



April Work Session Agenda

Tuesday, April 01, 2025, at 6:30 PM

Hybrid Meeting

3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722

This meeting will be hosted on Zoom

ONLY: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89670225884?pwd=eklVZW03UElvNW03TzJFcjBOTmR2Zz09>

Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 896 7022 5884 | Passcode: 922160

Call to Order

Attendees

- 1. Ward 1-Commissioner Young**
- 2. Ward 2- Commissioner Henderson**
- 3. Ward 3- Commissioner Wheatley**
- 4. Ward 4- Commissioner Givens**
- 5. At-Large Report- Commissioner Brooks**
- 6. John Hoatson-Town Manager**
- 7. Anthony Ayers- Chief of Police**
- 8. Todd Frankenfield- Treasurer Alta CPA Group (Via Zoom)**
- 9. Kevin Best- Town Attorney**
- 10. Angela Jenkins (Resident)**
- 11. Frederick Hill (Resident)**
- 12. Richard Anderson (Resident)**
- 13. Demetrices Ramsey (Resident)**
- 14. Julia Salsich (Resident)**
- 15. Yolanda Barnett (Resident)**
- 16. Lucia Proctor (Resident)**

Review of Agenda

Swearing-In of Election Judges

- 1. Election 2025 Judges**

Commissioner Chair Wheatley swore in the four Election Supervisors for the May 5, 2025, Election. The Election Supervisors are Angela Jenkins representing ward one, Frederick Hill representing ward two, Richard Anderson representing ward three and Demetries Ramsey representing ward four.

The Town Manager stated that three of the Election Supervisors were sitting in his office, Demetries Ramsey, Richard Anderson, and Frederick Hill. Angela Jenkins was on zoom.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley congratulated the four Election Supervisors and stated that they are now officially Election Supervisors and thanked them for their service.

The Town Manager stated that the town has Certificates of Appreciation for the four Election Supervisors and Ms. Jenkins' certificate is at the town hall and the Town Manager will make sure Ms. Jenkins will receive it. The Town Manager thanked the Election Supervisors for their service.

Proposed Town Tax Rate Schedule (CYTR)

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that next item on the agenda is the budget discussion and the proposed town tax rate schedule. Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired if there was a document to accompany the discussion.

Mr. Frankenfield (Town Treasurer) stated no to Commissioner Chair Wheatley's question and that there was no change from the budget that was shared previously, and he will share it on the screen. Mr. Frankenfield stated that he would be discussing the constant yield rate. The constant yield rate is a mechanism that the State provides the town with to maintain revenues that are the same as the prior year and offer the citizens a lower tax rate. If revenues stay, the same tax rate goes down because assessments have gone out. Most properties are raising in value constantly. The State and the county are reassessing, and the town is subject to raise a majority of its revenue through that tax base. The town has two property tax classes, residential and commercial, approximately 66% of its tax base is residential, and a third is commercial from the budget proposal that the town has been presenting. So far, the town has constantly maintained the tax rate that was passed in fiscal year 2025. Tax rates are the same. Revenues have a small increase, and those tax rates will be 0.4538 for the residential properties and 0.6735 for the commercial properties. The majority of the expenditure in the budget has been discussed. As the budget is drafted the budget shows a deficit of \$368,000. This means that the town will be taking \$368,000 out of savings from the beginning of fiscal year 2026 until the end based on the town's current reserves. Mr. Frankenfield stated that he is estimating the town to have 1.3 million dollars at the end of fiscal year 2027. It is up to the Commissioners, Mr. Frankenfield's suggestion that the town can weather the deficit of \$368,000, and the town is still within normal accepted ratios of cash to budget coming out of fiscal year 2027. Mr. Frankenfield stated that the Commissioners definitely have the opportunity to keep the town liquid. If the town is planning on expanding. The Commission has the option to increase tax rates to decrease the budget deficit.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked Mr. Frankenfield if he could repeat his recommendations.

Mr. Frankenfield stated that his recommendation is that the town maintains the same tax rate for fiscal year 2026 that was in place for fiscal year 2025. The 0.4538 for the residential properties and 0.6735 for the commercial properties. When the town maintains tax rates, it creates a little bit of revenue for the town. By maintaining the same tax rate, it provided about \$72,000 of revenue to the town. The Commission has the opportunity to increase or decrease. Mr. Frankenfield's suggestion is for the town to maintain the same tax rates so there won't be a larger budget deficit.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked Mr. Frankenfield if he could repeat what the deficit is.

Mr. Frankenfield stated that the deficit is \$368,000. If the town has 1.5 million dollars that is being carried into the next fiscal year at the end of the next fiscal year the town will be down around 1.1 and a half, the town is taking it out of the savings account to keep funding operations next year.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked Mr. Frankenfield if this is what was done last year and the last couple of years?

Mr. Frankenfield stated that yes, the town has been, and the town has the liquidity and the reserves to keep maintaining that practice. Mr. Frankenfield stated that the Commissioners may disagree with him and want to increase the tax rates. Mr. Frankenfield stated that there is a cost to the citizens, however the town doesn't have to dip into the savings to balance the budget.

Ward 1:

Commissioner Young stated that she supports what Mr. Frankenfield recommends with keeping it at the same level. Commissioner Young recommended that an explanation should be made to the residents in the newsletter because she received some complaints stating that the town is raising taxes because the state raised taxes. Commissioner Young stated that the article can help the residents understand that the raise of the taxes isn't due to the town raising taxes but through the state because it's separate from what the town is doing.

Mr. Frankenfield stated that he agrees, and another piece of the raise is the county as well, so when the residents receive their tax bills there is a piece from the town along with the county. Most residents see their assessed value, their property value goes up so unfortunately that comes with a higher tax bill.

Ward 2:

Commissioner Henderson stated that he agrees with the proposed methodology that Mr. Frankenfield mentioned to keep the tax rates the same.

(Commissioner Brooks asked Mr. Frankenfield if he could pull up the rates so the Commissioners can see them.)

Ward 3:

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she agrees with Mr. Frankenfield recommendations, and she also agrees with Commissioner Young about making the residents and homeowners aware of what's happening with the tax assessments. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she also received complaints last year. Residents believed that the town had raised taxes when actually, the county assessed the resident's property value higher, which automatically made the taxes go up, and the residents just didn't understand that it wasn't the town. It was the county. Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked Mr. Frankenfield if he could work with the Town Manager and put something together so that it can be placed in the newsletter

Ward 4:

Commissioner Givens stated that everyone has a misunderstanding, based on keeping the tax rate the same. Commissioner Givens stated that he can only assume that if the constant yield rate is kept at the same cost and the constant yield is lower, then you are raising taxes. Commissioner Givens believes that's how you're able to increase the revenue by \$73,000. The constant yield is kept at a balance of zero which means you will receive no more money than what was received last year, it will be the exact same amount. That is the constant yield rate that's what it is applicable to if you choose to leave the rate where it's at, and the constant yield is lower. Essentially, you are raising taxes now and Commissioner Givens feels that the town should. Commissioner Givens agrees that the tax rate should stay the same and receive that \$73,000 revenue. Commissioner Givens just want to make sure the Commissioners don't go out there and misspeak and put themselves in a position which is not true.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she and the other Commissioners stated the same thing as Commissioner Givens.

Commissioner Givens stated that there is a difference between what the other Commissioners stated versus him. Commissioner Givens stated there's a difference between the rate and the constant yield. These are two different numbers, so the rate the current rate as it stands, Commissioner Givens thinks, Mr. Frankenfield said, 4.4 or 4.5 or 5.8 or something like that. Commissioner Givens asked, was that correct?

Mr. Frankenfield stated that it was correct.

Commissioner Givens asked Mr. Frankenfield what the constant yield is.

Mr. Frankenfield was about to state the constant yield then, Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she doesn't think Mr. Frankenfield gave the Commissioners the constant yield. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that Mr. Frankenfield just provided the Commissioners what the tax rates were going to be.

Mr. Frankenfield stated that is correct.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated again that Mr. Frankenfield didn't say the constant yield. Commissioner Givens stated that Mr. Frankenfield knows what the constant yield is, and by Mr. Frankenfield stated, Commissioner Givens stated that he doesn't even know what the constant yield rate is, but Commissioner Givens stated that he automatically knows it's lower than what the tax the current tax rate is, because Mr. Frankenfield said there was an increase in revenue of \$73,000. Commissioner Givens stated that he would imagine that it should be about 2 cents, which is not per \$100 of assessed value. Commissioner Givens stated that he could be off on that a little bit two or three cents to that effect.

Mr. Frankenfield stated that it is accurate, the State is offering the town's constant yield rate at .4186. If the town chooses to go to a constant yield rate the town will not raise any revenue, and the town's revenue will be the exact same as this year. Mr. Frankenfield stated that his recommendation is to keep the tax rates flat, so the town does generate a little bit of revenue. Mr. Frankenfield stated that mostly because of the deficit number that was discussed earlier.

Commissioner Givens stated to get clarity Commissioner Givens doesn't think it's 4 point anything. Commissioner Givens stated it's 4.1. It's either 4 or 5, because it's 45 cents per \$100 of assessed value. It's not 4 cents per 100 or 40 or 4.5 cents. It's 45 cents per \$100 of assessed value, and the continual rate is 41 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

Mr. Frankenfield stated that's correct.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked what last year's constant yield rate was?

Mr. Frankenfield stated that he thinks the town adopted the constant yield tax rate last year for residential property and the commercial - the town either kept flat or didn't adopt the constant yield, but Mr. Frankenfield stated that he can pull those up while the Commission is talking.

Commissioner Givens stated the town did the constant yield last year, because Commissioner Givens' recommendation last year was to give a slight increase, so that the town would have a gradual growing of the revenues so that it wouldn't impact any of the residents dramatically. Commissioner Givens stated what Mr. Frankenfield stated, "well yeah, I think you're going to have to raise the taxes next year". Mr. Frankenfield stated, "But this year", which was last year, Mr. Frankenfield stated he thinks the town is fine at going to constant yield. Commissioner Givens stated that was the conversation, because Commissioner Givens specifically got on the entire Commission. The entire Commission voted against Commissioner Givens. Commissioner Givens stated the town is still surviving right. The town still has money in the bank, but the town has less money. Commissioner Givens stated what the town

anticipates, what has gone into the deficit or pulled from the debt because the town hasn't backfilled a number of positions so that will reduce the amount of revenue. The amount of expenditures.

Mr. Best (Town Attorney) stated that the constant yield tax rate has changed. The law now is, if you increase your rate, your tax rate period you must go through a notice and a hearing process. The constant yield tax rate is not computed the way it was in the old days. Mr. Best stated that he thinks the town is going to have to look at that. Mr. Best stated that he believes Mr. Frankenfeld and Commissioner Givens are both wrong in what they stated because the law has changed. It was repealed and amended a year and a half ago, so Mr. Best stated that he will get back to the Commissioners about this.

Commissioner Givens stated that he just wants to make sure that the Commissioners get some clarity. Mr. Best is talking about something different than the financial aspect of it. Mr. Best is talking about the requirements as far as the notification and have a hearing. The Commission is not talking about that. The Commission is talking about numbers, money, and having increases, and having a lower constant yield. Your rate that's not going to change. Commissioner Givens wants to make sure the Commission understands.

At-Large:

Commissioner Brooks stated respectfully, he does want to say, he thinks if the Commission is going to each Commissioner, it'd be good to get each Commissioners opinion or comment and then go to questions. Commissioner Brooks thinks one of Todd's first questions, does this deficit include the matches that the town has for grants?

Mr. Frankenfeld stated that it does include the grants and the other thing to consider is the ARPA revenue, that came in two years ago. The town is still spending this out, and Mr. Frankenfeld thinks the town has about \$90,000 in ARPA, that creates the deficit.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he thinks the only other thing he would like to ask the Town Manager to see what the business tax rates are for neighboring communities. Commissioner Brooks stated that he could be wrong just doing a little bit of research. It looks like the town is much lower, and if that's the case, Commissioner Brooks stated that he might support raising the tax yield a little bit to match what neighboring communities are charging as a constant yield tax rate.

Mr. Frankenfeld stated that he has a website link that he will share and put in the chat where the Commissioners can see all the other towns in the county, and what their tax rates are.

Commissioner Young stated that she just wanted to thank Mr. Frankenfeld and Commissioner Givens for their explanation. Commissioner Young also stated that she thinks it would be a good idea to place something in the newsletter explaining this.

Mr. Frankenfeld stated that the Commissioners are going to have three more meetings where the Commissioners will review the budget ordinance and adopt the budget on May 14th and then rates are due to the county on May 15th, so the town is on schedule. The town will adopt that into the legislation that will be introduced in the next meeting.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he wanted to ask the Commissioners if anyone would be in support of raising the business taxes, because it doesn't look like the town's taxes are comparable to other neighboring towns.

Commissioner Young stated that she would be open to it.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked Commissioner Brooks, was he saying to raise the business taxes?

Commissioner Brooks stated yes, the commercial. Commissioner Brooks stated that he is not in support of raising residential taxes, that they will raise themselves because the value of the houses has

gone up a lot over the years. Commissioner Brooks stated that he does support raising the town's business tax rates to make them more comparable with neighboring towns.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she will go through each ward and Commissioner Young has already stated that she would be in support with raising the business taxes. Commissioner Henderson was next. Henderson stated that yes, he supports raising the business taxes. Commissioner Chair Wheatley also supports raising business taxes. Commissioner Givens stated that he supports raising business taxes. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated Commissioner Brooks you received your response.

Commissioner Brooks asked Commissioner Chair Wheatley if the Commission could hear from Mr. Frankenfeld?

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated yes and after Mr. Frankenfeld speaks, the Commissioners will hear from Commissioner Young.

Mr. Frankenfeld stated that from .67 to .70 it creates another \$15,000 of revenue to the town.

Commissioner Brooks thanked Mr. Frankenfeld.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley repeated Mr. Frankenfeld's statement, raising the commercial or business tax from .67 to .70, she asked is that in cents?

Mr. Frankenfeld stated that the number is in dollars, so it's 70 cents per 100 (.70 dollars per 100).

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked how much would that yield?

Mr. Frankenfeld stated that it creates another \$15,000 on top of what the original projection was.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated in addition to the \$36,000?

Mr. Frankenfeld stated that is correct.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated okay and then Commissioner Chair Wheatley moved on to Commissioner Young.

Commissioner Young stated she does support raising the business taxes, but she is curious to know about the surrounding towns and their current business tax rates.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated Mr. Frankenfeld put that information in the chat, so Commissioner Young can click on the link and view the information for the other municipalities' business tax rates.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he will keep it brief, Commissioner Brooks stated that he mentioned 0.70 he would like to go higher at .72 and Commissioner Brooks thinks that is fair only because looking at the other municipalities the town is quite behind with similar taxes.

Commissioner Givens stated that he doesn't have a problem with going up to .72 or .70, it's whatever the Commissioners decide. Commissioner Givens stated that he just wants to make sure the Commissioners are aware of what they are doing before they decide to raise the business taxes.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated there are several comments in the chat and she asked if the Town Manager could read them.

The Town Manager stated from Mr. Best prior to 2024, the local taxing authority could not set a tax rate that exceeded the constant yield tax rate until first advertising its intent to do so. Now the local taxing authority cannot set a tax rate that exceeds the current taxable years, real property tax rate until first advertising its intent to do so. In addition to publishing an advertisement, the taxing authority must place a notice on its website. If the taxing authority does not have a website, it must post a notice in a place that is easily accessible to the public.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she thinks the Commission has discussed the taxes quite a bit and as Mr. Frankenfeld has mentioned there are three more meetings to discuss it more and the Commission has some things to think about. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she appreciates Commissioner Givens and Mr. Frankenfeld for explaining the numbers. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated moving on the Commissioners have old business that needs to be discussed.

Old Business

2. Old Firehouse Project (Commission Discussion)

The Town Manager stated a discussion is needed with the Commission in a closed session regarding the old Firehouse project. The Town Manager stated that the town did get an advisory opinion back from the Architecture board. The Town Manager stated that some things need to be worked out in reference to the project that will be discussed during the closed session.

New Business

3. Resolution 2025-04: Authorizing Town Manager To Coordinate Usage of Town Bus & Van (Commission Discussion)

This resolution is to set up a policy to authorize the Town Manager to schedule the use of the town shuttle bus or van. When a request is made by an outside individual or agencies. This is something that the Town Manager knows the Commission has requested. When people need to request the bus or the van, they can do so, and the Town Manager can then make the decision.

Ward 1:

Commissioner Young asked what kind of policy is going to be put in place that is different from what the town has now? Commissioner Young stated that she received a complaint from a resident who had trouble getting the bus to come pick her up from the store and she had to wait about an hour. Commissioner Young stated that if you could explain the policy and also put it in the newsletter so that residents would understand what those policies are in terms of distances and requests, and when they need to be made, and so forth. Commissioner Young thinks that would be very helpful.

The Town Manager stated that the town currently has a driver named Mr. Mayo who does the rides for the residents of the town, Mr. Mayo is available to go around a 10-mile radius around to drop people off at doctor's appointments and things of that sort. What this resolution is to allow people who want to schedule to use the bus or van. We've had requests from other municipalities to use the town shuttle bus as well as the van for different events or activities, and this now would allow the town manager to make the call. When people are asking for a reservation to use it. This spells out the policy so that everyone is clear as to how you go about reserving or requesting the bus or van.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated Commissioner Young just to be a little clear this resolution is for when requests are made outside of the town, so if an external request from another municipality, for example, when Delegate Fennell asked if the van could be used to transport residents from Colmar Manor, Bladensburg, and Cottage City up to Annapolis. So, the policy that's in place for our residents hasn't changed. This policy or resolution is for requests made outside of our town. Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked Commissioner Young if what she stated made sense to her.

Commissioner Young stated that it made sense.

Ward 2:

No comments.

Ward 3:

No comments.

Ward 4:

Commissioner Givens asked the Town Manager if the Town Manager could print him out a copy of the resolution and place it in his mailbox so that he can read over the resolution and make sure it satisfies all his concerns.

The Town manager stated that he will do it.

At-Large:

Commissioner Brooks stated that he thinks that the resolution is great, and he doesn't think that the Town Manager should have to come to the Commission as a body for something so little as this all the time. Commissioner Brooks stated that he supports this resolution. Commissioner Brooks wants to make sure that it's a mutual benefit for the town.

The Town Manager stated that he will make sure to make a note of what Commissioner Brooks stated.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that Commissioner Brooks made a good point and whenever the Town Manager approves any outside requests that the Town Manager makes sure that whoever is requesting the use of the vehicles understands what their responsibilities are.

Commissioner Young stated that loaning the bus shouldn't unduly have a bad impact on the resident's ability to use the bus.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the Town Manager would not forego the residents for some outside entity. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she is sure that the Town Manager would make the residents a priority in all cases.

Mr. Best stated that the policy doesn't mention anything about compensating the town in any form for loaning the bus or van to another entity. Mr. Best stated that there's not even a requirement to fill the tank back up with gas, so that might be something the Commission wants to place into this policy.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that Mr. Best made a good point, and she also agrees.

Commissioner Young stated is there something in the resolution that states the person who is requesting to utilize the van or bus needs to show that they are qualified to drive the bus or van?

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that yes, it is in the resolution.

4. Ordinance 2025-01: Establishing A Resident Only Zone Along Cottage Terrace Between 4:00 PM until 7:00 PM (Commission Discussion)

The Town Manager stated that he and the Chief of Police have been working on creating an ordinance that would establish a resident-only permit zone with Cottage Terrace between 4PM and 7PM. The Town Manager stated that what is being presented is a sample of hang tags that can be created for the zone that would allow for Cottage City police to be able to identify who should be coming through that zone between 4PM and 7PM. Also, within the packet there are several ordinances that have been written by sister municipalities regarding permit zones and what the sister municipalities have done to address the issues. The Town Manager stated that he wanted to receive the Commissions feedback on what the Commission would like to do so that an ordinance can be created and to move forward by April 9, 2025, in the next meeting.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked the Town Manager to explain again what he is requesting because she didn't understand.

The Town Manager stated that the town seems to have a traffic congestion issue, as the Commission all know, on Cottage Terrace during rush hour. The town ends up getting a huge amount of traffic coming through Cottage Terrace, and it creates congestion on 40th Avenue as well as Bunker Hill Rd and various streets within the town. The Town Manager stated that the plan would be to create a

resident permit zone it would allow for the Cottage City police to be able to police the area more efficiently, so that the police know who should not be coming through. The Town Manager stated that it would also make it easier to hand out violations for people who are continually trying to use them as a cut-through. The Town Manager stated that the Chief is on the call and maybe he would like to speak.

The Chief stated that the Town Manager pretty much summed everything up. The Chief also stated that the police just want to keep the traffic flowing smoothly, so there wouldn't be any inconvenience to the residents, and they don't have to wait in line while the other cars are being checked.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked who the permit would be for.

The Chief stated that the permit would be for the residents who use Cottage Terrace to go home.

Mr. Best stated that this is a parking permit ordinance that would allow parking on a designated street for residents of that street only. The ordinance has a provision that says that the Commission can establish these parking permit zones, or the people of a particular street can petition the Commission to establish a parking permit zone along a street or roadway or alley, so that they could exclude everyone except the residents of the abutting properties from parking using a permit hanger to park along that street. Mr. Best stated that out of the three sister municipalities he favors Edmonston because it has the simplest, and clearest. Mr. Best stated that this is a federal constitutional issue. You typically cannot exclude the public from using a parking space in the street unless you do it properly, that's why the Commission has to do this permit system via ordinance. Thank you.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she understands, but why does it just say Cottage Terrace?

Mr. Best stated that no, it's for parking along the street. It's not for travel that doesn't have any regulatory effect on people using the street for travel purposes the travel way. It's for parking along the street.

The Chief stated that the tags were supposed to say Cottage City Residents or Visitor and are not for parking. It's just a tool to recognize the residents when they are driving down Cottage Terrace and they can keep going and do not have to be stopped. The Chief stated Commissioner Wheatley you can get one of these for your car so when you come through in the evenings you won't get stopped by a police officer and they will let you keep on going because you live in the town.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked the Chief if the permit was for the local traffic coming through the town during rush hour.

The Chief stated yes not for parking.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that is why she was confused.

The Chief stated that it was his fault, he had sent it over to the Town Manager and didn't read it when the vendor had sent it back to him and the Chief forwarded it to the Town Manager.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that if a resident who does not live on Cottage Terrace, but in another part of town get this permit without the parking permit statement up there, and it just says, Cottage City 2025 resident the police would see that hanging in the car and if they are coming through during rush hour, they would wave them pass and that's all this ordinance is addressing.

The Chief stated that it is correct, and he hasn't seen an ordinance the way Mr. Best is referencing it, the Chief stated that he doesn't need the ordinance.

Ward 1:

Commissioner Young wanted to clarify that it wasn't a permit and just a tool to recognize the residents when they are driving through the town so that they can get through easily.

Ward 2:

Commissioner Henderson stated that he likes the idea of parking, but he believes that it should be for the whole town just like Colmar Manor and Edmonston and in the future the Commissioners can look into this having bumper stickers or hanging tags.

Ward 3:

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she does know that there is an issue with parking on certain streets in the town, Cottage Terrace is one of the streets that has a lot of congestion as far as parking. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the town has received some complaints from residents, and they have asked the town to look into a solution. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the Chief and others have been trying to come up with a solution or a plan.

Ward 4:

Commissioner Givens stated that he doesn't think the permits should be hangers because in some states they are giving out tickets, so he agrees with resident Yolanda Barnett about the bumper stickers or stickers inside of your car. Commissioner Givens stated that there isn't a parking problem, people just don't want others to park in front of their house and there are some streets a little bit more congested than others. Commissioner Givens stated that he can speak with Commissioner Henderson more offline if he likes.

At-Large

Commissioner Brooks stated do we need an ordinance for this, the purpose is just for identification of the residents.

The Chief stated that the town doesn't need an ordinance because the purpose is just to identify the residents.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he supports the identifiers and doesn't feel that the ordinance is necessary.

Commissioner Henderson stated that the purpose of him mentioning his earlier statements was because there are a lot of District of Columbia and Virginia tags and in the past, they were scanned so that people wouldn't be parking on the streets if they didn't have Maryland tags, now that isn't happening.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she knows about this because the previous police officers that were working in the town would come through the townhouses, and if they saw out of state tags, they were writing tickets, they can't write tickets on a private street. They started giving out warnings, and they were harassing people because they didn't have Maryland tags so at that time, they were very efficient on identifying out of state tags. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she thought it was a law.

The Chief of Police stated that he had done it twice while he was here. He gave residents 60 days to change their tags over.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she agrees with Commissioner Henderson and that the police department should be doing it more often.

The Chief of Police stated that the police officer will continue through their list.

Yolanda Barnett (Resident) wrote in the chat that the tags are not the best thing. They crack, and people won't keep them hanging. Can the residents have a permanent stick on the bumper.

Ms. Proctor (Resident) stated like on the window like when you get your oil changed.

4. Town Hall Lawn Maintenance Contracts (Commission Discussion)

The Town Manager stated that it was sent to three companies, and the town hasn't received the third one back as of yet. There is currently American Landscaping and Oak Lawn Landscaping. American Landscaping is coming in at \$17,897 and Oak Lawn Landscaping is coming in at \$14,040. The Town Manager stated that the Commission will receive the other quote that was coming from Keeping It Green Landscaping out of Washington, DC.

Ward 1:

No comment.

Ward 2:

Commissioner Henderson stated that he likes the Oak Lawn proposal, but he will wait for the third proposal to come in.

Ward 3:

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she will also wait for the third proposal.

Ward 4:

No comment.

At-Large:

Commissioner Brooks thanked the Town Manager for putting the proposal together and stated that he will also wait for the third proposal.

5. Using AI to Catch Up on Backlog of Meeting Minutes (Commission Discussion)

The Town Manager stated that he reached out to Escribe in reference to using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to catch up with the backlog of meeting minutes. The Town Manager stated that Escribe would be doing a demonstration for him and he emailed the Commission with some information regarding the company and the process. The Town Manager also stated that he reached out to Municode minutes, and they haven't reached back out, The Town Manager is hoping to be able to do the minutes in real time through Municode meetings.

Ward 1:

Commissioner Young stated that AI can make mistakes, and she isn't sure if that's the best way to go. Commissioner Young also stated that maybe it's best to hire someone because in the past the town had someone who kept up with the minutes religiously and the town is currently understaffed right now, and the town really needs to get into hiring people who are capable and willing to do the minutes.

The Town Manager stated the good thing is that Elisabeth, who's the Temporary Office Manager, has been working diligently to work on the town's current minutes and she was able to get some of them done. The Town Manager stated that The Temporary Office Manager (Elisabeth) is working on the most recent meetings, and then also, she's going to be starting on the backlog. The Town Manager stated that Yes, we can use AI the thing with AI, which I've discussed with the Temporary Office Manager is, we would need to go back and fine tune the minutes to make sure that things are correct. The Town Manager stated to Commissioner Young, you're right because AI does put things in so it's important to make sure we go back and proof them. Watch the video, make sure that we have

everything that needs to be captured correctly. The Town Manager stated that this is something the Temporary Office Manager will do moving forward.

Ward 2:

Commissioner Henderson asked how much the cost would be for the town.

The Town Manager stated that he has a demonstration with the company the following day and he will find out pricing at that time.

Ward 3:

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that Commissioner Young, you're correct. AI can make mistakes. AI can also be used as a tool to help with the backlog. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated it will need to be reviewed. Commissioner Chair Wheatley also stated that she doesn't agree with someone sitting and watching two to three hours of meetings. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that was the issue the previous Office Manager Britney Gabriel had when she was doing the minutes manually and she had to sit and physically listen to two to three hours of meetings which took time away from other duties. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she does think the AI is a good option to help get caught up and would like to see two additional proposals.

Ward 4:

Commissioner Givens stated that most people don't understand that minutes are not about word for word. Everything that was said. Minutes are about a summation of what was said in totality of the topic and conversation. So and so, Commissioner Givens just wants to make sure people understand that, also that the town is moving forward with the times and taking advantage of the technology.

At-Large:

Commissioner Brooks stated that he thought the town purchased something to help with the meeting minutes.

The Town Manager stated that yes, he's working with Civic Plus and Municode meetings to see if they have an AI component.

Commissioner Brooks stated that if they do have it the Town wouldn't have to purchase an additional one.

6. MML Services: Goal Building, Team Building, Prioritizations, Roles & Responsibilities (Commission Discussion)

The Town Manager stated that the Maryland Municipal League (MML) does retreats now and with the upcoming election on May 5th the Town Manager suggested that MML could come in on a Saturday and assist with some team building role and responsibilities and short-term goal setting and things of that sort. The cost is \$2,500 for those with populations under 10,000 people. The services are specifically designed for those newly elected councils. The Town Manager stated that it would be a good opportunity for the Commission, it would help bring everyone together and give the Town Manager assistance in his role alongside the department heads within the town.

Ward 1:

No comment.

Ward 2:

Commissioner Henderson stated that it sounds like a great idea, and he thinks that bringing the Commissioners together may be worthwhile and he would like to look more into it.

Ward 3:

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she heard about it when she attended the conference in Annapolis and from what she heard from the other municipalities the program was a great retreat. It helped them get some clear vision of where they wanted to go with projects and what they wanted to set as priorities, and it helped them. I believe, with team building, there are some other things, and prioritizing their goals for the future. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she supports it.

Ward 4:

No comment.

At-Large:

No comment.

The Town Manager stated that the next agenda item is the addition Commissioner Givens has asked for.

Commissioner Givens stated that it's not a big deal. Commissioner Givens just wanted to inform the Commissioners that the impeller on the leaf machine needs to be replaced, and the cost is less than \$500.00 due to normal wear and tear.

Commissioner Givens stated that he forgot to mention that the town has gotten barrels in, and the town has just ordered the top. Commissioner Givens stated the Commissioners need to think if they are going to put them out black or with the Cottage City logo or some artwork. Commissioner Givens stated that doing the Cottage City Logo would be most cost-effective.

Public Comments

Anyone seeking to speak under Public Comments must sign in prior to the end of the Commission Work Session. There is a 3-minute time limit. When you come up to speak, you will need to state your name, address, what organization that you represent and your topic of concern(s).

Mr. Kopecki (Resident) asked whether it would be possible to get more than three quotes for the lawn maintenance.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the town is only required to get three quotes.

Notice of Closed Session

Statutory authority to close session (check all provisions that apply). This meeting will be closed under General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b) only:

(1)____ "To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals"; **(7)**____ "To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice".

The Commission proposed to go into a closed session to discuss Old Firehouse & CCPD Matters.

All meetings are subject to closure pursuant to the Maryland Open Meetings Act: Pursuant to the Annotated Code of Maryland, State Government Article Section 10-508(a), the Council by majority vote may retire to executive or closed session at any time during the meeting. Should the Commission retire to executive or closed

sessions the Chair will announce the reasons, and a report will be issued at a future meeting disclosing the reasons for such closed session.

Motion to Adjourn the meeting

The Motion was made by Commissioner Brooks and seconded by Commissioner Henderson. There was a unanimous vote by the Commissioners. Young, Henderson, Wheatley, Givens, & Brooks. Motion Pass. No nays or abstentions.