

October 9, 2023

The Alexandria Borough Council met at the Alexandria Firehall in Alexandria, PA 16611. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by President Judy Scott. Pledge of Allegiance and prayer

Attendees:

Council Members: Tori Wilt, VP Joel Pheasant, Jane Pilch, Mike Peters, Pres. Judy Scott

Public Representatives: Ron Kuntz, Dan Coffman, Ron Dively, Daily News Reporter

The amendment to the correct the August date.

At 7:18 “voting meeting ceased due to lack of quorum”

Motion to accept the September 11th minutes pending the changes, Mike Peters. VP Joel Pheasant seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.

Financial Report and Bills –

President Scott said she had an \$800 invoice she just gave to Leslie in regards to the emergency tree removal. VP Joel Pheasant motioned to approve. Seconded by Mike Peters. All in favor. Motion carried.

Public Comment

Ron Kuntz – said he appreciated that they appreciate his questions. He goes home from the meetings and comes up with questions and has to ask.

In regards to the boat launch and park – have you done any type of comprehensive plan of this thing? It sounds like you’re going for a grant for the boat launch. President Scott interjected and said that the particular grant opportunity he’s referring to will open up in January and she spoke with the grant committee and council won’t move forward until January instead of at the end of September.

1. You call it a boat launch, what types of boats? President Scott said all non-motorized – he said his experience is that we have like 6 weeks of good kayaking. Mike Peters said it can be more if you keep track of the rain. I’m not sure, you’re saying it may only be used 6 weeks out of the year? I kayak and it can be more. Ron was noting that he was wondering why we feel the need to have a kayak or boat launch? Mike Peters said we don’t really have one in the area and we grab tree limbs to get out.
2. What type of maintenance or police presence are we going to need? Have we thought through that and some of the negatives on something like this? Also, the maintenance... will there be a bunch of maintenance costs? Has that been thought through and planned for? President Scott said that everything is a work in progress and we’re being very thoughtful how we go about it. We’re very fortunate that we’ve been gifted this property. There’s going to be a nature conservation area of sorts and our community is

somewhat like a flower blooming. More small businesses coming. The school will be able to come and get involved with this nature conservation area, it's much more than a boat launch. When you ask if things have been thought through, yes, there are many avenues we're thinking through

3. So, if I ask about maintenance and costs, do you have those written out? President Scott I can't give you a specific figure because it's a work in progress. Ron said he sees the other maintenance things that come up and he wants to know how will address that. We have vandalism issues in town, how will we handle that. Jane Pilch said they are excellent questions and well thought out. It seems to me you're saying we have to look at every single nitty gritty question. Ron said yea, how can I be for it without knowing these things.
4. Have you talked to the public and is that something that we want? Ken Patterson said that no matter what you put in town you'll have some vandalism. Everyone has it. It's a gamble right now – you can try to put nice things in. Tori Wilt said I wish more people would come to the meeting and voice their opinion. It's easy for us to sit here and voice our thoughts, I'm kind of going hmmm, I don't know, I have reservations about it. I also see how it could be a good thing. Jane Pilch asked have we voted to go after this grant. Tori Wilt said even if we were granted the monies we don't have to accept it? Mike Peters asked why would you go for a grant and not accept it, that's a lot of wasted time. Tori said, I get that, but I'm saying if we got the grant we aren't locked in. Ron said that brings up a good point. Dain Davis said, get the word boat launch out of your mind. It is a place for people to get into fish, kayak, and have a nice area. Not to much to maintenance. Dain said that it's not going to cost a great deal of money. Jane Pilch said, but it's \$300,000?? President Scott reiterated no, it is not \$300,000 – the grant we applied for goes up to that much. President Scott said we now have time to be thoroughly detailed and apply for the right thing. Dain said there will be a draft design and the borough can vote to approve it or not approve it. Dain said you have a property owner willing to donate this property for a parking lot and then Mike's happy to share his property to access the river. President Scott said this can really be a positive and safe for families. Ron said I see the positive, but I'm nervous about bad business choices or coming up with ideas that until I thought about it didn't work out. I just want to know what are we getting into cost wise. The budget is pretty tight as you said last meeting. Jane Pilch has DCNR grant in January which would be for the boat launch – is it tied to streetscapes, etc. President Scott said she is not comfortable answering the question tonight and would like the grant information in front of her so at next month's meeting. It would not be wise to have applied and rushed for the grant in September so I made the decision to not rush and go for the January time line. Ron said so council can turn down the grant money should they be awarded it? VP Pheasant well, we should have a decision about the project prior to going for the grant because that would be a lot of time. Ken said if you start applying for grants and turning them down then it'll be a long time until you get a grant. Ron said what if those council members would say they are on the fence, are you going to change your mind? VP Pheasant said well, I would hope

those council members would consistently show up to meetings to voice their concerns and vote on things. Tori Wilt said that this is all in the infancy.

Dan Coffman from Valley Construction, Ron Dively,— President Scott asked about Ron Dively's building permit for an area back at Canal Street. He wants to know where he can put the edge of his building. His lot is 60 feet and he needs 10 feet on each side. He wants to know what Alexandria's setbacks are. President Scott asked Ron to give a bit of understanding because they'll be getting an Army Corps Study back in November. Ron Dively asked should we do it prior to November. Mike Peters said are you referring to flood water displacement? President Scott said she doesn't know the answers yet, but that Army Corps will be coming in November. I explained about the fencing ordinance... Ron Dively said I just want to know when we can start, we are building it up to the height of the alley. The barn we tore down that was there was the height of the alley and we planned to rebuild, I had a temporary shed there and we are moving it. All I need is a setback agreement? My one neighbor already said she is willing to sign a variance, if that's what it'd be. Is there a specific form that we need? Mike Peters said we've never had that question before. Dan Coffman asked do you have a setback agreement? Dan asked do you have an application for your land use agreement? Tori Wilt said the only thing it says here on building permits – the required setbacks shall prevail. President Scott said that they will need to wait and talk to Brandon Foster with the permitting. Ron Dively also said, I want to do a sidewalk in front of the house. President Scott said that that particular sidewalk request was put in with the grant as well. Ron Dively said people walk out in front of my house all the time and they have to walk out on the street. They'll come back to the meeting in November

Ken Patterson

The two trees up the street, buckeye, right up with the new park on the corner – every time you go down there you have to get those leaves, the chestnuts are hitting people's houses and vehicles. Maybe you want to plant new trees there. President Scott said we have trees in the budget for next year, but as far as the trimming for this year we have nothing in the budget. Jane Pilch mentioned they are very historic trees, I don't think they are a liability according to Sam. I can see they are a nuisance, but does that mean they come down I don't think so. VP Pheasant asked if the next time he comes in that he can give us a specific recommendation on those trees. Those horse chestnuts are all over the sidewalk. President Scott said we do have a donation of trees to plant this year which we will. HRI would like to reimburse the borough for what we spent on the tree in honor of Cody for the Shook Family. We will be putting the memorial tree up November 19, 2023. President Scott said is that something we need to vote on to accept that? Mike Peters said I don't believe so, Leslie said, no you're not spending money. President Scott said we had a donation to specifically plant trees this year for \$1,000. There are some areas that need planting on Shelton Avenue, at the November meeting... President Scott asked if Jane has the location email from Sam? President Scott said because we have these funds, November is the time to plant the trees. Mike Peters said so we're planting now for the 2024 season? If we plant 24 more trees we reach our 90 tree goal within the 4 years we set for ourselves President Scott said. She said we have some smaller trees, are you up

for a community day to plant trees in November? VP Pheasant said yes, I am willing to plant trees. Mike Peters said if it's not a home football Saturday. Jane Pilch is gone from November 4 – 9. Tori Wilt said yea, depending. Knowing we've been gifted that amount of funding does anyone want to go with me to get the trees? President Scott said. Jane Pilch said, yes, I'll go with you. President Scott said with us planting them, I'll be more comfortable with small. VP Pheasant said what do we have budgeted? President Scott our budget is \$1,000. Jane Pilch said out of that \$1,000 would come equipment, etc. Tori Wilt made a motion to get the trees purchased and planted within the \$1,000 budget. VP Pheasant seconded. All in favor. Motion carries. VP Pheasant asked will planting happen before or after our November meeting? President Scott said before our meeting. Jane Pilch said she needs the tree breakdown from Sam.

PARK SECURITY

President Scott said we need the lights installed up there. She spoke with the Fire Department and the one shed that has the Christmas lights and all in it. There is a garage area under the fire hall building, we could have that area as our storage and eliminate the one shed that's up at the park and not conceal the park so much and hopefully eliminate some of the issues we're happening. The fire department will take it to their meeting, but appreciate it. Jane Pilch said can we wait a month after putting up the lights to see if that helps? President Scott said the light needs installed asap. A solar powered light in the center above the swings. Jane Pilch says oh no, I do not want a light there. What will you do to fix the problem Jane? President Scott asked. There's a new set of young boys walking right by our home, we'll get back to the light Judy, take a breath. These boys are causing a ruckus they really are. VP Pheasant said he hasn't had any issues at our end, during the summer you hear them and all, but we haven't had issues at our home or our property in a long time. Tori Wilt said they came by screaming all kinds of profanities, a couple times they've been at the park and I've been down there. They've been shocked to see me go down. President Scott said I've had community members come to me and ask what's happening? Why has nothing happened? Jane Pilch said you and I have discussed putting a light in the picnic pavilion, not on a pole? President Scott said I thought a powerful solar light on the swing set could help. Ken Patterson said there's a pole right across from the sheds, why don't you talk to Penelec and have them put a powerful LED light in there to light the park up. Mike Peters and Dain Davis said that there are many types of shields that can direct lights and provide shield if there's concern for people's homes. President Scott said we have to interrupt this conversation so we can get to the budget. VP Pheasant said we'll come back to it.

BUDGET REPORT

The \$1,300 for garbage services that's Clean Up Day? Yes

VP Pheasant asked if there are any significant changes from last year? President Scott said we took off for the bridge and we took off for the fire department. The fire department and I have spoke about this. When they were receiving before it was prior to the tax funds they didn't

have. We will have an opportunity to do a thank you for the fire department. We could host a ball for the fire department – let people get dressed up to the 9's and people could buy tickets. Tori Wilt said, I have no interest in that. VP Pheasant does that appear on here with the budget at all? President Scott said no. Mike Peters said they've talked about what we're doing now and Porter is doing the same thing – the tax, but not the same donation. President Scott said in essence they gain more with the tax, we're still contributing as a donation

Additional funds to the park from \$4,000 - \$5,800 – will come off of Rec Park and go under Parks – we are close to be 50/50 with them. We've been awarded \$61,000 in grant funding for the Rec Park – Tori Wilt asked is that split? President Scott said it's for the jointly owned park. Discussed ideas floating around for the park

VP Pheasant asked about the line for trees in for maintenance.

Nothing dramatically different. Leslie said keep in mind that this is the guideline, this is something to work with. Any further questions on the budget or a motion to advertise?

Mike Peters made a motion to advertise the budget. Tori Wilt seconded. All in favor. Motion carries.

Leslie asked do you post it at the library, I can give Ron a copy of this one. People can call Leslie to view it. VP Pheasant said he has no problem posting it to the website. Leslie said let me fix the parks line.

Back to the park lights...

Jane Pilch said if we're trying to make this town nice and historical, what about a gentle bulb – look at the library for example? The lights at the car dealership on 22 is pretty bright stuff, they are not historic town lights. VP Pheasant asked what are your thoughts on the motion light on the train station. Jane Pilch said if they could get a more yellowy bulb, VP Pheasant said they are motion lights and if we go with a motion light it only comes on when activated and could potentially be less glaring. Those are also a bit less expensive so maybe we could try that. I think they are the same thing we put on our building and add a nice light. They can be very bright, but they shouldn't be coming on unless something is there. Jane Pilch said we can look at the lights. President Scott asked if we'd like to make a motion to get bulbs installed before the next meeting? Jane Pilch said it has to be chosen well. Tori Wilt said where are we choosing this light? VP Pheasant said in the long run I'd like to see a nicer light, but for now we can get something manageable. President Scott said this about security and Jane Pilch said and quality of life and VP Pheasant said we can have something that addresses both. VP Pheasant until we get to a point we have the money to do something like that, I think buying a motion activated light for \$50. Tori Wilt said Walmart is having a sale right now. Mike Peters said where would we put them? Tori Wilt I don't know. I'm certainly sensitive to what Jane is saying. Tori Wilt said she would go to Walmart and get a light. Jane Pilch said she will go to Height Light to get the light she saw. Tori Wilt said I feel like we can be sensitive to the residents and also deter these children that are vandalizing. Tori Wilt said to President Scott she totally hears what you're

saying and we don't want kids to see these things. President Scott asked about a motion to get this done this week? Tori Wilt is going to also look at getting the light within the week. VP Pheasant asked if Ron notices the ones at the train station from his house. Jane Pilch said the light in the library arch is offensive. Tori Wilt found a light, but it's not Jane's preference. VP Pheasant said that most of your security lights are LED. President Scott said does anyone want to make a motion to get the light taken care of. President Scott tabled the discussion because it was fruitless.

Solicitors Report

Jeff Stover said he forwarded over a proposed agreement this afternoon. President Scott said this is in regards to the Hartslog Street. The document says the party of the first part is that Alexandria Borough or Fishers? Stover said he doesn't even have Fishers on it and will have that added. Jane Pilch asked what property? The idea of this document is so we can circulate, it's non-binding, but we can let people know these are the things we're trying to work towards. It indicates that the property owners are agreeable to making their land available for access purposes. He reviewed the document with council.

Dain Davis said 50 x 50 would be too big, Fishers side will be parking, but Mikes' side will be access to the river. Jeff Stover said that we can talk about dimensions and get an agreement with them also. Dain Davis said she is making all of the property available. President Scott said that Mike in our initial discussion asked that we make a fence area so the public doesn't access his property past a certain point. Jeff Stover said that he suggests detailed plans that shows this. President Scott said digging into these details was part of the reason we tabled the grant application until January. Tax exemption will be applied to the land. Jeff was asking are you granting either of these owners relief on taxes because they are making their land available. VP Pheasant said that Mike didn't ask anything like that? President Scott said that's a very nice idea. Tori Wilt asked what amount would it be? Jeff Stover said it would be up to council. Mike has two properties – Tori Wilt said so they'd be exempt from paying borough property tax? Jeff Stover said you wouldn't pay their taxes, just give them relief from the real estate tax. VP Pheasant said their property with the Fishers they've offered us use of the entire property – President Scott said I think it's Porter TWP, Mike Peters asked? Jane Pilch said can we budget in a thank you? VP Pheasant said part of the gift is that they won't have to maintain it. President Scott said it opens a lot of resources for us as a community too with having something like this in our borough. Tori Wilt said a financial gain? President Scott said yea. VP Pheasant said I greatly appreciate their gift and this is something they wanted to do for us, if they aren't paying taxes to us now we can't alleviate that for them. Jane Pilch said leave it as is. President Scott said insurance wise they'll be protected, I don't know if they would qualify as an exemption for them because they've donated it to be used to a municipality? Jeff said it may, but he's not the assessor. President Scott she thinks there would something, as far as building something on that property it'd be built with something in mind for the future. President Scott said are we comfortable to exempt them from any borough taxes that may apply? VP Pheasant said are we talking both properties? President Scott said I think both. VP Pheasant said Fisher-Lane is giving us their whole property, not sure about doing both of Mikes'. The one we're utilizing I'd be in

favor of. He's not asking for anything, but I'd be in favor of that. So the front parcel next to the river would be tax exempt. Tori Wilt asked do we know the amount of that? President Scott said the amount doesn't matter. Tori Wilt said, I'm curious, whether it's \$5 or \$500, I'm curious how it would affect the borough. Jeff Stover said I doubt it's that much money.

Jeff said in the future if you add structures, etc. or improvements there could be increased county or school taxes due to those improvements. President Scott asked if we could ask for exemptions, Jeff said you can, but they could be denied.

Jeff continued to read through document for council to discuss...

President Scott said I believe we should have the owners input if we make improvements. They definitely should have a say. Jeff said you want impotence for people to keep moving towards this – this will be confidential.

Jeff will take this draft home and make some of the discussed changes and then circulate it. Council members can give individual input to Jeff Stover in regards to this matter. President Scott asked if the Fisher-Lane family should be here in November. Jeff said yes, that's an excellent idea.

308 Main Street – Jeff completed the revisions. We have a complaint on the alley that passes Michael Smith's property and swings around and comes out Hartslog Street. He's been encroaching on the alley and not been communicative. We are asking the court to review the situation to find out our rights to keep the alley open, next step is asking him to move his stuff off the alley. We have a final complaint draft – President Scott has reviewed it. Jeff just needs authority to move forward. Mike Peters said didn't we do that last meeting, we did, but we didn't have a quorum to sign the document. Is there a motion to move forward and approve the document and sign it. Mike Peters made a motion. Tori Wilt seconded. Jane Pilch abstains. VP Pheasant, Tori Wilt, Mike Peters, President Scott in favor. Motion carried.

Law Enforcement – President Scott spoke with the Sheriff and he is putting together figures for the borough. The request has been made and he will get back to us.

I move that we accept her resignation with regret by VP Pheasant. Mike Peters seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

I make a motion to advertise the Secretary position. VP Pheasant. Mike Peters seconded. All in favor. Motion carried.

I make a motion to close the meeting Mike Peters. Tori Wilt seconded. All in favor. Motion carried. 8:50 pm