

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
CITY OF SEAFORD MAYOR AND COUNCIL**

April 9, 2013

7:00 PM

Mayor William G. Bennett called the Regular Meeting to order with the following present: Councilwoman Grace S. Peterson, Councilwoman Pat A. Jones, Councilwoman Leanne Phillips-Lowe, Councilman J. Rhea Shannon and Councilman David Genshaw. Dolores J. Slatcher, City Manager, and Charles Anderson, Assistant City Manager, were also present.

Councilwoman Peterson offered the opening prayer and Mayor Bennett led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Bennett solicited changes to the agenda. City Manager Slatcher stated that there were none.

Mayor Bennett called for a motion to approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of March 26, 2013. Councilman Genshaw made the motion to approve the minutes of March 26, 2013. Councilwoman Peterson seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

Mayor Bennett then asked Berley Mears, Director of Public Works, to come forward to introduce new employees. Mr. Mears introduced Allen Bryant, who was hired on September 4, 2012, and Josh Willin, who was hired on September 17, 2012. He explained that Mr. Bryant and Mr. Willin were not able to attend a Council Meeting sooner as they were attending a 6-month long water operator's course, which was held on Tuesday nights. He added that both men completed the course and passed the test, and officially State of Delaware licensed water operators. He then introduced Jeremy Kjos, who was hired on March 18, 2013, and Ray Hill, who was hired on March 25, 2013. He said that Allen, Josh and Jeremy are all part of the Public Works Department, and Ray is in the Waste Water Department. Mayor and Council congratulated the new employees.

Mayor Bennett then asked Rick Garner, Director of Power, and Ed Tumberlin, Construction Coordinator, to come forward, as well as Councilwoman Peterson, Electric Department Liaison. Mayor Bennett announced that for the third year in a row, the Electric Department received a Safety Award of Excellence from the American Public Power Association. The City of Seaford Electric Department received first place in Group B, for systems with 15,000 to 29,999 worker hours of exposure. Mayor and Council congratulated the Electric Department on their award.

City Manager Slatcher presented New Business # 1, request to name new street in Seaford Industrial Park as Megan Avenue. This is a private street in the Industrial Park. There is one existing building which will continue to have a Park Avenue address; three additional buildings will be given Megan Avenue addresses. She said that the name was requested by the property owner and approved by the Sussex County Addressing Department.

Councilwoman Peterson asked if the new street will be maintained by the City. City Manager Slatcher explained that it is a private street, which will be built and maintained by the property owner.

Mayor Bennett solicited any questions. There being none, he called for a motion. Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe made the motion to approve naming the new street in the Seaford Industrial Park as Megan Avenue as requested by the owner of the lands, Regional Builders, Mr. Bob Boyd. Councilwoman Peterson seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

City Manager Slatcher presented New Business # 2, bids for Seaford Industrial Park Drainage Improvements. She explained that the improvements include widening a pond adjacent to Woodside Manor, replacing a pipe under Park Avenue, and fixing an outfall to a retention area at Belle Ayre. The funds requested for this project were \$105,733, which was obtained from Senator Venables. There were four bids received, with Clark's General Contractor being the low bidder, with a bid amount is \$164,992. This amount was corrected from the original bid total which included a mathematical error. The contractor acknowledged the error and agreed to hold the bid

price at \$164,992. The additional \$59,259 will be paid out of the Stormwater Impact Reserve Fund.

Mayor Bennett asked if the City has worked with Clark's General Contractor in the past. City Manager Slatcher said that they have. She added that the engineers are recommending awarding the bid to Clark's General Contractor after completing the bid review.

Mayor Bennett solicited any questions. Councilman Genshaw asked if the bid is approved, how soon the work will start. City Manager Slatcher explained that there is certain paperwork which must be done, such as submittals and insurance, as well as holding a pre-construction meeting. She said that the work would probably begin in less than 30 days.

Mayor Bennett then called for a motion. Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe made the motion to award the bid for the Seaford Industrial Park Drainage project to the lowest bidder, Clark's General Contractor, in the amount of \$164,992, and to authorize \$59,259 to be used from the Stormwater Impact Reserve to fund a portion of this project. Councilman Genshaw seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

City Manager Slatcher presented New Business # 3, present for the first reading an ordinance to amend Chapter 15 of the Municipal Code of Seaford, Delaware relating to "Zoning" for temporary sign regulations. She explained that this ordinance will address flags and banners which are not currently identified in the Code Department, so that there will be some regulations and guidance in place for those businesses and property owners who wish to use temporary signs. She added that this item will come back at the next Council Meeting for the second reading and adoption.

City Manager Slatcher presented Old Business # 1, recommendations for real estate tax appeals presented on March 12, 2013. She asked Mr. David Hickey, DEL/VAL PTA to come forward to present his recommendations.

Mr. Hickey presented Appeal # 1, Tax Map 3-31-5.00-080.08, a vacant lot on Norman Eskridge Highway, Account # 6161. He explained that this parcel was appealed in 2009, and at that time he recommended no change be made to the assessment. He added that there is no reason to make an adjustment at this time.

Mr. Hickey then presented Appeal # 2, Tax Map 3-31-5.15-037.00, 8 Robinson Circle, Account # 3739, and Appeal # 3, Tax Map 5-31-10.17-077.00, 742 Rosetree Lane, Account # 602. He reported that all the information on these properties was correct in his assessment, and that the assessed values are in line with home sales in those areas at the time of assessment. Therefore, he is recommending no change be made in the assessments.

Mr. Hickey then presented Appeal # 4, Tax Map 5-31-10.00-295.00, 296.00, 297.00, 298.00, 299.00, 300.00, 301.00, 302.00, 303.00, 304.00, 305.00, 306.00, 307.00, 308.00, 312.00, 313.00, 314.00, 315.00, 316.00, 317.00, 318.00, 319.00, 320.00, 321.00, 24 undeveloped lots on William Ross Lane in Governor's Grant subdivision. He reported that these lots were appealed in 2009 and reduced in value 75% from \$75,000 to \$18,800. He explained that there was one lot out of those 24 that was not correctly adjusted in 2009. He is recommending to reduce the assessment of Tax Map 5-31-10.00-306.00 from \$20,000 to \$18,800 for consistency, and to make no change to the assessment of the other 23 lots.

Mr. Hickey then presented Appeal # 5, Tax Map 5-31-10.00-408.00, 409.00, 410.00, 411.00, 412.00, 413.00, 414.00, 415.00, 416.00, 417.00, 418.00, 419.00, 420.00, 421.00, 422.00, 423.00, 424.00, 425.00, 426.00, 427.00, 429.00, 430.00, 431.00, 432.00, 436.00, 437.00, 438.00, 439.00, 440.00, 441.00, 442.00, 443.00, 444.00, 445.00, 448.00, 449.00, 450.00, 451.00, 452.00, 453.00, 454.00, 455.00, 456.00, 457.00, 460.00, 461.00, 462.00, 463.00, 464.00, 49 undeveloped lots in Phase 2 of Belle Ayre subdivision. He explained that there is no infrastructure on these lots. Therefore he is recommending that the assessed value of each lot be reduced 75% from \$80,000 to \$20,000, as was done with Governor's Grant.

City Manager Slatcher asked if the adjustments would be for the current tax year, 2012, or upcoming tax year, 2013. Mr. Hickey said that the changes would take effect July 1, 2013. City Manager Slatcher said that in negotiations with property owners of Belle Ayre subdivision, the City

had agreed to make any changes effective July 1, 2012. Sharon Drugash, RE/PR Manager, added that historically, tax appeals are for the upcoming tax year. She said that the adjustment in Belle Ayre's assessed value will result in a decrease of approximately \$8,600 in annual tax revenue. City Manager Slatcher added that this amount would be issued as a credit on Belle Ayre's tax account, not refunded to them.

Mayor Bennett then called for a motion on Appeals # 1-3, the properties with no changes being made. Councilman Genshaw made the motion to make no changes as recommended by our Assessor Mr. David R. Hickey following his review of the information presented for Tax Map 3-31-5.00-080.08, vacant lot on Norman Eskridge Highway, Account # 6161; Tax Map 3-31-5.15-037.00, 8 Robinson Circle, Account # 3739; and Tax Map 5-31-10.17-077.00, 742 Rosetree Lane, Account # 602. Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

Mayor Bennett then called for a motion for Appeal # 4, the one vacant lot in Governor's Grant. Councilwoman Peterson made the motion to adjust, as recommended by our Assessor Mr. David R. Hickey, only Tax Map 5-31-10.00-306.00 from the current assessed value of \$20,000 reduced to \$18,800, the same as the other undeveloped lots on William Ross Lane in Governor's Grant subdivision being: 5-31-10.00-295.00, 296.00, 297.00, 298.00, 299.00, 300.00, 301.00, 302.00, 303.00, 304.00, 305.00, 307.00, 308.00, 312.00, 313.00, 314.00, 315.00, 316.00, 317.00, 318.00, 319.00, 320.00 and 321.00. Councilwoman Jones seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

Mayor Bennett then called for a motion for Appeal # 5, the 49 undeveloped lots in Belle Ayre. Councilwoman Jones made the motion to reduce the assessment of the 49 undeveloped lots in Belle Ayre subdivision Phase 2 as recommended by our Assessor Mr. David R. Hickey by 75%, from \$80,000 per parcel to \$20,000 per parcel being: Tax Map 5-31-10.00-408.00, 409.00, 410.00, 411.00, 412.00, 413.00, 414.00, 415.00, 416.00, 417.00, 418.00, 419.00, 420.00, 421.00, 422.00, 423.00, 424.00, 425.00, 426.00, 427.00, 429.00, 430.00, 431.00, 432.00, 436.00, 437.00, 438.00, 439.00, 440.00, 441.00, 442.00, 443.00, 444.00, 445.00, 448.00, 449.00, 450.00, 451.00, 452.00, 453.00, 454.00, 455.00, 456.00, 457.00, 460.00, 461.00, 462.00, 463.00 and 464.00. Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

Mayor Bennett then called for a motion to make changes effective July 1, 2012 for Belle Ayre, with a credit being posted to their account for the upcoming tax year. Councilwoman Jones so moved. Councilman Genshaw seconded the motion. The motion so passed with all present voting in favor.

Mayor Bennett asked if the property owners who appealed their assessments will be notified of the results. Sharon Drugash said that letters will be sent out to the property owners.

#### **REMINDER OF MEETINGS & SETTING NEW MEETINGS**

- Parks & Recreation Committee meeting – April 10<sup>th</sup>, Council Chambers at City Hall, 6:30 p.m.
- Special Mayor & Council Electric Rate Workshop – April 16<sup>th</sup>, Council Chambers at City Hall, 6:30 p.m.
- Recreation walking program kick-off – April 24<sup>th</sup> at Hooper's Landing, 7 p.m.

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councilman Shannon had nothing new to report for the Police and Fire Departments.

Councilwoman Jones reported that June Merritt has been working on the FY 2014 budget, as well as a new process for disconnects and reconnects. She reported that the final review from FEMA for Hurricane Sandy has been done, and the City may receive up to 75% reimbursement of \$39,180.16 in expenses. She said that Sharon Drugash has been working on road closure notices for the Electric Department, as well as Riverfest Car Show

registrations. She has also been working with Downes Associates on electric budget forecast and rate maintenance. She reported that Sharon will be mailing out Senior Citizen Tax Exemption applications and is preparing for the upcoming Council Workshop on retail rate maintenance. She is also continuing preparations for tax bills.

Councilman Genshaw reported that the Parks Department is busy mulching and getting sprinkler systems started. He reported that the Recreation Department is holding an open gym from 6 to 8 p.m. starting Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. He said that the walking club will kick off on April 24<sup>th</sup> at Hooper's Landing. He reported that meetings are being held for modified and slo-pitch softball, and games will start in May. He reported that the first movie night of the season will be held at the Ross Mansion on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. He said that Scott is working on starting a horseshoe program. He added that Nanticoke Little League's Opening Day is May 4<sup>th</sup>. He thanked Tim Conaway for his support of the Parks and Recreation Departments.

Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe reported that the Public Works Department has been working on street weed spraying and curb painting. She said that paving has started on Locust Street and Nylon Boulevard, and should take approximately 2 weeks to complete. She said that Public Works has installed and repaired water services on various streets, and is continuing with FOG inspections. She added that they are preparing for hydrant flushing, which will begin on April 29<sup>th</sup>. She reported that WWTF performance is good, and they are busy with routine work. She said that demolition is complete at 218 High Street. She reported that the Code Department has issued 12 building permits. She said that construction work at the High School is continuing and going well. She reported that a ceremony was held in Gateway Park on April 2<sup>nd</sup> for Autism Awareness, and that Gateway Park and City Hall are lit up blue for the month of April. She said that the Worksite Wellness kickoff event was held on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, with about 75 people in attendance. She added that Trisha has been working with the Recreation Department on the kickoff of the walking club, has attended several meetings and continues to work on Riverfest planning.

Councilwoman Peterson reported that the Electric Department has been working on tree trimming, as well as the distribution line extension at the Industrial Park. She said that there were two brief power outages, one on March 30<sup>th</sup> and one on April 1<sup>st</sup>. She reported that the Block Watch cleanup is going to be held on April 27<sup>th</sup>, and volunteers are needed.

Mayor Bennett added that April 15<sup>th</sup> starts Telecommunications Week. He said that he will be at the Police Department on Monday morning to commend the dispatchers on a job well done.

With no further comments, Mayor Bennett called for a motion to close the Regular Meeting of Mayor and Council. Councilwoman Peterson so moved. Councilwoman Phillips-Lowe seconded the motion and the motion so passed with all present voting in favor. Mayor Bennett closed the Regular Meeting at 7:32 p.m.

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Dolores Slatcher, City Manager