

Commissioners of Barnesville
Minutes
Town meeting January 2021
16 attendees

Meeting called to order
Minutes approved for October 2020 and November 2020

Committee Reports

Financial

State income tax revenue is coming in and is greater than anticipated.

The expenses for the stormwater design are being tracked as “consulting reimbursables” and funds from the stormwater grant as “deposits for reimbursables”.

Beautification

Monocacy Garden Club and committee will plant Town beds at signs, Town Hall, and the MARC station in April. Additional volunteers may be needed.

Sustainable Barnesville

Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at 7pm. Additional work was completed at the park with the installation of bluebird boxes. One additional box will be installed. Boxes will be monitored for use by bluebirds and other species. The Plant an Extra Row for Black Rock and WUMCO was successful in helping to address food insecurity which is increasing in the county. In the coming year, gardeners are encouraged to plant extra garden crops or donate shares through Community Supported Agriculture. Sustainable Barnesville is hosting a presentation of the County’s Climate Action Plan draft. The presentation will be Feb. 24 at 7pm via Zoom. Sustainable Barnesville also recommended and drafted a letter of support from the Town for the Maryland Safety and Transit Act to fully fund public transportation at the state level.

Board of Appeals

The Board is in the process of drafting a request form for Special Exception and Variance as recommended in the Revisions to the Master Plan. A form for Expedited Review for certain categories may be developed at a later date. Clarification of Variance, Special Exception, and Appeal was provided. A variance can be requested where a resident believes that application of the ordinance would result in undue hardship or difficulty and asks for an alternative in keeping with the intent of the ordinance. A special exception may be requested when an identified ordinance prohibits or prevents the specifications proposed. An appeal applies in cases when a permit was denied and applicants seek approval.

Capital Improvement

Town engineer Doug Lohmeyer, along with the Town attorney Jay Gullo, and the Tolbert family worked to provide documentation for an easement agreement regarding a right-of-way for a sidewalk from the park intersection to the Post Office. The agreement was provided to the State Highway Administration (SHA) and we are awaiting input from SHA.

Stormwater

The Town has received the conceptual plans from the CPJ & Associates regarding redirecting and limiting stormwater runoff. The conceptual plan will be revised to include suggestions for Green Water Solutions on the St. Mary's paved areas. Greywater Solutions require more engineering work and may need to go to the county to modify existing drainage structures. The Town will need to keep long-term solutions in mind. It was noted that this conceptual plan addresses the first inch of rainfall. Stormwater issues in Barnesville extend beyond the drainage situation at Barnesville and West Harris Roads. In the future, a subcommittee may be formed to address stormwater issues in Barnesville.

Park Development

The flower beds in the park were planted by volunteers from Sustainable Barnesville, the Beautification Committee, and Commissioners. The patio is completed. The electric service near the tree is completed. The sign has been installed. The park furniture was received and assembled by volunteers. The contractor needs to finish installing the wildflower bed at the south end and small modifications of the patio are needed prior to the furniture being installed. Additional plantings around the sign and larger plants will be completed throughout the year. This summer should be the 17 year cicadas and it would be best to plant at-risk plants at a later date. The Program Open Space grant is available to reimburse expenses incurred for the progress to date. The dedication ceremony will take place later in the year. A community suggestion of installing a Free Little Library was discussed. There is currently a free library collection at the Post Office and at the parking lot at St. Mary's. Such a book share project may be considered at a later date for the park.

Traffic Calming

In December, 56 citations were issued by Streethawk. The committee is discussing the possibility of striping on the roads, such as by Comus Inn, as an option to slow traffic. The visibility at West Harris and Barnesville was discussed. The homeowners contracted with a fence company for the fence installation. The fencing company received approval from the county, however, after installation the county was further consulted and reevaluated the right of way for the fence installation. The fence company is responsible for modifying the installation to be in compliance for the right-of-way and for fence height on a corner lot. The repair and replacement is scheduled to be completed soon. Additional concerns by the community were raised regarding a real estate sign near the corner and visibility from West Harris.

Community Events

The Town and Commissioners thanked the committee for all of their work in providing several holiday events in December. In February, the committee is planning a Valentine's Craft Virtual Event (Feb. 11th) and there will be the Town Dinner on Feb. 21st. All events are currently being held virtually with Zoom. The Town Dinner will include the option to pre-order a pizza kit from Pisano's in Germantown. The pizza kits would be delivered to attendees prior to the event date. During the Virtual Town Dinner, there will also be Virtual Bingo and a brief town meeting. A flyer with RSVP will be distributed as the event approaches. Ideas for future events include a

speaker series on Growing Up in the Barnesville Area, a Recipe Book, Cooking Demonstration, and other events at regular intervals. Additional events in the area may be found through the Poolesville Area Senior Center.

Town Hall is currently closed to the public.

Communications

The Tidbit will be published soon and additional articles and photos may be sent to Holly Larisch. The Town thanks Judy Stone at Stone Graphics for her time and dedication in updating the town website.

New Business

Question 1: What is the construction at 15500 Barnesville Road? It is a Buddhist Prayer Temple with dormitory housing.

Community Involvement Request: A proposal of solar installation in the Ag Reserve was brought before the Montgomery County Council. ZTA 20-01 would open up 1,800 acres (or about 2%) of the County's 93,000 acre Agricultural Reserve for community solar as a limited use in contrast to the Conditional Use Application process. The County Council will be voting on the ZTA on January 26th. The Sustainable Barnesville committee, Sugarloaf Citizens Association, and the Montgomery Countryside Alliance ask for letters in support of the compromise position requiring the Conditional Use process.

Letters on Police Use of Force. The State House and Senate will be voting on Feb. 9th on bills to include ways to deescalate the use of police force. The Town Commissioners will send letters of support on the bills to representatives.

Question 2: Several residents received letters regarding the state coming to survey local properties for the installation of trees to mitigate loss of forests and wetlands in the area. It was asked if other town or neighboring residents have received similar requests? Thoughts were that this may be related to the expansion of I-270.

Question 3: Are Masks now Mandatory at the Post Office: If this is now mandatory, how is it being enforced? Community members felt self-policing and politeness are the policy. The county is also conducting inspections as needed to enforce mandatory county health and safety requirements.

Question 4: What is the current availability and locations for Vaccine: Pre-registration with the county department of health is available online. The state and county have stated eligibility guidance for residents to receive the vaccine. There is currently greater demand than supply available of the vaccine. Poolesville Family Practice is making necessary preparations to become a vaccine distribution site, however, vaccine is not yet available for this location. The commissioners will write a letter of support to county and state representatives and to the

governor's office requesting vaccine distribution to the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve.

Town News: Sadly, long-time resident Dave Johnson recently passed away. His contribution to the historic restoration of Town Hall was noted. In the future, the Commission would like to note his contributions perhaps by a memorial plaque at Town Hall.

Motion to Adjourn at 8:42pm.