

Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in the Council Chambers on Monday, April 15, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm.

Present: Mayor Todd Nock
First Vice President: Monda Marsh
Council Members Present: Diane Downing, Scott Holland, C.L Marshall and Brooke Cottman
City Manager John Barkley
City Attorney Andrew Illuminati

Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer by Council member Marshall and Call to Order

Approval of Minutes from Meeting of April 9, 2024

Motion to approve minutes for April, 2024, with one correction - under Comments, third sentence mentions Mr. Mitchell (DNR). Corrected to Bob Mitchell (Robert L. Mitchell, Environmental Programs Director for Worcester County Government), not DNR.

(Marsh, Downing, passed)

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Marshall-aye, Cottman-aye, Downing-aye, Marsh-aye; none opposed, motion carried

Review and Approval of Current Bill List

Motion to approve current bill list (Downing, Holland, passed)

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Marshall-aye, Cottman-aye, Downing-aye, Marsh-aye; none opposed, motion carried

Update on Resolution No. 589, Cannabis Zoning Legislation

City Attorney Illuminati provided an overview of the new provisions of HB 805 as it relates to the City's local draft ordinance providing for Cannabis sales, cultivation, distribution and consumption. One additional provision of note is the distance requirements to places of worship. The draft ordinance should now go back to the Planning Commission for further review. The Governor has not yet signed the legislation.

Third Annual Juneteenth Event Request - Sturgis One-Room School House

Kim Jones of the Sturgis One Room School presented a special request for the 3rd Annual Juneteenth Celebration on Saturday, June 22nd, 2024 from 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., with free tours, sidewalk vendors, food, activities, music. The following was requested:

1. The ability to block off Willow Street & Front Street from 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. to house vendors and various activities which will include set up and break down time.
2. The ability to use the City's picnic tables to allow visitors a comfortable seating area to enjoy the festivities and eat. This would also require the approval of staffing to set up and breakdown the area.
3. The ability to use the City's bounce house and generator giving a fun experience for the youth that will be attending. We will have volunteers to man the bounce house at all times.
4. We request assistance from local authorities and city workers as in previous years.
5. Support from any City employee that would like to support, volunteer, speak, or set up as a vendor.

Motion to Approve the Event (Downing, Marshall, passed)

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Marshall-aye, Cottman-aye, Downing-aye, Marsh-aye; none opposed, motion carried

Preliminary Site Plan Review - Starbucks Coffee Company

City Planner Brandewie provided an overview of the preliminary plans for the construction, landscaping, lighting and parking for the proposed Starbucks, to be located in the Newtowne Square Shopping Plaza. We are awaiting construction plans for the project, which we expect to receive within the next month.

Council Comments

Council member Holland noted that he would like to see the paving list for City Streets before the project begins, and that while he appreciates having Department Heads at the meetings, it is not necessary in his opinion. He would like to see paving work done in "The Heights" neighborhood.

Council member Downing had no comments.

Council member Marsh would also like to review the paving list prior to the projects, and noted that projects in each Election District should be shared with Council members. Council member Marsh recommended 2 work sessions to go over procedures, roles, communication and process issues for Council and staff, especially given that we have 2 new Council members on board.

Council member Cottman suggested that staff look into the capabilities of the Paychex system and consider making better utilization of time management and other tools not related to payroll. Council member Cottman also expressed interest in working with local development investors like Sara Chapman to provide more incentives for growth across the City.

Council member Marshall mentioned that he appreciates the weekly reports from staff and agreed with Council member Cottman about development incentives as he is always looking for better ways to encourage economic growth in town.

Mayor Nock suggested that Council might consider the assignment of each Council member to a particular aspect of City operations and/or to serve as a liaison to a City committee, which would involve more of a role of bringing information back to Council as opposed to asking what council thinks about a particular issue.

City Manager Barkley announced the budget work sessions scheduled for April 22, 29 and May 13. Mayor Nock asked if there would be a virtual option offered. City Manager Barkley answered yes. Mayor Nock asked for a 3-year trend report when the budget is presented.

EMS Chief Ryan McReady indicated that an ambulance order is needed now via a letter of intent because it takes 3 years from order to delivery. Also, the City needs to revisit its 3rd party billing system contract to review the current fees and penalties if the City decides to vacate the agreement, and to ensure we are collecting a fair share of our fee revenue. Our new ambulance is expected to arrive within the next two weeks.

PD Chief Hancock reported that they are 1 position short at this time, with a Sgt. leaving for Talbot County for more money. The City continued to be challenged in our recruitment and

retention efforts and we need to compete with surrounding Counties. Mayor Nock commended Chief Hancock and the PD for the positive direction they have established in the Police Department.

Comments from the Audience

Janet Bernosky of the Eastern Shoe Post offered to publicize the City's committee vacancies and other opportunities to serve the City.

Kim Jones, of the Sturgis One Room Schoolhouse, offered support and guidance to the City with respect to the challenges involved with recruitment, employee retention, and any other personnel related matters. Mayor Nock thanked Ms. Jones for all of the hard work in bringing the Schoolhouse back to the condition it is in now after years of decline.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting (Marshall, Downing, passed)

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Marshall-aye, Cottman-aye, Downing-aye, Marsh-aye; none opposed, motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:36 pm.

Approved: *John C. Barkley*
City Manager