

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in the Council Chambers at City Hall on Monday, November 05, 2018. The meeting was called to order at 6:31PM.

Present: Mayor Bruce Morrison
First Vice President Esther Troast
Council Members: Diane Downing,
George Tasker, Dale Trotter
Todd Nock: Present via electronic media
City Manager: Robert L. Cowger, Jr
City Attorney: Paul Wilbur
City Clerk: Michelle Beckett-EI Soloh

Prayer & Pledge of Allegiance

Open session council meeting @ 6:31PM

Review minutes:

In a motion (Tasker, Trotter passed) to approve the minutes from October 15, 2018 @ 6:32 PM

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried

Review and approval of bills:

In a motion (Trotter, Downing passed) the bills presented to be paid @ 6:33PM

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried

Approve revised fee schedule adjustment for log cabin rentals:

Current fees for rental of the log cabin for nonprofit and city employees is \$75.00. That doesn't cover heat/electric or cleaning service. City needs to raise the cost to \$150.00 to cover expenses. Councilmember Downing feels that \$150.00 is too much. Councilmember Nock asked if we can lower the fee if the renter can do their own cleaning. Councilmember Troast suggested not doubling the fee. In her experience, a nonprofit rented it and after covering expenses they ended up with less than expected in their donation amount. She recommended raising it to \$125.00 for now and review next year.

In a motion (Tasker, Trotter passed) to raise log cabin rental fee for nonprofit and employees to \$125.00 per rental @ 6:45 PM.

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried

Police officer awards and new officer introduction:

Lt. Hancock stated after 5 months of intense work Lt. Craven and Lt. Hancock have finished the updates on the police policy and procedure manual. It will be turned over to the City Attorney for review and finalization.

Lt. Hancock said he would like to recognize 2 officers for their outstanding work on a recent traffic stop. On Halloween night Corporal Vicky Johnson and PFC Robert Horseman were involved in a traffic stop that resulted in a seizure of 843 cartons of untaxed cigarettes. That translates to an

approximate value of \$160,000.00 to \$180,000.00. Untaxed cigarettes provide funding for criminal organizations. Lt. Hancock presented and pinned each of the 2 officers with a Distinguished Duty award. Councilmembers praised each police officer and the entire department for their exceptional work and service.

PFC Castaneda has been training the new officer, PFC Shane Webster, he has participated in a 40-hour extensive program (DDT Police Training). So far, he has had several arrests including DUI. He is welcomed into the Pocomoke City family.

Public Hearing for the purpose of public comment on proposed demolition of the structures at the following properties:

Planning Director Dan Brandewie added 4 more properties to the demolition list. 114 Market St was recently finished. Grass is already growing on the cleared property. Two additional properties, 618 Clarke and 415 Oxford St are next. Planning Director Brandewie is nominating 4 more properties for demolition.

- A) 704 4th Street-Last known owner: Mary Robinson, family had indicated an interest in property but no arrangements made. Certified mail and notices posted on property both completed. Has asbestos siding, abandoned for several years.
- B) 411 Maple Street-Last known owner: Donald Grant, structural failure. Problem property for several years.
- C) 408 Market Street-Repossessed by bank in Florida. Planning Director met with caretaker company representative. Property has been cleaned up some and is being evaluated for structural soundness. Can wait to make final decision on demolition.
- D) 210 Walnut Street-Last known owner: Shirley Marshall, she does not live in the immediate area. Was rented through a property management company. Tenants were evicted due to very unsanitary conditions. Structural failure and roof issues. Property could be of some historical value. Owner has indicated that she would like to try and save the property

Councilmember Tasker stated that Seat Pleasant, MD had purchased rundown properties from the bank. The properties were renovated and sold or used for low cost rent.

Planning Director Brandewie suggested that a non-profit group possibly could act as an intermediary and get grant money for renovations and be sold. Possibly through Habitat for Humanity.

Councilman Trotter thought that the properties should be advertised in the newspaper for a 30-day period so anyone who might have an interest in the property has a chance to respond.

Councilmember Nock commented that Seat Pleasant, MD had approached the bank and properties were purchased for a \$1.00 each. Seat Pleasant, MD made money back by sale of renovated properties.

In a motion to open public hearing for comments regarding property demolition on above listed 4 properties (Tasker, Downing passed) @ 6:54 PM.

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried

William Sparrow, stated that he did not feel that the City did not need to be in the property rental business. He suggested to advertise and see if someone would take it on as a renovation project. No public comment regarding demolition of above listed properties.

In a motion to close public hearing of demolition of 4 listed properties back into open session (Trotter, Tasker passed) @ 7:05 PM.

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried

Council Comments:

Councilmember Downing stated the street light in front of her house is going on and off. Needs to be looked at and repaired.

Councilmember Trotter said the log cabin area looked great. Good job on that.

Councilmember Nock will be going to California to represent Pocomoke City at the League of Cities conference. Also, last week he had a meeting with MML. They want to prepare people for “active assailant” attacks. State police have a training program available.

Councilmember Troast wanted to schedule ethics training for City employees after the holidays.

City Manager Cowger stated Public Works will be putting up Christmas lights. After 2nd street there are no longer any poles. They are looking for other options to put up lights in that area.

Audience Comments:

William Sparrow, 1955 Orchard Drive, stated he is a former State employee and he noticed that the state has been posting snow emergency signs. That means the State can come in and tow cars to clear the streets.

In a motion to close open session (Downing, Trotter passed) @ 7:10 PM

Acclamation: Nock-aye, Trotter-aye, Troast-aye, Downing-aye, Tasker-aye; motion carried

Approved: K.M. Beckett-El Soloh
City Clerk