

Regular Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Pocomoke City Mayor and Council was held in Council Chambers on Monday, October 2, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm.

Present: Mayor Todd J. Nock
First Vice President: Esther Troast-Not Present
Council Members: R. Scott Holland,
Diane Downing-Not Present, and Monda Marsh
Interim City Manager: John Psota
City Attorney: Andrew Illuminati
City Clerk: Michelle Beckett-El Soloh

Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer by Councilmember Downing and Call to Order

Approval of Minutes from Meeting of August 14, 2023:

Motion to approve minutes for August 14, 2023 as written (Marsh, Holland passed)

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Downing-aye, Marsh-aye; none opposed, motion carried

Review and Approval Current Bill List:

Motion to approve the bill list (Downing, Holland passed)

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Downing-aye, Marsh-aye; none opposed, motion carried

Public Hearing & Approve Resolution No. 584, Cannabis Moratorium, 2nd Reading

Mayor Nock read: **Resolution No. 584**

**Cannabis Moratorium
Pocomoke City, Maryland**

Public Hearing opened. There were no comments or objections from the public. Public Hearing closed.

Motion to adopt Resolution No. 584, Cannabis Moratorium

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Downing-aye, Marsh-aye; none opposed, motion carried

Council Approval for Quotes for Appraisals of City-Owned Property

Planning Director, Dan Brandewie, stated there are three quotes from appraisal companies. They include five different city-owned properties: Fish farm and four Broad Street properties. There were a total of 17 properties to appraise but five are need immediate attention.

Councilmember Holland agreed that the five properties have an immediate need to appraisal. The others are not pressing at the moment. Mayor Nock made a recommendation to the Council to accept the McCain quote.

Motion to accept and award quotes for city-owned property appraisals (Holland, Downing passed)

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Downing-aye, Marsh-aye; none opposed, motion carried

Hebron Savings Bank Account Updates Needed

Mayor Nock recommended that Mayor Nock, Councilmembers Troast and Downing, the incoming Finance Director and Accounts Payable Coordinator, Tacarra Kuhns be named for HBS accounts.

Motion to appoint Mayor Nock, Councilmembers Troast and Downing, the incoming Finance Director and Accounts Payable Coordinator, Tacarra Kuhns for HSB accounts (Downing, Holland passed)

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Downing-aye, Marsh-aye; none opposed, motion carried

Comments from Council

Councilmember Holland said there will be a meeting at the library for nonprofits to help and encourage business owners and nonprofits come together and accomplish various business needs on October 12, 2023

Councilmember Marsh the second DockJam will be occurring. The greatest linebacker will also be making an appearance. There will be gridlock for traffic. This is an opportunity to encourage citizens to welcome everyone in, keep porch lights on and give directions and be the friendliest town. There were lots of comments from the first DockJam on how charming the town is. There might be a few tickets left. Get on if you haven't had the chance yet.

Comments from the Mayor

He is glad that Councilmember Marsh brought up DockJam. It was amazing the first time. He is disappointed in city staff for not telling Mayor & Council that the demolition process had started. To correct some of the rumors going around about Willow Street, before it can be offered for sale, it has to be declared as surplus property by two resolution readings, it was reported that demolition was \$150,000 and then \$259,000, neither of those figures are correct. The cost is currently, \$113,000.

Comments from Interim City Manager

Not present

Comments from Planning & Zoning

There are currently 2 drafts, one previous and one prepared by Code Enforcement, Mike Wyatt. The current process is to coordinate both drafts and bring it before Mayor & Council.

Comments from Audience

Dr. William Johnson, he recently purchased, what he thought was a duplex at 823 2nd St. The governing body for Planning & Zoning did not approve his request for rezoning for a multi-family residence. His background, growing up in Wilmington, DE in a duplex, was rough. He often saw conditions where water was leaking into the kitchen from upstairs. He promised himself that if he ever had the chance to provide housing, it would be decent, affordable housing. The size of the house 823 2nd St is too big and would be too much to reasonably maintain for a single family. The reason his request was denied was because of the six-month occupancy rule. He just closed on it in August 2023 and feels that he is being penalized because the property has not been occupied for over 10 years.

Commissioner Tullar, who was in the audience, recalls that the deed that they received was for Titus Investments and not for Dr. Johnson's development company, which is Be More Beautiful properties.

Documentation will be looked into. The matter still has to come before Mayor & Council.

Stephanie Smack, said she just purchased a home in Pocomoke City and she has concerns with the water bill. She believed that the number of gallons used for a family of four cannot be correct. In the last 3 months, it has been averaging 2,700 gallons. She did her own calculations and it should be about 33 gallons per day. Someone told her that the city can unlock something and allow measurements to be seen. More recently, she was told that water meters will be replaced with new ones. Mayor Nock recommended that she give copies of her water bills to the City Clerk to investigate.

Councilmember marsh took the opportunity to thank the public who came to the meeting. There needs to be more participation. Whether she agrees with comments or not, she respects what is said and it is an opportunity to learn.

Commissioner Tullar said there has been some concern about the Willow St and asbestos removal. Mayor Nock said all precautions have been taken but what he is confused about is why it is just coming up now. The project was talked about months ago during Council meetings. There was name calling regarding the Mayor and Council. He is disappointed that citizens wouldn't think that the city had the sense enough to go through proper procedures. Commissioner Tullar said better lines of communication might solve rumors getting started. Mayor Nock said if anybody should get blamed, it should be Worcester County because Willow Street was only purchased by the city for the purpose of the library project. That's how the city ended up with Willow St. Several Council members were not comfortable purchasing the property because the county changed the terms of the agreement several times then the city found out that the demolition loan had been suspended. Later the city found out that the county was working with a developer. Councilmember Holland said the Mayor & Council always had a plan B incase things fell through.

Motion to adjourn meeting (Holland, Downing passed)

Acclamation: Holland-aye, Downing-aye, Marsh-aye; none opposed, motion carried

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