

## Minutes

The mayor and city council Met in regular session on Wednesday, August 27, 2024, at 6:00 PM in the meeting room of the Corbin studio and gallery.

### Present

Darlene Taylor, Mayor  
Eric Banks, Council Vice President  
Casey Goldsborough, Councilman  
LaVerne Johnson, Councilwoman  
Hitesh Patel, Councilman  
Joyce L Morgan, Clerk Treasurer/City Manager  
Andrew, Illuminati, City Solicitor

Also, in attendance, Valerie Swift, Rick Taylor, Jennifer Merritt via zoom, Richard Crumbacker, Jim Peters, Josephine Estes, Vanessa Ward, Edward Hastings, Ruthie Todd, Diana Murray, Vinay Singh, Debbie and Stephen Graves, James and Vivian Bradshaw, George Friedley

Absent; Councilman Ivan Lankford

### **Invocation, Lord's Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order opening with the Lord's Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance

### **Approval of Minutes**

Council Vice President Banks noted that there were four sets of minutes for approval; work session, August 7, work session August 14, public hearing August 14, and regular meeting August 14, and made a motion to accept all four sets as written. The motion was second by councilman Goldsborough and carried unanimously.

### **Vote on the city of Crisfield Planning Commission recommendation for a text amendment to the zoning code to allow multifamily/apartment/condo residential units in the R-2 zoning district through a special exception approved on a case-by-case basis by the Board of Zoning Appeals – Rick Taylor, Chairman of the Planning Commission**

At this time, Mr. Taylor read aloud the recommendation made by the Planning Commission on July 24, 2024.

Mayor Taylor opened the floor for discussion and a vote. She noted that the City has gone through the process and had received public input, of which there were many concerns.

Mr. Illuminati noted that if passed, an ordinance would need to be adopted.

Mayor Taylor advised that she loves the city and understands everyone's concerns. She noted that she cannot vote. She advised that the city has a housing shortage, and she felt like this was a solution to the problem. She also commented that all citizens are important and need consideration, taxpayer or not.

She advised that whichever direction the vote goes, she will support the community. She also noted that she wouldn't want a large development in her own neighborhood, and that she would continue to serve all citizens.

Councilman Goldsborough noted that he is not in favor of the proposal at this time. Mayor Taylor noted that the proposal for the project is no longer on the table.

Council Vice President Banks commented that he supports the text amendment but is not in favor of a low-income development.

Councilwoman Johnson commented that 41 units is too much in the location and advised that she is concerned about the fact that the R-2 zone makes up 80% of the city, adding that we still must do something about the housing shortage.

Councilman Patel commented that he does not agree with the change, as R-2 it makes up most of the entire city.

Mayor Taylor noted that Councilman Lankford, who was absent from this meeting, was also concerned that we do something with the area but does not feel a large apartment complex is feasible.

Mayor Taylor advised that the city would continue to look for a use for the property.

At this time Councilman Patel made a motion to reject the recommendation made by the Planning Commission for the R2 district. Motion second by Councilwoman Johnson and carried unanimously.

**Vote on the City of Crisfield Planning Commission recommendation regarding the site plan for a medium solar facility located on approximately 71.6 acres of land located south of Woodson school Road and West of Calvary Road – Rick Taylor, Chairman Planning Commission.**

Mayor Taylor noted that the solar project has been reviewed for two years and will be beneficial to the City of Crisfield. She advised that the property location has been vacant for many years.

Councilman Goldsborough commented that this project has been in the works for two years and makes good use of the vacant property. He also commented that the State of Maryland is pushing for the development of solar panels.

Council Vice President Banks advised that he supports the project, noting it will be a financial benefit

Councilwoman Johnson advised that she agrees with the proposed project noting that the property has been vacant for many years.

Councilman Patel advised that he had no comment.

At this time, Council Vice President Banks made a motion to except the Planning Commission recommendation. Motion second by Councilwoman Johnson and carried unanimously.

**Approval of Resolution 489 to provide Delmarva Power and Light an easement along Woodson School Road for ECA - Mr. Illuminati.**

Mr. Illuminati read into record Resolution 489 supporting the running of electric lines along Woodson school Road. He noted that it will cost the city nothing to run the lines. He advised that Mayor Taylor needs to sign the easement document.

Mayor Taylor commented that the property had been donated to the city and it was OK with the FEMA team for the polls to be placed there on the property.

After further, brief discussion, councilwoman Johnson made a motion to approve resolution 489. Motion second by councilman, Patel and carried unanimously.

Second reader, Personnel Policy Ordinance Number 730 – Mr. Illuminati

Mr. Illuminati presented ordinance 730 repealing the old employee handbook. He advised that all employees would receive a copy of the new employee handbook and will have to sign a statement that they have received said copy.

At this time Councilman Goldsborough made a motion to adopt Ordinance 730 repealing the old employee handbook. Motion second by Council Vice President Banks and carried unanimously.

**Waterman's Park Planning City Proposal Selection Recommendation to Chesapeake Bay Trust – Mrs. Merritt.**

Mrs. Merritt made reference to the proposed Waterman's Park planning grant through the Chesapeake Bay trust. She noted that the city is one of the four reviewers for the grant award.

She advice that planning proposals were reviewed for site design and Bayland scored 359 with the next highest being Rauch at 323.

Mrs. Merritt advised that she is requesting that the mayor and council consider approval of bayland is the city recommendation for selection recommendation to the Chesapeake Bay trust.

Mayor Taylor noted that they will hold city meetings with the public regarding the plans for the Waterman's Park. She also noted that three other entities will also look at the plan.

Councilman Goldsborough advised that he would abstain from the vote, as he needs more information.

At this time, council, vice president banks made a motion to approve Bayland as the city recommendation for selection recommendation to the Chesapeake Bay trust. Motion second by Councilwoman Johnson and carried 3 to 2 with Councilman Goldsborough abstaining and Councilman Lankford absent.

**EPA Community Change Grant Writer Update – Mrs. Merritt**

Mrs. Merritt noted that an RFP was sent to seven grant writing firms for a contractor to develop an EPA community change grant for improvements to the City's wastewater treatment plant and wastewater lines.

She noted that one bid was received, but it was not a viable bid. She advised that we are looking for sole sourcing, and a defined budget from Rauch.

Mayor Taylor noted that we are also waiting on the report from Moonshot. She advised that the one bid received had a good proposal but no defined rate and noted that we will look at the Moonshot recommendation. She advised that we will be needing help with this grant.

Mrs. Merritt noted that we can include the sewer lines that cannot be lined.

Mayor Taylor noted that the City approved the surplus property bid for properties advertised located on Main Street. She thanked Mr. Illuminati for his hard work, noting that this is huge for the city and advised That the property was purchased from Tidal Health for \$1.00 for a freestanding medical facility to be located on Main Street.

Mr. Illuminati noted that this is great news and added that Councilwoman Ruthie Todd played a huge part in this process.

Council Vice President Banks noted that this progress will move the city in the right direction, working to keep McCready/Tidal Health here.

Councilwoman Johnson how many that she is excited and noted that this has been a frustrating process. She added that is cochairman for the main street revitalization project. She is very excited.

Councilman Patel commented that this will change Main Street in a good way and keep the medical facility here.

Mayor Taylor added that she is excited to partner with Tidal health.

At this time, Council Vice President Banks made a motion to accept the contract with Tidal Health. Motion second by Councilwoman Johnson, the carried unanimously.

Mayor Taylor sent everyone who worked on this process, noting that we are looking at all opportunities and adding that we just received project restore funds.

### **Public Input**

Diana Murray, 133 North Somerset Ave. read a list of concerns regarding sewer lines, ARPA bid process, and 1.5 million spent on infrastructure.

Vinny Sing commented that it is good to have Facebook record of the city meetings. He addressed the July 24 meeting concerning sewer lines, \$1.5 million spent, business development, \$350,000 spent to purchase property, 480k for repairs for Maple Shade, and inquired why the money was not spent on infrastructure and sewer lines.

George Friedly commented that the Waterman's Park would create parking problems at the depot. He thanked the Mayor and Council for turning down the R-2 proposal. He also referred to the ditches on his property, being clogged and full of water.

Ruthie Todd made reference to the need for new signs on Main Street and the curbs painted. She also presented a water filter from her son's residence and asked that the Public Utilities department look at a water issue there.

Mayor Taylor thanked ECA Solar for their work on the solar project in Crisfield

### **Council Report**

Councilman Goldsborough advised that he is glad for public input, noting he is also concerned about the sewer lines. He also advised that he's glad that the plans for the hospital are now out in the open. He also wished everyone a safe and happy Crab Derby weekend.

Council Vice President Banks thanked all the citizens for their concern. He advised he is glad for the progress that has been made with ECA solar and Tidal Health. He also advised that a community cleanup will soon be scheduled.

Council, vice president banks advise that the city will be addressing sidewalks, debris, etc. during the cleanup.

Councilwoman Johnson thanked the public for their interest and attendance. She noted that the City is making progress. She advised she is looking forward to the upcoming Crab Derby, and thanked all of the city employees for their hard work.

Councilman Patel thanked all of the city employees and noted he is glad to see the public getting involved. He referred to the upcoming Crab Derby and noted that Ms. Leeann Linton has put in long hours of hard work to make the event a success. He noted that Billy Joe Chandler has also brought the rides back to the crab derby, noting that volunteers are needed.

### **Mayor's Report**

Mayor Taylor noted that she tries to support everything. She advised that she welcomes public input concerns and though the council can't respond immediately, we welcome everyone's concerns.

Mayor Taylor advised that every penny of the ARPA money designated for infrastructure was spent on infrastructure. She noted that the previous administration had designated money for infrastructure from the funding. She advised that the current administration allotted funding for business development. She noted that the sewer line problem will be addressed at the next meeting.

Mayor Taylor advised that we make the public aware of how we are addressing issues. Mayor Taylor advised that she does not want anyone to feel that any of the ARPA money was misspent.

### **Adjournment**

With no further business for discussion Councilwoman Johnson made a motion to adjourn, second by Councilman Goldsborough, and carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted

Joyce L Morgan Clerk Treasurer/City Manager

Prepared by Valerie Swift, Secretary