

MAYOR'S COMMENTS, eBUGLE SPECIAL REPORT, AUGUST 2018

Thank you to Ed Lincoln for tackling the job of summarizing these multiple Council meetings and to Darshini for publishing them in a Bugle special report. Obviously, much detail must be sacrificed in producing such a comprehensive summary. I hope what follows will clarify some issues raised in the report and provide additional details to topics that, in my opinion, needed more explanation.

A few comments on the July 28 Special Meeting:

Prior to this special meeting, I had told the Council that given their objections, I would not sign the purchase order to replace and repair these two existing sidewalks (not part of the SRTS project). I also restated this during the special meeting. A majority of the Council still wanted to hold this meeting.

It's worth noting that these sidewalks are in poor condition and have been for some time. Both Gene and I cross-checked their condition against the approved Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP specifically cites the need to replace and repair these two sidewalks. We also double-checked the adopted capital budget by Council, which sets the policy for work to be done by the Town. The appropriated levels in the capital budget were more than enough for these two sidewalks.

This was not a unilateral decision made by the Mayor but one made in conjunction with the Town Manager. I was not aware of a "contracting procedures" document until this special meeting. We were following State and County procurement practices and past practices by the town office. The Town Manager said we needed to notify the Council before signing, which is what I did.

Regarding the August 1 Special Work Session, I'd like to address the issues of SRTS and draft agendas for meetings:

- When I became Mayor, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT), and the Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation were still reviewing the federally required Sec 106 process and comments from the Town's consulting parties. They told the Town Manager and me that they were hoping the Town might consider accommodations to help prevent a protracted review process.
- As early as the beginning of July, I informed council members that my research indicated a budget shortfall. During the weeks leading up to the work session, I met with each

council member to discuss the status of the SRTS budget and walk them through the cost analysis and options.

- The SRTS cost options were put on the table for Council consideration. I told each member that the decision was theirs to make. I also reiterated that these options were initially raised by homeowners early in the design phase, before I was elected Mayor.
- FHWA and MHT told the Town Manager and me on more than one occasion that these accommodations would not cause significant delay. Although they had no design details, FHWA and MHT still considered these accommodations to be minimal and an improvement to the original design. They said we could expect an abbreviated review should the Council decide to incorporate them into the final design.
- Discussion of the increased costs: The council voted its approval last August (2017) by resolution to allow the former Mayor to seek additional grant funding of \$350K to cover anticipated increased costs as well as the \$107K expense for the initial, and unsatisfactory, construction design. I had explained to each council member, during my individual meetings with them about the cost analysis, that the increase was based on the cost difference between the town engineer's 65% design estimates in July 2017 and the preliminary 100% design estimates in April 2018.
- In the August 1 work session, the Council and Mayor agreed that the draft agenda would include items by any member. The change in the June agenda was not initially unanimous; three voted in favor, one opposed and one abstained. We agreed that there would be no last-minute resolutions since this was a concern voiced by at least one resident in attendance and a few council members. It was agreed by all of us that draft resolutions would be posted in advance for review by residents.

I have comments on three topics from the August 13 meeting: Stormwater at Rokeby, Traffic Citations and the SRTS update.

- After Town Manager Gene, Councilmember Hans and I met with County officials and neighbors, the County completed an immediate short-term fix to the Rokeby footpath the same week.
- We do not know for a fact that "much of the water drains from the Estates." We know that this area at the end of Rokeby is the lowest point topographically. Stormwater runoff is coming from the Town, White Flint Park and Garrett Park Estates. Whether or not the County participates in helping us resolve this issue remains to be seen. We are consulting with them on potential solutions.

- The County Executive has authorized the Mayor “...as agent of the County to issue citations...” and/or to designate this responsibility. At present, I have designated our Town Manager to issue parking tickets.
- We are establishing a Traffic and Parking Advisory Committee to help develop best practices for implementing and evaluating this new town parking regulation. We are seeking volunteers to serve on this committee.
- The Council requested a meeting between the current and former mayor to validate the method by which Mayor Benjamin had estimated the SRTS project costs in 2017. In this meeting, we determined that the method used was the same. Both estimates were based on the town engineer’s most up-to-date cost estimates at the time—65% design in July 2017 and 100% design in April 2018.
- I confirmed that before the project goes out for bid, the Council will have to revise and adopt by ordinance the FY19 budget to appropriate the additional \$350K grant money (presently not listed in the adopted budget) and re-appropriate town funds to cover any shortfall. Our current capital budget prohibits the transfer of funds not only across major budget line categories but also within any major budget category. In addition, the Council will have to amend the February 2016 resolution prohibiting the use of town funds to allow the Town to do so. I recommended that we start this process now while the bid package is under technical review to mitigate future delays.

-- Kacky Chantry, Mayor