



TOWN OF HIGHLAND BEACH

(INCORPORATED 1922)

3243 WALNUT DRIVE

Highland Beach, Maryland 21403

Telephone (443) 837-5184

MAYOR

Crystal Chissell

COMMISSIONER

Michele Fuller

G. William Hunter

Sheila Jeanne Murchison

Linda Holmes Newton

TREASURER

Ronald L. Stokes, Sr.

Board of Commissioners Meeting Monday, October 14, 2024

Meeting called to order at 5:04 pm.

In attendance: Mayor Chissell, Vice Mayor Fuller, Commissioners Hunter, Murchison and Newton, Town Attorney DeLoach.

Review Agenda – There were no amendments to the agenda.

Public Comment – None.

Motion to approve the September 16, 2024 Journal made by Commissioner Hunter, Seconded by Commissioner Newton. Approved unanimously.

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report for September 2024 made by Commissioner Hunter, seconded by Commissioner Murchison. Approved unanimously.

Mayor Chissell introduced Jason DeLoach, Town Attorney.

Old Business

- Status Updates
 - Commissioner Newton reported that new traffic control signs are expected to be installed at end of October.
 - Old playground equipment was removed from the beachfront last week.
 - Dead trees on the beach will be removed once the tree removal contractor secures a permit. on beach.
 - Squirrels that were nesting in the eaves at Town Hall have been removed and the hole sealed. The pest control contractor discovered that raccoons are living in the Town Hall green roof.
 - Commissioner Newton is seeking an available marine contractor to remove the damaged lower level of the pier.
 - Commissioner Newton stored the two golf carts in one of the town sheds.
 - The HBCA has painted the sign at the entrance and cleaned the traffic control station.
 - Beach chairs will be stored in the shed at the end of October.

- Mayor Chissell reported that the town website has been updated with a new design and updated features. Additional work will be done to organize and add information on the site.
- Shoreline project – Mayor Chissell reported on her efforts to secure resources to address shoreline concerns.

Communities Involved

As discussed with the Commissioners and the Board during the past year, we are planning to move forward on a collaborative effort with other Annapolis Neck shoreline communities. The following communities are engaged in this effort: Annapolis Roads, Arundel on the Bay, Bay Ridge, Fishing Creek Farm, Oyster Harbor, Venice Beach, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Community Resilience Building Workshop

The Nature Conservancy has offered to facilitate a Community Resilience Building workshop for the Annapolis Neck shoreline communities to help us identify our common concerns and determine whether everyone will be committed to moving forward together in some way. One representative from each community attended a kickoff meeting on Thursday, October 10 to meet the CRB facilitator and learn what to expect from the workshop.

Resilience Action Planning for Maryland's Coastal Communities

Mayor Chissell applied for Highland Beach to participate in a program called Resilience Action Planning for Maryland's Coastal Communities offered by the University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center. Last week Highland Beach was accepted into the program. The program "offers coastal communities in Maryland the opportunity to participate in a coastal resilience training seminar, receive direct technical assistance, and develop a Resilience Workplan that summarizes key vulnerabilities and a set of prioritized, finance-ready, nature-based coastal resilience project ideas."

MTAP Fund Mapping

Mayor Chissell applied for the State of Maryland's Department of Budget and Management's MTAP Program and Highland Beach has been accepted. This program helps Maryland municipalities match local infrastructure needs with competitive federal funding opportunities through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

Anne Arundel County Hazard Mitigation Plan 2025 Update

The Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management is updating the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan. The current plan expires in June 2025. Federal law requires that the plan be updated every 5 years and having a plan in place is necessary in order to access various FEMA funding. Because Highland Beach is a municipality, the County must engage with us and has asked to hold a public meeting on the plan for our community. We are including all of the Annapolis Neck shoreline communities in the public meeting. It will be held on Monday, October 21 at 5pm at Hillsmere Elementary School and virtually on Zoom. After the hearing, the County will be asking that citizens complete a survey to identify where hazards are happening. We want to be well represented so that we can complete this important step toward federal funding.

New Business

- Appointments

Mayor Chissell proposed appointing Jerilyn Pope to the position of Town Clerk. Mayor Chissell shared some highlights from Ms. Pope's resume that indicate her qualifications. Ms. Pope would

work as an independent contractor on a project basis to help with administrative and strategic needs. Examples of some projects she might work on are grant writing and grant management, managing the shoreline project as it progresses, designing a records management system, and updating the code of ordinances.

Motion by Commissioner Newton to approve the appointment of Jerilyn Pope as Town Clerk, seconded by Commissioner Hunter. Approved unanimously.

Mayor Chissell appointed Joyce Stokes to the Board of Supervisors of Elections.

Motion by Commissioner Hunter to approve the appointment, seconded by Commissioner Murchison. Approved unanimously.

Mayor Chissell thanked Jean Langston, Dena Sewell, and Mike Harris who all served on the Board of Supervisors of Elections from 2019 to 2023.

There is a current vacancy on the Planning and Zoning Commission.

- Tree hazards – A tree next to the Douglass Summer House will be pruned to try to prolong its life. Commissioner Newton is attempting to find viable acorns from that tree.
- An arborist has surveyed all trees on property owned by the Town. There are three dead trees on upper Lake Avenue that need to be removed, along with debris. Commissioner Newton is seeking a second estimate for all of the tree work.
- The bamboo flooring at Town Hall is buckling. Commissioner Newton has had a building contractor assess the floor but the contractor was not able to determine the cause of the buckling.
- The roof at Town Hall appears to be leaking and water stains are visible on the ceiling. A roofer has assessed the roof and said entire roof is in bad condition. The green roof has rotted and the membrane needs to be removed. The shingles on the roof have deteriorated and the skylights need to be replaced.

Public Comment

Sterling Seay asked if it is necessary to hire a marine contractor to remove the lower level of pier. Ben Secundy asked if the Commissioners will we replace lower level of the pier and asked if the Commissioners are seeking contractors to replace the Bruce Avenue pier.

Ron Stokes said that he knows of a marine contractor in Cape St. Clair.

Commissioner Newton said that she has spoken with about 5 marine contractors but they are either not interested in the project or have not responded.

Grayson Dixon thanked the Board for their work and transparency.