

Town of Perryville  
Work Session Minutes  
December 19, 2023, 6:30 p.m. Town Hall

Attendance: Mayor: Matthew Roath, Commissioners: Michelle Linkey, Robert Taylor, and Timothy Snelling, Town Administrator: George Patchell, Finance Director: Debra Sharpe, Planning and Zoning Director: Dianna Battaglia, Senior Accounting Clerk: Tyler Bryan, Town Clerk: Jackie Sample.

Absent: Christina Aldridge

The December 19, 2023, Work Session was called to order by Mayor Roath at 6:30 p.m.

**Motion** was made by Commissioner Taylor to approve the December 19, 2023 agenda as written.

Commissioner Linkey asked to add to the agenda what the library is doing for the community while they are closed.

**Motion** was made by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Snelling to approve the December 19, 2023 agenda with the addition of the 1 item for Commissioner Linkey to give an update on the library to item number 1. **All in Favor: Motion Carried.**

Commissioner Linkey reported that the librarians are working hard to stay in touch with the community while the library is closed. The teen librarians are visiting the Middle School and the Outreach Program on a weekly basis. Another member will be going to the VA to work with the veterans and a couple of them will be doing a math club at Charlestown Elementary School twice a week. There will be bi-weekly outreach at Bainbridge and Perryville Elementary and they will continue to do their book discussions here at Town Hall.

### **50 Mill Creek Rd. Water and Sewer Study Presentation**

Ryan Flickinger, the Professional Engineer for Water and Wastewater and Miranda Marini, Scientist in Training for Water and Wastewater, from KCI Technologies gave a presentation on the water and wastewater analysis that was done for the proposed 50 Mill Creek Road development.

Ms. Marini stated that the study was to determine if the existing water and sewer system was able to handle the increased flows from the additional 67 homes. We were looking at both drinking water and wastewater. Hydrant flow testing was performed for the drinking water, one on 50 Mill Creek Road and the other on Principio Furnace Road to look into all the options for providing water, along with the flow meter data from the wastewater treatment plant. The Town has enough capacity and plenty of starting pressure at 70 to 80 psi with a typical starting pressure being 40 to 50 psi. You are currently only using 52% of the current wastewater sewer capacity, in adding these two neighborhoods you will have 37% capacity.

Mr. Flickinger stated that Ms. Marino explained that a single extension along Mill Creek for the water line will serve the demands of this new neighborhood in flow pressure. However, a water engineer in this instance is always going to recommend looping the water system as a preferred approach because it gives you a better flow, better pressure, redundancy if a line breaks, and to serve future growth. The wastewater line does have capacity and will still have capacity after this neighborhood is built. I&I, (Inflow and Infiltration) is significant in the Town of Perryville, which involves groundwater and rainwater getting into your wastewater system where it is not welcome. What the numbers are showing in Perryville is that when you have an intense rain event, especially in the spring when the groundwater table

is high that it tends to occupy most of your pipelines that you have coming into your Town. EPA ran a study that suggests that for every dollar you proactively spend in identifying your I&I and mitigate it, reduce it, or eliminate it you will save ten dollars in the future trying to catch up with that extra flow and beef up your system and large extra capacity to your treatment plant to handle the rainwater that has already gotten into your system. He knows that the Town has used temporary flow meters to get some flow data and suggests that smoke testing is another way to perform testing which is inexpensive and safe. There is also new technology that is out there which is called iTrackers which basically inserts probes into your manholes and takes into account the biometric change of flow that is going through your pipes at a given point and time while it is raining compared to what your dry flow looks like, and is less expensive than the flow meters that the Town has utilized in the past.

In regard to the capacity and talking about I&I Mayor Roath's understanding is that we have two essential sewer lines that go under the rails. He assumes the lines that we are talking about that are at 52% are the eastern lines, he questioned whether they had an idea of the impact on that line in particular or is that another study for later.

Mr. Patchell responded that is for another study.

Mr. Flickinger commented that the Town has the ability to meter actual flow at the Wastewater Filtration Plant, in answering the question there is not a dedicated meter for that subject sewer line. He made note that they could make these slides available and answer any questions by emails or side conversations about whatever works best for the crowd.

Mayor Roath made note that we always like our vendors to be available to our residents for questions outside of these meetings that are relatively formal.

Commissioner Taylor commented that these slides are available on boarddocs right now.

Mayor Roath suggested that they leave business cards if they have them available that residents can pick up if they have any questions but believes that most of them are probably here about the traffic impact. He asked for comments from the board.

Commissioner Taylor believes that the looping system should almost be a requirement because of many of the places in Town where we have had significant water quality issues with the tap water in areas in the Town where we do not have a loop system where the system dead ends, such as Frenchtown Crossing and Beacon Point who have had significant water quality complaints. He believes moving forward with this without a loop line should be a non-starter because it will cause problems right off the bat as far as water quality is concerned.

Ms. Battaglia stated that she has provided the board packets for 50 Mill Creek, which includes a copy of KCI's report along with the traffic impact study that was done and there were some questions that she had. She also had Mr. Sussman review the package and he may have some questions and we may get some comments from him to be sent to you, so there are more discussion topics.

Mayor Roath asked for clarification whether we were still waiting for clarification for those questions.

Ms. Battaglia feels that the board should review the information to be able to move forward with the process. Ms. Battaglia explained that once the details are worked out Mr. Sussman will prepare a Resolution to be able to move forward with notifying the State and the County and scheduling the Public

Hearings, so she wants to make sure that we have all of the information before we send it out. She is waiting for Mr. Sussman's comments and will be talking to him tomorrow.

Mayor Roath asked her to give a brief summary about the process for the Annexation.

Ms. Battaglia commented that there will be two Public Hearings held as we move through the process once the board works out the details on the requirements and the applicants will provide a full packet. It will be advertised in the paper and the proper notifications will be done, the Planning Commission will have a Public Hearing to go over various parts of the project and the board will also have a Public Hearing and at that time you will be able to state your comments and we will have more information as we are presenting the project. She also stated that the old historical home is not going to be demolished, it is actually on the historic register, so it has been incorporated into the project.

A member of the audience representing the developer stated that it was not on the historic register, but they have decided not to demolish it.

Another member of the audience stated that it states on-line that it is historically registered.

Mr. Patchell stated that those that are interested can go to the Town's website under Town Meeting and there will be a boarddocs link that you can click on, and you will have access to the information that we have here today. The January Work Session is when we hopefully will get the additional questions answered for the Mayor and Commissioners to go over in a little more detail.

#### **Water Distribution Study Update - Kevin Pampuch**

Kevin Pampuch, the Project Consultant representing AECOM, gave a presentation regarding Perryville's Water Distribution study. He reported that in 2008 the Town had commissioned the startup of the Perryville Water Distribution System Improvements which included a new 1-million-gallon tank by the casino. In 2009 the lines were extended to Chesapeake Overlook for the purpose of serving the Hollywood Casino site which now includes demand from Great Wolf Lodge. The system operated as intended until 2016 where there were around 10 reports of discolored water between 2016 and 2019. The complaints calmed down again for a period of time and then between July of 2022 and September 2023 an additional 20 or more complaints were received. The Town contracted AECOM to perform a study of the Town's water distribution system to identify the cause of the odor and turbidity. In October of 2022 Telog devices were installed at key system locations to understand the operating pressure of the system and performed flow testing of the fire hydrants in the vicinity of where the Telogs were located. When we compared the data results they were not in agreement to the water system model. After further investigation by Town DPW staff, it was determined that several pressure control valves were not functioning as intended. We assisted with identifying the improper valves and assisted with coordinating a representative to replace or rebuild the valves that were in need. On page 4 you can see a picture of the water that was captured when we did flushing of the lines which were along Turnpike Drive which had been inactive for some time until that area was developed. The line was not even full because of the elevation of the I-95 Water Tank, so it is to be expected that there is likely corrosion in that line. We have discussed the possibility of doing further investigation and further into the report we have provided some cost figures on what would be needed along with the cost of rehabilitating the lines by lining them. They also gave suggested practices that should be performed by the Water Treatment Plant employees and the DPW employees, on a daily, monthly, bi-annual, or annual basis. There are still some unresolved issues that are still occurring. Water is becoming warm in the cold-water system at the High School at times which we believe may be a backfeed problem within the school itself, possibly from the boiler system. There is some loss of pressure at Perryville Elementary School when we are flushing hydrants. Reperform

flow testing and recalibrate the water system model to reflect the current system operating conditions and perform CCTV investigation of the 12" Upper Turnpike Drive water main as a basis bid for development of an RFP to line the main. Mr. Pampuch made note that one thing that you may want to think about for the future is to take into consideration that the Town's water distribution system is continuing to grow with annexation projects being considered. As the system grows you will need a full-time dedicated water staff to be able to perform all of these activities, right now they are shared and have other responsibilities.

Commissioner Snelling asked if he was suggesting a 24/7 staff for that.

Mr. Pampuch responded not necessarily a 24/7 staff for the distribution, but a dedicated staff to perform the necessary functions, now they are doing things unrelated to the water system.

Mr. Patchell explained that what he is referring to is a water distribution team who maintain the water system and water lines and valves throughout Town and are also down at the Pump Stations on the sewer side to make sure they are working properly and exercising those valves and all of the maintenance necessary on a scheduled basis to maintain the system so that the system, is running the way that it should. It is very difficult for the DPW staff to get to all of those things under the current workload.

Commissioner Snelling inquired if we have the results from the water tower that has recently been inspected.

Mr. Pampuch responded that he was not involved in that directly, his understanding is the crew was delayed.

Mr. Patchell responded that the crew had not arrived for the 1-million-gallon tank yet to do that evaluation but the ½ million-gallon tank was evaluated and repairs were made. They were scheduled for right before Thanksgiving but cancelled and have not rescheduled at this time but stated that they would give us at least a three-week notice.

### **Review Process for Town Grant Programs**

Mr. Patchell stated that he wanted to make sure that he had captured all of the recommendations that the board made at the Work Session for the various grant programs application process and if the board is ok with the recommendations they will be put in Resolution form to be voted on at an upcoming Town Meeting.

### **Non-Profit Grant Applicant Recommendations**

Mr. Patchell stated that one of the recommendations were to award more points to non-profit organizations that are located within Town limits. Another recommendation was adding points for non-previous award winners, for example: 10 for new applicants, 5 for one previous, and 1 for multiple awards.

There were no objections or comments regarding those recommendations.

### **Business Development Grant Applicant Recommendations**

Mr. Patchell stated that the recommendations that were made for the business grant requirements were to add an advance of \$3,000 for business and revitalization grants, not just the 501c grants which will also be paid out to contractors. The other recommendation was to add points for non-previous award winners, for example: 10 for new applicants, 5 for one previous, and 1 for multiple awards.

### **Revitalization Grant Applicant Recommendations**



Mr. Patchell stated that the recommendations for the revitalization grant requirements were that grants will not be granted for applicants in consecutive years unless funds are available after meeting all potential requests. Previous town elected officials are not eligible for grant funding until 3 years removed from office.

Commissioner Linkey would like to strike the 2<sup>nd</sup> one, Commissioner Taylor and Commissioner Snelling concurred.

Mr. Patchell stated that it will be removed then.

Mayor Roath inquired if they at least have another time frame in mind.

Commissioner Taylor believes that there should not be any time frame, once someone leaves office they should be entitled to the rights and privileges of any other citizen of the Town. He would possibly be open to the discussion of a point system for past commissioners, possibly the first year that they are out of office they get minus 5 points for their application, so if we get more people that are eligible for the grants, the commissioners are at the end of the line if there are more people applying than we have funding. He sees no reason why the commissioner who has left office and applies for a grant and the funds are available for all of the grants that have applied he sees no reason not to give it to them.

Mayor Roath commented that he is a resident of this Town even though he sits on this board, so what stops him from applying.

Commissioner Taylor does not believe there is anything currently in the rules from preventing a sitting commissioner from applying for a grant.

Mayor Roath inquired if he believes that is kosher.

Commissioner Taylor commented that he does not believe that is kosher and would not vote for that but does believe that once someone has left office and are not on the board that are awarding the grants and not voting for it and they a citizen of the Town of Perryville and have the right to apply for any other privilege that any other citizen of the Town may apply for.

Mayor Roath commented that he is amenable to anything that will bring credibility back to this process. If it is negative 5, he will agree to it, or if it is twelve months, he would be happy with that as well.

Commissioner Taylor would not object to having a negative 5 points for a member of the board after having left the board in the first 12 months after office.

Commissioner Snelling agrees that we can do something with the point system also.

Commissioner Linkey was ok with that, asking if you also wanted to add that sitting Town officials would not be eligible.

Commissioner Taylor believes that would be appropriate to add and Mayor Roath agreed, he commented that we cannot be competing with our residents.

Ms. Battaglia commented that when staff review these applications they are put into a database and points are associated with it where the committee comes up with recommendations to the board, the board ultimately awards the funds.

Commissioner Taylor reiterated if you wanted to give negative five points to any member of the board who left the board and then applied for a grant in the first year, he would be ok with that.

Mayor Roath stated that it appears that we agree on that.

Mr. Patchell summarized the other proposed changes. Proof of 10% match must be provided to the Town before additional project funds are released. Adding points for non-previous award winners- Example: 10 for new applicants, 5 for one previous, and 1 for multiple awards. Point system for various sections of the house that are visual, with the front/façade worth more points, side and back worth less points, etc., if that is the case, we will have to come up with a point system.

Mayor Roath inquired if we are considering the debate that we had regarding the word structure.

Mr. Patchell responded that there was nothing that outlined that specifically.

Mayor Roath inquired what is going to be done about that and it was suggested that it needs to be tightened up significantly since these are beautification grants, he does not see how structural plays a factor in this.

Commissioner Taylor does not really have an opinion one way or the other.

Mayor Roath commented that the intent is for beautification, things that noticeable and are seen from the road, not for a concrete pad for a hot tub in the back of the house which is not a benefit to the community.

Commissioner Taylor commented that a concrete pad for a hot tub would not be appropriate use of funds, but if it somebody is trying to fix a structural issue that is going to cause damage to their home in the long term then that is a property value issue which he does not necessarily have a problem with.

Mayor Roath commented that these are meant to have an impact on the community not just the individual.

Commissioner Taylor responded that property values do impact the community. He mentioned having a point system for front facing visual aspects getting more points versus a structural issue that is still outside the home and would still qualify with the current rules, but would be awarded less points, he would be open to discussing that.

Mayor Roath wanted to revert back to the word structural and the meaning, stating we are not qualified to determine what is structurally necessary and what structurally is not. He asked if we would be an agreement to having someone that is applying for structural support for a project to have backup documentation by someone that is qualified suggesting that it is a necessity.

Commissioner Taylor would not have a problem with that, if they have a quote from a contractor, he thinks that should be sufficient.

Mayor Roath responded that a contractor is trying to sell a project, we need something that states that it is a necessity.

Commissioner Taylor asked what he wanted people to do hire an engineer.

Mayor Roath commented that he wants the word structural taken out altogether because it is too broad.

Commissioner Taylor disagreed with that, believing that structural is an important issue if it is something that is going to affect the outside of your house, such as your porch is going to collapse, or a decorative wall or fence is going to collapse.

Mayor Roath referenced the previous grant awardee, stating there is nothing external to a basement that is supposedly flooding.

Commissioner Taylor stated that it was cement work that was on the outside of the house to prevent flooding into the basement.

Further discussion ensued.

Mr. Patchell inquired if we are looking at clarifying the word structural or leaving it as is.

Mayor Roath stated that we need to tighten up the definition of what structural means and maintain that the structure is outside of the home and a legitimate study is done that states that it is a necessity.

Commissioner Taylor inquired who is going to conduct the study, Mayor Roath responded whoever is going to provide a study.

Commissioner Taylor commented that you just stated that if contractor to provide the study that is not ok because they are a contractor.

Mayor Roath commented that he can have someone come out and give him a quote for new windows and that person will give him a quote for a new windows, not to suggest to him that they are a necessity, a structural is a necessity.

Commissioner Taylor does not see the need for changing the definition but if we wanted to do a point system on the various areas of the house, he would be fine with that, but is not in favor of removing the structural language.

Commissioner Snelling and Commissioner Linkey agreed that the word is fine the way that it is, and she stated that this was to help citizens in beautifying their homes and you are suggesting for them to spend more money to get these fundings because they would have to hire an engineer not just a contractor. She gave an example of her taking her car to a shop and asking them what needs to be done and they give me an estimate and why it needs to be done and then they fix it, she asked what the difference is.

Mayor Roath responded you are talking about structure and the flooding of basements and things in the back of the home that has nothing to do with beautification which you are trying to expand to structural and internal and back yards, the language needs to be tightened to stay with the intent of it.

Commissioner Linkey commented that we did suggest a point system for the front to be more and the backs and sides be less.

Mr. Patchell asked if there were any suggestions on the point system, front and back, Commissioner Linkey suggested 10 and 5.

## **FY25 Budget Presentation**

Ms. Sharpe stated that tonight we are doing a budget presentation forecasting our cash flow needs for the next 10+ years. She along with George have been uneasy about the fact that the Town did not have

any long-range plan in place to increase our revenues yearly. There was not a strong budget modeling format available, so we purchased a program from a company called Waterworth. We have been working with them for the last several weeks and providing them with raw data to put inside their model. We have Calvin Coles from Waterworth on zoom tonight to give a brief presentation of our current projections. She asked the board to take a minute prior to the presentation to review the “assumptions’ handout. She believes that will answer several questions that they may have plus it will make the presentation easier to understand. After the presentation she would like to present several potential solutions to our cash flow issues.

Mr. Coles, representing Waterworth was here to present some financial model scenarios and forecast for a 15- year horizon starting with 2020 and ending in 2035. He is not here to suggest any changes or adjustments to your revenue sources, it is simply showing what the math is telling us. The models are fluid and can be changed at any time given change of assumption. The first was for operating expenses over a fifteen-year period, showing a few years of operating expenses in the model along with the 2024 budget and forecasting over time a 3% increase to operating expense over year based on inflation which can be high right now with the expectation that it will level out. It is currently showing some debt service along with capital improvement scenarios. It also shows current revenues, including personal property tax, real estate tax, and other operating revenue, you will see over time the operating expenses and the debt services will be growing with inflation and will become a little out of reach. He demonstrated a couple of models for capital improvement planning which demonstrate minimal and additional budget of capital improvement projects, one being 1.5 million for the future is showing that the forecasted revenues are still not quite making it. The opening cash balance that is showing for 2024 was 8.8 million dollars and with there being a little more spending than revenues in 2024 this would start to shrink and over time because the revenues are not keeping up with the revenue requirements the forecasted cash position drops over time. He explained that many communities are facing challenges with insufficient revenues for growing revenue requirements over time for many funds. Many communities are having to take more corrective measures to maintain a more sustainable future in terms of revenues with the current outlooks.

Ms. Sharpe went over some potential budget deficit solutions which may not be very favorable for some people, but she wants to offer solutions when there are problems presented. Tyler contacted all of the local municipalities and did a comparison, breaking it down by several different categories, Police Department, trash removal, yard waste and bulk trash. These are areas that the other municipalities either charge quite differently than what we do or do not offer it at all. We have provided a chart and categorized them by color and the municipalities that offer a service at a lower charge are in green and the ones that offer a service with an intermediate charge are yellow and the red are the higher charges or do not offer it at all. Ms. Sharpe stated that when you look at the tax rates there is a big difference in what the other municipalities charge. Perryville is charging a little over \$0.36 per \$100 of assessment, Rising Sun is \$0.46, Northeast is \$0.48, Chesapeake City is \$0.53, Port Deposit is \$0.54, Havre De Grace is \$0.56, Aberdeen is \$0.62, and Elkton is \$0.63. Perryville is at the low end of what is charged, however, offer more services or do not charge for services that the other municipalities do. Our personal property tax is also low except for Rising Sun who is a couple of cents less. For trash removal a lot of the municipalities charge back for trash removal, either monthly, quarterly, or annually. A lot of municipalities do not offer yard waste services at all, or the trash contractor will do it and bill directly, and the same for bulk trash. Ms. Sharpe summarized her recommendations to keep in mind or consider. A real estate tax rate increase from the current rate of .3634/\$100 with a five-cent increase would bring it up to .4134/\$100. For residential property owners the impact will be minimal. On a \$250,000 home, the taxes will increase \$125 a year. Commercial property owners will see the same percentage increase, but obviously the total



amount of tax increase will be significantly higher. Based on the current tax assessments (excluding Great Wolf) just a \$.05 tax increase would generate \$252,339. This is based on the Town's total assessment value of \$504,678,833. For Personal Property tax there is room to increase more substantially and still be under the rates are in other municipality tax rates and would only impact businesses not residential properties. If the tax rate is increased by \$.05 it would increase the current assessable tax base by \$59,533 a year. If we increased it by 70 or 80 cents, then we would be more in line with where the other municipalities are and receive a much greater increase in revenues. The other bug line item that has crippled our budget in the past several years has been the trash removal services. She believes that when she started in 2017, we were being billed around \$16,000 per household for trash removal, we are currently at \$28 per household and by the time the next five years are up we will be up to \$35 per household. This year we are paying \$484,000 per year for trash services. Within five years we will be paying almost \$600,000 in trash removal. You must be able to spread that cost out to the residents to take on some of that burden or we will have to increase the tax rate dramatically overall. Other things that could be done is to charge for bulk trash service. These are recommendations that she would like the board to look over and consider or come up with combinations that they feel may work. If you have any concepts or assumption ideas, they can plug them into the model and see how it would impact their cash flows. As it stands now, if we take no action, we will be out of cash in less than five years.

Commissioner Taylor inquired if this was something that she wanted us to think about and do during the budget cycle.

Ms. Sharpe responded that she wanted to offer it ahead of time for consideration so that it is not a last-minute thing, we want to know in the beginning where we are going so that we know how to do the budget. In the proposals the minimal capital outlay is just in the general fund which does not include water and sewer, the minimal capital outlay is only \$300,000, and that just covered repair and replacement of equipment for DPW, replacement of vehicles as necessary, and roads and sidewalks just to cover the highway user fund revenue. Other than that, it did not allow for any large capital improvement projects.

Commissioner Linkey asked for clarification that Great Wolf was included as part of the model, to which Ms. Sharpe responded that it was with the figures that we have at this point.

Mayor Roath inquired about the modeling program if it is something that is ongoing.

Ms. Sharpe responded that we have the software now, so we can make adjustments and plug in new figures according to the board's recommendations on assumptions.

Commissioner Taylor asked for clarification that these figures are based on the Town's current taxable properties.

Ms. Sharpe stated that the real estate taxes were kept at the constant yield and we use the same amount every year.

Commissioner Taylor commented that in talking about annexation, adding 60 homes would change that model.

Mr. Patchell responded that this does not take into account all of the future growth that may be occurring.

Commissioner Taylor commented that annexation and other things coming into Town are just something to consider when we are doing the modeling, not saying that it is going to fix the problems.

Ms. Sharpe made note that we have been supplementing our income with the Local Impact funds for 10 or so years now and the pandemic has shown that we cannot do that. We have only received two payments so far for this fiscal year and have been substantially less than what we normally get, and based on that we will not meet the minimal amount that she estimated for the budget for Local impact revenue.

Mr. Patchell stated that in FY 2024 we have seen a significant increase in our investments based on the return because of the higher interest rates, as those interest rates start to level off or reduce, we will start to see less money coming in on the interest on the funds that we have in those accounts. In the water and sewer account we have a similar type of model that we can put a variety of different assumptions in and come back and tell you where the enterprise funds are located which will be part of the budget presentation in the future as well.

Ms. Sharpe commented that they are calling for a decrease in interest rates next year, and that a decrease in interest income is not projected in that cash flow, so that cash flow can drop even quicker.

Commissioner Linkey asked Tyler about the modeling program and how easy it would be to put in different amounts when it is time to meet for the budget.

Tyler responded that you can, the program allows him to build multiple models if you wanted to run several different scenarios.

Commissioner Taylor inquired if the \$30 trash pickup per house in 2025 is monthly or annually.

Ms. Sharpe responded that it is monthly, however we have to go back to Trash Tech on that. Their cost was based on 1417 individual properties that they do pickups for and charge us for, but do not include the condos, so we would have to get them to break down the condo cost to reduce the individual property charges. Ms. Sharpe stated that as high as these rates seems, they are still cheaper than what individual properties are charged outside of Town.

Mayor Roath commented that it is probably true that we have some space to raise rates and still be competitive in the taxation marketplace, but the problem is that a very large business was opened that we should have taken on a significant more amount of revenue and in the same year consider tax increases is a bad look.

Ms. Sharpe stated that over \$600,000 is projected in those numbers from Great Wolf, which is just for the personal property and the real estate tax, so that was taken into consideration, we are just much lower than we should be.

### **Polar Bear Plunge Allocation**

Commissioner Linkey commented that the Police Chief had requested a \$500 donation for the Polar Bear Plunge for the Special Olympics if he participates in the Polar Bear Plunge in February.

Mr. Patchell believes that all of the local municipalities are going in together for the plunge and representing Cecil County.

Mayor Roath inquired if that means that all of the municipalities are donating \$500.

Mr. Patchell was not sure he did not have that information.

Commissioner Linkey stated that the plunge will be February 2<sup>nd</sup> at Sandy Point State Park. Ms. Sharpe notified us that we do have that in the budget.

Mayor Roath got an informal consensus to allow the request.

Mr. Patchell commented that since it is in the budget it will not need to come to the January 2<sup>nd</sup> Town Meeting for a vote it will be allocated for the Polar Bear Plunge.

Harriet McMillen. 90 Mill Creek Road inquired when they were going to be able to ask questions about the Mill Creek Annexation.

Mayor Roath responded that those questions will be asked at the planning session.

Mr. Patchell responded if the project is moved forward to the Planning Commission there will be Public Hearings at that time.

Commissioner Linkey stated that there will be one Public Hearing for the Planning and Zoning board and one for the Mayor and Commissioners.

Mr. Patchell responded that right now there is not enough information, at the January 16 Work Session there will be more information on that about the actual project, because staff also have additional questions that need answered by the applicants.

Ms. McMullen responded that there may be the possibility to ask questions at the January 16<sup>th</sup> Work Session then.

Mr. Patchell responded that would be up to the Mayor and Commissioners because it is a Work Session.

Mayor Roath responded that staff and the board all have questions on the viability of this project but stated that there is a process to answer these questions at the appropriate forum.

### **Potential Dog Park Location**

Mayor Roath made note that they reached out to a business that specialize in dog parks and playgrounds to come up with a conceptual layout for a dog park, this property is located next to our Pump Station on Roundhouse Drive with roughly a third of an acre. The conceptual concept shows a six-foot white picket fence on the back bordering the adjacent properties to provide them with noise dampening and privacy and to save some money on the project, the remaining sides would be a six-foot black chain link fence. It shows a split down the center to separate the larger dogs from the smaller ones with a secured entry to make it difficult for the animal to get out of the enclosure. It has a couple of benches along with a couple of water stations and other aspects to make it more comfortable and usable. He stated that the concern of the health of the turf underneath was brought up previously and the recommendation because of the size of the location and because it is not shaded and that large of an area would not be a concern for turf health if adequately maintained. Making a synthetic turf for that large of a space would be an incredible expense for such a thing. In speaking to the representative, he suggested that this would not be a necessity but would be a luxury for this location.

Commissioner Linkey asked for clarification that the \$56,000 quote did not include the fence.

Mayor Roath responded that it did not, it was not things that were asked for, this was put together by the contractor himself as a suggestion. His vision on what can be put in there could be relatively minimal and things can be added as we have an idea of the volume of usage will be and as the budget allows, and/or grant opportunities.

Commissioner Linkey believes it was less for the fencing in the last Work Session.

Mayor Roath believes it was around \$20,000.

Commissioner Linkey inquired if he or someone had conversations with all of the affected citizens.

Mayor Roath responded that he has not had conversations with all of them but with the one that had raised significant concerns. He has had numerous conversations with them regarding the design and they still have concerns regarding the amount of noise that there would be but have softened in their opposition to it based on his conversations with them.

Commissioner Linkey questioned if anyone from the Town had spoken to the other citizens at all.

Mr. Patchell responded that they had not.

Mayor Roath commented that we are not hiding anything, and this would probably be the first time that we knocked on the doors of every single person affected for a project.

Mr. Patchell found the quote from Long Fence, which came in at around \$21,000.

Mayor Roath believes this project would have a significant positive impact on our downtown and the people that live down there and would be a project that has some significant financial value to it and suggested that we continue to pursue it.

Commissioner Linkey made note that Commissioner Taylor had mentioned another location that would not be quite as close to someone's back yard out here by the Little League.

Commissioner Taylor reiterated his opposition to this location because it abuts homeowners' houses and the fact that it is a main road that people walk up and down. It will be a source of noise and regardless of what the contractor said, once dogs have spent the whole summer in at the location there is not going to be any grass left it is going to be all dirt and it will be an eyesore along with a smell. He is in favor of having a dog park but not the proposed location. He is looking to have a better or alternative location for it. If it is a municipal amenity, we can have it here at the municipal complex, out there next to the ball field or at the Town Park, he does not think that Roundhouse Drive is the appropriate place for it.

Mayor Roath stated that as it pertains to the financial information that we got earlier in this meeting any position except for our community park for this application he does not support, moving a dog park to where people would have to travel to get to makes no sense. Taking into consideration that we have a third of an acre of property that is totally unused centralized around a population of people that have dogs. You can drive down there during the day and notice a lot of people walking their dogs, which provides a significant value. Suggesting that they would have to walk a mile or half a mile to get to it limits its value.

Commissioner Taylor responded that your argument eliminates half of the people in Town because the people on that side of Town would have to walk even further from that side of Town, where if you put it in the municipal complex here people from both sides of Town would have an equal distance to walk.

Mayor Roath commented that there is not a larger concentration of population in our Town than the area surrounding this property.

Commissioner Taylor stated that is true because the condos are there, and it is a highly concentrated area, but it is a big downtown and there is a lot of people that live on the other side of Aiken Avenue and a lot of people live on this side of Aiken Avenue.



Mayor Roath responded that this project provides the most value for the most amount of people for the least amount of investment for a property not being utilized right now.

Commissioner Snelling's concern is with the residents in this location and believes that they should be given notice that this is something being considered.

Mayor Roath asked for clarification from George that this information has been put out there.

Mr. Patchell responded that it has been on previous Work Sessions for several months which are open to the public.

Commissioner Snelling feels that the properties that abut the proposed dog park should be contacted.

Mayor Roath asked George how many projects we had gone and knocked on someone's door and told them this is what we were going to do.

Mr. Patchell is not aware of us doing that for any project while he has been here.

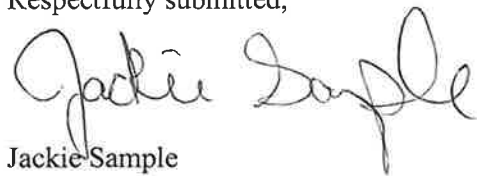
Commissioner Snelling commented that they should be sent notice though.

Ms. Barrick, who resides at 412 Roundhouse Drive, inquired if the board would be open to someone such as herself to try to gather information from other dog owners in Town in what they would like in a dog park, not necessarily where it will be but maybe where it is going to be for input from the people that are going to use it. She walks the whole Town and would be happy to do an informal survey of people that she knows have dogs in the area, she knows some people on Aiken Avenue too. It is not as concentrated in this area as it is down along the water, she would be willing to do that if we were genuinely interested and had not already made the decision that you are not interested in having one.

Commissioner Taylor commented that he is always open to more information and Commissioner Linkey concurred.

**Motion** was made by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Linkey to adjourn the December 19, 2023, Work Session at 8:10 p.m. **All in Favor: Motion Carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jackie Sample". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Jackie Sample  
Town Clerk

