

**TOWN OF WACHAPREAGUE
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
August 10th, 2023**

COUNCIL PRESENT:

Charlie Gible-Town Clerk

Charles Elliott, Mayor
Sandie Puchalski, Vice Mayor
Robert Williams
Glenn Schagelin
Robert Bilicki
Stephen Joseph
Aileen Joeckel

Town Council Meeting

7:00 PM Meeting began.

Councilman Glen Schagelin led the prayer.
The Pledge of Allegiance was said by all.

TOWN OF WACHAPREAGUE COUNCIL MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Charles Elliot.

I. Public comments

Anne Swick spoke about how her dog was attacked at the dog park. She was in the park where two unattended dogs were inside the fenced area. The owner of the two dogs was sitting in her truck. One of the dogs attacked Anne's dog Ducky when he turned his back on them. Anne had to separate the dogs and pull the dog off her dog. Ducky received injuries on his back and Anne on her hands. She had to see a doctor for her injuries. Both Anne and her dog were put on antibiotics. She reported she doesn't know who owns the dogs, if they had their shots or where the owner lives. Anne suggested sign-in sheets to use the dog park.

Paula Deppin suggested a lock, either electronic or key lock to gain entrance to the dog park. She said you would need to register to use it. Your name, address, and vaccinations the dog had would be required. Paula also suggested a fee charged for your key and use of the park. Her thoughts were this would help to maintain the park. She said she would be willing to do the work required to put this together.

Vice Mayor Sandi Puchalski suggested needing to have a card to use the park. She said you would need to register to receive a card for use. Vice Mayor Puchalski She wasn't sure if the lock system would work.

Councilman Bob Williams suggested a picture of the dog along with the other requirements for registration.

Vice Mayor Sandi Puchalski said she could have signs made regarding registering dogs.

Fred Janci said having a registration for park use would provide information about the dog, who owns the dog and if they are up to date on their vaccinations.

Fred Janci said the people using the park need to take responsibility for their dogs while using the park.

Anne Swick said the owners should be in the park with their dogs.

Councilman Aileen Joeckel said when she was on council before, you would need to get a key to use the tennis courts. They kept the key at the motel as the location for pickup.

Councilman Stephen Joseph stated that dogs without leashes will do whatever they want. They will attack each other if they want to. He said both parties are responsible. He said to Anne, that doesn't mean anything against you.

Anne Swick said the dogs were acting friendly until Ducky turned away. She originally thought they were fine.

Councilman Bob Bilicki said having a sign with rules and regulations, a registration, and a key to use the park sounds like a good solution.

Paula Deppin and Anne Swick thanked the council for listening to them.

Paula said this town is so clean and safe due to all the members of the council working to keep it that way.

Steve Borgess spoke about the problem with the house located next to him on 22 Powellton Ave.

He said it was originally set up as a fishing lodge for the owners and his friends to use for fishing trips.

The original owner got sick and had to sell. Steve Borgess stated that since Matt Hart purchased the home 13 years ago the home has been nothing but problems. It is a rental that seems to attract people with low income and usually has several families living there and pitching in to pay the rent. He said it is a multi-family home whether it is zoned for that or not.

Steve Borgess stated he spent \$4500.00 for a 6-foot fence to be installed between his home and the property next door. Mr. Borgess reported a recent incident that happened at the home next to him, Sunday July 30th. He said he and his wife were sitting on the porch Sunday morning when a red pick-up truck flew in front of Steve's house, it came to an abrupt stop, someone got out and ran around the car saying F-ing this and F-ing that to somebody. The person got in the car and raced off. About 15 minutes later a car drives up the road at a high rate of speed. He heard a crash and screams and shouts. Steve Borgess said he couldn't see what happened because of the fence between them. He said after the crash the car ripped across his driveway. He said an 18-year-old came out chasing the vehicle brandishing a gun and swearing at the people in the car. Steve Borgess stated he called the police. He spoke more about the activity at the house. Steve Borgess reported there is the constant inflow of cars and doing drugs. He said you can smell marijuana. Cars pull up all hours of the night, windows go down; you can put two and two together Steve reported.

Steve Borgess stated he called 911, filed a police report, wrote letters to the sheriff and to the commonwealth attorney. Steve Borgess read a resolution he wrote as a suggestion for the town to adopt. He stated this is his first pitch. His ordinance said that any residence or tenant of a rental property in Wachapreague convicted of a felony or misdemeanor crime that involves a weapon of any kind, possession, sale, or use of any illegal drugs, or is involved of any violent act shall be evicted within 72 hours by the Accomack Police. He also stated that the landlord to be fined \$5000.00. Mr. Borgess said that the landlord should also be fined \$5000 for each offense within a period of a year and lose their ability to rent their home.

Steve Borgess thought he heard that the people living at 22 Powellton will be evicted by end of the month.

He said every morning the tenants start their trucks at 3:00 AM. The trucks have no exhaust, they are very loud, and let them idle for 40 minutes. He said there is no consideration for their neighbors.

Steve Borgess said we need economic development. He said we need to price them out of town.

Vice Mayor Sand Puchalski said that is something the council cannot do.

II. Town Council Meeting

July 13th, 2023, minutes were reviewed.

Councilman Steve Joseph motioned to accept the minutes.

Councilman Bob Williams 2nd the motion.

All agreed.

III. Review of Financial Report

Mayor Charles Elliot asked to review the town's financials for July 2023.

Vice Mayor Sandie Puchalski asked if letters had been sent to the people that owe the town money.

Town Clerk Charlie Gible said yes, 2 weeks ago. She stated that she spoke with a title company regarding Tom Smith. Town clerk Charlie Gible said she reported the amount they owe the town to the title company.

She stated Rubie Wright called regarding the amount she owed. Town Clerk Charlie Gible stated that we had a payment plan for David and Denise Johnson but they only made one payment several months ago.

Vice Mayor Sandi Puchalski motioned to approve the town financials.

Councilman Bob Williams 2nd the motion.

All agreed.

Marina's financials for July 2023 were reviewed.

Councilman Bob Bilicki motioned to approve the marinas budget.

Councilman Bob Williams 2nd the motion.

All agreed.

IV. Unfinished Business

A. Maintenance

Councilman Glenn Schagelin stated the garbage truck passed inspection.

He said he is in the process of getting estimates for garbage service from an outside vendor.

Councilman Aileen Joeckel asked if the town's residents would have to pay an additional fee for garbage pickup.

Councilman Glenn Schagelin said no. He stated he believes this will be cheaper. He was given a price of \$17.00 per house, one can per household, two years ago. The town will save on gas, insurance, and maintenance of the truck. It will also give the guys an extra day to work on taking care of the town.

Councilman Steve Joseph said we need to do the math to see what it will cost the town.

Councilman Bob Bilicki stated Monday would be a good day for pickup.

B. Powell Park

Vice Mayor Sandie Puchalski said nothing new to report.

Councilman Bob Williams stated he has been taking care of the cemetery.

C. Seaside Park

Councilman Bob Williams stated the broken bench has been replaced.

D. HRSD

Fred Janci spoke about DEQ requirements regarding the funds controlled by them. They require a simple ordinance that states you will need a permit to join HRSD. It should state the owner of the property is responsible for the maintenance of the grinder pump, lateral piping, electrical connections and keeping it in satisfactory working order. If this is not adhered to, the town will take over and fix the problem and charge the owner. A lien can be placed on the property if the bill is not paid by the owner.

Fred Janci said we did not get all the funding we asked for from the DEQ. That is the reason that only 17 homes can hook up for no fee.

Councilman Bob Bilicki stated the original plan included all the property owners and the commercial businesses to be able to hook up. He said Gurney has increased the cost and reduced the number of services they are offering.

Councilman Stephen Joseph said he got the number of \$17,000 from Exmore. He stated we have applied for a grant to include the rest of the property owners along the line.

Councilman Aileen asked how long do these pumps last.

Fred Janci said 10 years or more.

Councilman Bob Williams stated when he lived in North Hampton for 30 years they never had a problem with their pump.

Fred Janci stated the old leach fields and system are not required to be removed. We did not receive enough money to do this.

Vice Mayor Sandi Puchalski made a motion to make an ordinance with the specifications that DEQ requires regarding sewer.

Councilman Steven Joseph 2nd the motion.

All agreed.

Fred Janci thanked the council for the work they did on the town hall. He said it looks great. Fred Janci also spoke about how nice the parks are trimmed. He said they look good.

E. Derelict Properties

Councilman Bob Williams stated the shrubs in front of the Gazale's house needs trimmed. He stated it is a traffic hazard.

Mayor Charles Elliot said he would trim the shrubs. He does work for them.

Councilman Bob Williams said the house needs work. It is in bad shape.

Mayor Charles Elliot stated they are getting mold in the home.

F. Marina

Vice Mayor Sandi Puchalski said she is working on getting estimates for the marina to reconfigure the north side of the T dock. She got one from Shore Litz and is waiting to meet with Dean Fisher.

Vice Mayor Sandi wants to do a work session regarding marina work and discuss the properties the nature conservatory wants to donate. She suggested having the meeting on September 7th at town hall.

She said we will need to vote on who gets the bid. Vice Mayor Puchalski stated she will get the information to the council members ahead of time.

Vice Mayor Sandie Puchalski said they pulled the old rose bushes. She is looking for short grasses to plant at the marina.

Vice Mayor Sandi Puchalski asked the council if it would be ok to have a truck pull up to the marina and fill up boats. She said with the situation at the Island House the big boats are having a problem filling up.

Councilman Bob Bilicki asked if VIMS would be ok with that.

Vice Mayor Sandi Puchalski said she would speak Brandon at the Coast Guard station regarding this.

Councilman Bob Williams asked if we have a way to clean up a spill.

Vice Mayor Puchalski said yes, we have a boom.

G. Tourism

Councilman Aileen Joeckel spoke about the local choice winners. She said Wachapreague did very well. The Island House won for best waterfront dining, oyster menu, and allergy friendly options. The best ecotour went to Seaside Eco tours. The winner of the best fishing trip was awarded to Daytrippers. The best short-term rental was given to the Artist Apartment.

Councilman Aileen Joeckel said Daytrippers took some people out to take pictures for tourism. She said they are trying to gather content and pictures for the advertorial and new signage.

Sunshine soul is expensive so they might not be using her.

One Fish Two Fish have not gotten back to her.

The Famtour is coming to the eastern shore in October. It is 30 employees that work at the welcome stations. They will be in Wachapreague. October 10th. Current Reflections will be hosting them. They will tour the Wardius Motel and their gift shop. The group will also walk through town and have dinner at The Island House.

The group will also be touring Chincoteague.

Turner is working on sketches for a bronze flounder sculpture.

Councilman Joeckel asked council if we could make a motion to spend \$1350 for a quarter page ad to be placed in the visitor guide. The money, she said, is already in the budget.

Councilman Steven made a motion for the town to spend \$1350 for a quarter page ad to be in the visitor guide.

Councilman Glenn Schagelin^{2nd} the motion.

All Agreed.

H. Floodplain Adm/CRS

Councilman Bob Bilicki said that Debt. Of Environmental Programs is going to put a tripod on a reference parcel to place a water quality monitoring station.

Councilman Bob Williams said the new CRS report will be due soon.

I. Town Beautification

Nothing new to report.

Councilman Glenn Schagelin thanked Anne Swick for taking care of the plants at the Post Office.

J. Safety and Security

Nothing to report.

K. Historic District

Nothing to report.

L. Streets and Drainage

Nothing to report.

M. Planning Commission

Councilman Aileen Jockel spoke about the Nature Conservatory work on Cedar Island. She said this work would save the town.

She asked if Chris Hines from VIMs, could do a presentation at our next meeting. He is in Gloucester. The council like the idea.

She will check with him.

Councilman Aileen Joeckel spoke about an article in the Post regarding short term rentals. The article described how the town of Cape Charles has focused more on the businesses and not the residents that live there. It described how well Wachapreague has handled the town's short term rentals and printed the towns ordinance regarding this.

Councilman Aileen Joeckel said that Jim Bell will work with the zoning officer Arthur Mendez regarding the inspections required for the owns short term rentals.

N. Community News

Mayor Charles Elliott talked about the audit that is completed on the town every third fiscal year.

The cost is \$8500.

Councilman Sandi Puchalski made a motion to use the company that Mary Joe recommended and have the audit done June 2024.

Councilman Glenn Schagelin asked if we got the insurance to cover loss of income if the Island House would go under. Councilman Glenn Schagelin and Town Clerk Charlie Gibble said they would investigate this.

Councilman Bob Bilicki said we should put the Dog Park and the problems that Steve Borgess has had in his neighborhood as new business.

Vice Mayor Sandi Puchalski asked about having the town yard sale on October 7th.

The council agreed with the date.

Town Clerk Charlie Gibble said it is already on the web site.

O. Adjournment

Councilman Glenn Schagelin Motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Vice Mayor Sandie Puchalski 2nd the motion.

All Agreed