



## **LEGISLATIVE SESSION MEETING MINUTES JANUARY 13, 2024**

### **PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Council President D'Shawn M. Doughty, Vice President Angela M. Blake, Councilwoman April R. Jackson, Councilwoman Michelle R. Gregory (Zoom), Councilwoman Sharon C. Dashiell, Mayor Randy Taylor

Ms. Gregory joined the meeting via Zoom just before the presentation of the Consent Agenda.

### **STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

City Administrator Andy Kitzrow, City Clerk Julie English, City Attorney Ashley Bosché

The City Council convened in Legislative Session on January 13, 2025 at 7:49 p.m. in the Government Office Building Council Chambers, Room 301, located at 125 N. Division Street. President Doughty presented the legislative agenda.

### **PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

(Ms. Blake stepped out of the meeting.) While presenting the legislative agenda, President Doughty amended the agenda to remove Resolution No. 3377. He called for a motion and a second to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Jackson motioned and Ms. Dashiell seconded. The vote was 3-0 to approve the amended legislative agenda. (Ms. Blake returned to the meeting.)

### **CONSENT AGENDA** – presented by City Clerk Julie English

- Resolution No. 3374 – to appoint Jennifer Berkman to the Human Rights Advisory Committee for term ending January 2027

The vote was 5-0 in favor.

### **RESOLUTIONS** - presented by City Administrator Andy Kitzrow

- **Resolution No. 3375** – proposing the annexation to the City of Salisbury of a certain area of land contiguous to and binding upon the Corporate Limits of the City of Salisbury to be known as the “City of Salisbury Wastewater Treatment Plant Annexation”

Ms. Dashiell motioned and Ms. Jackson seconded. The vote was 5-0 to approve Resolution No. 3375.

- **Resolution No. 3376** – a plan proposing the annexation to the City of Salisbury of a certain area of land contiguous to and binding upon the Corporate Limits of the City of Salisbury to be known as the “City of Salisbury Wastewater Treatment Plant Annexation”

Ms. Blake motioned and Ms. Dashiell seconded, and the vote was 5-0 to approve Resolution No. 3376.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

President Doughty directed anyone wishing to comment during either of the public hearings to stand and be sworn in by the City Clerk. Twenty-eight members of the public stood to be sworn in.

- **Ordinance No. 2908** – amending Section 17.150.050A.7 of the Salisbury City Code to delete the word “townhouses” from the category of uses permitted in Parcel H of Planned Residential District No. 7 (The Villages at Aydelotte Farm), and increase the density to 6.0 units per acre

President Doughty asked for a motion and second for Ordinance No. 2908. Ms. Blake motioned and Ms. Dashiell seconded.

Ms. Bosché presented the ordinance.

President Doughty opened the public hearing at 8:08 p.m. Having no public comments on the ordinance, the public hearing was closed at 8:09 p.m.

The vote was 5-0 to approve Ordinance No. 2908 for second reading.

- **Ordinance No. 2909** – amending Section 17.24.040 to increase the inherent density permitted for the development and redevelopment of property located in the Central Business Zoning District

President Doughty asked for a motion and second for Ordinance No. 2909. Ms. Blake motioned and Ms. Gregory seconded.

Mayor Taylor asked for clarification on the participation on Zoom. Ms. Bosch  clarified that Ms. Gregory was able to participate on Zoom as long as she had her camera on.

Ms. Bosch  presented the ordinance.

President Doughty opened the public hearing at 8:13 p.m.

- Speaker #1 was in support of increasing the density.
- Speaker #2 agreed that we need more density but was not in favor of giving the developer an abatement of tax revenue.
- Speaker #3 fully supported the downtown density amendment.
- Speaker #4 was a representative of the Wicomico NAACP and tentatively supported the increase in density but still had questions he wanted answers for before giving his full support.
- Speaker #5 was in favor of the density increase amendment.
- Speaker #6 stated that the increased density amendment would be beneficial to Downtown Salisbury.
- Speaker #7 was not in favor of the density increase.
- Speaker #8 did not agree with the increase in density. She stated that the City would take on the financial loss.
- Speaker #9 agreed with speaker #8 and urged council not to make the change.
- Speaker #10 was not opposed to the density increase but was opposed to the process of how the council was handling it. He asked council to table it until further review.
- Speaker #11 strongly opposed the density increase amendment and stated that the council should listen to the Department of Infrastructure and Development.
- Speaker #12 explained that increasing the density would be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan and that parking studies need to be completed.
- Speaker #13 would like to see more diversity with who receives the development contracts and give more opportunities to other developers.
- Speaker #14 was not in favor of the density increase and felt the developers were being greedy.
- Speaker #15 was invested in multiple businesses downtown and fully supported the density increase amendment.
- Speaker #16 thanked Council for passing the ordinance through 1st reading. He explained that more housing needs to happen and, along with the Greater Salisbury Committee, was in favor of the density increase.
- Speaker #17 was not in favor of the density increase.
- Speaker #18 explained that accessibility should be taken into account throughout the whole process of development.
- Speaker #19 stated that there was a special exception of 70 units per acre up until a couple months ago, so making it 80 units per acre would not be doubling the density. He was in favor of the increased units per acre.

- Speaker #20 was in favor of the increase in density and was a believer in the benefits of urban infill development.
- Speaker #21 urged the Council to wait to make a decision until formal studies came back regarding parking.
- Speaker #22 was not in favor of the increase in density. She questioned why there was so many tax incentives when the state was in a deficit.
- Speaker #23 believed it was unfair to make her tenants pay more in rent because of the tax break the developers would receive. She was not in favor of the density increase.
- Speaker #24 urged the council to support the increase in density.
- Speaker #25 stated that Wicomico County and the City of Salisbury needed more housing no matter what kind it was. He was in favor of the increase in density.
- Speaker #26 expressed that President Doughty should recuse himself from the vote due to his employer and was not in support of the increase in density.
- Speaker #27 believed that this project would build community for all generations. He stated that this project would not be perfect but would be a betterment for downtown.
- Speaker #28 urged the council to take a pause and think about the impact it will have on the City.

Mayor Taylor stated that this was not a density debate but a parking debate. He did not think this was the right approach.

The public hearing was closed at 9:36 p.m.

The vote was 4-1. Ms. Dashiell motioned to table Ordinance No. 2909 but did not receive a second. Ordinance No. 2909 was approved for second reading with a vote of 4-1.

President Doughty entertained a motion for a 2-minute recess. Ms. Blake motioned and Ms. Jackson seconded.

President Doughty entertained a motion to reconvene. Ms. Blake motioned and Ms. Jackson seconded.

#### **ORDINANCES** – presented by City Attorney Ashley Bosché

- **Ordinance No. 2907** – approving a budget amendment of the FY2025 General Fund Budget to appropriate funds to the Salisbury Fire Department’s operating account

Ms. Blake motioned and Ms. Dashiell seconded, and the vote was 5-0 to approve Ordinance No. 2907 for second reading.

- **Ordinance No. 2910** – approving a budget amendment of the FY2025 General Fund Budget and the FY2024 Water Sewer Fund Budget to appropriate funds required for Field Operations

Ms. Jackson motioned and Ms. Dashiell seconded, and the vote was 5-0 to approve Ordinance No. 2910 for first reading.

- **Ordinance No. 2911** – authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems for the purpose of accepting grant funds in the amount of \$4,000.00, and to approve a budget amendment to the grant fund to appropriate these funds for the Salisbury Fire Department

Ms. Jackson motioned and Ms. Dashiell seconded, and the vote was 5-0 to approve Ordinance No. 2911 for first reading.

- **Ordinance No. 2912** – authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with the State of Maryland for the purposed of accepting grant funds in the amount of \$542,000.00, and to approve a budget amendment to the grant fund to appropriate funds for the Salisbury Fire Department

Ms. Blake motioned and Ms. Jackson seconded, and the vote was 5-0 in favor of Ordinance No. 2912 for first reading.

- **Ordinance No. 2913** – authorizing the Mayor to enter into a contract with the Rural Maryland Council for the purpose of accepting grant funds in the amount of \$13,791, and to approve a budget amendment to the grant fund to appropriate these funds for the Salisbury Fire Department

Ms. Jackson motioned and Ms. Dashiell seconded, and the vote was 5-0 to approve Ordinance No. 2913 for first reading.

- **Ordinance No. 2914** – approving a budget amendment of the City’s FY2025 Budget, accepting a donation from Draper Holdings Charitable Foundation for the Santa Workshop Program

Ms. Blake motioned and Ms. Dashiell seconded, and the vote was 5-0 to approve Ordinance No. 2914 for first reading.

- **Ordinance No. 2915** – to accept grant funds from the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs in the amount of \$2,998.00 under the FFY2023 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant Program

Ms. Jackson motioned and Ms. Dashiell seconded, and the vote was 5-0 to approve Ordinance No. 2915 for first reading.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The following public comments were made:

- Speaker #1 was not in favor of how the Council voted for Ordinance No. 2909 and was disappointed.
- Speaker #2 asked that the full minutes from the closed session back on June 20, 2023 be released. She was also disappointed in the outcome of the Council's decision.
- Speaker #3 thanked the City Clerk and City Attorney for their work and stated that they were the epitome of public servants. He stated they were the reason the meetings were able to happen.
- Speaker #4 urged the Council to reconsider their decisions with the public comment time limits and forms.

### **ADMINISTRATION COMMENTS**

Mr. Kitzrow explained since Ordinance No. 2909 had passed that moving forward we needed to have continuing conversations about accessibility and affordability and take everyone into consideration. He gave a huge shout out to all the staff that overcame the blizzard especially the ones that had to work in it. He was excited to share about the Salisbury University Performing Arts Center and stated that was going to be a big win for downtown.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Ms. Gregory appreciated everyone who came out to speak on the density amendment and noted that the decisions that were made were not made lightly. She thanked Brad Gillis for personally contacting her regarding accessibility.

Ms. Jackson stated that she never had an issue with density. Her issue was the amount of money received in revenue for the parking lots. She explained that she voted the way she thought would benefit the city after doing her own research. She added that she was proud of her granddaughter who was working two jobs, going to school and maintaining a 4.0 GPA. She commended Mayor Taylor for always being there when she called him.

Ms. Dashiell mentioned that the aviation school would be opening January 27th and that they would be getting a new airline carrier in June.


Ms. Blake explained that she had some things to say but wanted to save it for the people who had left the meeting.

President Doughty explained that change was hard and that Council was always open to listening to the public. He thanked everyone for the conversations that were had.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the Legislative Session adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

  
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City Clerk

  
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Council President