**Commissioners of Barnesville**

**Minutes for** October 16, 2023, 7:30 pm

The meeting was held in person at town hall with the option to connect via. Ten residents and Commissioners Callear and Zuckerman were in attendance. The Special Guest was Marilyn Balcombe, Montgomery County Councilmember, District 2.

**Agenda.**

The meeting was called to Order at 7:32pm, followed by thePledge of Allegiance.

The past minutes from the September 2023 meeting were approved.

The Financial Report was reviewed. State income tax and Property tax were partially received. As property tax bills are due in September and December, more revenue is expected. For long-term maintenance of the park planting areas, it was proposed that the town solicit bids to contract bed maintenance, watering, and weed removal. The addition of the street trees was also discussed as an added expense for the park this fiscal year.

The Beautification and Sustainable Barnesville reports focused on the park. Maintenance identified for the park planting areas was descripted as a once a year cleaning, periodic cleaning of the area by the guardrail and identification of improvements for plantings, addition of street trees, replacement of grass needing mowed along the steep slope by the sidewalk with a ground cover, reseeding areas, and water deliver as needed during the growing season. Brightview was identified as an option. Bids will also be sought from other companies. Lauren Greenberger and Clean Cut Lawns were mentioned as additional companies. Suggested trees for the streetside planning were suggested. Audrey provided handouts with photos of the potential trees. Trees may be purchased through Stadler Nurseries for planting. The best time of year to plant trees would be November through January, if the ground is not yet frozen. As for a water source at the park, the Agricultural Well is an option of high cost and a Gravity fed cistern would be limited by the hard, impervious surface of the patio an installation of a receiving cistern and gravity fed distribution. No solution was decided at this time.

Sustainable Barnesville will be holding the monthly Mindful Meditation in October (see events list) and in November.

The Board of Appeals has no activity to report.

Capital Improvements discussed included work to complete at the park for a water supply for the plantings, stormwater management around town hall, and pressure washing the fencing behind town hall. Holly and Tracey will look for the bids received in 2020 regarding a stormwater management at town hall.

For Traffic Calming, there were 10 shifts in September, including weekend and weekday morning and weekday evening. A total of 92 traffic stops were made. The traffic camera on Beallsville Rd is helping to deter speeding in both directions. The purchase of dynamic feedback speed limit signs were discussed. The signs would be placed at existing poles.In addition to feedback signs, it was brought up if the town were interested in purchasing its own speed cameras. Council member Balcombe spoke on this issue. For the state route, MDOT would need to approve for safety and clean line of site prior to installation of any camera. If it were located on a county road, then the county would need to approve installation. New Market, Maryland, who also does not have their own police force, did purchase their own equipment and the process took two years.

As a side note, any revenue received from speed cameras cannot exceed more than 10% of a municipal budget. Any surplus is returned to the state. Barnesville’s speed camera revenue has supplemented payments to Streethawk and other public safety issues, such as sidewalks.

The stop sign at the park may need to still be adjusted since the location of the sidewalk was painted prior to the stop sign, and not after.

Traffic patterns in Barnesville indicate when traffic congestion on I-270 is high, additional vehicles cut through Barnesville and Boyds. The traffic light at Boyds is not timed for the high volume and results in back-ups. The signal timing is not adjustable based on traffic volume and is maintained at a regular sequence. A prior traffic study and master plan for the Boyds and Germantown MARC stations suggested road redesign to improve traffic patterns. At Boyds, a Bus Lane is proposed to improve Bus access to at MARC. And, a Clarksburg to Boyds (MARC) route may be added if the need is found.

Council member Balcombe also provided an update on Whites Ferry operations. The problem is not yet solved. Recently a forum was held and both property owners gave public statements on what they desire. The Ferry owner has offered to give the business to the State, however this does not resolve the issue of a landing site on the Virginia side. Several options were mentioned (1) County revenue could provide for a land lease, (2) Virginia property owner could purchase the ferry business, (3) County is looking at different landing sites on the Virginia side, but this is problematic given the depth and flow rate of the Potomac and appropriate substrate for a landing site. The state of Virginia has the authority to do eminent domain and take the land for a ferry landing site, but they are trying to avoid this action. The Ferry does not have a significant impact on Loundon County, whereas traffic in our area has increased with Virginia vehicles going through Point of Rocks and then Barnesville to reach portions of Montgomery County. The Montgomery County government held a meeting regarding ferry operations, it is available on YouTube.

Planning and Zoning had no report

Community Connections will be holding their Fall Festivities on Saturday Oct. 28th (pumpkin contest judging) and Sunday Oct. 29th (apple bake off). Please register on the Google form distributed or email Holly or Clare. All categories of entries are welcomed.

The Twilight in the Park in September was well attended and will be held again once the weather warms.

Town Hall is available for rent and has been used for the Sustainable Barnesville’s Mindful Meditation.

For Communications, an issue for November/December will be prepared. Send articles and photos to Holly.

No New Business at this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40pm

Upcoming Events

Sugarloaf Mountain Mindfulness Community and Sustainable Barnesville: Mindfulness Meditation. October 20; 6:45 – 9pm.

Fall Extravaganza-Pumpkin Decorating Contest. October 28, Judging at 1 pm

Fall Extravaganza-Apple Bake-off. Town Hall. October 29, 3-5pm

Trick or Treating. October 31

November Town Meeting—November 20, 7:30pm