Minutes of Town Council Meeting Held on March 19, 2024

As reviewed, approved, and accepted by the Town Council on April 11, 2024

There being a quorum, Mayor Charles Hendricks called the meeting of the Town Council to order at 7:31 p.m. The meeting was held using video conferencing. Council Members Charles Bradsher, Tom Burke, Amy Koval, and Christina Pellegrino were present. The Town Clerk, Assistant Clerks, Planning Commission Chair, and Town Attorney were present.

Mayor Hendricks explained that the plan for tonight is for the Mayor and Council to consult with Town Attorney Victoria Shearer to obtain legal advice relative to pending legislation in town. The first order of business is to consider closing the meeting for the purpose of moving to a closed session for consultation with Ms. Shearer. There will be an open session after the consultation.

Vote to Close Public Meeting

Mayor Hendricks said, “I will now read into the record a closing statement that is available for public inspection. The Mayor and Council will reconvene at 8:45 p.m. after the closed session on this same Zoom link. The Mayor and Council will meet in closed session to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice relative to pending legislation as authorized by General Provisions Article, Section 3-305 (b) (7) of the Open Meetings Act. I move that the Mayor and Council meet in closed session to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice relative to pending legislation as authorized by General Provisions Article, Section 3-305 (b) (7) of the Open Meetings Act. Is there a second?”

Member Koval seconded this motion.

Mayor Hendricks then asked if there was discussion on the motion. There being none, the Town Clerk called the roll to vote on the motion:

Council Member Bradsher Aye

Council Member Burke Aye

Mayor Hendricks Aye

Council Member Koval Aye

Council Member Pellegrino Aye

Mayor Hendricks asked if there were any objections. There being none, he explained the plan to return to the open meeting at the end of the closed session.

The open meeting recessed at 7:35 p.m.

Resumption of Open Session at the same Zoom link

Mayor Hendricks called to order the resumption of the open session at 8:51 p.m., resuming video conferencing. Council Members Charles Bradsher, Tom Burke, Amy Koval and Christina Pellegrino were present. The Town Clerk, Assistant Clerks, and Town Attorney were present, as well as approximately two residents/guests.

Public Comment on Draft Moratorium Ordinance and Proposed Amendments and Decision on Whether to Close the Public Hearing on the Draft Moratorium Ordinance

Mayor Hendricks asked for public comments on the draft moratorium ordinance. There being none, he stated that there has been a lengthy public hearing and recommended closing the public record.

Council Member Burke made a motion to close the Public Hearing at this time. Council Member Pellegrino seconded the motion. ***Unanimously approved.***

Discussion and Possible Action on the Draft Moratorium Ordinance and Proposed Amendments  
Mayor Hendricks stated that the draft moratorium ordinance would give the town a strategic pause to review its commercial zoning provisions, but that it would be better to undertake a broader review of zoning provisions within the entire town., Therefore, residential and agricultural zones should also be included. He then suggested laying the current draft aside and developing an alternate ordinance placing a six-month moratorium on development applicable to all zones in the town.

Planning Commission Vice Chair Brian Kline asked for clarification on the addition of residential and agricultural zones.

Mayor Hendricks responded by saying that a moratorium that is clearly designed for a broad review of zoning issues in all areas of the town would be most useful.

Council Member Koval stated that makes sense because the town does have some parcels that are undeveloped and added that it would be good to have a cohesive plan for the whole town.

Mayor Hendricks stated that there are some zoning issues relating to some large, undeveloped parcels and recommended that the town make a comprehensive review of its needs relative to the Zoning Ordinance. He added that a new moratorium would need new whereas clauses designed for an ordinance with a broader scope.

Council Member Burke stated that in previous testimony on this moratorium, he mentioned that the town needs to look at the procedures involved in how a development, whether it is commercial or residential, gets considered and approved in order to allow more input on a public level as well as from the Town Council and the Planning Commission. So that is one reason he is interested in this idea.

Council Member Pellegrino said that she agrees with Council Member Burke and said that we need to look at the town as a whole with the master plan and need a broad view of all three zoning areas.

Council Member Burke said that we also need to look at redevelopment of certain areas.

Mayor Hendricks made a motion to lay the draft moratorium ordinance that was introduced on November 1, 2023, along with the proposed amendments to it, on the table. Council Member Burke seconded the motion. ***Unanimously approved.***

Town Council Schedule

Mayor Hendricks suggested that the next Town Council meeting be held on April 9, and as no Council member objected, he will call the meeting for April 9, 2024.

Resident’s Forum

Planning Commission Member Brian Kline asked for clarification on the adoption of a new draft moratorium ordinance that included a broader look at zoning within town.

Mayor Hendricks explained that a new moratorium ordinance will need to go through a new public hearing, but that at this time it is just a concept that will need to be drafted into an ordinance.

Adjournment

Council Member Burke made a motion to adjourn at 9:13 p.m. Council Member Pellegrino seconded the motion. ***Unanimously approved.***

Respectfully submitted,

James Schneider, Assistant Clerk

Town of Laytonsville