



Town of Sykesville

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Town House

Stacy Link, Mayor

Joseph Cosentini, Town Manager

Craig Weaver, Town Treasurer

Kerry G. Kavaloski, Town Clerk

OFFICIAL MINUTES OF JANUARY 8, 2024 REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING **NO. 24-01**

The Council meeting of the Town of Sykesville was held on Monday, January 8, 2024. Mayor Link called the meeting to order at 7:04 P.M. in the Town House Council Chambers. Mayor Link led the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

PRESENT: Mayor Stacy Link, Council President Anna Carter, and Council Members Alan Grasley, Elizabeth Guroff, Mark Dyer, Leo Keenan, and Jeremiah Schofield.

STAFF: Joseph Cosentini, Town Manager
Police Chief Michael Spaulding
Kerry Kavaloski, Town Clerk

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Natalia Okshefsky, 821 Herman Way, gave a public comment regarding trash collection for Parkside at Warfield. Mayor Link announced that at the December 11 Council meeting, an annual rebate payment to the Warfield Home Owners' Association was approved.

CONSENT AGENDA:

I. Minutes from December 11, 2023

MOTION: Council Member Grasley motioned to approve the item on the Consent Agenda. Council Member Schofield seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously with Council Member Keenan abstaining as he was not present at the December 11 meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

II. **Consider/Discuss/Act on a Petition for Zoning Map Amendment (7306 Springfield Avenue)**

Mayor Link explained that a petition for map amendment was submitted by the owners of 7306 Springfield Avenue. The Council will need to reject this petition in order to accept the alternative proposed by the Planning Commission for a text amendment to the Local Business District allowing for a Service Garage to become a conditional use.

Joe Cosentini, Town Manager, explained that the petition was referred to Planning Commission in September, and Planning Commission determined that rezoning the property to Business General was not the best option and recommended adding service garages as a conditional use in the Local Business District, which is the current zoning for the property. He further explained that this process started in October 2022, staff explained that the property had lost its non-conforming use, a Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) case was held to petition the determination of the loss of the non-conforming use, and after the BZA meeting, Mr. Cosentini allowed the property to be used for minor uses while going through the rezoning process. The operation on the premises has ceased. If the text amendment is approved, the property will still need to go through BZA and the Planning Commission site plan process.

Kelly Miller, on behalf of the applicant, explained that the applicants have been working collaboratively with the Planning Commission and are in support of the text amendment. Tom and Daniel Joy are the second generation owners of the property and there is a lengthy family history of working at the garage. There are two other properties in the B-L District that are currently operating as non-conforming uses that will benefit from this text amendment. She said the applicants did ask for service garages to be allowed as a principal permitted use if they have three bays or less, which would allow the applicants to go straight to the site plan process, however Planning Commission decided to keep all service garages as conditional uses regardless of their size.

Council Member Guroff asked for clarification regarding the timing of the operations of business at the property. Mr. Cosentini explained that minor uses were allowed shortly after the initial BZA hearing. The use intensified and the use has since ceased. Ms. Miller explained that the business was not open to the business, and that was the misunderstanding. Council Member Guroff also asked for clarification regarding the parcel for discussion. Parcel 4087 is the parcel with the building on it. The other two parcels owned by the applicant are not part of the discussion currently. There is a provision in the Town Code that can allow the BZA to approve using another parcel as parking without changing their zoning.

Council Member Schofield explained the Planning Commission's main issue with a Business General zoning for the property was that there is no other Business General zoned properties in the Town. He also explained that the property has been there since 1917 and the history of the property was taken into consideration by the Planning Commission regarding the text amendment.

MOTION: Council Member Grasley motioned to reject the petition for zoning map amendment as submitted by the owners of 7306 Springfield Avenue. Council Member Schofield seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

III. Consider/Discuss/Act on the Introduction of Ordinance NO. 2024-01: AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE AMENDING THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE, CHAPTER 180 – ZONING, ARTICLE X – B-L LOCAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, §180-62 CONDITIONAL USES

MOTION: Council Member Schofield motioned to introduce Ordinance NO. 2024-01: AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE AMENDING THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE, CHAPTER 180 – ZONING, ARTICLE X – B-L LOCAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, §180-62 CONDITIONAL USES. Council Member Grasley seconded the motion.

Mayor Link explained that she is not against the introduction of the Ordinance, but she will not be in attendance at the January 22 Council meeting when the ordinance will be considered, so she would like to have a full conversation regarding the ordinance tonight. She explained that she would like to hear from property and business owners. She is concerned about how the ordinance will affect the other businesses in the B-L District that are operating as non-conforming uses currently. She also explained her concern with the minor uses operating without a business license and without Maryland Department of the Environment being consulted.

Council President Carter asked about the impact on the other two service garages currently in operation in the B-L District. Mr. Cosentini explained that the other two service garages are currently in compliance as non-conforming uses because the business operations have not ceased for more than six months. They will no longer have that stipulation if the ordinance is passed.

Council Member Guroff acknowledged that this issue is a very emotional issue involving members of the community and a lot of history.

Council Member Keenan asked about the titling of the property. It is still deeded to Thomas and Ruth Joy. Ms. Miller explained that the deed hasn't changed yet but the two brothers, Daniel and Thomas, and their sister are owners along with their mother, Ruth.

The motion carried unanimously.

IV. Public Hearing regarding Ordinance NO. 2024-01: AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE AMENDING THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE, CHAPTER 180 – ZONING, ARTICLE X – B-L LOCAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, §180-62 CONDITIONAL USES

MOTION: Council Member Keenan motioned to open the public hearing regarding Ordinance NO. 2024-01: AN ORDINANCE OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE AMENDING THE CODE OF THE TOWN OF SYKESVILLE, CHAPTER 180 – ZONING, ARTICLE X – B-L LOCAL BUSINESS

DISTRICT, §180-62 CONDITIONAL USES. Council Member Schofield seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Jane Mergler, 763 Central Avenue, gave public comment regarding the years of neglect, the residential area, the closeness to Sykesville Middle School and Millard Cooper Park, and her concern regarding the line-of-sight obstruction possibilities.

Jill Singleton, 7321 Springfield Avenue, gave a public comment regarding the lack of a sidewalk in front of the garage and adjacent parcel.

Marie Miller, 7313 Springfield Avenue, gave public comment in support of the text amendment. She is in support of preserving the history of the site and having the Town work collaboratively with the property owners/tenant.

Bob Miller, 7313 Springfield Avenue, gave public comment in support of the text amendment. He explained that he would like to see a business back in the location instead of having the building sit vacant.

Brian Tignor, 7312 Springfield Avenue, gave public comment in support of the text amendment. He thinks with proper planning, there is no reason why a business couldn't be run in the location.

Jamie Tignor, 7312 Springfield Avenue, gave a public comment in support of the text amendment. She explained that she appreciates that they want to keep it as a business.

Jamie Serra, 724 Central Avenue, gave a public comment in support of the text amendment. He explained that small local car lots will use local mechanics to fix cars before they are sold.

Rene Forsberg, 7240 Springfield Avenue, gave a public comment in support of the text amendment. She thinks the bigger issue in the area is speeding, and that is not related to the business or property.

Josh Priest, tenant of 7306 Springfield Avenue, gave a public comment in support of the text amendment. He explained that he does have a business license, sales tax ID, and everything else he needs to run a legal, legitimate business. He explained that he wants to be part of the community. He expressed his concern over the length of the rezoning/text amendment process.

Mayor Link thanked Mr. Priest for his comments and explained that the process starts when the paperwork is submitted, and the Town cannot begin until that happens.

Council Member Guroff asked if he was planning on having vending machines in his shop. Mr. Priest explained that he did want that

and maybe an ice machine for people picnicking at Millard Cooper Park.

Tom Joy, owner of 7306 Springfield Avenue, explained that the sidewalk will not impact the business operations at the location. He explained that they have invested a lot in the building but have plans to invest even more. His father began working at the garage in 1974 and bought the property in 1978. It would be difficult to make the garage into any other type of business. He intended to reopen the shop himself, but the dream was halted once his father passed away. He explained the misunderstanding about the grandfathering in of the business as a non-conforming use.

Ms. Miller thanked everyone for their comments and the dialogue and questions regarding the text amendment. She renewed her request for service garages with three or less bays to be principal permitted uses in B-L District.

The Council decided to leave the public hearing open until their meeting on January 22 to allow for any comments to be submitted via email.

The Council took a short recess at 8:55 P.M. to allow the room to clear of anyone who wanted to leave.

MOTION: Council Member Grasley motioned to return to open session at 8:57 P.M. Council Member Dyer seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

V. Consider/Discuss/Act on Resolution NO. 2024-01 allowing alcohol at Downtown Sykesville Connection events

This resolution is brought before the Council every year to allow the Downtown Sykesville Connection (DSC) to apply for liquor licenses for several of their events. Council did not have any discussion regarding the resolution.

MOTION: Council Member Grasley motioned to approve Resolution NO. 2024-01 allowing alcohol at Downtown Sykesville Connection events. Council Member Dyer seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS/REPORTS

- The next meeting is Monday, January 8, 2024
- We have volunteer opportunities available on the Historic District Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Police Auxiliary. Email town@sykesville.net for more information about volunteering with the Town.
- Staff Updates
 - Town Manager Update

Mr. Cosentini announced that the work on Springfield Avenue has not started due to the forecasted inclement weather. He also announced that budget revisions will be on the January 22 agenda.

- Public Safety Report

Chief Spaulding presented the Public Safety Report for the period of December 5 through January 1. There was a total of 941 reports, including 21 assist other agencies, 14 community policing events, 34 foot patrols, 581 patrol checks, and 39 traffic enforcement initiatives.

Chief Spaulding explained that incident 00281 involved a grown adult being threatened, not a juvenile. Incident 00282 was a male suspect forcing a female to the floor and was not considered domestic violence because the male did not live at the residence and was not in a romantic relationship with the female. Incident 00283 was an intoxicated subject from Marriottsville. Suspects have been identified for incidents 00284 and 00287. And incident 00288 marked the fifth stolen vehicle from Town limits in 2023.

There was discussion regarding placing a speed camera that would issue tickets on Springfield Avenue within the school zone. Doing so would require an ordinance to be passed.

Chief Spaulding highlighted incident 00291, in which Officer Hoppa assisted a citizen in getting into a treatment center for substance abuse. Officer Hoppa was thanked for her kindness and help with the situation.

- Council/Committee Reports

- Council Member Keenan announced that the DSC 2024 events calendar is out now. There is a merchant events tab on the DSC website. The DSC is focusing on enhancing diversity and inclusion during their events in 2024.
- Council Member Grasley announced that the Historic District Commission met on December 27 to review an application for signs at a new business, Feet First. Their next meeting is scheduled for January 24 at 7 PM.
- Council President Carter announced that she will be attending the Raincliffe Home Owners' Association meeting on January 17. She also announced that the DSC event flyer in the newsletter had incorrect dates for the Farmers' Markets, and they will be on Sundays.
- Council Member Schofield announced that the Planning Commission met on January 2 to approve the decision letter regarding the zoning text amendment that was sent to Council.
- Council Member Dyer announced that he was upset by the internet outages that were in December and is working to get a moratorium on planned outages for the entire month.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the Council, Council Member Grasley motioned and Council Member Schofield seconded to adjourn meeting at 9:21 P.M.

The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted
Town Clerk Kerry Kavaloski