in Middleburg. They we actually met with the two of the organizers yesterday. We walked a path. The path I'll go over here shortly is basically going to start at the Asbury Church. And they're going to. And the organizers said they are leaving sharply at 11:00. So if you're not there at 11:00 and you want to be part of this, you're gonna have to catch up. She says they will leave sharply at 11:00. She has hopes now for about a hundred. That number has grown over the course of this, over the course of this building up and preparing. The basic concept is they will leave the church. The Asbury Church on Jay Street. We will walk up to Madison or Marshall on the sidewalks. And all of this is scheduled to be on on sidewalks, which is why we chose the path we chose. They will take a right on to 50 from Madison. Again, staying on the sidewalks, we will walk to the post office crosswalk. We will cross at the crosswalk. We will then walk back on the sidewalk all the way to.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: You mean Jay Street?

A.J. Panebianco: Correct. That's where we're going to start. Yes. On Jay Street. And so then they'll walk all the way back down Route 50 on the sidewalks to Jay Street. We'll cross Route 50 and go back to the church once at the church. They believe they're going to try and have four speakers. Currently, they only have two that are confirmed, which is Mayor Littleton, and they asked me if I would speak as well. So Mayor Littleton and me so far, the two confirmed, two unconfirmed, they know they're going to have other speakers, they just don't have that. They don't have confirmation yet. Staffing from the PD. It's been a big event to try and coordinate and make sure that we can make it successful for them. However, it does blend with some of the plans we already have in place. So it it was easier perhaps then it could have been if we had to do all of this from scratch to figuring out how we do a parade on the sidewalk. We already do a parade on the sidewalks. So we just do this as a march on the sidewalk. It works well as far as staffing we have. The PD will have all of its staff that is available, which and then, Colleen, to assist with traffic. And Colleen, we'll take notes if we need to take notes for later. Aside from that, we have promises from the county to provide staffing that's consistent with what is needed to control the rest of the traffic, to allow them to cross at each and every crosswalk. And it's consistent with what they've done in other events around Loudoun County. So that's really about where we're at with it. We're excited about the opportunity to show Unity in Middleburg. And so we're glad to be part of this.

Bridge Littleton: Ok. Thank. Thanks. So let's just. I'll call on each person one by one if anybody has got any questions for A.J. or any thoughts or ideas. And then we can, you know, double check on other stuff. So, Darlene, you go first since I see you.

Darlene Kirk: I see you, too. I don't think I have any questions. We're not expecting this to be like a protest type thing?

A.J. Panebianco: No, They're very excited about being a unity walk, showing that Middleburg is unified in its stance against racism.

Darlene Kirk: Great. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Peter.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Chief, thanks very much for that summary. I was just a bit confused. Sorry about the Jay Street thing. Obviously, going up Jay Street. Is it turning right on Marshall then going to Madison, going down Madison.

A.J. Panebianco: Correct it. It'll turn right onto Marshall. It'll turn left on the Madison. It'll it'll cross the crosswalk so that it's on the side of the street so we don't have to cross again at the light. They'll take a right onto the sidewalk, walk to basically the post office. Use that crosswalk to turn around. I just felt like putting them at the top of the hill at the other crosswalk is at the crest of the hill. It's just not safe to do a large number of people crossing right there. So we're choosing to cross at the post office and then back down to Jay Street, which where they'll cross 50 and they'll walk Jay Street. We will probably use a vehicle behind them to not allow anything on Jay Street until they get back to the church just because there's really not a sidewalk there.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: Right. Understood. 11 am, so really getting into town 11:10, 11:15. I guess things are starting to get going with businesses at that time on a Saturday morning. So we're just got to watch, you know. I mean, if it's peaceable, I'm strolling [inaudible]. We have to make sure there's no funny business you know.

A.J. Panebianco: Yeah. We're in hopes that this won't impact traffic at all. So that's our that's our are our primary plan right now is that it's just everything on the sidewalks to traffic impact will be stopping let people cross, which they actually have to do anyway. And we will have officers there to ensure that they they do stop because it's going to be a larger crowd. It'll be similar to what we do around Halloween when we take the kids through town.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: All right. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Bud.

Bud Jacobs: Hi Chief. Thanks a lot for the summary. I've got three or four questions I want to ask. Ask them all and ask you to respond to each. So we don't take up a lot of time going back and forth. The first question is, who exactly are the organizers? My second question is what kind of threat intelligence have you received, if any? Have you heard anything from any other law enforcement agencies about what the risks might be here? And I'm talking obviously about infiltration of outsiders to maybe damage commercial properties or for that matter, people coming from the Alt Right attacking the demonstrators. And finally, are you sufficiently comfortable with the safety levels for this for this event? That's those are my questions.

A.J. Panebianco: Let me let me address the first one. The organizer, the main organizer I've been dealing with is Mehreen Mahmood, I believe is how you pronounce her last name. They are locals. Yeah. Her actual full name is Mehreen Mahmood. She goes by Mina and they are locals. They are very much ingrained in this community as a whole. And they really, I think, are proud to show that the community is unified in its stance against racism. We have a history here that is leaning towards that as well. So that's the organizer.

Bud Jacobs: Is there a particular organization or is it.

A.J. Panebianco: No, she's an individual. Yeah. So it started off probably as a smaller group of people and then it is grown and these things tend to grow. They don't know how many people will show up. They know what they hope for. But, you know, we don't know the total numbers. So as far as intelligence and threats, we monitor that daily and hourly and we have assistance with that. Currently, there is nothing that is known. And as far as a comfort level with safety as it stands now, absolutely. We are comfortable with this. They have a good message that I believe needs to be shared. And I believe we can assist in that process. And it will be a good event for the town.

Bud Jacobs: And I assume minimal disruption, no changes in street parking or anything like that.

A.J. Panebianco: We currently have a plan, which we'll talk about later. And I do it sort of like what we try to do for other events in town, which is if we know we're going to be on the streets or we know there's a potential to be on the streets, it's easier to give parking back than it is to take it after it starts. So the initial plan currently has parking in

the primary section between Pendleton basically, and Liberty as no parking on the street. And that's what we're probably going to discuss a little later, because we want to make sure the plan fits with what the town's agenda is. But have a plan that if it is a small enough crowd that everything's going to be maintained on the sidewalk, then we will we will look at, you know, pulling that actually before it even starts. We're going to know at about quarter to eleven how many people are coming. And so we'll be able to adjust any plan that we have as far as relates to parking and or removing it or adding it back actually at that point. But currently, the plan that I've proposed has it as eliminated for that period, because it's it's just a it's what we generally do when we have things that occur downtown.

Bud Jacobs: Thank you. You said between what cross street?

A.J. Panebianco: I'm sorry.

Bud Jacobs: You said they might restrict parking between Pendleton. And what was the other Cross Street?

A.J. Panebianco: Liberty. I'm sorry. Pickering and Liberty. So it would it would be pretty much the downtown section is what we've, where they're going to, where they're going to be walking is where we would generally do that. But as we look at the crowd and determine new, my plan has is calling for adding it back. The problem is we just don't know the numbers that are gonna show up.

Bud Jacobs: Gotcha. Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Kevin.

Kevin Daly: Thank you Bud. Those are similar questions that I was going to ask regarding the parking North Jay Street toward [inaudible]. Okay. Will that area posted for no parking.

A.J. Panebianco: No, there. That's probably parking that they're going to use. They've made arrangements with a lot there and in the area as well to be able to use that lot. And they took care of getting that taking getting secured on street parking is going to remain in the area down there and hopefully they're going to be able to use it again it's going to be a hot day. And, you know, they're going to walk about basically a mileage like nine tenths of a mile if you walk the route. And so in hopes that they have at least some parking in the area so that they don't have to then walk to another vehicle and, you know, possibly have some heat issues. We're hoping that they can utilize whatever street parking is available there to minimize any risk of the heat.

Kevin Daly: Father Gene Emanuel Church, has offered their parking lot in the back of Parish House for any of the participants if they need a place to park. I'll put that out. And Bridge this question is for you. How do you want the town council? Do you want us walking beside you? Would you like the town banners such as we use during the Christmas Parade to stay in front of us or carry by us?

Bridge Littleton: So on the banner I think that actually might be dangerous because some of the areas of sidewalk are pretty narrow and that thing's pretty wide. I mean, it's great when you're on 50. But if you're on the sidewalk, especially when you get around some of the bigger trees. But I mean, honestly, Kevin, I you know, I think everybody just does what they feel comfortable, you know, walk, you know, bring your family, walk with your family, you know, walk with someone, you know who's there. I actually think it's better if we're all spread out in among the entire crowd instead of just being a group on our own. So however each person feels is best, I think is the right thing to do.

Kevin Daly: That's all I have.

Bridge Littleton: Philip

Philip Miller: A.J., thanks for putting it together. I guess one question, I have it so we don't have any idea what the expected crowd is going to be.

A.J. Panebianco: We have an idea of what they're hoping for, but there's no way really to gauge that with, you know, who knows about it when it's coming and what those numbers will end up being. They hope to have, you know, 100 or less,

Philip Miller: 100 or less. Ok. So aside from the safety concerns, which I think Bud, Kevin and everybody else have already addressed, you feel comfortable with the number of officers that you have and the number of vehicles you have to make sure that everybody's safe crossing.

A.J. Panebianco: Absolutely. The sheriff's department is committed to give us the additional traffic units that I'll need.

Philip Miller: Ok, we're going to use our matrix boards entering town to let people know that this is going to be happening and there will be a wait.

A.J. Panebianco: We will we're going to probably program those on Friday to say event on Saturday. Expect pedestrian traffic or something, whatever fits on there. But something along those lines.

Philip Miller: Expect delays. Yeah. And it's going to be a very hot, hot day. And given the pandemic, are are they encouraging their marchers to wear face masks I hope?

A.J. Panebianco: And to help counter that, I have already purchased enough water to supply every person that they think is coming with a bottle of cold water at the at the event or at the at the end because of the process that they're going to do is they're going to leave at 11:00. They're going to walk through town showing the unity march. Then they're going to come back and that's when they're going to do the speeches. So they're encouraging everybody to bring a bottle of water with them. However, by the time they walk a mile, most of the people will drink the water. And what it hasn't been drink will probably be warm. And so we're going to have a cooler with water if they decide they want to get water out of the cooler, they can. And we've talked to them about making sure that, you know, that they wiped the lids off before they partake in them. And we're not being touched lids. But, you know, the hands start going in and out. We just wanna make sure that they're they're safe with that.

Philip Miller: Are we going to provide hand sanitizer.

A.J. Panebianco: I don't have a plan to, but we can probably talk about that. I have some hand sanitizer I can bring down there. So I will have that. them from nowhere.

Philip Miller: I think it's a good idea to have it.

Bridge Littleton: Or the easier thing might be because you're handling bottles might be wipes.

A.J. Panebianco: All right, so we'll add that I just don't want to have somebody with a heat problem and they're not going to bring water, so we're going to have water if they need it. I think it's just logical. And I think it's it's best, best we can do to ensure that.

Philip Miller: All right. Long as you feel comfortable.

A.J. Panebianco: I do.

Bridge Littleton: Phillip. OK. [Inaudible] I know Chris is on.

Rhonda North: I think you got everybody now.

Kevin Daly: Ok. I have a follow up.

Bridge Littleton: Sure, it'll cost you five bucks.

Kevin Daly: Ok, I'll buy you a cup of coffee. Are we having the water at a table?

A.J. Panebianco: We'll probably put a table out there and a cooler with the water in the cooler. And we don't know how it's going to be distributed. I'm gonna leave it up to them. It's their event. But I told them that I would have some water there if they needed it for safety or something like that.

Kevin Daly: Do we have a loudspeaker system here for giving, given that size of the crowd in the area that a speech or the talk will be given rather than having voices yelling it out which would spread nice COVID vapors. Do we have a sound system?

A.J. Panebianco: They are bringing a sound system. However, if their sound system, they can't. If there's a failure in it. We at the PD have a system that they can use. It's a bullhorn, but it has a microphone. So you don't have to have a bullhorn in front of your mouth.

Kevin Daly: Thank you.

Bridge Littleton: Ok. So one of the issues, too. We do want to cover is the parking. So I have no doubt there'll be a lot of concerns from business owners about closing. And I got to imagine that if you are if we decide that we want to close parking, you've got to close it first thing in the morning. Or the night before [off mic] Yeah. Yeah. So, you know, coming out of COVID and all that stuff. We do want to make sure we maintain safety and stuff like that. I do know I did ask around last night, there were some you know, when Purcellville had there one. There was the input that actually having cars there would have been good because it would have kept people from going across the wrong places they don't need to go. So. What we can always make it a game day decision, right? We can always sort of decide at the moment how things are shaping up or if there is you know, who knows. Right. What is the general feeling about, you know, not having any parking on on Main Street in terms of in terms of, you know, how this how this event is shaping up and and all that kind of stuff. And I'll start. So it's a very, very tough balancing act. Right? I mean, you know, this is not like one we're seeing in a lot of cities where people are intending to create problems. You know, the whole goal is to to, you know, is to be respectful and whatever. And, you know, the businesses are having a hard time. So, you know, and actually, cars do create a natural barrier to separate. I'm not the safety expert, but any other thing we have in town, I only think we remove remove it on Main Street for Christmas and Middleburg, which is, you know, ten thousand people, not a hundred, every other thing we were had I've ever seen us remove parking. So what's the general feeling around, you know, how we might want to do that. I mean I get it right. It's like nine o'clock. You get three hundred people showing up, OK. It's a different story.

A.J. Panebianco: However, at nine o'clock, if we have 300 people show up, the likelihood that we can get the parking gone is not as high as if.

Bridge Littleton: No, no, no. What I'm saying is put it out the night before, but if at 9:00 o'clock it's not pull it.

A.J. Panebianco: They're not scheduled to show up until 10:00. So that's when she's telling people to arrive. She's going to be there at 9:00. She's telling people to arrive between ten and eleven because she doesn't want them in the heat that long. And that is the actual game plan now is that we're going to go the way I have it programmed is that we're going to have the it's easier to give them to release the parking to be used than it is to try and take the parking away at the last minute. And so that's why we have this system that we put into place there. If it's a huge crowd that likely is going to be bigger than we expected, then we may want to look at keeping the parking prevented from being there. If the crowd is what she's thinking. And that's an even actually, if that crowd double the size she's taking a couple hundred people, we're still fine on the sidewalks. So we're going to we're to make that call. The way I have it is about 10:45 if it's looking like the crowds not growing rapidly, we're going to go ahead and say pull all the part, no parking signs. And Tim Cole's supposed to be here and some my guys will assist with tossing the no parking

signs into the back of the truck and get them out of the way. It's just much easier to give it back than it is to prevent it once it starts.

Bridge Littleton: Have we thought of any accommodations for businesses that they can send folks to say, hey, you know, if you need a parking, go here?

A.J. Panebianco: I have not.

Bridge Littleton: Have we reached out to the charter school and asked them to use their parking lot?

A.J. Panebianco: I have permission to use to charter school for this event. OK. So if they want to use the charter school, they're certainly welcomed.

Bridge Littleton: Who's they?

A.J. Panebianco: Whoever wants to park there.

Bridge Littleton: Ok, so we would have to let the businesses know that. OK, so let's one more go round real quick. You know, everybody's thoughts on how we want to, you know, do the park, you know, do we want to ban it at all? Do we want to, you know, pull it at 10:45. Pull it at ten. You know whatever. Darlene.

Darlene Kirk: I like A.J.'s plan of pulling after he sees what's going on. Personally, I think that's probably the best way to handle it.

Bridge Littleton: Ok. Bud.

Bud Jacobs: I have concerns about the parking, A.J. I happened to visit down in Charlottesville, the street where Heather Heyer was murdered during the Alt Right demonstrations down there. If it was a street that was closed to parking and if there had been parking allowed, Heather Heyer would still be alive because the car that killed her could not have negotiated the street so in the unlikely event that we might face or the demonstrators might face some threat from some outside entity. Seems to me keeping the cars in the street is an additional safety measure for the people taking part in the demonstration. I don't know how to thread the needle between the number of demonstrators and how crowded it is on the sidewalk. But it seems to me we do have a responsibility to protect peaceful demonstrators from any threat that might come up. And I'm pretty sure there won't be a threat. But I'm just I'm a little concerned, I guess, is how I would put it.

A.J. Panebianco: Duly noted.

Bridge Littleton: Kevin.

Kevin Daly: As I said earlier, they're welcome to park at the Emmanuel Episcopal Church parking. Has anyone thought perhaps the Baptist Church parking lot might be available as well?

Bud Jacobs: Could I add one other thought Bridge?

Bridge Littleton: Sure, absolutely.

Bud Jacobs: Well, it just occurred to me that if we remove cars from parking on Main Street, isn't that [inaudible] an invitation to people taking part in the march to bleed into the street from off the sidewalks.

A.J. Panebianco: If you're asking me that, I would say no, based on what we've been talking with the organizers on this. So I don't see that they're going to if the crowd size is like it is now, there's not going to be that. I don't see that as a risk.

Bridge Littleton: But isn't that why.

Bud Jacobs: [inaudible] 100 or less we won't close off the parking.

A.J. Panebianco: Even if it's 200, we probably we won't close off the park and we will release it. We had we had I think it was it was two or three hundred kids in this, kids and families in the last children's parade for Halloween. And it and it was easily handled on the sidewalk with no issue.

Kevin Daly: I concur with that.

Bridge Littleton: Ok, so Philip.

Philip Miller: In thinking about the parking and that is where they're going to happen. They're going to speak at Asbury when they arrive there after the march, right?

A.J. Panebianco: Correct. There's a destination that they'll be going to. Correct.

Philip Miller: Where will all these two hundred, let's just say, two hundred people stand.

A.J. Panebianco: Currently. It is planned to be on the green area of the church if they can fit there. If not, it will spread out a little further. They also had the use of the parking lot down there. But they're going to be parking they're not necessarily gathering there. But if it has to spread out, it will be a natural spread. Based on what available space is available.

Philip Miller: Ok, well, through traffic, that residential area, I know it's a small street, but I think that's a concern, especially if you've got cars parked on the street there. And, you know, it'd be good to work with the organizers to have a plan for where people can go safely. I don't think it's going to be, you know, a terrible concern with lots of traffic. But we should definitely have a plan.

A.J. Panebianco: We have a plan for that. And we will actually have officers there to direct traffic and make sure that there is at least a roadway if it over spills.

Philip Miller: Ok. I tend to actually agree with, but about the people spreading out into 50. And I think the cars do create a natural barrier as long as people are in conformity with the recommendation. I think it doesn't take much for a group, even of 100 people who are peacefully walking down the street to, you know, have one or two people create the optic of, you know, walking along the other side of the sidewalk. Then, you know, that spreads into walking through the open parking parking spot. And then all of a sudden, you know, one person is just on the other side of the parking line. I think leaving the car there as long as he can is a better idea for creating a natural barrier.

A.J. Panebianco: If we leave them there, they're left for the entire event, no matter how it turns out.

Philip Miller: Ok.

A.J. Panebianco: That's the dilemma we're in. We either have it and give it. We either don't have it and give it back or we have it regardless of what happens, we can't take it back. We won't have the if the crowds are large enough that we're having to figure out what we're going to do with where they're going to actually safely walk, then we're not going to have time to go through and [inaudible] with parking. We're really talking about, you know, 15 to 30 minute window to make these decisions.

Bridge Littleton: Let me ask a question. So the whole reason Christmas in Middleburg has gone to barriers and taking out the parking is because it always bled out. So the statement that is not going to bleed out. That's not going to happen. It's going to especially if we're going to be encouraging everybody and they're encouraging everybody to

maintain social distancing. That's a six foot circle. Which means it's actually it's actually a 12 foot circle, so the train is either going to be seven miles long or people are going to be you know, it's going to have I mean, to say they're not going to go into the into the. I think is we're fooling ourselves. If we block that parking. They are absolutely going to bleed out into those parking spots, especially where you get some of the areas where the trees are really narrow, where there's a trash can or something like that, and people want to walk next to each other. You see the space, you're going to take it. Given that and given that 50 will be open on Saturday, you know, in the middle of the day with a lot of traffic. Is that a safety concern we're not considering?

A.J. Panebianco: It's been considered.

Bridge Littleton: And especially if we're not going to have like barriers if tape or something like that,

A.J. Panebianco: If you're looking at 50 generally on a Saturday morning at ten, eleven o'clock in the morning. It's not slam packed.

Bridge Littleton: This will be at noon. This won't be a 10 o'clock in the morning.

A.J. Panebianco: It starts at 11:00. And and they'll they'll be off there by noon.

Bridge Littleton: It'll take an hour.

A.J. Panebianco: That's about what we figure.

Bridge Littleton: So it's not going to be 10 o'clock.

A.J. Panebianco: Right. That's why I say eleven o'clock. It's not that busy. So if you want the cars there, just let me know.

Bridge Littleton: And we've got the farmer's market too.

A.J. Panebianco: Which is not there, though.

Bridge Littleton: No, I get it, I get it. Yeah.

A.J. Panebianco: So, yeah, I just need direction on what you guys want. We will do whatever you want. My plan, I believe, is solid given that if you have other variables that happen. It accounts for those. But if council's desire is that we have parking, we will have parking.

Bridge Littleton: Here's the challenge. Right. The challenge is like I understand where you're coming from, but making a decision at 10 minutes of 11:00 is too late because if you naturally want to have, you know, barrier created, it's not going to happen in 10 minutes. And if you pull it 10 minutes before people start walking. That actually might be more dangerous because people go back and into spaces and all that kind of stuff as you unleash them. And people are walking up the street and people are gonna be walking in the open spaces. I mean, it actually might be creating a public safety hazard. But maybe releasing them earlier.

A.J. Panebianco: Yeah, I mean it. We have to see what size the crowd is. If I'm going to do the plan I have. If you tell me that you want traffic to be able to park on on a main street, that takes one element out of my mix that makes my whole day easier. But I don't know that it makes it safer. I don't know that it doesn't, but. Okay. But that's my dilemma. And that's my plan.

Bridge Littleton: So, Peter, you haven't. I'm sorry, Peter. I jumped ahead of you. Go ahead.

Peter Leonard-Morgan: No, no problem. A lot of great points. I would really like if we didn't have to prevent parking at eleven o'clock on a Saturday morning. However, [inaudible] whatever you decide. [inaudible] that's my view. [inaudible] I am really aware of that. Not really a great answer. I would prefer not to move that cars [inaudible].

A.J. Panebianco: And I guess a more detailed note as the march progresses, we're going to open the parking up behind them as they go. It's going to be almost simultaneous. It's not going to be they go back down to the church and give their speeches and then we open it up. As it moves past an area, as it gets past Pendleton. We're we're gonna be chasing them essentially, because the officers that were working traffic at that point are no longer having to work traffic because that intersection is clear. And as intersections clear, they can release that parking. So it won't necessarily be the full hour. But ah, well, it'll be more than an hour because if we leave it blocked, it'll be all day until the event starts. So it's a dilemma. I know I made the plan based on, you know, all worst case scenarios. And that's what the plan that I put together for is if council has concerns and desires that it be that we allow parking. All I need is a direction to say that's what you want. And, you know, we will allow parking. It's really you know, you guys speak for the people. You speak for the businesses. You're the elected body. I've given you what I think is the right plan for this event. And if you see it differently all I need is somebody to tell me and we'll take that out. It's literally two lines off of a map that I have to take off. And a lot less work that we have to do that morning. So you know, it really comes down to that. I have to build these plans for worst case scenarios, not best case scenarios. And so this is built for a worst case scenario. If we have a large group that shows up that we know is not going to be able to be contained on a sidewalk. We have an alternative plan for that.

Darlene Kirk: Do we know I don't know where she's planning on getting her people from. I haven't seen anything about it except on, ah, you know, what you set out and that sort of thing. So I don't know how she thinks, you know, she's going to draw that many people, really.

A.J. Panebianco: I don't. And there's another organizer that I've not met with, and I don't know what that plan is to get that information out. We've asked. We just haven't been told.

Darlene Kirk: Well, I trust you, A.J. I think you do plan for the worst case scenarios. And we really haven't had any problems with, you know, Christmas in Middleburg when you've been charged, so.

Bridge Littleton: I do know that I. So from what I understand, it's they've been you know, the organizers have been phoning people and e-mailing. and it's word of mouth. It's a lot of word. A direct word of mouth. Exactly. Exactly. So. Ok, so is there a consensus from everybody in terms of what we want to do? Let it go as is or, you know, pull it or. Well, I mean, we don't have to make a final final decision until, you know, Friday afternoon. It could very well be that by Friday afternoon is a whole lot more clarity. And it's like it's really going to be 75 people, OK? Or it could be something different.

A.J. Panebianco: And that's a good point, because this plan is consistently evolving as we get more information. And it's a problem when you have an event that you really don't know how they're they're getting the word out and they know that they think they're going to have about a hundred people. But it could grow.

Philip Miller: A.J., are you going to do like a briefing before the whole thing?

A.J. Panebianco: I'm sorry you broke up, I didn't hear the beginning.

Philip Miller: Are you going to do a safety briefing before the march?

A.J. Panebianco: That is my intent. When we're down there to say we're getting ready, start. Here's what we're gonna do. And here's where we're going to take you. We're going to re-emphasize the need to be on the sidewalks and to maintain what they feel is a safe social distancing.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah, for everybody coming. Don't forget your masks.

Philip Miller: [inaudible]

A.J. Panebianco: I hadn't planned to put the water out until the end because they've in their fliers. It says bring water. I just know that given my experience in life, that if you walk for a mile with a bottle of water, you don't have bottled water when you get back. So I think that at the end we're going to be sticking some form of a water cold water system out there for them that will help to hydrate those that need it. And, you know, hopefully they will take advantage of it if they need it. And those that do need it, it will be there for them..

Philip Miller: I think it's always a good idea to have it. And even if you don't need it, I set it up beforehand. We the end of it up and have hand sanitizers, maybe have some fliers or some signage that says maintain social distancing beware of cars on 50 that kind of thing.

A.J. Panebianco: We're going to actually say that verbally. I think it's going to be a much stronger message if they hear it, because I don't know how many people would actually read fliers, but we're we're going to physically say that before we start. I'll go over the.

Bridge Littleton: What was that, Kevin?

Kevin Daly: So I just wanted to point out, you hand out fliers and then you're going to have to have a team to pick up the fliers that end up on the pavement and on the road. So this is a good, strong plan that AJ has. You can't plan for every contingency, but you do plan for the worst case scenario and it allows greater flexibility. Then as the event occurs. From the sounds of it doesn't say come as you are invite from by the organizers, they're not trained for marching discipline. So there's going to be a lot of straggling going on and it's going to be hot again. I think we have a very good, strong plan through A.J., because the plan is as good and strong. And as I said, we can't plan for every contingency, but we do have the worst case scenario planned out.

Bud Jacobs: This is Bud. I'd like to echo Kevin's sentiments on this. A.J has done a terrific job. They are quite meticulous plan. However, as I think Eisenhower said with regard to the D-Day invasion, the plan is nothing. Planning is everything. And as long as A.J. can retain the flexibility that he needs to make decisions on the spot, I think we're going to be OK. I remain concerned about the parking issue, but if it's workable to open it up, once A.J. has an assessment of how many people are actually going to be present, I suppose that's the best we can do. And the most flexible we can be given the circumstances.

A.J. Panebianco: And generally during the day when there is no parking in the morning for like events, even Christmas in Middleburg. Once we put the signs up, we don't really wholeheartedly enforce those. We know people will stop at the coffee shop and get coffee. We're not going to raise Cain about that until it's getting close. And they'll know they'll know when it's time that they can't. And it's the people in Middleburg are pretty good about what they need to do. We have strong contingency of people who come and go often and are aware of when there's certain things out how to really do it. I mean, you know, they've learned us. We've learned them, which is good. You know, the biggest thing I want to close as far as my any statements I make is I'm excited to be part of this. And I think the town is going to benefit well from this. And I'm glad that the council is taking a look at this and are going to participate where they can. So thank you.

Bud Jacobs: Yes. Have you communicated with our businesses about plans for the day of the march?

A.J. Panebianco: We have not as of yet. We're developing what we're trying to finalize plans first before we put them out. This plan, this plan is ever evolving every day. But, yes, we intend to do so prior to especially after this meeting. It will give us a little bit more guidance of what we need to do and how we need to do it.

Bridge Littleton: And I would say one thing to look, let's physically go talk to them. Yes. No e-mails, no fliers. Let's go talk to people. You know. I'm sure, you know, they need to understand, you know, where we are as a council in terms of, you know, supporting this walk. And it's the right thing to do and it's the right time to do it. But,

you know, it's I mean, they'll have a legitimate concern. And we want to make sure that we do. We understand and empathize with what you know. They'll have an impact. Right. They're going to have an impact. So their patience and understanding is important.

A.J. Panebianco: And you may have some that want to join.

Bridge Littleton: I mean, right now. Exactly. You know, you'll have the gamut. You're right. You'll have the gamut. You'll have the people who are all in. You have folks who, you know, are concerned about impact their business. So we just need to be as understanding as possible. The second thing I would say, too, is let's understand what the extra parking areas are that they could direct customers to if need be. So if it's Middleburg Community Charter School and, you know, blank and blank. Great. Let's just let them know and say, hey, we you know, we tried to adjust as best as possible. There are spaces here and there are spaces here, even though town is very limited. Right. OK. And the last thing I would say, too, is everybody is comfortable with this. Understand the concerns. But let's I mean, honestly, A.J., let's try to shoot like it at 10:30. You know, if there's no little logistically.

A.J. Panebianco: I might know by that.

Bridge Littleton: Yeah. If there's no legitimate safety concern in terms of, you know, it can't be. That's no more planning for worst case because we have real time information at the spot. And if there's the comfort level that, hey, this is all shaping up the right way, then let's open the parking and getting the no parking out.

A.J. Panebianco: I commit to do that as early as it is feasible.

Bridge Littleton: Okay, great. Darlene do you have something else?

Darlene Kirk: I was just gonna add that they may pick up a few people when the Friday blast goes out because it'll be on that won't it?

Bridge Littleton: Friday blast?

Darlene Kirk: Friday email.

Bridge Littleton: No it's not going to be on that.

Darlene Kirk: Okay. That's what I was checking.

Bridge Littleton: No, I mean, you know, the one thing we the or you know, we I don't think we as the town want to try to take over their message. Right. They are messaging it the right way that they feel as the organizers. And, you know, I just don't want us to step on that. [off mic] Yeah, no. I mean, I think we'll do that with all the businesses as it goes around. Yep. Ok, A.J., thanks very much. Any other Will or Rhonda, any input from you guys? [off mic]. Ok. Any other last questions for AJ?

Bud Jacobs: Would you want us to take any action Bridge?

Bridge Littleton: I think, A.J., you got the guidance you need?

A.J. Panebianco: I think I do. I think we're going to leave it. And as my plan currently has and as early as possible, make changes if we can.

Bridge Littleton: And even if it's Friday afternoon, you go, hey, I've got firm numbers and it all feels good and you feel like it may make sense to pull it then pull it. But I think everything else makes total sense.

A.J. Panebianco: As soon as we can get know, get it pulled, we will. I did meet with the organizers and told him that we may or may not have parking. She seemed pretty much in favor of it not being there for the reasons that I talked about. And so I think that we're going to be good.

Bridge Littleton: Ok. Was, um. Hang on one sec. Let me pull up the agenda, make sure I miss anything. Will, you had a question?

Will Moore: No. Mr.. Is simply going to say that Danny has been on the line all morning from his desk in South Carolina if you just wanted to just check in with him as well.

Bridge Littleton: I have absolutely no intentions of checking with Danny. No, I'm kidding. Danny, any thought I didn't realize you were on any any input from you.

Danny Davis: No, Mr. Mayor. Thank you. Appreciate, A.J., and all the good work here. Obviously, he's put a lot into it and he communicated coordinated with all the appropriate agencies. So I just appreciate that the effort he's put into this. [off mic]

Bridge Littleton: And Danny, you can't take vacation time and also put work time for this call. It's one of the other.

Danny Davis: It's all vacation, but it's all part of making sure that everything runs smoothly. We've got a great team up there in the office. And that's why I'm comfortable being here, because I know we have a great team running things back there.

Bridge Littleton: Well, enjoy the margarita. All right, listen, unless there's nothing else. Meeting is adjourned. Thanks.