



## TOWN OF BETTERTON

### Meeting Minutes from Planning Commission Meeting January 11, 2021

#### Call to Order:

A meeting of the Betterton Planning and Zoning Commission was held virtually, due to COVID-19 restrictions, with the Town Manger hosting at Betterton Town Hall, and the rest of the attendees via "Go to Meeting" on January 11, 2021. The meeting began at 6:42 PM.

#### Present:

Attendees included: Tom Mogle, Elizabeth Greenwell, Ginny Story, Helen Sanders, Mel Rapelyea, Tom Deliberto, Harry Marcy. Also in attendance – Betterton residents Russell Bell, Russ Bell, William Stairiker, Janet Sorrentino, Candi Sorge, Carol Casey; MPCA members Danny Winborne and Bill Butts and MD. Planning Commission's Joe Griffiths.

#### Members not in Attendance:

Members not in attendance: Diana Le Clair.

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#### Announcements:

After call to order, minutes from last meeting in September approved.

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#### Unfinished Business:

- **Guidelines for rules & Procedures**

Mel needs to check on if we voted to approve the Rules and Procedures.

- **Beachfront Property**

The property adjacent to the beach. Owned by an out of state person who has expressed an interest in developing the property and building a condo unit there. Last meeting Russ Bell suggested perhaps the township could purchase the land. Mel is in touch with the Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, and a contact there Owen Bailey who also suggested that the township try to purchase the property and made us aware that there are grants available that may help us develop the property to keep the property as a green area.

Elizabeth mentioned she reached out to the owner a few months back, and at that time the owner said she was not interested in selling. She lives in California (Sheila has contact info for the owner). Russ suggested we see if we can have first rights of purchase. Mel wants to first get an idea of how much grant money might be available to us towards purchase.

- **Small Cell Ordinance (SCO)**

**5G** 3 waves – low, medium and high. Betterton most likely will not get high. Low wave is 20% better than 4G and it uses the same modules that we have installed on top of the water tower now. The high waves require a box about the size of a pizza box and requires one placed every 500 feet. Betterton most likely would not have the high wave. But if new equipment will be added to the community – like the previously mentioned boxes, then the Commission would need to approve it.

We need a policy already in place already against these 5G boxes being in the right of way of the town. This gives us the leverage to refuse something not aesthetically pleasing. Bill Butts from MPCA offered us the following advice. He worked 26 years in the cable tv industry. First and foremost, we need to identify what is

our “cable franchise requirement” for Betterton. And do we have multiple cell phone providers even outside of that franchise requirement. We need to understand what opportunities we locally have in places, as well as what the county has in place. All have to do with video, speed, bandwidth and connection capabilities. We need to understand what we are going to be able to operate in going forward.

Elizabeth noted that on the water tower we currently have Delmarva, Verizon Wireless, and the fiberoptic Think Big is coming. Our cable franchise is Atlantic Broadband, we have internet from them too.

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### Action Items:

- Check if the Rules have been approved. If not vote for approval in the next meeting.
- Follow up on funding available for the beachfront property purchase (Mel).
- Follow up on workshops/resources for comprehensive plan offered by MPCA (Helen). Schedule some working meetings for the comp plan (Helen & Ginny). Consult with Candi on the last annexation. (Helen)
- More research on the 5G question. Bill Butts may be a resource we can check in with on this. Helen will share Bill’s contact info out to Tom D. and Mel.
- Decide if we want our minutes posted to township's website. If so, Tom M can do it

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**New Business:** Solicit help other than just Ginny and Helen for comp. plan updates.

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### Report:

The announcement was made that Mr. Russ Bell has been nominated to become a member of the Planning Commission. His swearing in will be scheduled with Mayor and Council.

Betterton's new Town Manger, Mr. Tom Mogule was introduced. He started in December of 2020. Elizabeth Greenwell is the outgoing manager. The commission also welcomed guests from the Maryland Planning Commissioners Association (MPCA) Danny Winborne, Joe Griffiths, and Bill Butts.

There was a lively and informative discussion with the MPCA folks on reworking our Comprehensive Plan and possible workshops they will be offering this year. MPCA is a group of citizen planners, and a training and advocacy group for citizen planners. We are waiting on 2020 census results to incorporate into the plan, and Joe Griffiths pointed out there is a new requirement to include housing elements in the plan (as of June 2020). We must plan for low income and workforce housing. Based on AMI (Area Median Income – as HUD number). Comp plans are typically reviewed every 10 years. Dates have been pushed up because of the pandemic. Betterton's new date for an updated plan is 2025 (vs 2022). Suggested we consult with Betterton's town attorney on the housing element requirement. Comp plan will greatly be enhanced by getting input and buy in from all the township commissions. Candi: had input from Fire company, citizens, American legion last time. (Include Marzella's and BOTB?). Involve Kent County as well – KC plan was updated in 2017. Danny will send us Gaithersberg's 5G plan.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 PM.

Next meeting planned for April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,  
Helen J. Sanders