

TOWN OF GLEN ECHO
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
February 11, 2008

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

Visitors: Kym Elder, GEP Site Manager
 Constance Macy, Resident
 Sophie Keefer, Echo Reporter
 Carlotta Anderson, Resident
 Jim Anderson, Resident

Mayor Beers called the meeting to order at 8:00.

Mayor Beers began the meeting by telling Council that the water run-off problem on Oxford Road, causing a dangerous icing problem in cold weather, was brought to the attention of Bob Harrison, a representative of the A. Morton Thomas (AMT) engineering firm, during a walk-through of Town streets with Councilmember Kogelnik.

GLEN ECHO PARK REPORT

Kym Elder brought up the recently highlighted U.S. Park Police personnel shortages and noted that the U. S. Park Police have assured her that they will continue to respond to emergency situations in Glen Echo Park (GEP); the concern is the emergency response time. Ms. Elder reported that this was tested last Friday when the Park Police responded within 12 minutes to an attempted suicide in GEP. (A concerned Park visitor reported a woman sitting in a car with the motor running.)

Councilmember Long asked how many U. S. Park Police officers patrol the George Washington Memorial Parkway (GWMP), including Clara Barton Parkway. Ms. Elder responded that there are 12 officers covering the area from Mt. Vernon to Carderock.

The National Park Service plans another meeting on Oxford Road drainage this Thursday; a bicyclist took a bad fall on the ice at the area of their concern on upper Oxford Road and on the exit road from the GEP parking lot. Ms. Elder also reported that there is a meeting scheduled with GWMP Superintendent David Vela and representatives from the Interior Department solicitors' office on the NPS Oxford Road ownership position.

Councilmember Long noted there is a new Clara Barton NHS ornament and asked if there will be a similar ornament for GEP. Ms. Elder said that a carousel prototype is being developed. Both will be sold at the Clara Barton NHS book store.

Ranger Ronnie Spiewack recently retired from the NPS after 35 years; she will continue as a volunteer at Clara Barton and participate in art classes at the Park.

Mayor Beers inquired if Councilmember Long had additions to the GEP report. Councilmember Long read a letter, dated October 15, 1975, from the Mayor and Town Council into the minutes (attached), noting another letter dated March 19, 2001, written by Mayor Beers and based on recommendations of an eleven-member committee. The 1975 letter concerned the attempt by the Nixon administration to declare Glen Echo Park surplus federal property, and the Town's strong opposition to that action. The 2001 letter, signed by the Mayor and all four Council members provided the Town's comments on the "Final Management Plan/EIS-Glen Echo Park."

Mayor Beers asked if Councilmember Long proposed giving letters to GEP; copies were given to Kym Elder.

Mayor Beers then asked if there were additional comments or Park business; there were no further additions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion 2008-3 to approve as presented the January 16, 2008, Town Council Meeting minutes. Motion passed unanimously.

STREET REPAIR PROJECT REPORT

Councilmember Kogelnik sent in this report via email:

As I mentioned in a previous email, I will not be able to attend tonight's town council meeting. Here is a brief update on the street repair/survey project. I met for several hours with Bob Harrison from A Morton Thomas last week to review the requirements, walk the town and discuss the schedule and next steps on the project. He will be conducting several site visits and walk-throughs (as well as taking core samples) over the next month to generate a detailed assessment and report on their recommendations for moving forward. He will provide multiple courses of action for us to consider given a range of repair requirements and priorities and their associated budgets. He believes he will have most, if not all, of the report complete by the next town council meeting, although I will confirm that for the March agenda in advance. He believes we will easily meet the window for doing any repairs this year. He will be sending me a status report every week, so I will keep everyone informed of AMT's progress.

Mayor Beers noted that, according to Michael Mitchell, Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation, the storm drain survey and report should be completed soon. The necessary survey was delayed because the NPS initially refused to allow County surveyors on Park property.

TOWN PARK LANDSCAPE REPORT

Councilmember Long reported that she and Councilmember Arber have selected a curved bench by Country Casual. Mayor Beers asked about the wood and durability;

Councilmember Long responded that the wood is teak. There was further discussion about the bench. Shorb Landscaping will store the bench until masonry work is finished; they will then install the bench. Mayor Beers said the bench should not hold up project and directed Council members Long and Arber to make a final decision and get the project started. C/T Polak will order the bench and have it shipped to Shorb as soon as the order information is provided.

TOWN HALL USE REPORT

Councilmember Long highlighted some of the events on the attached town hall use report, including the meeting on March 17 of the Montgomery County Citizens Advisory Board.

Kate Horwitz will organize the St. Patrick's Day party, to be held on March 15.

Councilmember Matney said that, at the request of some residents, "Once" will replay at the film festival.

CHARTER AMENDMENT ON VOTER QUALIFICATION

Mayor Beers opened the discussion on a voter qualification charter amendment by reviewing some of the concerns noted during the January Council meeting. She explained that Town Attorney Knopf has drafted a charter amendment to bring the Town more in line with other municipalities and Maryland law and recommended changes related to voting by non-citizens and the requirements for registering to vote. The draft would also clarify the duties of the Clerk-Treasurer and of the Board of Supervisors of Elections.

Discussion comments were:

- Mayor Beers said she supports a requirement that all voters are legally in the U.S.; voters should have a vested interest in the election's outcome.
- Mayor Beers said that the right to vote is a fundamental right of citizenship. If there are no requirements for eligibility, people could come from other areas to vote in Glen Echo elections.
- There was extended discussion about who is a legal resident of the Town. Resident. Mayor Beers explained that a Legal resident means a U.S. citizen or a person legally authorized to reside in the U.S. (not illegal aliens).
- Resident Carlotta Anderson said the Town does not have a right to question if an individual is legally in the U.S. She suggested that the Town require non-citizen voters to sign a statement that they are legally residents in the U.S., and do nothing else.
- Mayor Beers responded that a non-citizen could be asked to sign a statement under penalty of perjury; it would be up to the Board of Supervisors of Elections to request further proof if necessary.
- The question was raised as to how Glen Echo would enforce registration statements.
- Carlotta Anderson questioned if Montgomery County voter registration rolls were even used during voting; C/T Polak confirmed that these rolls are used during the Town elections.

- Councilmember Matney suggested striking a requirement that a person be a lawful resident of the U.S. Mayor Beers stated that one must be a lawful resident of the U.S. to be a lawful resident of Glen Echo.
- Mayor Beers likes Somerset's Charter wording; Glen Echo's requirements should be same as nearby jurisdictions.
- Carlotta Anderson said the Town should keep the existing charter and follow its provisions. Amending the Charter will incur unnecessary costs.
- Mayor Beers noted that it is necessary to change the charter because it allows people to register to vote immediately prior to voting, noting that this caused a controversy during the last election.
- Mayor Beers proposed that there be a closing date for voter registration and suggested the fourth Monday prior to an election.
- Councilmember Matney suggested that the closing date for registration be the second Monday before an election; this would be consistent with Section 501(a) of the Charter which requires voters to have resided in town for 30 days prior to any town elections.

Further discussion, and possible introduction, was tabled until the March 10, 2008, town council meeting. Mayor Beers will find out how other jurisdictions enforce their registration statements signed under penalty of perjury. C/T Polak suggested getting input from the Town's Board of Supervisors of Elections on the issue of voter qualification, "legal citizen vs. Town resident."

TOWN HALL MAINTENANCE

C/T Polak presented an updated landscaping plan for the town hall from Chapel Valley. The proposal includes improved drainage, soil testing and enhancement and a mixture of shade and sun plantings. Mayor Beers noted that the funds are available in the current budget under line item 13. Capital Improvements.

Motion 2008-4 to accept the landscaping proposal dated February 8, 2008 for \$6700, from Chapel Valley Landscaping for the town hall lawn. Motion passed unanimously.

TOWN WIDE YARD SALE

Resident Diana Hudson-Taylor offered to organize a town-wide yard sale on April 5. In the event of rain, the town hall has been reserved. Council agreed to reimburse Ms. Hudson-Taylor for expenses.

C/T Polak explained that a town-wide shredding event is being organized; tentatively set for April 20, from 10 – 2. Collection will be behind the town hall.

CHAPEL VALLEY LANDSCAPING CONTRACT

C/T Polak reported that Chapel Valley has submitted the 2008-09 contract based on the changes requested: town parks will be maintained on an hourly rate until landscaping begins; the annual amount was reduced by \$2000, until Council decides which company will maintain the town parks to insure the guarantee provided by Shorb.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

1. Recycling: Constance Macy expressed concern over how to encourage and inform residents on proper recycling. Council suggested highlighting in The Echo that new bins are available behind the town hall, and include specifics on proper recycling. A flier can also be circulated to residents. C/T Polak offered to circulate a flier provided by Ms. Macy. Council thanked Ms. Macy for bringing her concerns to their attention.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50.