



# TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH

(INCORPORATED 1922)

3243 WALNUT DRIVE

Highland Beach, Maryland 21403

Telephone (410) 268-2956

## MAYOR

William H. Sanders III

## TREASURER

Sheila Jeanne Murchison

## COMMISSIONER

Eric Brewington

Michele Fuller

Sheila Jeanne Murchison

Benjamin Secundy

## Board of Commissioners' Meeting

**Date:** November 27, 2021

**Attendees:** Mayor Sanders, Commissioners Brewington, Fuller, Murchison, and Secundy. The meeting was called to order at 11:02 a.m.

### Citizens' Input

Comments were received from citizens.

### Journal Review and Approval

A motion was made by Commissioner Murchison to approve the journal from October 23, 2021. The motioned was seconded and approved with three votes in favor and one opposed.

### Treasurer's Report

Commissioner Murchison gave the Treasurer's report and stated that the treasury balance across all accounts is \$450,906.57. The town is still in a period of very few expenses.

### Mayor's Report

On Nov. 11, 2021 the Board of Commissioners met with a delegation from the state which included Senator Elfreth and her Chief of Staff; Delegate Henson; Delegate Jones and her Chief of Staff; and Vincent Moulden, Asst. Director for Strategic Engagement for the County Executive. The delegation was given a tour and history of the town before returning to the Town Hall for the meeting. The meeting agenda included: general support in response to climate change; rising Chesapeake Bay waters; shore erosion and replacement of timber groines; storm water drainage; replacement of gas generators at the town hall with a battery wall; moving electric service lines underground; multiplex tennis court; pavilion and approx. cost; battery wall for the museum; annual fund for museum maintenance; street paving; and a proclamation at the statehouse for the 100-year anniversary. Mayor Sanders and several

commissioners stated that the meeting went very well. Senator Elfreth also called after the meeting to express how well the meeting went and how impressed she was with projects undertaken.

Mayor Sanders and Environmental Consultant, Zora Lathan, have undertaken to prepare a grant application for the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) to fund an erosion control project. To date, they have been conducting necessary research, consulting with contractors and other contacts in the environmental community, and working with the grantors at DNR to determine what elements the grant application needs to address. The grant application is due December 15, 2021 and will be awarded in July of 2022. The contractor is working on a preliminary design. Because the permit process takes about a year and the final design is not required to start, the permit process will be started in January of 2022. The intention is to proceed with the project whether or not the DNR grant is awarded. Work done prior to the grant is not reimbursable and will come from the town's reserve (savings) funds. The cost of the project is estimated at \$1M. It would provide erosion control and bring in additional sand, pushing it out at least another 50 ft. None of the playground equipment should have to be moved. If the grant is not awarded, there are two alternative avenues for funding.

- 1) Apply Anne Arundel County for the Erosion Control Grant Program
- 2) Federal infrastructure funds. States will be looking for shovel-ready projects.

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Commissioner Murchison moved to hire Coastline Design, P.C. for shore erosion control design and permitting work at a cost of \$27,500. The motion was seconded and approved by all.

The mayor recommended naming the town hall in honor of Charles and Laura Douglass and naming the new pavilion for Dr. Mary Church Terrell. Commissioner Murchison moved to approve the naming of the town hall as the Charles and Laura Douglass Town Hall at Highland Beach. The motion was seconded and approved with four votes in favor (incl. the mayor) and Commissioner Fuller opposed.

Feedback from the residents regarding the construction of a new pavilion was 2-to-1 in favor of the project. The planned structure would be 1/3 larger than the town hall's multi-purpose room, accommodating at least 100 people. It would be used for covered events, such as the July 4<sup>th</sup> event, and eliminate the need for tents. The pavilion would not have air conditioning (since it will be open air), a bathroom (since it will be for residents' use), or a chair lift (it will be low enough for handicap access). Since there will be no mechanical components, maintenance is expected to be minimal. Although the initial plan was to use savings to complete the project, the state's current advocacy of open-air structures presents an opportunity for full funding. After the meeting with the state delegation, Delegate Jones forwarded paperwork for a Legislative Bond Initiative to be presented during the next legislative session. The naming of the pavilion in honor of Mary Church Terrell would be a key factor in the funding request. Funds would be awarded in July of 2022. State funding would not require that the facility be open to the public.

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Commissioner Secundy moved to proceed with the construction of a pavilion to be named the Dr. Mary Church Terrell Pavilion, contingent on full funding by the state. If that funding does

not come through, the motion will come back to the commissioners to approve the project using town funds. The motion was seconded and approved by all.

*(In response to a citizen's question, the mayor discussed the purchase of a mini bobcat during the Citizens' Input period.)* It was recommended that a mini bobcat be purchased to address the ongoing need to relocate sand on the beach, as well as to move/remove large objects. Owning the equipment would allow for faster response times, while the smaller size, and running on tracks instead of wheels, is better suited to use on the beachfront and less damaging than the larger equipment used by professional firms. Purchasing new vs pre-owned will provide a full warranty and allow it to be outfitted for the town's needs. The cost is \$28,178.65, which would come from savings. The mayor and the Commissioner for Public Works would be trained to operate it, as well as any citizens who are interested. It would be stored in the new shed that is to be built. The unit could also be rented or loaned to Venice Beach.

Commissioner Brewington moved to purchase the bobcat. The motion was seconded and approved with four votes in favor (incl. the mayor) and Commissioner Fuller opposed.

The annual report of the Frederick Douglass Museum and Cultural Center has been received. Their beginning balance was \$25,354 and ending balance is \$28,417.

According to our Senator, there is likely to be a proclamation on the Senate floor on April 13, 2022 commemorating the 100 Year Incorporation. The mayor proposed a celebration program for the citizens to be held the same day. A catered event was suggested with a tentative location being Quiet Waters Park. It was proposed that the event be paid for by the Board from town funds and each household receive two non-transferrable tickets. Preliminary thoughts regarding the program were shared and it was asked that others give it some thought as well.

Recommendations for a vendor to provide decontamination services for the Town Hall and museum have been identified. Decontamination will need to be done on an ongoing basis using American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds.

### **Commissioners' Reports**

Commissioner Secundy reported that the Zoning Commission met and reviewed four applications. Three were approved, and one was disapproved.

Commissioner Brewington reported that due to potential permitting requirements, and the need to wait for favorable weather, and determining what the pier looked like before, repairing the pier will not be a quick or easy fix. He has identified someone who can repair the pier, however that person is out of the country for the next few months. In the interim, other minority contractors are being consulted. The mayor added he also had someone come out and walk the pier and stated that although the platform washed off, the substructure is still there, so a permit may not be needed.

Commissioner Fuller reported that she reviewed all the ordinances and has some recommendations that she will forward to the mayor. It was recommended that a digital version of the ordinances be created.

**Old Business**

There was no old business.

**New Business**

Commissioner Fuller recommended forming the erosion task force by Jan. 31, 2022, as well as implementing a formal maintenance program for outdoor structures, such as the piers.

**Citizens' Input**

The meeting was again opened for citizens' input.

**Set next meeting date and adjourn**

The next meeting was set for 11 a.m. on Dec. 18, 2021

The meeting was adjourned at 1:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lisa Miller Scott, Town Manager