

Onancock Town Council Meeting - November 22, 2021

Town of Onancock
Town Council Meeting
November 22, 2021
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order and Roll Call:

Mayor Fosque called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and roll was called. Mayor Fletcher Fosque and Councilmembers Robert Bloxom, Ray Burger, Joy Marino, Sarah Nock and Maphis Oswald were present. Councilmember Thelma Gillespie was present electronically. All members were present, and a quorum was established.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Consideration and Approval of the October 25, 2021 Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes:

Mayor Fosque asked for any changes, additions or corrections to the minutes as submitted.

With none, Councilmember Oswald made a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

Councilmember Bloxom seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Public Business:

No public hearings scheduled.

Council Discussion:

- a. Discussion of Planning Commission Recommended Changes to Town Code Section 38-77, Special Exemptions: Mr. Spuck shared the following Planning Commission proposed changes to the Special Exemption Code:
 1. Operators of Bed and Breakfasts must live on site.
 2. Update on the terms used for short-term rentals.
 3. Special Use Permits for short-term rentals expire every three-years from the date of issuance.
 4. Current owners must apply for the Special Use Permit. In situations of property sale contingent up Council's approval of the Special Use Permit Application both the current owner and purchaser may jointly apply.
 5. LLC's must disclose all individual members of the partnership since no one owner can have more than one Special Use Permit for this purpose.
 6. The contact information for the property manager must be local and on file with the Onancock Police Department as well as provided to the property's immediate neighbors.
 7. There must be a linear two-hundred feet and one tax parcel as defined by Accomack County between properties allowed for Homestay properties.
 8. A Homestay property cannot operate more than 90-days in a calendar year.
 9. Properties will not allow more than two guests per bedroom and no more than four persons per bathroom, Nuclear families with children under the age of 18 are not limited to the number of guests allowed.
 10. Property owners must provide to the Town, annually, proof of insurance for property damage and liability in an amount no less than the full replacement value of the structure as it exists at the time of application.

Extensive Council discussion followed each item.

A majority of Council Members requested that the 90-day restriction be removed from the proposed language.

Mayor Fosque asked Mr. Spuck to supply Council with a map to review in more detail the 200-foot radius requirement between homestays at the next meeting. Mayor Fosque stated that Council will continue to review this proposed language at the next Council meeting and that the Public Hearing will be held at the January 2022 Town Council meeting.

11. Police Response to Public Safety Concerns: Mr. Spuck shared that the Onancock Police Chief and staff have been working on a plan which centers around placing cameras around Town. The Town can either do Wi-Fi or cellular cameras and since the Town does not have Town wide Wi-Fi coverage the most likely scenario would be cellular cameras. The Town has secured a quote for these cameras and the cost per camera per month with the cellular package is \$130.00. The Chief is working on viability and functionality of the cameras as well as placement of them.

Council discussion followed.

Councilmember Marino shared with she is working with the Police Department along with others to come up with an attractive police officer recruitment plan.

12. ARPA Tourism Grant: Mr. Spuck shared that Virginia Tourism has received a \$50 million tourism grant and that Accomack County will be receiving \$260,000 of those funds for tourism. Currently there are three Destination Marketing Organization's (DMO) in Accomack County including the Town of Onancock. Accomack County has asked that the Eastern Shore Tourism administer these funds on their behalf. Mr. Spuck has had conversations with all parties involved advocating that Onancock receive its own allocation of those funds since being our own DMO has value added. Once the allocation is determined he will be bringing his plan to expend the funds before Council. These funds can only be used for tourism efforts.

Public Comments:

No public comment was heard.

Committee Reports:

- a. HRSD, Robert Bloxom: Councilmember Bloxom deferred to Mr. Spuck's Town Manager's Report.
- b. Waterfront Committee, Robert Bloxom: Councilmember Bloxom shared Chairman T. Lee Byrd's report which is attached.
- c. Planning Commission, Robert Bloxom: Councilmember Bloxom shared that Chairwoman Judith Grier has resigned from the Planning Commission and that Mr. Scott Schreiber has agreed to take over as the Commission Chair. The Commission also reviewed the current zoning for the

business districts, and it has been decided that they need to spend more time on coming up with thoughtful changes. The Commission also reviewed an application for a rezone. Currently, the Eastern Shore Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ESCADV) is selling their shelter on Hartman Avenue which is a duplex. The parcel is zoned R1A which does not allow for multifamily cohabitation. They have a sale pending the Town's approval of their rezone request. They are asking that it be rezoned to R2 which is multifamily friendly. The Planning Commission consensus was to recommend the rezone to Town Council.

- d. Personnel Committee, Joy Marino: No meeting.

Mayor's Report:

Mayor Fosque thanked Mrs. Lisa Fiege for her hard work on the Small Business Recovery Assistance grant.

Town Manager's Report:

Mr. Spuck shared with Council his report which is attached.

- a. ARPA Projects Updates: See attached.

Council Comments:

Mayor Fosque shared that Councilmember Bloxom was vacating his seat at the end of the year. Due to that upcoming vacancy Town Council would be going into Closed Session to interview applicants for Councilmember Bloxom's seat.

Councilmember Oswald expressed concern over the employees that are slated to go with HRSD when the plant transfers, stating that some of them chose not to get vaccinated and therefore will not be able to be employed by HRSD. What is the plan to take care of those individuals? Mr. Spuck shared that he has been working with these employees towards a positive outcome which will be retirement.

Councilmember Oswald also asked if the business owner that currently provides lawn services to the Town has been informed that the Town will be taking that activity back in house. Mr. Spuck stated that he has been in contact with the owner's partner, and they are aware of the coming change.

Councilmember Nock asked if there was any movement on the lot the Town has for sale on Watson Street. Mr. Spuck stated that there has not been any, sharing that the lot may not be priced right.

Councilmember Nock asked if there was any update on the Northeast Section grant. Mr. Spuck shared that he would be checking in with Mr. Eric Luchansky who had said initially that the application to the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development would be ready around Thanksgiving.

Closed Session:

Councilmember Marino made a motion to enter a closed session pursuant to §2.1-3711 (A)(1) to interview and consider appointment for the upcoming Town Council vacancy. Councilmember Gillespie seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Town Council entered closed session at 8:35 p.m.

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Councilmember Marino made a motion to end close session and certify that no other discussion was held other than described in the motion to enter close session. Councilmember Oswald seconded the motion, and a roll call vote was taken.

Robert Bloxom	Absent	Ray Burger	Yes/No
Thelma Gillespie	Yes/No	Joy Marino	Yes/No
Sarah Nock	Yes/No	Maphis Oswald	Yes/No

Town Council reconvened open session at 9:23 p.m.

Councilmember Marino made a motion to appoint Mrs. Cindy Holdren to fill the vacancy on the Town Council effective immediately following the December 20, 2021 meeting until December 31, 2022. Councilmember Nock seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

Adjourn:

Councilmember Gillespie made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Nock seconded the motion. The motion passed by unanimous voice vote.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 p.m.


Fletcher Fosque, Mayor


Lisa Fiege, Deputy Clerk

Town Council: Bob Bloxom, Ray Burger, Thelma Gillespie, Joy Marino, Sarah Nock and Maphis Oswald
Mayor: Fletcher Fosque | **Town Manager:** Matt Spuck

Town Manager Report

November 22, 2021

HRSD

- USDA in D.C. has all the information they requested, and we are simply waiting to hear about their final decision regarding any repayment requirements of the grant portion of the original USDA bond used to construct the wastewater treatment plant.
- All other tasks, to the best of my knowledge, have been provided and once we hear back, we will be ready to close on the transfer immediately.
- After we close, we will begin the process to transfer the Town's collection system.

Bulkhead

- If the project cannot be completed by April 1, we will delay until next fall.
- The County Wetlands has advised us that this project does not require a permit. VMRC and ACE have assigned personnel to review our application. We have not received permits yet.
- We received a grant of \$270,000 from VPA and another grant of \$64,500 from BIG for this project. It should require little, if any, Town contribution. If any funds are required, Council already budgeted for it in the use of reserves for grant-matching.

Tax Season

- All tax bills were distributed on-time.
- The decision Council made to eliminate vehicle decals and add the fee to property tax bills simplified the process for residents and likely generated increased revenue.
- There is some information that we can share more clearly on the bills next year. This was the first time we did this in house, and we will make those improvements each year.
- We have approached the County about trying to get the data files to us a little sooner (Chincoteague and Onancock both prepare tax bills in house).

Town Communications

- If you would like communication from the Town for local issues (like hydrant flushing, traffic issues, etc.):
 - By Text: Text the word ONANCOCK to 91896
 - By Email: Give your email address to any employee in Town Hall.

Small Business Recovery Grant

- The term for this grant has expired.
- We have received a clean report from DHCH for our grant compliance.
- The total amount distributed to 30 Onancock businesses is \$346,290.38.
- We provided meaningful support to 6 nonprofit organizations and 75% of the businesses that received grants are SWAM (Small, Women-owned, Minority-owned)!

Department of Public Works

- The town is transitioning into our normal festive Christmas town!
- Craig has joined DPW until the Wharf re opens in early Spring.
- We will begin to interview for the second slot in February.

Included as part of
11/22/21 minutes

Virginia Tourism Grant

- Accomack County received \$260,000 from the VTC. The DMO's are charged with submitting a spending plan to the County for how best to spend these funds.
- Onancock is one of the 3 DMO's in the County (The Tourism Commission and Chincoteague are the other 2).
- The Tourism Commission has agreed to administer the effort of preparing a County-wide spending plan. The Commission is a regional body and will likely perform the service for Northampton County as well, who received \$100,000 (and the Commission and Cape Charles are the 2 DMO's in that locality)
- As part of our being a DMO, we have a spending plan in place already, but once we learn of the amount earmarked for Onancock, I will put that list before Council for prioritization and approval (working with OMS as well)

2021 Audit

- We are completing the preparation for the 2021 financial audit, which should take place over the holidays

Christmas in Onancock

- We distributed a newsletter of the rack card prepared by OBCA that outlines the events for .

Police

- The two officers attending the police academy are performing well and will join the department here after completion in early January. They will need 240 hours of supervision after they return before they are fully certified as Onancock Police Officers.
- Both new police vehicles have been delivered – BUT, there was a mechanical issue with the last car and it is back at the dealership being repaired.

Staff Change

- Lisa has given her notice that her last day working for the Town will be at the end of December.
- This is a huge loss for the town and the office.
- The first ad ran in the Post on the 19th.
- The hiring process has been shared with Council and the interview team.
- We are going to move as quickly as possible.

Water Tower

- The tower is offline and water pressure in Town is managed by the pumps at the wells and the pressure release valves located throughout town.
- I have been trying to communicate any changes or possible disruptions to service as I know of them.
- This project will take about a month more.

Misc. Small Projects

- Pedestals for the wharf (purchased with 2020 BIG funds) is beginning
- The White Oak project is resuming now that work on it will be less distressing to the tree. Remaining tasks are lightning protection, branch cabling, high limb removal, and ground cover and asphalt removal.
- I am researching and writing an ordinance to govern the development of property contiguous to paper roads. Council has asked me to write this quickly and bypass Planning Commission. I will have this prepared for the December meeting.
- I am arranging for the County to print a new mark-up copy of the zoning map so that we can get it updated and ready for review, as per the Comprehensive Plan, by Planning Commission
- Dog Park – I am asking for a larger printout of the property to allow for community design. I found another resource other than the survey company – they do not have time to help.
- I need to update the town purchasing policy to include items from the federal code 2CFR 200 so that our internal policy mirrors the federal code for ARPA spending purposes.

Lisa W. Fiege

From: T Lee Byrd <tleebyrd@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 16, 2021 6:33 AM
To: Robert Bloxom; Lisa W. Fiege
Subject: waterfront Tuesday 11/9/21

I fear that I have missed Council meeting ?

Nevertheless, for your minutes Lisa:

The marina has closed entirely for the season. According to the harbormaster, the power has been turned off in anticipation of electrical work on the pedestals and the bathhouses are closed. Winterization will be done soon.

Permitting is near completion for work to be done on our bulkhead and parking areas.

Waterfront committee meetings will be scheduled on a month to month basis for the winter time off season

T. Lee