

TOWN OF HOUSTON
MINUTES OF MEETING
APRIL 05, 2018

The monthly meeting of the Houston Town Council was held at the Houston Volunteer Fire Department, 143 Broad Street, Houston, DE on Thursday, April 05, 2018.

PRESIDING: Mayor Angelo Abbate

IN ATTENDANCE: Councilpersons Greg Gilmore, Carroll B. Jester, William B. Moore & James F. Aquilani.

Call to Order

Mayor Abbate called the meeting to order at 7:30pm followed by Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence.

Approval of Previous Minutes

March minutes were not available.

Town Elections (Not Needed)

- Oath for Office for incumbents:
 - Mayor, Angelo Abbate
 - Councilmembers, Carroll B. Jester & James F. Aquilani
- Notarized by Ruth Ann

Monthly Reports

Treasurer

McDonnell reported \$71,868.79 in the General in Account, \$10,939.71 in Municipal Street Aid, and \$105,220.49 in Realty transfer tax, all as of February 28, 2018. Justin King still has uncashed checks. Motion to approve report by Jester, seconded by Moore and carried.

Bills

Delmarva Power

Peninsula Oil & Propane, will be switching to Blue Hen

Motion to pay bills by Gilmore seconded by Aquilani and carried.

Tax Collector

McDonnell reported Angelo was given names of past due townsman to send certified letters to: Schwan; Jefferson; Oronzio; Travers; Dietz; and Lions. Fleetwood and Rollison were sent priority mail. If taxes are not paid by the 16th, there will be a tax lien. O'Hern and Citibank made payments. Ellerbusch is making payment plan payments. Motion to accept Tax Collector's Report made by Jester, seconded by Moore and carried.

Planning & Zoning: Lane Use

No permits for month of March

Code Enforcement Violations

Gonzales cleaned property up, a day late, but completed. Abbate talked with lawyer about code violations, county must enforce codes. Need to put more pressure on county; take pictures. Rollison,

and, Jefferson properties are properties in question. Need pictures of violations to submit to county. Also need townsman to call county with complaints, (302)744-2450 for general number of county building code. Eric Buckson is our levy court commissioner, county does not want to kick property owners out and become homeless.

Correspondence

- Peninsula Oil & Propane sold Houston's contract to Blue Hen to take effect on May 2018, contract expires May 2019. Rates have to remain the same until end of contract; however, the pickup date may change. Abbate makes a suggestion to ask for new trash and recycle cans.
- Verizon assessment remains the same; hasn't changed since 1987.
- DNREC, Division of Parks and Rec grant money available again for matching funds. Abbate filled out a pre-application asking for \$90,000 for a grand total of \$180,000 to put towards the Town of Houston Park. Reece White's family donated land of proposed park to the Town of Houston, park project name Houston White Memorial Children Park. The proposed project is for playground equipment from preschool to elementary school children and access to park coming from Sleepy Hollow Drive. Sleepy Hollow Drive stops at the town lot; will save from having to pave coming from Broad Street.

Public Comment Section

No public present

Old Business

- Comprehensive Plan Rewrite Draft was sent to PLUS review. 9:30am on April 25, 2018, for the PLUS committee meeting.
- Solar speed sign replacement was ordered, Abbate still has the check to pay upon receiving invoice.
- Update on Railroad Avenue road damage caused by Norfolk Southern Railroad. Issue is a public safety issue, liability to the town. Motion made to have town lawyer to send Norfolk Southern Railroad letter addressing the liability of the damage created from the railroad company by Jester, seconded by Gilmore and carried.
- Sewer meeting was cancelled to be rescheduled to May 3, 2018 meeting. Aquilani correspondences with the contractor unable to do a survey without a commitment. Rates with debit service could be from \$125 to \$200 a quarter, plus plumbing connections and septic tank abandonment \$2000-\$4000. Depending upon the average income on the area being served whether grant money is available.

New Business

- Appointment of Council Positions & Committees: Abbate nominated Greg Gilmore for Vice Mayor, Kit Schmulling for Town Secretary, Dawn McDonnell for Treasure and Tax Collector, Jaime Sharp of Moore & Rutt as Town Solicitor, Town Council as Board of Health and Board of Adjustment, and Leon McDonneell as Lay Member for Board of Adjustment. Motion to accept nominated positions by Jester, seconded by Moore and carried.
- Property owner to have tax liens attached for non-payment, previously discussed in tax collector report.

- Begin Review for FY '19 budget, taxes, and fees: Scheduled for May 3, 2018 meeting. Scheduling of public hearing for adoption of FY '19 Budget and FY '19 Taxes and Fees: Scheduled and vote on June 7, 2018 meeting.
- Move forward with Town of Houston children's park, motion moved by Aquilani, seconded by Jester, and carried.

Council Member Comments and Update Session

- Jester, Houston Fire Company, would like council supports for add on parking lot paving in order to get additional support from representatives.
- Proposed no left hand turns on Route 14, Milford-Harrington Road at Deep Grass Lane and Killens Pond Road could bring additional traffic into Houston.

Adjourn

A motion by Moore to adjourn, seconded by Jester and carried at 8:31pm.