

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in the Council Chambers at City Hall on Monday, December 03, 2018. The meeting was called to order at 6:31PM.

Present: Mayor Bruce Morrison
First Vice President Esther Troast
Council Members: Diane Downing,
George Tasker, Dale Trotter, Todd Nock
City Manager: Robert L. Cowger, Jr
City Attorney: Roscoe Leslie
City Clerk: Michelle Beckett-EI Soloh

Prayer & Pledge of Allegiance

Open session council meeting @ 6:31PM

Review minutes:

In a motion (Tasker, Trotter passed) to approve the minutes from November 05, 2018 @ 6:32 PM

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried

Review and approval of bills:

In a motion (Trotter, Downing passed) the bills presented to be paid @ 6:33PM

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried

Introduction of new police officers

Lt. Hancock stated there are 3 new police officers to introduce. They will be going to the January 2019 police academy for training. Doug Mumford who has worked for Pocomoke City EMS since 2012. James Wood who was a seasonal police officer in Ocean City, MD. Joshua Brown, who is a Sergeant at ECI. Avery Marshall who is already a certified officer and should be starting in the next week.

Request to authorize to dispose of City surplus properties

Planning Director Brandewie stated there are 7 vacant lots that the City has been maintaining. He would like Council approval to move forward with sales or auctions and he would also like the City Attorney to weigh in on the legal process for sale of properties. Attorney Leslie stated that the City must place a 20-day notice that states properties are no longer needed by the City for public use. The Council can pass a Resolution to approve sale of properties. City Manager Cowger stated these are properties that the City has acquired over the years mostly through tax defaults. Planning Director Brandewie stated that properties are a range of sizes from 6000 to 9000 square feet. They all meet zoning requirements and are set up for water and sewer. Councilmember Nock said he would like to see all Councilmembers reach out to Habitat for Humanity to build houses. He doesn't want to see empty lots just sitting after the sale of a property.

In a motion to table until next Council meeting, January 7, 2019, the sale of 7 City-owned vacant properties until the City has time to contact Habitat for Humanity or other humanitarian project agencies (Nock, Tasker passed) @ 6:37 PM.

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried
Action: Planning and Zoning Director Brandewie to contact Habitat for Humanity and other project agencies and bring back results to January 7, 2019 Council meeting.

Set Public Hearing date for Zoning Map Amendment for property on Linden Avenue
Planning Director Brandewie asked to set a Public Hearing date for January 7, 2019 at next Council meeting for a Zoning Map Amendment for a property on Linden Avenue.

In a motion to set Public Hearing date for Zoning Map Amendment for Linden Avenue property for Council meeting on January 7, 2019 at 6:30 PM (Downing, Trotter passed) @ 6:41 PM

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried

Action: Planning Director Brandewie to draft Resolution to be read regarding the Linden Ave property for rezoning.

Additional Public Comments on properties designated for demolition or repair

- A) 704 4th Street
- B) 411 Maple Avenue
- C) 408 Market Street
- D) 210 Walnut Street

Planning Director Brandewie asked to move forward with demolition following the Ordinance for unsafe buildings. He stated that demolition notices have been posted for 2 weeks as required by Charter. Councilmember Trotter asked in what paper were the Public Notices published? Planning Director Brandewie stated it was in the Salisbury Times. There have been no responses received from the public regarding these properties to date. Councilwoman Troast addressed the audience for comments. James Jones, refused to give address but stated he is a resident of Pocomoke City, asked if the 4 properties listed are bad enough to require demolition. Planning Director Brandewie explained that all properties, with the exception of 408 Market Street, are in need of demolition but an offer could be made to the property owner. The property owners have all been given ample time to make arrangements for repairs. The previous 7 properties in discussion are already cleaned up, vacant lots. Debbie Jones-Grates, 222 Laurel Street, asked if property near hers was going to be torn down or burned because her mother is in her 90's and not able to get away from snakes that might come in during demolishment process. Terminex already told her she will have to have the property treated days prior to demolishment.

In a motion to move forward with demolition on 4 properties listed above (Trotter, Downing passed) @ 6:50 PM.

Councilmember Downing asked about the property that had the recent fire at 724 9th St. What is the next step to prevent it from sitting there for years? Planning Director Brandewie stated he will look into it and be prepared to issue clean-up notices if necessary.

City issues to be addressed

City Manager Cowger gave updates on projects. Blocked waterlines between 14th and 15th Streets on Linden Drive in the Heights has been completed with new lines, 15th Street is almost complete, an IOREX unit will be installed at Market and 15th St, we have representatives from City of Baltimore, Harford County and Pennsylvania coming to observe installation of the unit. After that, Linden Drive and Dorchester will be finished up. We have been on Market and 10th Street for the last 2 Sundays at

the lift station pumping. We need to redo 7 of them and we are looking into USDA grant money and emergency funding to help with cost of replacement. If there is a sewage backup that spills over into storm drains it would mean major fines from MDE. We are working on addressing funding for that project. The boardwalk at Mallard's is completely washed out. There was never a bulkhead put in and dirt keeps getting washed out deeper. Boat Docking competition will have to be on hold until a bulkhead can be put in. The estimate is approximately \$250,000 to \$300,000.00 for a bulkhead. Councilman Nock suggested trying to recover funds that were misappropriated in this town. The last thing to be addressed is the Armory. The City has applied for several grants and all have been denied. The deed states that when the City no longer uses the property ownership reverts back to the State. City Attorney will review the deed. Councilmember Downing stated that Commissioner Lockfaw was working on some type of funds for the Armory but Pocomoke City never heard any more. Josh Nordstrom stated once he is sworn in as the new Commissioner he will look into funds for the Armory. William Sparrow, 1955 Orchard Drive, said we need to involve our representatives and that there is money available through the Land Preservation Act. Everyone cannot afford the YMCA and there needs to be a place inside City limits for kids and families to go. Cambridge just received grant money.

Motion to table discussion for funding to repair Armory building until after contacting MD State representatives and grant writer (Trotter, Downing passed) @ 7:05 PM

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried

Last City issue update is Cypress Park is scheduled to get work done in March/April 2019 timeframe. There is grant money we have to match. It will be an inhouse job but will be a major facelift for the park.

It was announced at the Mayor's Old-Fashioned Christmas event, the Council decided to name the new playground at the Cypress Park the "Bruce A. Morrison Park" with a formal celebration once park is finished.

City website-changes to operations

City Manager stated that the Council has had a lot of discussion about the website, Today's information in electronic media driven and Pocomoke has so many updates and changes happening we aren't able to update the website on a daily basis and get important info out to the public. Councilman Nock said that the website is in desperate need of updates. It needs to look modern. Councilman Tasker stated that he contacted the County IT to see if they would be able to work with us. The approval did come through for the County to work with us. The current IT arrangement that the City has would not be affected except for the website part of it.

In a motion to have the City work with the Worcester County IT to update the City website (Trotter, Nock passed) @ 7:12 PM

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried

Finance Officer and City Manager to review and adjust FY 2019 budget

City Manager Cowger will meet with the Finance Director to review and make any adjustments or changes to the budget where needed. Any changes will be brought back to the January Council meeting.

Introduce recent Charter updates

introduction of City Charter updates tabled until after one more Work Session scheduled for December 10, 2018, 5:30 PM

Patricia S. Martin proposal to Council for Proclamation

Patricia StilleMartin presented a request to the Council for a Proclamation to celebrate the birthday, January 6, of Bishop Isaac Jenkins. Proclamation request was denied as at least 2 Proclamations have already been passed as early as 2012. Councilmember Troast said that Pocomoke City and the Council holds Bishop Isaac Jenkins in the highest regard for all the work that he accomplished.

Comments from Council

Councilmember Downing there are 2 potholes on 10th St.

Councilmember Trotter reminded everyone of the swearing in of Josh Nordstrom tomorrow and Matt Crisafulli today.

Comments from Audience

Rev. James Jones thanked the City for the Proclamation that was passed to recognize his wife of 45 years, Donna Jones, the support from the City and Council meant a lot to him and his family.

Ronnie White, 804 Walnut St, asked what construction work was going on at the Rt 13 bridge. City City Manager Cowger stated it's the 2nd phase of traffic light installation. They are a bit off schedule but will be done soon.

In a motion to close open session (Downing, Trotter passed) @ 7:25 PM

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried

Approved: *K.M. Beckett-El Soloh*
City Clerk