

DRAFT

Town Council Work Session
December 14, 2005

The Town Council Work Session was called to order by President, Donna Turner at 3:09 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the Town Hall. The following Council and staff were present, Donna Turner, Council President, Mary McCarthy, Council Vice President, Norman Pinder, Council Member, Royden Powell, Town Manager, Steve Kehoe, Town Attorney, and Jane Saulsbury, Administrative Aide.


This work session was requested by the Queen Anne's County Commissioners to provide them an update of the status of the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant, the proposed change in the groundwater discharge permit, and the operation of the spray field irrigation. Commissioners Dick Smith, Gene Ransom and Ben Cassell were present. The Commissioners were curious to know if the seasonal variations in ground water discharge and the expansion of the spray area relative to the buffer will allow more building permits to be issued. Yes, it does. Mr. Powell explained the Capacity Management Plan and how the design capacity of the wastewater treatment plant relates to available allocations. The Town can meet its present commitments, but would like to boost the seasonal capacity to 542,000 gallons per day to meet future obligations for infill lots and commercial projects that are pending. Mr. Smith asked if the Town is requesting an increase in the land being sprayed and Mr. Powell advised yes. The Town's current capacity can meet the three to five year estimated growth and fulfill the Public Works Agreements, but wishes to have greater flexibility for those projects coming up. Mr. Smith advised that the County has to address commercial and economic growth. Mr. Cassell said "we know exactly what we have" and that the County needs assurances that the Town has a handle on the development that is in the works. They are concerned hearing that the Town needs more capacity. Mrs. McCarthy assured the Commissioners that Mr. Powell had worked incredibly hard on formulating a policy for issuing sewer allocations that will meet the current demand. Mr. Kehoe said the policy guidelines give the Town flexibility to issue building permits to Symphony Village and North Brook up to 104 permits per year. The Town is requesting the County's support in its pursuit of additional spray area to increase the gallons per day from 500,000 to 542,000. Mr. Ransom said that the Commissioners want to make sure the spray-field is operating well and has been approved by the Maryland Department of the Environment. He suggested the Town present its plan at the County's Master Water and Sewer Update Hearing scheduled for December 20, 2005.

The Commissioners were of different opinions as to the Town's sewer management. Mr. Ransom and Mr. Smith prefer spray irrigation if properly run, monitored and governed. Mr. Cassell said he would like the sewer treatment be improved so it could be put into the Bay. Mr. Pinder asked why the Riggs Farm was not approved for spray irrigation. He was advised that the farm does not perk sufficiently to be a good spray irrigation choice. Mr. Smith said he has no problem approving 42,000 more gallons providing it is for mixed use and no additional development. Mr. Ransom stated he is "not comfortable" at this time to support the proposal, but that he would do some "homework" and speak with adjacent property owners. He will also speak with the other two Commissioners. He said there is a history of M.D.E. not regulating properly and he has a lack of confidence in their ability to regulate the Town. Mr. Smith added that he is concerned about the buffer protection and adjoining homes, not wanting the spray to leave the farm. He asked if the Town could position flags at 100 feet and 50 feet from the property line so that he could visually see the area that is being sprayed.

After discussion of some of the technical aspects of the spray operation, Mr. Cassell affirmed that he trusts the Town to operate the plant responsibly. Mr. Smith advised the Town to send a letter to the County prior to the hearing next week with details of the Town's water and sewer plan and its allocation policy.

There being no further business to discuss, the work session was adjourned at 4:35 p.m. by motion and second of Mr. Pinder and Mrs. McCarthy, respectively and by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,



Jane Saulsbury
Administrative Aide