



Town of Garrett Park  
PO Box 84  
4600 Waverly Avenue  
Garrett Park, Maryland 20896

Regular Meeting of Town Council  
Garrett Park Town Hall  
10814 Kenilworth Avenue  
Garrett Park, Maryland 20896

Town Council Meeting: 13 February 2017

### Minutes

**Call to Order:** Mayor Benjamin called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM. Present were Councilmembers McClintock, Schulp, Wegner and Welch. Also present were Town Manager Swearingen, several Town residents and Margaret Soltan from the Bugle.

**Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved as presented.

**Presentations by Residents:** There were no presentations by residents.

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes of the January 9, 2016 meeting were approved without objection.

**Action:**

- Variance Request, 11004 Montrose Ave. Councilmember Welch provided the background and details of the request for a variance for the construction of a porch at the rear of their house. The Land Use Advisory Committee recommended against approval of the Variance on the basis that alternative designs would accommodate the deck without violating the setback requirement. Testimony was received from the homeowners, their contractor, two neighbors and other residents. Councilmembers discussed the pros and cons of granting a variance and what findings were needed to do so. Several councilmembers agreed that granting the variance would maximize the privacy of the homeowner; minimize the impact on their neighboring property owners; minimize the negative effect on the beauty of the town; be compatible with the town's existing scale, natural topography, physical setting and density of development and would encourage a compatible relationship between expanded housing and neighboring structures in scale, siting and orientation. Failure to do so would constitute a hardship. Councilmember Welch moved approval of the variance. The motion was seconded by Councilmember Schulp. Councilmembers Welch, Schulp and McClintock voted in favor of granting the variance and Councilmember Wegner voted against.

-Introduction of the FY 2018 Proposed Operating and Capital Budgets. Town Manager Swearingen presented the proposed budget to the Council noting that neither the real property tax rate nor the personal property tax rate are proposed to be changed from the FY 2017 rates. Additionally, the solid waste charge is proposed to be lowered from \$333 per household to \$330 per household. There are very few changes in the proposed

FY 2018 budget from the FY 2017 budget. After a short discussion, Mayor Benjamin requested that the Council approve the introduction of the proposed budget. Councilmember Wegner moved the introduction of the Proposed FY 2018 Operating and Capital budgets. The motion was seconded by Councilmember McClintock and was passed unanimously. Mayor Benjamin suggested that if the Council wanted to have further in-depth discussion, they could hold a work session. If they have only minor questions they could discuss them and act on the FY 2018 budget at the March meeting, or could defer action until April. He reminded that council that the work session must be an announced open meeting.

-Committee Appointments. Mayor Benjamin presented his list of appointees to the Arboretum, Historic Preservation and Archives committees. The list is attached to these minutes. Councilmember McClintock moved approval of the appointees. Councilmember Welch seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

**Discussion:**

-Adjustments to the Town's election process. Mayor Benjamin presented to the Council an outline of suggested adjustments to the election process that have come about as a result of reviews of previous elections and the provisions of the Charter and Code of Ordinances. Some of the suggested changes would require amendments of the Code and/or Charter, and others could be implemented immediately. The list of suggested adjustments is attached to these minutes. Councilmembers McClintock, Schulp and Welch volunteered to work on the election process and to develop the needed changes. They hope to have some of the changes ready in time to implement them for the next election on May 1, 2017.

-Sidewalk Project Update. Mayor Benjamin announced selection by the Town of the engineering firm Nobis Engineering to complete the design of the sidewalk project. They will begin work immediately.

**Town Manager's Report:**

The Town Manager provided a budget report which included the Town's financial position through January of FY 2017. The Manager's Report is attached to these minutes.

**Adjournment:** Mayor Benjamin adjourned the meeting at 8:37 PM



Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gene Swearingen".

Gene Swearingen, Clerk-Treasurer