

**Regular Meeting
Town of Preston
April 7, 2008**

The regular meeting was called to order by Commissioner Ellery Adams at 7:00 p.m. Also present were Commissioners Bill Mills and Robert Stacey.

Attendance: Reg Maguire, III, Gary Waltemeyer, Ashley Sard, Abby Schmidt of the Times-Record, Barb and Don Galloway, Jeff Trice, Keith T. Woolsoncroft, Wendy Adams, Wayde Barnhart, Mike Blanchfield, Kevin Hauf, Eunice Diefenderfer, Shane Dickinson, Mike Campbell, Michael McCrea, Harold Moxley, Ryan and Deanne Harrison, Kathleen Barry, William and Joan Evey, Harry Rieck, Jr., Chief Robert Reed.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved after adding the closed meeting held during the last regular meeting on March 5, 2008.

The minutes of the public meeting on the zoning map held on March 5, 2008 were approved as submitted.

The minutes of the public hearing regarding the proposed purchase of a house on Choptank Road for a police building were approved after adding there were 29 people in favor of the purchase and 6 opposed with 3 undecided.

Public Works Report: Robert Stacey read the Public Works report. Dale reported:

- the flowmeter was replaced at the sewer plant so our discharger can be measured accurately as state requires
- he replaced a faulty check valve on the suction line in the chemical room
- he also had both pumping stations vacuumed out and washed down
- he cleaned out several storm drains in Town
- he removed the #1 aerator from the lagoon because the motor kept tripping the heater on the starter. He took it to a shop to have it repaired and it should be back soon.
- he had all the fire extinguishers in Town buildings inspected and certified.
- he had Mr. Rooter unclog the sewer main at the lagoon. It backed up into one home on Backlanding Rd. and we had to call Serv-Pro in to clean up the damage.
- he also raked some leaves, cut grass and did some weed eating
- the biggest project was reading all the meters in Town for the quarterly water and sewer bills

Police Report: Chief Reed gave the statistical data for the month and advised:

- there were 14 calls for service
- there were 33 warnings and 23 traffic citations issued
- he said he had a meeting with the County and they are ready to go online with the new computer service they have. The current system is no longer in use. The grant the County received will cover one vehicle and the other vehicle will have to be paid by the Town, which is approximately \$1,000.00.

Unfinished Business: Ellery said the speed alert signs were ordered and delivery is set for April 18th.

- Bill would like the newspaper to attend on the 18th so those travelling through will be aware of it.
- Also, he wants to know who will be responsible for collecting the data. He also wants everybody trained on the unit to be able to use it.

Ellery then asked Mimi for a report about working with the school on a child safety grant.

Mimi said:

- she called the vice-principal 3 or 4 times and sent surveys home with the kids and some of the teachers and they still haven't gotten back to her.
- it is due April 30th and she can't even start on it because she can't get any information

Ellery then said the Town sent a letter to Senator Colburn to get help with wastewater capacity and he in turn sent a letter to State officials to try to get some help. The Town will be meeting with a Maryland Environmental representative on Thursday and he hopes to resolve some of the issues surrounding our limited wastewater capacity.

New Business: The bills for March were unanimously approved to be paid.

Ellery then said Mickey McCrea is present with the Caroline County Historical Society. Membership is \$25.00 and they are behind the restoration of Linchester Mill. Ellery said Mr. McCrea has done probably 70% of the hands on labor and also directing volunteers. He then asked for volunteers in the room for labor or become a supporting member of the Caroline County Historical Society or the Friends of Linchester Mill. Mr. McCrea said there are 300 members in the Friends of Linchester Mill. He also said that June 7th, they will hold their arts and music festival at

the Mill. This years theme is gospel and blues; there will be narrated hayrides; tours of the mill, and the Blues Festival will be in the evening.

There is a public hearing on April 23rd for Stories of the Chesapeake, Appendix B, at Chesapeake College which would make Preston a part of it and would make Preston eligible for grants.

Also, Ellery said the Commissioners will meet with Caroline County Commissioners on April 21, 2008 at the Haps Building at 7 p.m. regarding Jonestown.

Ellery said Parks and Recreation has gotten off to a great start. He said they accept donations and have many activities planned. He also commended Mr. Mills and Stacey on their participation. Bill Mills said he would like to see their existing funds carried over in addition to the \$500.00 budgeted. Bill Mills said the current balance is around \$1,500.00 and he would like that sum to remain. Mimi said it would take either an ordinance or charter change, but the full amount could be rebudgeted for next year in the meantime.

Ellery asked Mimi about the scanning equipment. Mimi said everything is functional except the scanner is not connected to her computer.

Bills Mills asked Mimi about the profit and loss year to date for last year and current year.

Bill Mills made a motion to pay \$25.00 each to Caroline County Historical Society and Friends of Linchester Mill, seconded by Ellery, unanimously approved.

Mimi said the auditor said the entire forestation account of \$4,800.00 must be spent by the end of the year for trees. Bill Mills suggested around the lagoons and maybe around the dump. She said for \$4,800.00 we should be able to get pretty good sized trees and have them planted by the nursery for a guarantee. Ellery asked Bob Stacey to follow up on it.

Ellery then brought up the subject of turning over the crossing guard to the Board of Education and saving the expense for the Town. He said our current crossing guard is about to retire and has been doing a great job. This could be a good time to approach the Board of Education. Bill Mills thinks the Town should be reimbursed for our expenses since it is not a Town responsibility. Ellery asked if we should turn it over to the Board of Education. Bill Mills said it will still fall into the Town's hands. Ellery suggested the issue be tabled for more thought.

ON AGENDA:

Mike Campbell, Director of Caroline County Mental Health Clinic. There are about 125 active clients in the Preston zip code. A therapist goes to Preston Elementary School 1½ days a week. They are going to the Towns to set aside funds in their budgets if they are currently running a deficit for the second year in a row. He said the Town could become a member of the foundation or volunteer to be a member of the advisory board.

Ellery suggested he get together with Mickey McCrea and go in on his fundraisers. Bill Mills said the Town could include some information in our quarterly newsletter.

- Harry Rieck spoke representing the Emmanuel Lutheran Church. He said they are considering installing a digitalized system in the church to play music or bells to bring attention to the church. He is waiting for permission from the Town regarding noise limits, etc. Ellery said the Town does have a noise limit ordinance. Mr. Rieck said he just wanted to mention it before the matter is presented to the Town. Ellery said he prefers chimes.
- Ellery said there are two people on the agenda who wish to speak regarding the public hearing that has already taken place and, in the interest of being an open government, the Commissioners have let the public know everything about the purchase of property for the police department. The issue was tabled; an ordinance was read and now it is time for a vote, which allows 20 days to obtain 20% of registered voters to bring it to referendum. If voted down, we can go to a straw poll. There were 29 in writing who were in favor of the purchase with 6 opposed.
- The options for a straw poll vote are: (1) purchase house on Choptank Rd. for \$245,000.; (2) build a new concrete building designed as a police station; (3) build an addition to public works building; (4) build a new building with standard frame construction; (5) build a new building with a Town office, police station, and meeting room; (6) possibly rent room from the Fire Company as EMS is moving across the street; (7) add room to new EMS building at town expense with long term lease; (8) build a new building for the Boy Scouts and use their present building; (9) build new Town office and meeting room and use the present building for a police station; (10) rent office from David Wilson at \$2,000.00 per month; (11) turn over police department to the Caroline County Sheriff's Dept. On the straw poll, several options will be shown with rough estimates of costs. Two architects have volunteered to help at a price.
- Mr. Barnhart spoke on the agenda. He said that he and his wife had no intention of selling their house to begin with. They were actually considering adding on to the house because they like the Town. Anyone who says we made

a decision to get out of a bad real estate fix is incorrect. He said Ellery approached them regarding the possible sale. He said he was dumbfounded and could not believe his ears. He said he would then have to talk to his wife. He looked at it objectively. If he would have put it on the market, it would have been listed for \$265,000., as per the real estate research due to the amount of land the house sits on and it is only 4 years old next June.

- Dee Harrison spoke on the agenda. She would like to see the verification of why a new police station is necessary, along with crime statistics in this area. Where is the funding coming from? Where are the plans for holding cells? If we are not processing people here that could be processed elsewhere, why these elaborate plans? Why is there a need for showers? Her biggest concern is that you cannot make a decision without being thought through as this is a decision for the next 25 years.
- Ellery said this has been worked on since the first day he was elected; many options were researched. First, it was suggested we use the library. It is a little small; there is no rest room; parking may be an issue, it is being used for storage, etc. Next was an addition to the public works building but there may be a problem insuring it if it is attached to a building of structural steel. Ellery said statistics would have to be obtained from the Town, Caroline County Sheriff's Dept. and Maryland State Police. A shower is necessary in case a prisoner spits on a policeman. Also, Ellery said he does not believe any new funding nor a tax increase is necessary. Part is by attrition because the school crossing guard is leaving in June and currently earns \$4,500., and the real estate constant yield which should generate a new \$18,000. However, the new budget has not been completed as yet. The ordinance to purchase the house at 3683 Choptank Road must be voted on.
- Gary Waltemeyer asked what the second reason was to buy the house. Ellery said it was for separation of Town personnel and the police department. The second item was the location of the house between emergency operations does not look right. Also, it involves security issues and space for the Town and police department.
- Bill Mills said his only concern is that the 27th is where the referendum would fall and the closeness of the election, whereas if you go the straw poll route there is time for advertising, etc. Bill then explained that a referendum forces the issue by law, whereas a straw poll is not binding.
- Ellery asked that all in favor in passage of the ordinance say aye. He was the only aye. All opposed say nay. Bill Mills and Robert Stacey said nay. The vote was 2 to 1 opposed to the passage of the ordinance.
- Bill Mills said he would like to see a straw poll. It must also be advertised. Ellery wants to show several options with rough figures. The Commissioners will hold a public hearing to discuss the questions and it will be advertised 15 days prior.
- Ellery said the Times Record has been so gracious to advertise Preston the last two years in the Talbot Guide which will be out shortly. The cost is \$545.00.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Johnson