

TOWN OF GLEN ECHO
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
December 10, 2007

Attendance: Debbie Beers, Mayor
Nancy Long, Councilmember
Eve Arber, Councilmember
Robin Kogelnik, Councilmember
Steve Matney, Councilmember
Cathie Polak, Clerk

Visitors: Kym Elder, NPS, Glen Echo Park Site Manager
Eleanor Balaban, Resident
Kathleen Kotcher, Echo Reporter
Peter Somerville, Resident
Michael Bobbit, Resident and Adventure Theatre Representative

Mayor Beers opened the meeting at 8:00 p.m. and invited Michael Bobbit, Adventure Theatre (AT) Artistic Director, to address Council on the fundraising efforts for AT.

ADVENTURE THEATRE

Michael Bobbitt, joined by AT board member Peter Somerville, explained that AT is trying to move from a community Theatre into a professional Theatre model. Additionally, there has been a rent increase and a square footage loss in the recently reopened AT. AT is looking for more community based partnerships and asked Council to consider a donation to Adventure Theater.

When asked, Mr. Bobbit suggested \$1500. The donation could either underwrite a production, where town residents would receive 2 free tickets to the production, or the donation would go toward AT's capital campaign and the Town would have a permanent plaque on a seatback.

Comments on the request were:

- Mayor Beers noted that a resident suggested the Town rotate an annual donation among the different cooperators and Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture (GEPPAC);
- Councilmember Arber asked about the costs of costumes and sets: approximately \$3000 for each production;
- Councilmember Long said that AT has been an integral part of the Park since 1971. Also, that many of our Town's children have benefited from AT's presence in the Park. She supports a \$1500 to AT;
- Mayor Beers noted that there is \$3000 budgeted for community contributions, with \$2300 remaining;
- Mayor Beers said she feels the Town has a commitment to the GEPPAC, if \$1500 is too high, she suggested a minimum of \$750;
- Peter Somerville suggested a \$1500 donation to AT with lower ticket fees;
- Michael Bobbit suggested the possibility of asking residents for matching funds;

- Councilmember Long inquired about the benefits AT received from GEPPAC. Mr. Bobbit said the new theatre is a wonderful space, Mr. Somerville said GEPPAC promotes the AT.
- Kym Elder, GEP Site Manager, noted that fees were substantially lower when the NPS was managing the cooperators;
- Councilmember Long again said she supports commitment to contribute \$1500 to AT;
- Councilmember Kogelnik also supports the suggested \$1500 AT contribution but also likes the idea of a free-tickets-for-residents trade off that is offered with underwriting a production;
- Councilmember Matney said he would recommend donating to the AT capital campaign, but not underwriting a production; underwriting could give the impression that it is an annual donation.

Motion 2007-24 to donate \$1500 to the Adventure Theatre capital campaign for this special case, and move funds from line item 16. Contingency to line item 17. Community Contributions as needed. Motion passed with three (3) in favor; Councilmember Matney abstained.

Kym Elder reported that NPS has approved a new neon sign for AT on December 7, 2007. The \$4000 sign will be paid for by AT and is under construction by Rainbow Neon. Councilmember Long inquired if the sign will be compatible with the other neon in the Park. The AT sign is a replica of the Puppet Company sign and will be placed on a wall under the corrugated metal roof. Ms. Elder is hopeful that the sign will be installed soon.

GLEN ECHO PARK REPORT

Kym Elder reported that the Victorian card workshops were cancelled because of the disruption caused by fumes from the exterior painting that entered the Clara Barton House. The House reopened last weekend; the contractors continue to work on painting the west side of the house on mild days, as well as replacing some window panes.

There is no ruling from NPS on their opinion of the Oxford Road ownership. Ms. Elder said she is concerned about plowing responsibility of Oxford Road. She said after the most recent snowfall that Oxford Road was icy. C/T Polak explained that the Town's contractor, Peyton Tree Services, always plows Oxford Road, as he did in the recent light snowfall, which was done very early in the morning. Ms. Elder would like to have a further meeting to discuss NPS concerns on Oxford Road.

Mayor Beers questioned why the Popcorn Gallery is only open on weekends, especially during the Christmas season. Kym Elder said that this is a question for GEPPAC. She offered to bring it up at the January 9, 2008, GEPPAC Board meeting.

On Saturday night, December 8, GEPPAC hosted an open house for public that included open artists' studios and galley sales in the Park. There were over 300 visitors.

STREET REPAIR PROJECT REPORT

Councilmember Kogelnik reported that A. Morton Thomas (AMT) responded that they would initially take four (4) core samples. Additional core samples would be done at a cost of \$1110 each; their survey will designate the location of additional samples. Mayor Beers continues to support AMT, citing the overall cost, history with previous projects in Town, and their ability to manage the complete bid package as the reasons.

Councilmember Matney noted that he understood the Town to have already accepted the proposal from EBA Engineering. Mayor Beers and Councilmember Kogelnik explained that a closer inspection of the bid proposals revealed that EBA's proposal lacked some important requirements (bid package) and their fees were over \$12,000 more than AMT.

Motion 2007-25 to accept the AMT bid proposal. Motion passed; three in favor, Councilmember Matney opposed.

Eleanor Balaban complained about street light outage reporting process. She asked to have "The Echo" to publish reporting information.

LANDSCAPING REPORT

Council members Arber and Long consulted resident Jim Ford on his opinion as to whether the number of plantings from the original Shorb Landscaping plan should be reduced; he noted several areas where he thought fewer plants would be desirable. (Note: There is a concern that the Town parks will soon become too overgrown with the original number of plantings proposed.) Mayor Beers asked if the Council members are satisfied. They replied yes and noted that the total amount of bid will remain \$22,800. Council members Arber and Long met with Rob Petersen of the Shorb Company to discuss agreed-upon changes.

Mayor Beers noted that a few residents have asked for vegetable garden plots. Councilmember Long said she thought that the right-of-way is a better place for vegetable garden plots; Shirley Strong intended the land to be kept as open space for all residents to enjoy. Councilmember Long noted that Shirley Strong had given the Town two gifts—one is the land, a tangible gift; the other is intangible, i.e., by dividing her land she had prevented the possibility of construction of a "McMansion." C/T Polak noted that both Town parks do not receive enough sun for vegetables to grow.

Councilmember Long presented several photographs of samples of stone work for the bench enclosure for Shirley's Park; a bench needs to be selected before stonework can begin. There was also discussion about the stone selection for Shirley's plaque.

Motion 2007-26 to approve the revised Shorb Landscaping plan. Motion passed unanimously.

Councilmember Long suggested that Shorb manage the newly planted parks to protect their guarantee; she presented a preliminary proposal from Shorb. C/T Polak will discuss how this will affect the Town's contract with Chapel Valley.

Councilmember Matney inquired about the inclusion of a town bulletin board originally discussed. Several council members were concerned about management of a bulletin board. C/T Polak offered to manage a bulletin board provided it was placed near the Town office.

TOWN HALL USE

Councilmember Long noted that, as a favor to GEPPAC, the Blues Dance event will return to the town hall for six Sunday evenings during the winter. The space the Blues Dance would use in the Spanish Ballroom, the newest east wing, is being rehabilitated to add a wood floor. The Blues Dance will return to the Spanish Ballroom space next year. GEPPAC will pay the \$50/per use fee.

Joan Foster's family changed the date to hold a remembrance in her honor to January 26. They have asked to temporarily remove town paintings and to display Ms. Foster's paintings. Councilmember Long is helping the family with caterers and musicians.

The Holiday breakfast will be on Saturday, December 15, 9 to 10:30 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

At Councilmember Long's request, approval of the minutes is tabled until next month.

MARYLAND MUNICIPAL LEAGUE (MML)

Councilmember Arber reported that the annual MML Legislative Dinner was poorly attended. Council members Arber, Long and Matney, and Mayor Beers attended; the newly elected official we were hosting was not able not attend.

CHARTER AMENDMENT

Review and introduction of the charter amendment was tabled to the January Council meeting.

JANUARY COUNCIL MEETING

Due to travel by Mayor Beers and several council members, the January Council meeting was changed to Wednesday, January 16, at 8:00 p.m.

GEPPAC CONTRIBUTION

Motion 2007-27 move \$1000 from line item 16. Contingency to line item 17. Community Contributions. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion 2007-28 to donate \$1500 to the Glen Echo Park Partnership for Arts and Culture. Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 9:20.