



WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES NOVEMBER 18, 2024

PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT

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

PUBLIC OFFICIALS ABSENT

Councilwoman April R. Jackson

STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

City Administrator Andy Kitzrow, Police Chief Dave Meienschein, Colonel Howard Drewer, Finance Director Sandy Green, City Clerk Julie English, City Attorney Ashley Bosché

WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The City Council convened in a Work Session on November 18, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. in the Government Office Building Council Chambers, Room 301, located at 125 N. Division Street. After reviewing the emergency exit instructions, President Doughty invited Mike Dunn and Bill McCain to share their presentation.

PRESENTATION – presented by GSC President Mike Dunn and GSC Housing Task Force Chair Bill McCain

Greater Salisbury Committee White Paper

Mr. Dunn emphasized the importance of referencing the Federal Reserve's data, which highlighted housing as the number one issue across the country. He noted that Wicomico's real estate market was facing a supply shortage, and the Greater Salisbury Committee was addressing this by examining septic system issues. Mr. Dunn pointed out the lack of desirable neighborhood choices in the area, and efforts were needed to attract regional and national home builders. The Greater Salisbury Committee aimed to serve as a catalyst for positive change in the community. Mr. McCain emphasized that the housing shortage in Wicomico County was part of a nationwide issue with a significant lack of new homes being built. In the past, over 500 homes were constructed annually, but in recent years that number had dropped to only 150. He highlighted that the county faced challenges related to water, sewer, and septic

issues. The presentation focused on the need for new single-family homes at all price points and suggested ways to streamline the development process to attract developers. President Doughty asked for insights on the combined area, to which Mr. McCain responded that the county must target national builders and share its story to draw them in. Ms. Blake recognized that Salisbury is no longer a small city and has worked hard for growth. She thanked the Housing Task Force team for their efforts. Mr. Dunn emphasized the need to grow neighborhoods beyond just Downtown Salisbury. He believed that the community was facing a housing supply and demand imbalance, with new developments quickly becoming rental units at unsustainable prices. He shared that a property manager (with holdings along the East Coast) stated that Salisbury was unique in seeing rising rental prices, unlike other markets where rent was decreasing due to more available units. Michele Gregory raised the possibility of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as a way to alleviate housing pressure and allow multi-generational living. She asked for suggestions on how best to implement this. It was noted that the zoning code was a living, evolving document that served as a guideline but must be updated as the community's needs changed. Ms. Dashiell emphasized that the focus should not be solely on Downtown. She supported positive change and was not opposed to development, but wanted clarity on how job markets affected homeownership. She stressed the importance of good-paying jobs to support people in buying homes. Mr. McCain clarified that the examples they presented were models to consider, not full blueprints for the entire community. Mr. Dunn concluded with the fact that Salisbury needs both new neighborhoods and also affordable housing.

ORDINANCES

Ordinance authorizing the reallocation of the Federal Recovery Funds from the Water Sewer Fund to the General Fund and to appropriate said funds for Service Centers, Share II and III, in the General Fund

Mr. Kitzrow explained that the ordinance would allow the city to reallocate money into different accounts so that it would not be given back to the federal government and that they could move forward with other projects.

Having no council comments, unanimous consensus was reached to move the ordinance forward to Legislative Session.

Ordinance to accept funds received from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development for the purchase and installation of cameras on the parking garage

Chief Meienschein explained that the funds received from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development would enhance the ability to secure the downtown area. Colonel Drewer explained that the cameras would be beneficial for city events. He explained that six years ago the garage was “made ready” for these kinds of cameras and they would tie into the network.

President Doughty asked that cameras be installed inside the garage if money was available in the future. Colonel Drewer responded that there were already cameras in the garage, and that this grant was for the community rather than the parking garage itself.

Council reached unanimous consensus to move this forward to Legislative Session.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Speaker #1 was in favor of development but was not in favor of developers not completing their developments; the roads at Schumaker Manor.
- Speaker #2 was not in favor of the Greater Salisbury Committee's White Paper and did not like the comparison between Wicomico County to Sussex County.
- Speaker #3 asked for a countdown clock for public comments. She was joyful that six of her rentals were able to be turned into single family homes. Her concern with bringing new neighborhoods was the lack of schools.

ADMINISTRATION UPDATES/COMMENTS

Mr. Kitzrow began by congratulating his staff and team for the work they put into 3rd Fridays and other events this past year. He also mentioned that the Comprehensive Plan Survey was live on the city website.

Mayor Taylor participated in the 100th anniversary of the Junior Board at Tidal Health. He invited everyone to go see art in the Art Space Gallery.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Ms. Blake stated that Schumaker Manor did not meet the formula for their roads to be fixed. She asked Mr. Kitzrow and he confirmed. He explained that there were other roads in Salisbury in worse condition. She also mentioned that she could not attend 3rd Friday but heard how wonderful it was. She was looking forward to the tree lighting and as always encouraged everyone to donate blood and plasma.

Ms. Dashiell attended the Veterans Roundtable that Habitat for Humanity sponsored. She said there was a lot of great feedback. She also attended the Adopt-A-Block ribbon cutting and thought it would be very beneficial to everyone. She thanked Jeff Merritt and everyone who helped pack 744 boxes for Operation We Care. She concluded by asking for volunteers or donations for Hands and Hearts Homeless Shelter.

Ms. Gregory highlighted that the library was having their book sale.

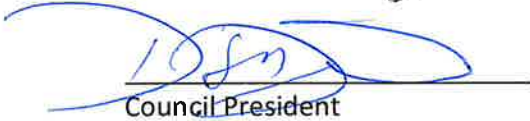
President Doughty stated that this past week was a dark time with losing a previous Wi-Hi teacher, Ms. Susan Ward, and with another incident that happened on the west side of town leaving a person hospitalized. He was disheartened by the resistance of the Rules of Order. He

mentioned that the United Way Emerging Leaders were doing care packages for Thanksgiving, the Junior Achievement would be conducting their Leadership Academy and that Tidal Health would be having their community clinic in the coming weeks. He attended the Salvation Army Red Kettle Breakfast. He thanked the administration for the great communication between them and council. Lastly, he mentioned that the elected officials were almost to their one-year mark.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, the Work Session adjourned at 6:00 p.m.


City Clerk


Council President