

**CITY OF EASTPORT  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
SHEAD HIGH SCHOOL - BAND ROOM - 6:00 P.M.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION - 5:30 P.M. TO 6:00 P.M.

<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel Matters	<i>Title 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(A)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Real Property or Economic Development	<i>Title 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(C)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Labor Negotiations	<i>Title 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(D)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Consultation w/Legal Counsel	<i>Title 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(E)</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Poverty Abatement Application	<i>Title 36 M.R.S.A. § 841</i>

**Those in Attendance:** Councilor Roscoe Archer, III, Councilor Hailley Bradbury, Councilor Scott Emery, Councilor Mary Repole, and Council President, Gilbert Murphy. Also present were City Manager, Elaine Abbott; and Legal Counsel, Dennis Mahar. **Absent:** City Clerk, Ella Kowal.

THERE WAS NO EXECUTIVE SESSION

**REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING**

(Ref. WS700346)

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Council President calls the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

City Manager, Elaine Abbott, reads a proclamation for Councilor Gilbert Murphy's service to the City of Eastport, the residents, the community, and the employees and thanks him for his dedication.

Councilor Murphy responds to say that it has been an honor to serve and that he has been in Eastport since he was five years hold and that he and Alda raised their family here. He closes with thanking everyone.

**II. ACTION from EXECUTIVE SESSION - NONE**

### **III. PUBLIC HEARING(s)**

Council President opens the public hearings.

#### **Maine Coast Heritage Trust Proposal to Acquire & Donate Rights to Create Off-Road Walking & Biking Trail**

Council President opens the floor for public comment as well as from the City Council.

The project manager for Maine Coast Heritage Trust addresses the Council and informs them that this proposal was brought to them by community members about four years ago. After being able to reach out and contacting land owners, there is some potential to acquire two parcels and to get an easement on another third small parcel that would allow a non-motorized walking/biking trail from Middle Street out by Shackford Cove and out through to Key Street by the baseball field/tennis court area. He proposes that Maine Coast Heritage Trust do all the leg work and acquire the properties and then donate it to the town. They have yet to start the process and there are no guaranties. He continues to say there is a lot to consider, i.e. signage, maintenance, etc. He also notes the concerns expressed at a previous meeting about losing the tax revenue which he understands to be around \$2,000.00. That being said, he feels confident that the town would improve in value over time to exceed what is lost in taxes. He touches on grant opportunities as well as community coalitions. He explains that it is a concept at this point and before he moves forward, he must know that the town is willing to accept the donation. He continues with saying that it is an opportunity and an exciting project but that it is time sensitive project.

Holly Gartmeyer-Deyoung speaks as the CEO of the Eastport Health Center as well as a private citizen in support of the project and comments to say that it will be beneficial to all not only health wise but on a safety level as well. She speaks that they will be a strong support of this proposed concept/proposal.

Meg Keay also speaks in support of it as well as representative of Washington County Council of Governments and the Eastport Healthy Maine Streets Program. She notes this is a small part of a major network that would allow an opportunity to a trail increase to connect to Pleasant Point, to Route 1, connections within the state and possibly into Canada. She comments to say it is a concept with great potential. She continues by reading a letter from Crystal Hitchins with WCCOG that highlights data such as growth, tourism, real estate sales, etc. The letter also addresses an increase to mobility whether be walking or biking. This opportunity would also be a gain to the downtown and the working water front as well as to the local businesses.

Jeanne Peacock speaks to the public safety that this will give the children and allow them to continue to walk or ride and with the trail they will have access to the local area in all facets.

Pat Christopher speaks on behalf of Pathfinders which is a local walking group. It is a group of seventy members that walk year round. The area ranges from the Moosehorn in Calais to the bold coast in Cutler but that a majority of the walks are in Lubec and one that she recalls in Eastport at Shackford's Head. Their intent is to walk two to four miles and then stop for a meal. She closes to say that they strongly support this proposal and hope that Council will give its consideration of support as well.

Ross Argir speaks as the Chair of the Parks & Rec Committee and that they too are in support of this proposal and that the committee would coordinate the creation of the trail. He closes to say that one of the reasons that he and his wife bought the property where they live is because of the walkability of the area.

Jana Sutherland recalls that as a child they walked the railroad and it was much more dangerous but that she is glad to see that there is interest in making it a real walking trail and is in support of it.

Jon McNerney asks if there is a map of the proposed trail.

Another member of the audience speaks in support of the project as well and notes the benefits it will bring to all of us, young and old. He is also willing to help in anyway he can.

Meg McGarvey speaks to the opportunity it will permit to tie into the seawall and the downtown area and that they are also in favor of this project.

Another member of the audience speaks out that she is neither for or against the project but asks how the City would recoup the money lost in revenue of taxes. Councilor Bradbury responds to say that it was discussed at the previous meeting and that the City will be replacing street lights out to LED's and that it is a greater saving or more than the \$2,000.00. The member of the audience asks when that savings would be implemented. The City Manager responds that EMERA estimates that they would commence in about three months. Council Bradbury speaks to clarify that there would be no loss of tax revenue for the fiscal year 2018. She further comments to say that this would not come to fruition until 2019 or possibly not until 2020. She emphasizes that this project would be an asset and that it is unfortunate that people view this as a potential loss. This would add to our community and is invaluable in terms of a dollar figure.

Jana Sutherland reminds everyone that the City just sold the old City Hall building and that is going back on the tax rolls whereas as it was not there before.

Jon McNerney asks if there is a plan to extend this into the downtown area. Councilor Murphy responds that it already goes to Sea Street and Councilor Bradbury responds that it is maintained by walkers now.

Rafi Hopkins comments to say that access will also attract more to the community and rather look at it as a loss we should consider it as an investment.

The Assessor, Robert Scott, speaks to everyone focusing on the loss of revenue to that one section of the proposal. He notes that the City already have a 3-1/2 square mile island that is 33% tax exempt which we are already losing money on. He notes that properties that the City or Council puts out to bid for sale generally bring revenue back. However, we will not get revenue from places that are already tax exempt and will stay that way; i.e. the 81 acres out at Shackford Head, 72 acres out on Treat's Island, 14 acres on Matthew's Island, 140 acres airport area, 3 acres out at the campground which is now a dog park. The land in question is a small area, but there is more to it than the loss of revenue. As the Assessor, he must look at the bigger picture and look at it all. Speaking as a taxpayer, if the tax rate continues to go up; he would rather see the sidewalks fixed.

Councilor Bradbury responds to say that those don't have to be exclusive as she too would like to see the sidewalks fixed as well. It should not be one or the other, the goal should be both. She speaks to the areas he mentioned and that they are not accessible to children or within an easy walking distance or even on safe roads. She speaks to the losses and the long-term picture is by having the amenities such as this in the community will attract families with children which would add to the tax base and alleviate some of that burden. She stresses that this is not an immediate payout and it is investing in the future of Eastport and generations of younger people that we hope will stay here or maybe come back here. It is a longer term goal. The Assessor responds that he did not intend to put her on the defense but that he was bringing forth his point of view as an Assessor and as a taxpayer. Jon McNerney asks if there any calculations done on the loss of revenue Councilor Murphy responds it is reflective of about \$2,000.00 per year. Jeanne Peacock responds to the Assessor that one of the great things about Eastport is that through the wisdom of former City Councilors many many years back and going to the future is that they look at Eastport's land not for just individuals but for the common good and a majority of this is for the working good of Eastport as well as the greater good.

Another audience member speaks to the cost of the investment to the trail as well as concerns of real safety when it involves policing it. Police Chief, Mike Donahe responds that trails do have access at both ends for vehicles. He also notes that they have bicycles which utilized for policing and does not see that as an issue at all.

Councilor Bradbury addresses the project manager with Maine Coast Heritage Trust with a question relative to funding for maintaining and creating the trail. He speaks to inquiring of State and Federal funding.

Councilor Archer addresses a question of concern with regard to parking for those that come specifically for the trail. Maine Coast Heritage Trust project manager responds that he believes they would park downtown or the access areas. He does not see this as a destination but rather an additional trail and to walk it is a total of ten minutes.

Councilor Repole comments to say that this has been in the works for awhile now and that Hugh French has worked hard on this and she is glad to see that Maine Coast Heritage Trust is taking an interest to consider Eastport to afford us this opportunity, and she closes that she is in support of the proposal.

Jon McNerney asks if the trail would be accessible intermediate if it is surrounded by private property. The project manager responds it is accessible to on and off at High Street and Key Street.

Councilor Murphy comments to say that this would be an asset and that he does not have a problem with it. It may just attract someone to come and possibly stay.

Councilor Emery comments to say that he is against it and feels that the elderly are being taxed out.

Council President makes a final call for questions/comments and closes this portion of the public hearing.

**Zoning Ordinance Amendment (Change to the Zoning District for three Continuous Lots at: 1 & 3 Brinker Street and 6 Deeks Street in Quoddy Village – from R2 Residential to B2 Highway)**

Council President opens the floor for public comment as well as from the City Council.

Mike Morse addresses the Council and updates that this has been brought forth to the Planning Board and they have reviewed the request and brings this recommendation to the Council for their approval.

Council President makes a final call for questions/comments and closes this portion of the public hearing.

**IV. ACTION on PUBLIC HEARING(S)**

**Maine Coast Heritage Trust Proposal to Acquire & Donate Rights to Create Off-Road Walking & Biking Trail**

**MOTION** BRADBURY **SECOND** REPOLE **(PASSED 3-2)**

*(Councilor Emery & Councilor Archer Voted "NO")*

To accept the proposal from Maine Coast Heritage Trust to Acquire and Donate Rights to Create Off-Road Walking and Biking Trail on the track bed from Middle Street to Key Street.

**Zoning Ordinance Amendment (Change to the Zoning District for three Continuous Lots at: 1 & 3 Brinker Street and 6 Deeks Street in Quoddy Village – from R2 Residential to B2 Highway)**

**MOTION** REPOLE **SECOND** ARCHER **(PASSED 5-0)**

To approve the recommendation brought forth by the Planning Board to Change the Zoning District for three Continuous Lots at 1 & 3 Brinker Street and 6 Deeks Street in Quoddy Village from R2 Residential to B2 Highway.

**V. ADJUSTMENT(S) TO AGENDA - THERE WERE NONE**

**VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - THERE WERE NONE**

**VII. NEW BUSINESS**

- a) **Authorize Treasurer to Transfer \$15,000.00 Grant Money from Non-Interest Account (CDBG) to the General Fund for Reimbursement of Expenses** *(Requested by the City's Treasurer, Traci Claroni)*

**MOTION** BRADBURY **SECOND** ARCHER **(PASSED 5-0)**

To approve authorizing the Treasurer, Traci Claroni, to Transfer \$15,000.00 Grant Money from the Non-Interest Account (CDBG) to the General Fund for Reimbursement of Expenses as requested.

- b) **Accept Donation Funds on Behalf of the Eastport Senior Center - \$200.00 & to Authorize the Treasurer to Disburse it to the Eastport Senior Center**

**MOTION** REPOLE **SECOND** BRADBURY **(PASSED 5-0)**

To approve accepting donation funds on behalf of the Eastport Senior Center in the amount of \$200.00 and to also authorize the Treasurer, Traci Claroni, to disburse those funds to the Eastport Senior Center.

- c) Council Approval for Purchase of (4) New Tasers – Eastport Police Dept. Police Chief, Mike Donahe, addresses the Council with the specifics and needs of the request before them. Kendal Ziegler from the audience addresses concern for cheaper and effect ways and notes that this expenses is not part of the budget. She also speaks about the numbers and requests data. Council President comments that tasers are not only used for the Police Dept. but also with emergency/medical/violent situations.

**MOTION** REPOLE **SECOND** ARCHER **(PASSED 5-0)**

To approve the purchase of four new tasers with a 5-year contract for an amount of \$8,948.00 for the Eastport Police Department as requested and submitted.

**MOTION** REPOLE **SECOND** BRADBURY **(PASSED 5-0)**

To approve the purchase of two chest cameras not to exceed \$1,800.00.

- d) **Council Approval to Change the Airport Enterprise Fund back to a Department in the General Fund for FY2019 and Moving Forward** *(requested by the Auditors)*

**MOTION** ARCHER **SECOND** REPOLE **(PASSED 5-0)**

To authorize and approve changing the Airport Enterprise Fund back to a Department in the General Fund for FY2019 and Moving Forward as advised and requested by the Auditors.

**e) Council Liaison/Manager Updates**

The City Manager updates that they are looking for budget committee members anyone interested please contact City Hall and that they meet once a week between January to April. She also reminds everyone that there is no on street parking as it makes it difficult for Public Works to efficiently clear the streets and also notes that there is a parking ordinance whereby vehicles will be ticketed and towed if not in compliance. In closing, she thanks Councilor Murphy and Councilor Repole for their service and also welcomes newly elected officials Jeanne Peacock and Peter Small who will serve in their official capacity on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019.

Councilor Murphy reports that Downeast EMS is financially stable and that they are looking to purchase another new ambulance and have enough funds available to pay for it outright. Their intent and goal is to have three ambulances in each base.

**MOTION** \_\_\_\_\_ **REPOLE**      **SECOND** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMERY**      **(PASSED 5-0)**  
To accept and approve the Council Liaison/Manager updates as presented.

**f) Council Approval of Consent Agenda**

**MOTION** \_\_\_\_\_ **ARCHER**      **SECOND** \_\_\_\_\_ **REPOLE**      **(PASSED 5-0)**  
To accept and approve the Consent Agenda as submitted.

**VIII. COUNCIL ISSUES**                      -                      THERE WERE NONE

**IX. ADJOURN**

**MOTION** \_\_\_\_\_ **ARCHER**                      **SECOND** \_\_\_\_\_ **REPOLE**      **(PASSED 5-0) TIME: 7:15 P.M.**  
To adjourn.