

PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE MINUTES (DRAFT)

Monday, October 28, 2024

6:00 p.m.

Town Hall

104 North King Street

Members Present: Mayor Gatz, Chris Stroeck, Linus Bicker

Members Absent: None

1. **Call to Order:** Mayor Gatz called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM

2. **Approval of Minutes:** September 23, 2024 meeting

L Bicker motioned to approve the minutes. Mayor Gatz indicated that the minutes should be edited such that the narrative section related to the wayfinding should be incorporated into the narrative of the Bike Path topic because it is a part thereof and not its own separate topic/project.

3. **Visitors:** Jim Auxer, Steve Pearson

4. **Public Comment:** Jim Auxer made a public comment that any contractors performing work in town limits should have a business license from town.

5. **Unfinished Business:**

A. Finalize the Committee's Purpose Statement

Mayor Gatz, Chris Stroeck, and Linus Bicker discussed the language that was presented at the September meeting and discussed some changes, coming to a consensus on a final version:

The Public Works Committee advises the Mayor and Town Council on and provides oversight of the administration of Town Ordinances as related to streets, sidewalks, waste management, Town-owned properties, the upkeep of private properties, and all other related matters.

Linus Bicker moved to approve the purpose statement. Chris Stroeck seconded, and it was approved.

B. Finalize the Committee's FY 25 Priorities

Discussion occurred on the 2025 Priority Goal that was identified at the September meeting. The goal being:

Enhance accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Chris Stroeck expressed some concern that the goal was narrow and he inquired how

initiatives would be handled if they were not related to that specific goal. Discussion ensued that Public Works Committee has broad responsibility in overseeing the public works services throughout town, and that this proposed priority goal related to pedestrian and bicyclist accommodations does not minimize the importance of the operational needs and associated oversight that would necessitate action by this committee. Chris Stroech was agreeable to the approach.

Linus Bicker moved to approve the priority goal and it was seconded by Mayor Gatz.

C. Update on Utility Pole Canvassing--Discussion

Chris Stroech provided a recap of the utility pole project, stating that the scope was to walk town and visually ascertain the status of the poles in regard to their condition and the presence of unused wires. He stated that the findings would be compiled and provided to the utility company with no guarantee of any action on their part.

Mayor Gatz inquired about who owns the poles and Chris Stroech replied that most are owned by the power company but that is an aspect of the project that is still being learned.

Chris Stroech stated that he would identify some days for him and Linus Bicker to do this work.

D. Update on Status of Stormwater Infrastructure Planning Project- Fairfax Field & Mill Street - Discussion

Mayor Gatz provided an update that 2 bids had been received for the design of the projects adjacent to Fairfax Field and Mill St. Chris Stroech suggested having an expert come to read existing ordinances and to make an assessment and that he would identify options.

E. Update on Presentation to the Committee on International Business Code-Discussion

Mayor Gatz stated that Andy Beall was working to schedule a time and date for the Subject Matter Expert to talk to the community in an educational session.

6. New Business:

A. Committee's Priority to Enhance Accommodation for Pedestrians and Bicyclists-- Discussion

Mayor Gatz spoke to a project that Marcy Barlett has been working through the Age-Friendly Shepherdstown Committee. Chris Stroech provided some historical information that Age-Friendly Shepherdstown was charged with doing a sidewalk assessment some time ago and reporting their findings to the Public Works Committee. The initial concept was to identify problem areas of sidewalk and to have an openness to pursue grant money for the purpose of making improvements.

B. Benches on German Street and Nearby -- Discussion

Linus Bicker spoke that there was community concern based upon social media activity as well as personal accounts that there has become a pattern with the artistic benches that have existed throughout town, coming into disrepair and consequently being removed due to safety concerns by public works staff.

Chris Stroech provided history that Shepherdstown Shares raised the money to paint the benches that were first placed into town several years ago. Requests were made to place more benches but the consensus at the time was that no additional benches were needed at that point in time. The committee stance was that benches were welcomed in the parks. No more requests for new benches were made after that. There was a parallel track as to who was going to track and maintain them but no formal process was created. The town ultimately took ownership but no plan for replacement exists.

Mayor Gatz provided his knowledge of the background, agreeing that it was a Shepherdstown Shares initiative for creating seating during COVID. Shepherdstown Shares commissioned benches to be painted and identified locations where there would be sufficient space without blocking sidewalks. Artists used paint that did not hold up to the elements and the benches themselves started deteriorating. Public Works staff would remove the benches and Mayor Gatz made it a priority to return memorial type plaques that were on some benches back to the represented family.

It was noted that the benches have a link to the economic development of town and that they support public art. Chris Stroech indicated that some residents did not like the benches. Mayor Gatz indicated that a process needed to be developed and Linus Bicker proposed that a town policy would be a good start. Linus Bicker agreed to provide a draft policy on the artistic benches to be provided to the Public Works Committee for review no later than February. Mayor Gatz and Chris Stroech were in agreement with this path forward.

7. Mayor's Report

Trip hazard on German still being repaired. Town staff will complete the work and bill the property owner.

Staff are completing the RFP for the painting of several town properties. Notably town hall and the roof of the tobacco warehouse.

Public works staff did provide large trash bins to several restaurants. This is a favorable process for PW staff because the machine picks them up and is a more efficient means for collecting refuse.

The donated Hurley property lines were staked. The town will remove debris and clean up property. The town will also remove trailers that are empty. Five trailers still have residents and have plans for relocating. Residents of three of the trailers do not have plans to relocate.

Water line survey – The town will be mailing a letter to water service customers related to the survey results.

8. Next meeting date- November 25, 2024

9. Suggested October Agenda Items – Please submit by November 15,2024.

10. Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 7:29 pm.