



**MINUTES OF THE
TOWN COUNCIL INFORMATIONAL
WORK SESSION
FEBRUARY 10, 2026**

I. Bruce A. Wahl, Mayor, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. In attendance were Laura Blackwelder, Daniel Duvall, Jonathan Evans, Anthony Greene, Eric Reinhardt, and Jamey Shuls, Council Members, Dr. Samelia Okpodu, Town Administrator, Sharon L. Humm, Town Clerk, Dan Baden, Town Treasurer, James Berry, Public Works Administrator, Wayne Newton, Town Engineer, and Sarah Franklin, Planning & Zoning Administrator.

II. **Pledge of Allegiance** – Mr. Newton led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. **Informational discussion on the following:**

1. **Legislative Activity** – Dr. Okpodu brought before the Council several bills being proposed in the House and Senate. HB383 “Municipalities-Limiting Access to Beaches-Prohibition” is a bill introduced by Delegate Long. The Mayor and Delegate Long had discussion on this bill with the Mayor expressing opposition to the bill due to specific issues related to Brownie’s Beach. Delegate Long understood and has stated he would withdraw the Bill.

Ms. Franklin provided a staff memo on Senate Bill 36 “Starter and Silver Homes Act” that was introduced at the request of the Department of Housing and Community Development. The intent of this Bill is to help provide more affordable housing, but, if the Bill is passed, the negative impact on Chesapeake Beach would be significant. Ms. Franklin provided a table which explains what the direct impacts to the Chesapeake Beach Zoning Ordinance would be. She addressed questions and concerns from the Council.

Dr. Okpodu prepared and uploaded opposition testimony to this Bill. The Town will work in conjunction with the Maryland Municipal League who is working on behalf of the municipalities.

2. **Planning & Zoning Recommendations**

- a. **Fences** – Ms. Franklin stated, currently, fences are regulated in the building code. Property owners who have unusual situations on their lots are not given much leeway in addressing those with regard to fencing. The



Planning Commission reviewed the fence regulations within the zoning code and is recommending some modifications to Section 290-19 G. Fences and Walls that could allow folks with unique situations to appeal to the Board of Appeals for relief. The Council has been provided with those modifications to Section 290-19 G, along with other modifications that address front and side yards of corner lots, non-conforming fences, storm water flow underneath a fence, air circulation and how to address wind hazards. Ms. Franklin addressed questions from the Council.

b. Home Occupations – Ms. Franklin stated, with direction from the Council, the Planning Commission has been reviewing errors in the zoning ordinance with regard to home occupations. For some unknown reason, home occupations were removed from residential areas within Town. The Commission considered and deliberated on amendments to the text to address those errors. In the meantime, these modifications have been provided to the Council by the Commission which will allow residents to acquire permits for their home occupations while the Commission continues a more comprehensive review of the land use table and home occupations. These modifications conditionally allows home occupations in all districts which Ms. Franklin can review and issue permits. Ms. Franklin addressed questions from the Council.

3. Kellam's Draft Concept/Master Plan- Jenny Janis was present to deliver to the Council a slide presentation of the Kellam Park Concept Master Plan. Ms. Janis addressed questions from the Council. There were a number of recommendations/suggestions from several members of the Council. Vice President Shuls asked that the Council put those suggestions in an email and send to him, and he would share with Ms. Janis.
4. Water and Sewer Rates – Dr. Okpodu stated, based on discussions that have taken place over the last ten months, the remaining area where adjustments could occur are in the area of the allocation of salary and wages within the Utility Fund. Based on the Council's desire to have salary allocations reflect the true cost of operations, and after discussions among staff, a number was reached, and the rates were built around that. The Town Treasurer provided further input on the figures and calculations and provided the Council with a five-year projection of what the Utility Fund budget and the Treatment Plant budget would look like under the proposed rates. Mr. Baden addressed questions from the Council. Councilman Duvall suggested that a brief letter/notice be provided for each



account holder explaining the rates, what to expect and what rates may look like moving forward.

5. SHA Update – Mr. Newton updated the Council on the current status of the 261 Sidewalks (SRTS) sidewalk project. An updated proposal from Rossi was received, SHA has reviewed it and is asking if the proposal is acceptable to the Town. The estimate came in at \$608,000. Although, the estimate is over 10% higher than the anticipated cost, if the Town is willing to accept, SHA will move forward and ask for a fee increase to match that. This will be brought before the Council for consideration at the February meeting.
6. Celebrate Trails Day – Councilwoman Blackwelder was pleased to announce that her Walkable Community committee (WCAG) has an opportunity to partner with the Rails to Trails Conservancy. This organization is dedicated to creating a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors. They have a day that is designated as a national “celebrate trails day.” It is the fourth Saturday of April, and it is April 25th this year. The committee would like to designate this day as a day of celebration in Chesapeake Beach, this year, and each year after. A proclamation will be presented at the Council meeting.

IV. Adjournment

There being no further comments, the work session adjourned at 8:00 p.m. on a motion by Councilman Reinhardt. Seconded by Vice President Shuls, all in favor.

Submitted by,

Sharon L. Humm
Town Clerk

This meeting can be viewed in its entirety on the Town website on the Town Government page at www.chesapeakebeachmd.gov.

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