

DRAFT
TOWN OF EDMONSTON
WORK SESSION MINUTES MARCH 3, 2020
FY 20-21 Budget review

1. CALL TO ORDER; Mayor Gant called the meeting to order at 6:05 pm with Council Member Johnson, Bennett-White, Layne and Turberville . Staff present were Town Administrator Rod Barnes, Town Clerk Averil Gray and Police Chief Harris.

2. AGENDA REVIEW: The agenda for FY 20-21 Budget Schedule was presented. Administrator Barnes commented on the budget process as one of most important tasks Council undertakes each year and then the Town's mission statement was read. It was indicated the largest investment the budget makes is staffing to ensure we're attracting and retaining competitive staff.

3. Town Administrator Rod Barnes presented the 2019 Year in Review as follows:
 - The most recent hiring of Police Chief Harris, noting his strategic plan presented during the interviewing process; his analysis and department overhaul process; and the creation of a new mission statement.
 - Town Hall was modernized with new paint, flooring, kitchen cabinets, and dishwasher, creating office space for Code which modernizes, boosts morale of staff and improves the professional look of the building.
 - 47th Street Avenue Park was updated by MNCPPC and grant through Maryland Wildlife & Parks
 - Black History Month event included 1st prayer breakfast through a partnership with local clergy.
 - Maryland DHCD grant funded 2nd of Edmonston Beautiful assisting with home improvement projects. Current grant includes \$50K for businesses to improve the façade of their buildings.
 - Officer Torres was promoted to private 1st Class officer and Averil Gray was hired as the new Town Clerk.
 - For Arbor Day we partnered with William Wirt Middle School planting Chestnut Trees. Edmonston established an afterschool Environmental Club

at William Wirt that included activities included such as town trash pick-ups, building a rain garden and planting trees. Tires retrieved during the pick-up inspired using them to create pollinator gardens at the school.

- Through the Green Team's work, the town was named Tree City for the 5th year and participated with Earth Day Clean-up along with 2 two Dumpster Day.
- Community Garden expanded to to 11 3 plots with Mr. Johnson's oversight. A rain garden with permanent fencing was added through a grant from MD Dept. of Natural Resources.
- The Green Team hosted a rest stop for Bike to Work
- The Town was able to increase support to Bladensburg FD and they've been more involved with various events.
- Veterans Park received 3rd Prince Georges beautification award and the Town participated with County Executive, Alsobrooks' Growing Green with Pride Countywide initiative planting trees and shrubs around Veterans Park.
- We had Movie in the Park and celebrated Edmonston's 95th birthday with our annual parade and festival which included a birthday float; a donation from a local business of a go-kart to Edmonston; End Time Harvest Ministries youth participation; local restaurant food booths, rock wall and train. Mr. Barnes suggested allocating funding next four years to go towards a 100 year celebration in 1924 for a larger scale event.
- The Town sponsored participants for the afterschool environmental team with the theme "If I was Mayor" what environmental improvement would I make to the Town. The contest winner and second place winner served as Junior Mayor and Council Member at a Council Meeting.
- Mayor Gant and Mr. Johnson handed out popsicles donated by Berliner at bustops and Fountain Park to mark the end of the school year.
- Decatur Street Repairs utilized permeable pavement concrete blocks as an innovative and less costly approach to the streets problem.
- Mayor's Gant leadership efforts over the years and as President of PGCMA President to support legislative action received recognition by the MML with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the summer conference.
- The Town began a new activity of a Fireworks Watch party on the Decatur Street Bridge. Unfortunately rained-out this first year, but the location is a perfect spot going forward to see Bladensburg's firework display around 4th of July.

- The Town received a CDBG Grant to operate a Summer Camp focusing on leadership skills and environmental issues.
- Interns with End-Time Ministries helped DPW and Summer Camp. This year DPW and the Police Department will each be assigned an intern.
- The Green Team had a crab feast celebration. We awarded Yard of the Month gift cards to residents during the summer months.
- The Police Department held the annual National Nights Out at the Edmonston Recreation Center.
- The Town participated in Ports Town Day and resident Freida Parks was named “Volunteer of the Year” for Edmonston and Town Administrator Rod Barnes was named “Employee of the Year”. It was noted that Ports Town Day will not occur this year.
- The Town presented a proclamation to Elizabeth Seton celebrating their anniversary and Mayor Gant spoke at the school.
- Unity Day was celebrated on the Decatur Street Bridge with attendance by state and county officials, Roger Heights Social worker, Bladensburg FD, Roller Girls Roller Derby team members, author of a book of bullying and testimonials, residents and elected officials.
- Council Members Bennett-White and Layne picked up the Town’s Sustainable Maryland recertification at the fall MML conference.
- The Halloween event included a hayride and Movie in the Park with Mr. Johnson on the grill.
- We started Casino Night as an activity geared towards the Town’s seniors and it’s Casino Night with bingo, number wheel and black jack.
- Through Port Towns Collaborative grant, Edmonston received a set of Big Belly solar powered trash receptacles and compactor for Decatur Street.
- At residents request, speed bumps were added on 52nd and Emerson Avenue.
- The Town distributed 36 Thanksgiving baskets to residents in need.
- The Town sponsored a Pancake Breakfast for Veteran’s Day with proceeds raised going to Bladensburg HS ROTC. With proceeds in the amount of \$835 going to the school. Mr. Johnson providing services as chef.
- Mayor Gant currently serving as PGCMA President to support legislative action.
- The Town’s Volunteer Appreciation Celebration recognized 35 volunteers for their service at the annual Volunteer Appreciation Reception in December and 16 businesses received baked fruit bread and sparkling cider

by Mayor Gant, Captain Sullivan and Mr. Barnes for “Make a Difference Day” in November.

- Dave Lohr served as Santa at the Town’s annual Tree Lighting ceremony. Christmas wreaths were created by Mr. Barnes mother-in-law so the flower planters around Town looked like presents. The Town held its annual Adopt a Child and participated in Rogers Heights December food distribution and visit from Santa. We held our annual Christmas Party and holiday decorating contest.

Mr. Barnes presented a Readers guide that is prepared each year to provide residents and users helpful information on the FY20-21 budget. Several pages were noted to review specifics such as: Page 13 for information of property tax; with page 14 providing a comparison of taxes in other communities. Page 15 notes the constant yield rate tax is lowering but the assessed value has grown. Page 16 shows demographic information which notes a slight decrease in the population from 1540 to 1498 with 55.5% of residents Latino/Hispanic. The average age of residents is 33.8 and salaries have increased from 52K to 77,648 K. Page 17 is information about the Council and starting on page 19 is the Town’s debt policy; page 28 is the organization chart and 29 has staff salary information.

Strategic plans of action include infrastructure projects, many to be met through grants such as the expansion of Town Hall especially to accommodate for the Police Department growth; Plummer memorial rose garden; façade improvements to businesses; the continuation of Port Towns Weatherization program and Edmonston Beautiful home improvement program. A marketing campaign is in development featuring areas of interest to attract daytime tourism being done by Steelbeach Postproduction. Capital Bikeshare at Veteran’s Park soon to come. At a recent Prince Georges zoning meeting with Maryland National Park & Planning Commission, the impact of proposed changes indicated the re-write or elimination of zoning laws showed minimal impact to Edmonston and other Port Towns. It was also noted that the Port Town sector plan was outdated and should be revised in the near future.

Council Member Turberville stressed that a strategic plan be more comprehensive and cohesive looking at the Town’s development over the next 10 to 20 years. Council Member Bennett-White inquired as to the process and

Council Member Layne asked about the feasibility of working with our current strategic plan. Administrator Barnes and Mayor Gant responded that the type of strategic planning is beyond the scope of work the Town can assume and an outside consultant would be needed. The upcoming Purple Line provides mass transit within walking distance but the County will focus on the high populated areas that can sustain multi-use dwelling/commercial areas. Mayor Gant offered that creating Green Zone initiatives to ensure developers operate under certain criteria perhaps even streetscape requirements. Marketing opportunities may exist to tie the area of Edmonston within the Arts District more closely to the area as a whole. Rod will explore grants for developing a strategic plan for the Town.

An increase within the revenue section of the budget was noted due to the timely review and processing of red light tickets not done so previously. It was estimated that over 1000 tickets weren't approved within deadline therefore approximately \$65,000 in revenue was lost. The Police Department is receiving weekly reports from Opto-Traffic to correct this issue so the department has a better alert system. The Recreation Center continues to make profits particularly as a result of Mayor Gant's suggestion to lower rental fees. In addition, the alcohol fee increase hasn't deterred usage.

There is revenue increase with the \$200 per year rental/inspection fee for 53 single family homes being used as rental property within the community.

The \$1.6 million dollars in grants received has been separated from the revenue section as it doesn't impact that area of budget overall.

There are a few Capitol expenses put in the budget such as a dump truck replacement for DPW and potential cruiser replacement needs. IT service is being replaced and monthly on-site visits are a part of their services. We are still reviewing if the water drainage problem from Elizabeth Landing is resolved since gutter replacement has also been done so that the floor repair can be revisited on the Police Storage/Public Works Building.

Census efforts underway to include handing our posters and flyer to residents and businesses and a message from Mayor Gant to be produced for the access channel.

Mr. Barnes will write a memo detailing annexation steps as inquired by Council previous meetings. It is apparent that businesses and residents located on Edmonston Road will not want to be annexed.

Dates to continue the budget review was set for March 24th. A public hearing about the budget will be held at the April 8th meeting and the budget will be adopted at the May 13th meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 8:05.