

Town of Little Creek Council Meeting Minutes for April 4, 2022

The meeting of the Little Creek Town Board was called to order at 7:00 pm by Commissioner Edward Strouse. Pledge of Allegiance was recited by Board members and residents in attendance and a moment of silence was observed. Having observed that all five members of the Board of Commissioners were present at the meeting, Commissioner Theresa May declared to all persons in attendance that there was a quorum and therefore the Town Council was free to conduct business and begin the meeting. Eighteen members of the public were in attendance for the general meeting: Carol Williams, Bill Clark, Scott Bundek, Judy Hegman, Doug Hegman, Sr., Susan Freese, Glenn Gauvry, Ariane Mueller, Penny Gentry, Jim Woznicki, Ken Frazier, Michael Rinehart, Jeanne Sullivan, Thomas Antonio, Angelia Strouse, Sam Gentry, Terry Gentry, Andrew May.

The meeting minutes from the previous month were electronically sent to the incoming commissioners for their review prior to this meeting. All commissioners on the board reviewed the minutes from March 7, 2022, and Commissioner Adrienne Hegman made a motion to accept the minutes received from the secretary/clerk. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Jason Arrington and put to a full board vote where it was passed unanimously.

The Treasurer's report was read aloud by the Treasurer, Adrienne Hegman, to the full assembly. A motion to accept the report from the March 7, 2022, was made by Commissioner Theresa May and seconded by Commissioner Carol Puleo. When presented for a vote to the full board it was passed unanimously.

Adrienne Hegman stated the pending bills and provided information on communication with the former code enforcement officer, Dennis Russum, concerning his request for payment of \$180.00 for work done for the town prior to the change in administration. Although there was no way to verify the days and work completed, Commissioner Hegman proposed the bill be paid thus ending the relationship between the town and the former code enforcement officer and allowing the Town of Little Creek to move forward in a different direction regarding these duties. After discussion among the Board of Commissioners, the motion was made by Commissioner Theresa May to pay the bill from Dennis Russum for work done on behalf of Town Code Enforcement under the former administration and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Carol Puleo. The motion was then put to a vote by all members of the Board of Commissioners, and it was unanimously decided to pay this bill. The formal motion to pay all the bills was made by Commissioner Jason Arrington. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Carol Puleo and put to full board for a vote. The Board unanimously passed the motion to pay the current bills.

Committee Reports

- a) Crime Watch – Commissioner Arrington
 - Attended Crime Watch monthly meeting, at Levy Court in Dover, DE
 - Still need a Crime Watch Leader (Captain)
 - Commissioner Arrington explained that Hartly started their Crime Watch in August of 2020 with 40 members and suggested the Town of Little Creek could reach out to

Pickering Beach and Kitts Hummock in partnership to help each other with Crime Watch

- According to Police from February 23 – March 23 vehicle thefts occurred mostly on Saturdays. Vehicle parts thefts (catalytic converters) happened from mid-day to late at night.
- The Next-Door App has been effective in many towns and is still being used to assist with deterring criminal activity. Commissioner Arrington would like to see this incorporated in Little Creek.
- The next Crime Watch meeting at Levy Court is scheduled for April 28, 2022, at 7:30 pm

b) Parks and Recreation – Commissioner Hegman

- April 17th the town will be hosting an Easter Egg Hunt that will be free to the community. Will be hiding Easter Eggs for the hunt at 11 am. Alicia Grow won the online Easter Egg guess. There is no age limit for the hunt.
 - i) Dog Park
 - More poop bags were ordered
 - In the process of getting pumps ready (per Doug Hegman)
 - Susan Freese is making a sign for gate about trash disposal (trash cans)
 - Can add 55-gallon drums (see Mr. Doug Hegman or Mr. Ken Frazier who could get plastic ones)
 - Susan Freese asked about moving the can that is located by the basketball court to the gate of the dog park.
 - The broken window of the Post Office has been repaired by Commissioner Edward Strouse

c) Code Enforcement – Commissioner Puleo

- The forms to report a code violation or concern are now available online via the Town of Little Creek website. Commissioner Carol Puleo explained how the process works and what to do to report a concern. She also explained that it will be checked regularly.
- The County came out to attend the two properties with trash violations. One of the properties was condemned for multiple violations.
- Commissioner Strouse explained the process involved and the role played by the Town and the County. Terry Gentry spoke about the house next to hers. It is still out of compliance with the Town Ordinance Codes. Commissioner Strouse mentioned that after speaking with the homeowner, a dumpster had been brought to the residence and was quickly filled with contents from the inside of the property, but there is still an issue with the back yard. He mentioned making another call to the owner regarding the back yard.
- Resident Thomas Antonio mentioned the problem with squatters. He sited the incident in Leipsic where squatters burned down the house where they were squatting. A suggestion was made to create a Town Squatter Law for Little Creek.

- d) Rental Properties – Commissioner Puleo
- Commissioner Carol Puleo and the full Board of Commissioners are currently reviewing the town’s rental policies.
 - She would like to see the letters from the last year. Resident, and former Treasurer for the Town of Little Creek, Judy Hegman mentioned Commissioner Adrienne Hegman could potentially help get these letters from former Commissioner Stacy Hoffer, her next-door neighbor. Former Commissioner Hoffer oversaw the handling of all duties regarding rental properties during the previous administration.
 - Suggestion was made to start fresh with notifications being sent out concerning rental properties
- e) Planning Commission – Carol Williams
- Nothing to report currently
- f) Little Creek Fire Company Report (President Ken Frazier)
- Fire Company currently has one well which provides 5,000 gallons of water supply to refill trucks
 - They will be putting in a second well which will allow the trucks to be filled faster
 - Impact on homeowners: It won’t change the Fire Company’s ISO rating, which is currently a 3. The end of November review was done, and the rating could get better with another review.
 - There is no official cause for the February fire at 326 Main Street. The footage captured on video by the camera located across the street from the blaze has been sent to Baltimore, Maryland, to prove out what happened. It could have been set and not accidental. The incident is still under investigation.
 - The State of Delaware is experiencing a lot of fires and fire related deaths this year. Typically, the number of calls received by Fire and Rescue are split evenly, usually 50/50, between fire and medical. However, this year, the percentage has increased to 80% fire and the number of medical calls has decreased to 20% overall. Many of these fires have been structural fires and there have been deaths related to some of these fires.
 - Chief Bundek explained the events which led to the damage of the Garage Door located on the front of the Engine Bay facing Main Street. The Fire Company was responding to a call, when a partially open compartment on the top of the truck caught the beam located at the upper inside edge of the garage bay. The insurance company was contacted, and the trucks were moved around to allow the fire company to provide the same level of service as always. There was only one truck damaged in the incident and no personal injuries were sustained. The Fire Company is working with the insurance company and building inspectors to ensure that the repairs are done to the existing bay and any problems are corrected to bring the bay up to current code regulations.

Old Business

a) Northern Flood Study

- A meeting has been arranged for Town Council to meet with State Representative Bill Carson, a representative from Del Dot, representatives from DNREC Conservation, and Sharon Cruz from Verdantas (The company who conducted the Northern Flood Study). The meeting is scheduled for April 20, 2022.
- Objectives of Meeting:
 - Look at current pipe system
 - Determine level of responsibility for repairs belonging to Del Dot and that belonging to the Town of Little Creek
- Next phase of study is estimated to cost \$99,500.00
- Continuing to move forward to get the issues resolved and repairs made to the tidal drainage system.

b) Traffic Calming

- i) Commissioner Strouse is in contact with the person in charge of truck enforcement unit.
 - Pennsy Supply is a local company with trucks that travel through town on Main Street often, but the company cannot do anything unless there is proof that the drivers are driving with the third axle down.
 - Council will revisit the town traffic issue with State Representative Bill Carson
 - State Police don't want to give out tickets because they will lose the case if contested in traffic court
 - ii) Regular Traffic Report
 - Office of Traffic Enforcement contact name: Jackie McDermott
 - Commissioner Strouse is in contact with her
 - Officers were present a few days in Little Creek and during that time, 8 citations were written. The time that the officers spent in town was free to the town as it was covered by funds provided through the State for law enforcement in Delaware's small towns
 - iii) Crosswalks
 - Continuing to pursue placing crosswalks at strategic areas along Main Street
 - Possible grants available through Bayshore to By Ways, (Contact name: Ann Gravatt)
 - Mayor Strouse will contact Ann Gravatt to discuss
 - Mayor Strouse will also meet with the local farmers and Commissioner Buckson about traffic issues and work together to find an agreeable solution for traffic calming measures. The meeting is scheduled for April 6, 2022, at Levy Court in Dover.
 - iv) Banners
 - Town Council will work to get banners placed back on poles throughout town as soon as possible
- ### c) ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act)
- Town Council needs to investigate and make certain of reimbursements
- ### d) Land Development Ordinances

- Town Council continues to research newly adopted ordinances and determine any revisions that need to be made.
- e) Cavaliers Property
 - The Town does not currently have paperwork regarding this property
 - Property has been sold, but there is nothing official
 - The new owner will need to reach out to the Town Council concerning transfer paperwork, etc.
- f) Storm Water
 - Need to take closer look at Catch Basins, but there is nothing new to report currently
- g) Website
 - Commissioner Adrienne Hegman continues to update and maintain the Town of Little Creek website.
- h) Dover Post
 - Commissioner Theresa May continues to reach out to the Dover Post Office to change the individual house delivery of the Dover Post weekly issued newspaper to box delivery at one to two locations within the Town. There is nothing new to report.

New Business

- a) Zoom Account – Commissioner Strouse
 - The Zoom account is active
 - It will be utilized once the ground rules have been written and set in place
 - The Fire Company has been granted permission to use the account for their meetings
- b) Trash Contract – Commissioner Strouse
 - Still untouched. Commissioner Strouse will reach out to the Trash Companies as soon as possible.
- c) Community Partnerships – Commissioner May
 - Nothing new to report. Commissioner Strouse will be sending the contact names and information to Commissioner Theresa May as she will take over the responsibilities regarding partnerships with the surrounding communities.
- d) Grass Cutting – Commissioner Hegman
 - Mike Little is the person caring for the cutting of the lawn at the Dog Park, Post Office, Town Hall, and surrounding area. His rates are changing to \$170.00 per week and includes weeding.
 - A motion was made by Commissioner Puleo and seconded by Commissioner May to continue using the current grass cutting services and agree to pay the increased amount for these services. When put to the full Board of Commissioners for vote, the motion was passed unanimously.
- e) MuniPay – Commissioner Hegman
 - Active URL which could be added on the Town of Little Creek website
 - Would allow fees to be paid online
 - Contains dropdown list of transactions that can be made which specify where funds are to be applied

- It will not tell the amount needing to be paid or take the place of billing, but it will give the option for making online payments instead of writing and mailing checks.
 - The fee to use MuniPay can be \$3.00 or a 2% fee to use credit card to make payments. The application determines what fee to charge and selects whichever equals the greater amount.
 - Donations to the Dog Park may also be made through this application. If the payment is considered a donation, the convenience fee is waived.
 - The money goes directly to the Town bank account.
 - If approved at the Town Council Meeting, MuniPay will be added to the Town website.
 - A motion was made by Commissioner Arrington to accept the addition of MuniPay as an online option for paying fees and making donations to the Town. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hegman. When put to the full Board of Commissioners for vote, the motion was passed unanimously.
- f) Spring Clean Up
- Working with Fire Department to get access to a dumpster
 - The fee to empty the dumpster is \$350.00
 - Looking into whether can use some of ARPA funds to assist with paying this fee
 - Susan Freese is willing to make a flyer for this event.
 - Date for Spring Clean Up to be announced as soon as event can be scheduled, and details are worked out
- g) FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) Request
- Paul White requested documentation be sent to him, but he did not want it to be scanned or electronic in form
 - A response was sent back to him on March 17, 2022, stating that there was no way to get the documents requested without having them scanned or electronically sent.
- h) Sidewalks
- The sidewalks are broken and uneven which poses a tripping hazard for pedestrians
 - Resident Jason Courtney could temporarily fix spots posing hazardous issues
 - Additional concern is some of the sidewalk areas in town are not full width (30 in. of clearance) as they are overgrown with grass and or other forms of vegetation
 - Ann Gravatt, with Bayshore to By Ways, has grants available and Council will investigate what may be available to assist with cost of repairs
 - Commissioner Strouse researched what is available to aid and found an organization called America Walks.
 - America Walks invests money in towns to improve conditions for and encourage walking. In some cases, this organization has covered 100% of the cost to repair/provide suitable walking areas for towns needing assistance.
 - Another problem to consider is the collapsing pipes under Route 9 which are causing some areas of sidewalk to also collapse and will need to be repaired/replaced in order to level out and correct the problem in the long term.
- i) Streetlights – Commissioner Strouse
- Streetlights are one of the Town’s highest expenses

- The current light bulbs can be replaced with LED bulbs for free
- Making this change will save the Town of Little Creek \$700.00 per year
- A motion was made by Commissioner Adrienne Hegman to have the City of Dover replace the bulbs in Little Creek with LED bulbs. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Carol Puleo. The motion was then sent to a vote with the full Board of Commissioners and was then voted unanimously in favor of replacing the bulbs in the streetlights.
- Commissioner Edward Strouse will call Customer Service to arrange the replacement of the bulbs.
- j) The property owned by the Fire Department that is intended to be used for Fire Department expansion is currently zoned residential and zoned for farming. Documentation also claims the zoning for that area is undefined.
 - The Town can determine what want the zoning to be for that parcel of land by sending a letter that affect.
 - Fire Company plan says they want it to be institutional
 - Motion was made by Commissioner Adrienne Hegman to send a letter to the Planning and Zoning Office to get the parcel listed as being zoned for institutional use. This motion seconded by Commissioner Theresa May. When put to a full Board of Commissioners vote it was passed unanimously.
- k) Options for Solar Lighting at the Dog Park/Town Hall
 - Commissioner May will present options, with quotes, for discussion at the next Town Council meeting.

Public Comment

- Floor was opened for Public Comment
- Resident Terry Gentry brought up her concern about farmers spraying fields behind her house on windy days. She stated that when the spray blows into her yard, it kills off the trees/plants she has planted. Other residents in attendance also expressed concern over the spraying of agents on the fields on windy days.
- Commissioner Strouse will reach out to the farmers who spray the fields near Terry Gentry's property.

Adjournment

Motion was made to adjourn meeting by Commissioner Jason Arrington and seconded by Commissioner Carol Puleo and put to the full Board for vote. All members having voted "Aye" the motion to adjourn was carried and the meeting was officially ended at 8:22 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa May
Secretary