

CITY OF SALISBURY  
WORK SESSION  
JUNE 3, 2024

Public Officials Present

Council President D'Shawn M. Doughty  
Vice President Angela M. Blake  
Councilmember April R. Jackson

Mayor Randolph J. Taylor  
Councilmember Michele Gregory  
Councilmember Sharon C. Dashiell

In Attendance

City Administrator Andy Kitzrow, Fire Chief Rob Frampton, EMS Assistant Chief Chris Truitt, Deputy Chief Chris O'Barsky, Assistant Chief Chris Twilley, Housing and Community Development (HCDD) Director Muir Boda, City Attorney Ashley Bosché, City Clerk Kim Nichols and members of the public.

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On May 20, 2024 the Salisbury City Council convened at 4:30 p.m. in Work Session in Council Chambers of the Government Office Building. The following is a synopsis of the items discussed.

**Resolution to approve amendment to the CDBG PY 2023 Plan**

Grants Manager Jo Ellen Bynum and Housing & Community Development (HCDD) Director Muir Boda joined Council.

Ms. Bynum reported more funding was needed to complete two of the current projects- Truitt Street Community Center and the Waterside Park Restroom and Pavilion. Both were committed to in Program Year 2021 and 2022. The resolution would approve the substantial amendment. It was on public display with no comments received. HCDD determined the funds that were being moved from the 2022 Plan that were originally for Anne Street Village (ASV) were no longer needed and would be reallocated to Truitt Street. The original 2022 sidewalk money would be reallocated to Waterside Park.

President Doughty asked about the Homeless Service Intensive Case Manager. Mr. Boda said the position was funded through CTI grant program. The City program ended and nobody would apply for the funding right now. They had one position. When planning and building ASV they should have conducted an environmental assessment of the project. The director at that time did not, and purchased the ADA non-accessible bath house. It could not be made ADA accessible because the doors were not wide enough. The money allocated in the 2023 Plan was meant to enhance that by adding a ramp and other things to fund the other position. Since it was not ADA accessible they could not use Federal funds. President Doughty asked what the research was behind making ASV ADA compliant. Mr. Boda said the solution would be to purchase a new or separate ADA accessible bath house. They could research costs, but the CDBG funding was a "use it or lose it" which was why they felt it was more appropriate to go to a project that

was already under way. President Doughty asked if we did not realize this when we applied, and what was the timeline. Mr. Boda answered that at that time they likely had not started buying anything. The timing for submitting for CDBG funding wraps up by January or February because the process to put it together was massive. They thought the Waterside Park project would be \$200,000 but realized it would be much more.

City Administrator Andy Kitzrow discussed possibly transitioning away from managing ASV to a third party manager and possibly surplussing the property. For the City to invest capital dollars into a project that could be changing course and operations with was questionable, and it was better to utilize funding for a project that was moving forward in the same capacity since it was CDGB funded. The money allocated for ASV would not solve the problem and they needed to complete Truitt Street.

Ms. Dashiell was concerned that ASV had never been filled and asked what would happen to the residents in the interim. Mr. Boda said the money was never intended as a part of the budget and operating. It was for something else and they were operating ASV as best they could. The biggest challenge was for applicants to agree to the requirements. In the past month he said they interviewed about 20 people and only three agreed. They were creating a re-admission program for some who had been dismissed from the program for certain violations. President Doughty noted it seemed in poor taste that we would have applied for grant funding to improve the ADA accessibility and couldn't use it. Mr. Boda said the application completed over eighteen months ago before they even opened the project and assessed what was needed. President Doughty said we dropped the ball with ASV many times we were having the same conversation. Mr. Boda said they were still putting the process together for the partnership and had two people working very hard with the residents and outreaching to bring people into ASV.

Mr. Gregory said she spoke with the former director of HCDD about the bathrooms not being accessible and he said it was not a problem. She asked how many people had to be turned away because we did not have that accessibility because many unhoused people were disabled. The Disability Advisory Committee could have been asked for input.

Mayor Taylor stated the City never exceeded 13 or 14 residents out of the 24 units and were limited to 10 because of that second staff person. As we went to the RFP and moved into a partnership we would free ourselves up to fully occupy the place. The ADA accessibility was a challenge but if we were looking to provide for needs, then that was the direction we were headed.

The following comments were received from nine members of the public:

- Speaker disagreed with the Mayor about removing CDBG funding for a case worker. While he was soliciting for a non-profit to take over ASV, any agency that might be interested would need to ensure ADA accessibility to the bathroom and shower. The \$50,000 funding was earmarked for that. In the Proposed FY25 Budget, the case workers were cut from three to one. This was a recipe for burnout and disaster. ASV was on the chopping block and defunding it by cutting

staff was not the answer. While we were in the middle of a housing crisis, this showed a lack of caring for our most vulnerable. In speaker's ten years at Habitat for Humanity they hired several people we realized later who were homeless. It took months for their housing situation to stabilize. She asked Council if they were 100% committed to all of the community residents. ASV deserved staff and resources to continue the success and momentum of the Housing First Program. She asked Council to restore the CDBG funding.

- Speaker was a retired psychologist who visited ASV and was surprised not many people lived there. The current implementation of the programs did not fit the original concepts. People needed food, shelter and clothing before they could start rehab programs. She thought there may be some strong "gatekeeping" going on.
- Speaker was proud of how our community supported the disadvantaged and the marginalized. Ten years ago she was homeless after a major health issue and lived in a car for two weeks. Circumstances most often caused homelessness. It took more than ten years to overcome and she was housing secure for the first time. She said to be the kindness people deserved and keep ASV from closing its doors.
- Speaker worked with the homeless for the last 17 years and founded the Camden Community Garden ten years ago. He agreed with the prior speakers and was very concerned about what we did to this population, such as putting them aside and pushing them down, marginalizing them and saying they did not matter and were not part of our community. He did not know why ASV had not been properly run but it was time to figure it out. Taking the funding away to make it accessible would not bring success to ASV and asked why the RFP was taking so long.
- Speaker thanked Mr. Doughty for his questions because the inquiry was needed. He experienced homelessness, most recently two years and nine months ago and was now property manager of an apartment complex. ASV represented our collective ability to extend grace to the least of these. He wanted to see effort put towards seeing this project be a success. Look to other states and countries where this type of program was a success. That was the City's job, not the public's job.
- Speaker on Zoom thought it was very rushed and she heard mixed messages in that it was first going to be a partnership. The City needed more transparency. This information was released very last minute and the importance of the matter warranted some time taken to look at all the options because we had a huge unhoused population. Asked what the City's plan was in relation to the unhoused and what kind of studies were being done or committees put together. How were we prioritizing the space because it was absolutely urgent that we did so. Thousands of the unhoused were children, and Wicomico County had 63% of children living below the poverty level, many in the City of Salisbury. Parks and community centers needed funding, but it should not be an either/or.

Ms. Bynum said the public comment period ended on June 7. The idea to reallocate began last November before they discussed transferring it. She became aware that there was no way to make ASV ADA accessible and the project could not occur unless the whole trailer was replaced. The City did not meet its timeliness goals and there was no design going on but there were restrictions on CDBG funding. She said she took responsibility because to her it made sense to put it in projects that were already started.

- Speaker said that prior to ASV she owned Baker Street Rentals. The properties fronted on what used to be Linens of the Week property which was deemed uninhabitable and unusable due to the chemicals used when the laundromat was there. The City took ownership of the property. Prior to the building of ASV they thought they could put ASV on that property without much thought process going into it and spent considerable resources only to find out that was money that should not have been spent. Think with the end in mind. It was not happening for ASV and now sadly the new Mayor, new housing people and Council were trying to figure out how to think with the end in mind when it was not first considered. There had to be a way to re-configure that trailer or a mobile system that could be added. There were carpenters and City staff that could build something.
- Speaker worked with the unhoused at the Wicomico Library. They came in every day, slept under bridges, and were seeking answers. Some applied for ASV with people who no longer worked for the City. When she calls the number, nobody answers. Many of them had mental illness and did not understand why they went through the process and fell through the cracks. Many shelters had stipulations that kept them from being in them. Where were they supposed to stay? Many could not hold down a job and needed support. Speaker said she was fielding that support every day on her own, and it felt as if the City had wiped its hands of this project. There was this big, beautiful place where they thought they could stay and they did not know why they could not. Their well-being had to be considered.
- Speaker worked six months to empower and keep an 18 year old from giving up. Last month he was notified that he was going to be an ASV resident. Now he was asking if he would be kicked out. She was tired of trying to console young people when they were not being listened to. Passion built ASV and passion would keep it here, with or without the City. Passion built Truitt Community Center and she saw Ms. Chestnutt work to get ASV in the community because she knew these individuals first hand. We would continue to work with this population, but could not do it alone. We were forgetting the people who mattered. Whatever decision was made, she said to inform the residents first and include them in the conversation. If an accessible trailer was the problem she could find one and it should have been done when the passion was first there. Ms. Gregory asked the question and they glassed over it. We knew we had homeless individuals in wheelchairs years ago, and had people dying over opioid overdose years ago. We knew people were dying out in the cold years ago. For them to say we could not do this because of a trailer- fix it, open the gates to the community.

Mayor Taylor stated the City was committed to ASV and the homeless and was looking to opening it up to the full 24 person capacity, but had new challenges to navigate. If a grant for the ADA accessibility factor was needed, it would not be part of this grant.

President Doughty said the reason the funds could not be used for ASV was due to the accessibility and there was no timeline to sign off on this to whatever entity. He asked for the documentation to prove that and could not accept by just the sheer word. He wanted the funds used in Salisbury. Ms. Bynum stated there was not room for a ramp.

Mr. Kitzrow said that Truitt Street needed funding to be completed. The ASV project had a need but not a simple solution. Solving the problem now and spending whatever it took in the next rounds of CDBG funding to solve ASV was a viable solution.

President Doughty said he asked in October why Truitt Street was not completed, and wanted it done but felt he was choosing between two great projects when Truitt Street should have been done. Mr. Boda said with ASV there were a couple of issues. The accessibility issue came down to a space issue. The ramp required space, and units may need to be moved to allow for it. There were things that DID had to review. The units, although collapsible and portable, had the fire compression system connected. That was likely where a big piece of the cost would be.

President Doughty asked Administration and Mr. Boda to present a plan for ASV with the end in mind. It was not right planning without knowing our plan.

Ms. Gregory asked why the bathrooms could not be ground level. Trailers could be built on foundations low to the ground. It took a foot of ramp for each inch up off the ground.

Mr. Boda did not know the structure under the trailer. Mr. Kitzrow thought the easiest solution was to start over. If we sold the trailer we could build bathrooms and showers on the ground and include washing machines. It could all fit but may be triple the cost. That could be the next funding round. He thought they could solve the problem pretty quickly but not with the money that was currently on the table.

Ms. Dashiell asked if the fence could be knocked out to allow for a longer ramp. Mr. Boda said we were close to the back property line and the doors were not wide enough.

Mr. Kitzrow said they wanted to move the Waterside project forward. With the funding we could strike the other additional lines to keep the funding for ASV intact. They needed to solve the case manager because it was for one year only. The \$50,000 would be a placeholder, but we needed more funding whether it was CDBG later or City funding now, but had to solve the Truitt Street shortfall. We could keep ASV funding, figure out how much it was going to cost, figure out how to pay for the rest of it, and find money for Truitt. He wanted to ensure Waterside was not forgotten by just tabling it all. President Doughty said that since it was not time sensitive we would move it to the next Work Session and return with a plan, determine raising or lowering, or a ramp. The presentation would be held on the June 17<sup>th</sup> Work Session.

**Resolution to approve CDBG 2024-2028 Con Plan, 2024 Annual Action Plan & 2024 Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice to HUD**

Ms. Bynum said this year the City was due to complete the five year Consolidated Plan and Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice in addition to the Annual Action Plan for Program Year 2024. The consultant group of Urban Design Ventures assisted and she introduced Mr. John Hagland who joined her and Mr. Boda at the table. Both

plans had been out for public comment and were generated after weeks of consultation with various stakeholder groups and input from citizen surveys and reviews of data. They were on display since March 1<sup>st</sup> and went through the required citizen participation plan. Incorporated within the Con Plan was the 2024 Annual Action Plan for allotment for this year. The allocation was \$346,673 and the project breakdown was \$69,333 to the City for General Administration with the remaining funds split, with \$138,670 to Habitat for Humanity for the Critical Home Repairs Program and \$138,670 to Salisbury Neighborhood Housing to support their Owner Occupied Rehab Program. Both would be subrecipients. She requested Council's approval.

Mr. Hagland said this was the third five-year interval that Urban Design Ventures did the consulting. Both plans were available online. They were on display prior and the request was for them to be approved to be submitted to HUD as a requirement to receive CDBG funding every year. It was summarized into the following needs: housing, homeless, special needs, community development, economic development, and planning. Within need goals were listed. By receiving CDBG funds the City committed to further fair housing. He explained the application process to HUD.

The following comments were received from one member of the public:

- The documents produced had a lot of ambiguous things about the zoning code. We were in the middle of doing our comprehensive plan, dealing with TIF proposals, HORIZON Program that had to be reviewed by the end of the month, and people wanted PILOT agreements. All this had to be condensed and done in one fell swoop and not piece-mealed. It was simple- do like Annapolis. If one wanted to do a subdivision development there you had to provide a certain amount of affordable housing. They could put affordable housing in the Salisbury Mall development. It was easy to do, and did not need 300 pages.

Council reached unanimous consensus to advance the legislation to legislative agenda.

### **Abandoned Shopping Cart Ordinance**

Mr. Boda said the ordinance would create a program to handle abandoned shopping carts in the City. It became an issue where they became blight. The legislation required businesses to post cart removal warning signs stating they were not allowed off the premises and were required to identify their carts either by branding or name plates. A business or cart owner could provide a letter for a customer that used the cart off premises with a return of 72 hours. Code Compliance Officers would immediately abate abandoned carts. It was similar to what Fruitland and other municipalities around the state did and would encourage businesses to keep track of their carts better.

Council reached unanimous consensus to advance the legislation to legislative agenda.

### **Village at Tony Tank speed limit ordinance**

HCDD Community Relations Manager Rachel Manning and DID Transportation Manager Jon Wilson joined Council. Mr. Wilson said the issue pre-dated him and was given to Ms. Manning to solve. She explained residents in the neighborhood felt the 30 miles per hour speed limit was too high. There was speeding on the streets, and other neighborhoods had 25 miles per hour speed limits. Mr. Wilson said all neighborhood speed limits should be 25 miles per hour. Ms. Manning added that it fell in line with DID's Vision Zero to reduce speed, and increase reaction time.

Council reached unanimous consensus to advance the ordinance to legislative agenda.

### **Budget amendment for the WTP Filter Replacement Project**

WTP Superintendent Ron Clapper and WTP Assistant Superintendent Jeff Lambert joined Council. Mr. Clapper advised Council that a surplus of money was found in the Chemical Account because caustic soda was a lot less for the fiscal year. The request was to transfer the funds to the Filter Project for PFAS treatment.

Council reached unanimous consensus to advance the legislation to legislative agenda.

### **Revisions to Human Rights Advisory Committee (HRAC) by-laws**

Suzi Peterson, HRAC Vice Chair and Executive Administrative Assistant/Staff Liaison Jessie Turner joined Council. Ms. Peterson reported that at the February 7, 2024 meeting of the Human Rights Advisory Committee, they unanimously agreed to amend the committee's bylaws. She reviewed the amendments that were recommended, as follows:

- *Section 1.a. – Membership. Remove requirement for membership to include at least two representatives of racial or national minorities, at least two representatives from the LGBTQ+ community, at least one youth representative aged 16-24 years; and at least two members of local religious organizations.*
- *Section 1.e—Membership. Change the allowance of unexcused absences from three to two.*

Having a quorum has been a challenge in the past year. T Mayor Taylor asked how many members were in the committee, and Ms. Turner said there were seven members and thirteen spots were available. She shared how to apply to serve on the HRAC or any other committee.

Council reached unanimous consensus to advance the legislation to legislative agenda.

### **Budget amendment to correct Ordinance No. 2865**

Finance Director Keith Cordrey explained Ordinance No. 2875 corrected Ordinance No. 2865 previously passed by Council. The purpose of Ordinance No. 2865 was to advance projects planned to be appropriated in the FY25 Budget but they were moved up to consolidate bond issues and save bond issuance expense. The consolidation avoided redundant issuance costs for FY23 and FY25 by having one issue in the three years. He said that incorrect projects for the water sewer fund were inadvertently included in

Ordinance No. 2865. Section two of the proposed ordinance reversed the appropriations incorrectly assigned by Ordinance No. 2865. Section three inserted the correct projects intended to be brought in by Ordinance No. 2865.

Council reached unanimous consensus to advance the legislation to legislative agenda.

### **City policy on flying flags**

City Attorney Ashley Bosché reported that the First Amendment restrained government from restricting other speech, but it did not apply to the government's own speech. Government entities, such as Salisbury, could generally say what they wanted, could advocate for favored policies taking positions promoting some views but not the others. Cities, Counties and government entities may select and designate specific flags to fly on government owned flag poles rather than opening up to the public to raise their own flags. When the government spoke for itself, there were not First Amendment implications. If the government spoke or made decisions about someone else's speech, then that raised First Amendment implications. There could be issue in terms of First Amendment analysis. A Supreme Court decision in 2022 illustrated that flags were sometimes government speech, and prohibiting citizens from raising their own flags could be viewpoint discrimination. She said the rule for the City to decide was whether we wanted to have a policy or not. When the government did not speak for itself and excluded speech based upon the viewpoint, that was potentially a First Amendment violation and discrimination. When the government spoke its own self, it could say whatever it liked to say or not to say. It could not restrict someone else's speech.

She shared that if the government wanted to only fly the American flag, County flag, and City flag and not open up to the public to fly other flags, that was alright. However, if the government had a policy and opened its flag poles to the public to raise other flags, and allowed it in some cases and not others, that could be First Amendment violation. If they allowed the public to fly flags, they could not choose which flags they would fly.

President Doughty said the "if we did one, we would have to do them all" frightened him a little bit because he did not want the City to represent anything that was not forward thinking and inclusive, and that we spoke for everyone here. He asked how Council wanted to move forward to make sure we represented our people in the City.

Ms. Gregory suggested creating a permit policy for flags, and not necessarily for flying on the poles at the Government Office Building (GOB) but at Unity Square. There was something going on every month that we supported and promoted. Perhaps a permitting policy for using a flag pole, either at the GOB, Unity Square, or other City location.

Mr. Kitzrow said there were areas to hang banners on Downtown street poles. We were approached by different organizations who have asked to use City property or assets to help support or bring awareness to a cause. A permitting policy could help us understand what they would want and for how long. We would have to decide where and for how long so that we could understand what was going on. Ms. Gregory said we needed some



structure in place. If the County did not want to participate and since we shared the poles at the GOB with them, then Unity Square would be ideal. We needed a process so that situations like this did not come up again because this was disappointing and a sad decision for the City to make. Supporting marginalized communities was something we needed to do and it would have been the 5<sup>th</sup> year. This should not happen again.

Mayor Taylor supported a policy and would prepare a draft. He said he reached out to the County Administration and Council and they did not want to continue. President Doughty asked if the permitting could pass through Council for approval as well. Ms. Bosché said that from a legal standpoint, the City could do whatever it wanted providing they were not making decisions based upon viewpoint.

Ms. Blake said regarding First Amendment rights, Council had prayer prior to every Executive Session, and that was a stance that the City took. She saw that was not a neutral stance, and was not saying to take prayer away, but asked how that was neutral. We were supposed to be inclusive and embrace everybody. This was not the first time separation of church and state was discussed.

Ms. Bosché said these were ethical and moral questions. Legally, the first amendment applied when the government infringed upon somebody else's speech. It did not apply to the government's own speech. The government could say whatever it wanted. In the case of the 2022 Supreme Court decision, a group wanted to fly a Christian flag. The City of Boston denied the application because they thought it violated the establishment clause, which was separation of church and state. The Supreme Court said that the city's flag raising program did not express government speech because they were opening up their flag poles to the public. It was a cursory type of process, and the government granted everyone's exception, except for this one on the basis of the Establishment Clause. The Supreme Court said that the city's refusal to allow them to fly the Christian flag amounted to impermissible discrimination based upon religious viewpoint, a violation of First Amendment rights. The government could do whatever it wanted. Ethically, morally, philosophically... those were decisions that the City needed to make. Her legal concern was when the Public's right of speech was infringed upon. That was where the policy would come in. If you allowed someone to speak or if the City was putting up the speech, there could potentially be no issues. If the City did not allow a permitting for a group, we would be discriminating against them. That would be where the policies came into place. The issue was when the public was speaking, not the government.

Ms. Blake stated she did not know how the City government could say it was the position of not raising the Pride flag was taking a neutral position when we opened up for prayer every other week. She did not mind having prayer but she knew other people were not comfortable with it. Just because people were not comfortable with the Pride flag or prayer, did not mean we should take them away.

Ms. Bosché said that the City was an entity and needed to decide what they wanted the City to say. Ms. Blake said the City Council sets the agenda. When we placed prayer on it, that came from the Council.

The following comments were heard from 10 members of the public:

- The City had a rich history of hosting cultural events organized by groups such as Juneteenth, the Folk Festival, Haitian Flag Day and Salisbury Pride. They were a testament to our values and a source of inspiration. Pride month was about acceptance and equality, celebrating the work of LGBTQIA+ people and raising awareness of issues and disparities that persist. Pride events spread a message that all community members were valued and deserved to be celebrated and assures young people that they were respected. Pride events help reduce feelings of isolation, suicide thoughts, and make society more accepting of the LGBTQIA+ population. Put a structure put in place to fairly vet requests.
- Speaker could see both sides of the situation. In the portrayal of neutrality it was often familiar to him of the same situation they were dealing with Reverend Graham. In that decision they were re-evaluating and re-analyzing how protocols needed to be in place. Speaker did not want to feel like the Pride community was an afterthought or was discarded and placated to because of who they were.
- Speaker said cultural events played a crucial role in bringing people together to build a social connection with marginalized communities and promoted inclusivity and celebrated diversity. By flying the Pride flag we were sending a message of solidarity and inclusivity to the community. A formal system should be established to review and approve permit requests for these events.
- Speaker was the victim of hate crime when she flew the Pride flag at her home and looked forward to the City flying the flag to lift up her voice and other voices in the community, as she could no longer fly her flag.
- Speaker said the only way to fight hate was with love. Being neutral created more division, and leading with love never steered her wrong. What we did today impacted the generations of tomorrow. Lead by example and love.
- Speaker was happy to see the dialogue. The flag was flown without incident for years, and purposely refusing to fly it sent a message that our City bowed to intolerance and injustice. It was absurd we needed people to decide on equality with more City assets being used to figure it out. She asked how hard was it to choose equality, and when did neutrality end and did neutrality apply to the many cultural events held throughout the year. Refusing the flag was a simple choice made because it was an easy target and when faced with the repercussions, took a cowardly stance of neutrality as if no one knew exactly what you meant. Now was the time for the Council to step up and do something.
- Speaker opined that there should be nothing other than strict governmental speech shown on our flag poles, and flag poles should be separate from streets and parks because there was a difference. In the Supreme Court case Ms. Bosché mentioned involving Boston, they looked at it as if flag poles were quintessential governmental speech. The City of Boston had allowed almost anyone to fly the flag, including the Pride flag. Then they came with the “Christian” flag and it was not a standard Christian flag. It was the first time in 283 applications that they denied an application. The case epitomized what happened when the door was opened. The best thing to do was to not do anything with the possible

exception of flags honoring those who served the country. There were lots of opportunities to fly their flags on their own personal property. It did not need to be on City flag poles. Streets and parks were different from flag poles.

- LGBTQ+ youth and young allies were very civically engaged and motivated and were paying attention locally and nationally. The Pride flag portrayed on our banners and cross walk were very important to them. Our leaders had the opportunity to show them they were welcomed and loved in Salisbury.
- A big part of the story that the media missed and was downplayed by others was that this connected the City and the County. Salisbury has always had the big challenge of the very intrusive County government particularly with the position of the County Executive. Speaker said he understood the decision to not fly the flag was a joint decision. The County Executive had a very dangerous role over the City of Salisbury and continually produced problems about inequity on funding, on issues with resource allocation, and right now was creating a constitutional crisis. Tomorrow the County Council would discuss a referendum to abolish the County Executive. He encouraged Council to think about where they stood on the issue, and if they had thoughts about what the County Executive was doing in these types of cases, make your voices heard.
- Speaker on Zoom was a fairly new Salisbury resident and one of the reasons he moved to Maryland was because his home state was becoming less progressive. Many policies started small- no flags, a book here, a policy there, and then there were no DEI Offices and other things were removed in different states, beginning with small things like this. His wife was from Maryland and knew the area. When discussing moving she mentioned Salisbury because it still had that small, community feel like Baltimore or DC did not have. Speaker applied for his job in July and asked his employer if it was a safe community, and was told it was safe, that they actually just took down the Pride flag after being flown the month of June. Speaker was disheartened that it was being used as a political stance with our new Mayor. The flag was one reason they considered this a safe community.
- Speaker started the PFLAG Chapter and when the event began in Salisbury, the City wanted PFLAG to pay for the flag and organize the event. The problem could be solved by having the City decide to do it themselves. You did not need PFLAG to do it. The City could purchase the flag. The symbols that the City did and did not put up regarding Pride Month and other cultural and minority groups sent a strong message. She was a psychologist and they called that the structural determinants of health. The signifiers were significantly related to mental health outcomes. Council had full control over it and did not need PFLAG give a flag. She said she noticed there was no Pride Month proclamation and there have been proclamations for other groups. There were also no changes to the City's social media, which was a deviation. Council needed to come together over these larger issues and reach a consensus on their values.

Ms. Gregory liked the idea of the City buying the flag and could do that for other months. President Doughty agreed, and in determining Council's role, he would support having a role in that because it was more than just one person determining the vision.

## **Administration and Council Comments**

Mayor Taylor said he had to make a decision about a flag on joint property with the County. He reached out to see if they were getting the resources needed to make a successful event. He approached the County several times about flying the flag and they did not agree to it. The prior Mayor raised the flag without the County's permission. His decision was misconstrued as negative towards the event.

Ms. Dashiell said that Rachel Manning did a wonderful job with Newton Street Community Center. They just dedicated their third floor to STEM and had wonderful interactive projects for children. Neighborhood walks were coordinated by Rachel. Habitat had a wonderful home blessing. Ms. Hilligoss did a great job, also.

Ms. Jackson thanked everyone for coming out.

Ms. Gregory thanked everyone for attending. We appreciate, see, hear and support you. She thanked Ms. Jackson for coming and wished her the best in her pending surgery. She encouraged everyone to attend the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Salisbury Zoo Gala.

Ms. Blake wanted to know which flag pole the City owned. There were two at the GOB.


President Doughty thanked everyone for attending. He said when they hurt, he hurt. He wanted Council to show support for the people who worked, lived and played here and shared the hurt was "us" in the African American community years ago, and it was you all right now. The Zoo Gala was this Saturday and he was excited to attend it.

Councilwoman Jackson said the Wicomico Library was hosting the Black History Living Museum on Saturday at 1:00 p.m. at the library. She would be there representing her father. It was an awesome program.

## **Adjournment / Convene in Special Budget Session**

With no further business to discuss, the Work Session was adjourned at 6:47 p.m. and President Doughty immediately called the Special Budget Session to order.

  
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City Clerk

  
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Council President