



Commission Work Session! Minutes

Tuesday, May 06, 2025, at 6:30 PM

Hybrid Meeting

3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722

This meeting will be hosted by Hybrid: Town Hall & Zoom

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

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

Call to Order at 6:33 PM

Attendees

- 1. Ward 1-Commissioner Young**
- 2. Ward 1-Commissioner Elect Salsich**
- 3. Ward 2-Commissioner Henderson**
- 4. Ward 3-Commissioner Chair Wheatley**
- 5. Ward 4-Commissioner Givens**
- 6. At-Large-Commissioner Brooks**
- 7. John Hoatson-Town Manager**
- 8. Anthony Ayers- Chief of Police**
- 9. Todd Frankenfield- Treasurer Alta CPA Group (Via Zoom)**
- 10. Kevin Best- Town Attorney**
- 11. Denise Hamler-Resident**
- 12. Amy Sawyer-Resident**
- 13. Mr. Kopecki- Resident**
- 14. Cynthia Henderson-Resident**
- 15. Robyn Barnhart-CPJ**
- 16. Felix- Resident**

Review of Agenda

Public Hearing:

For the taxable year beginning July 1, 2025, the Commission of the Town of Cottage City of Prince George's County proposed to increase commercial real property tax rates from \$.6735 per 100 of assessment to \$.72 per 100 of assessment.

The Town Manager stated that currently the Town is having a public hearing for part of the increase of the commercial real property tax. The Town Manager read the information into the record. The Commission of the town of Cottage City of Prince George's County proposed to increase commercial real property tax from point 6735 per 100 of assessment to point 72 per 100 of assessment. The Town Manager stated that Anyone seeking to speak must sign in prior to the end of the Public Hearing. 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. This was advertised in a newspaper of general circulation twice. The Town followed all the guidelines for the constant yield tax rate for the State.

Ward 1

No Comment

Ward 2

No Comment

Ward 3

No Comment

Ward 4

No Comment

At-Large

No Comment

Mr. Kopecki Resident stated to the Town Manager that he stated that the tax information was in the newspaper of general circulation twice, but he doesn't remember seeing it in the Newsletter or anywhere else.

The Town Manager stated that it was also on the Towns social media and Constant Contact.

Mr. Kopecki stated that he doesn't have social media.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked if it was placed in the Newsletter.

The Town Manager stated that it wasn't in the Newsletter because it didn't make the deadline, however the requirements are that it must be in general circulation, which is the main requirement to meet by the State.

Business

1. New Website & SeeClickFix Introduction (Civic Plus Team)

The Town Manager was going through the Town's new website and what it has to offer to the community and how to access the multiple languages. The Town Manager explained how to report a concern through the town's website.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the language translator disappeared when she tried to access it.

Ward 1

Commissioner Young stated that she spoke with some residents that didn't receive the newsletter this month and she wanted to know if the newsletter was mailed out.

The Town Manager stated that the newsletter were hand delivered due to the high cost of the postage and will be sent out via mail going forward if the postage isn't too high.

Ward 2

Commissioner Henderson stated that he thinks the website is wonderful and he has no changes. Commissioner Henderson also stated that he received his newsletter.

Ward 3

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she also received phone calls from residents that didn't receive newsletters and whoever is hand delivering the newsletters make sure they actually go to each resident.

Ward 4

Commissioner Givens stated that the Commissioners can consider giving a small stipend to someone to hand deliver the newsletters in that area in which they are not being covered.

Commissioner Young stated that she received reports from ward two and three that didn't receive the mail.

Commissioner Givens stated that the Town's regular mail man isn't here at the moment.

Commissioner Givens stated that he likes the website and one thing that he wants to make sure is clear is in reference to the SeeClickFix is once the work is sent to the specific departments is that they respond back to the residents so that the resident can know it's been received.

At-Large

Commissioner Brooks thanked the Town Manager for all his hard work on the website, and he stated that he will take a look at the new website.

2. Port Towns Joint Resolution 2025-01: Form A Community Development Corporation (CDC) (Commission Discussion)

The Town Manager stated that this is a joint resolution from the Port Towns to establish a Community Development Corporation (CDC). The Town Manager read the information into the record so that the Commissioners could have a discussion. The Town Manager stated that a request for \$15,000 from the town to work with the other municipalities to establish the CDC and start it up.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she has attended several meetings, and she doesn't recall a dollar amount being stated. Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked the other Commissioners if they recall a dollar amount being stated.

Commissioner Young stated that she doesn't recall a dollar amount, but she does remember the original discussion and when certain people took over the old CDC there was a bunch of money in there. Commissioner Young stated that the Commissioners need to find out what happened to the money.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that per the bylaws the board has to give any funds that remained to another nonprofit. It was decided by the Executive Board. The previous Executive Board decided to give the remaining funds to Echo Farms or a second one in Edmonston.

Denis Hamler Resident stated that there was about \$60,000 dollars still in that account and that they had to pay an attorney to dissolve the organization. The previous board members of the CDC were open to having the funds go into the next CDC, however the bylaws stated previously where the money was going to go and that is what transpired.

Commissioner Givens stated that someone mentioned that the town would have to chip in \$15,000 dollars.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he doesn't remember who designated that amount or when that amount was suggested.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the other three Port Towns have already signed off on their resolution and the town is actually holding up the process. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the town was not privy to the information.

Commissioner Young stated that she isn't objecting to doing it because they do a lot good for the community, and there needs to be a meeting for all four towns.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the four Port Towns would start fresh and the Town Manager and Administrators would get together to discuss the process and the set up. Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked the Town Manager if when he finally met with the other Port Town's was this when he found out about the \$15,000 dollars.

The Town Manager stated that when he actually met with the other Port Towns, they had a meeting with Tom who is apart of an organization called Resilience and his organization was the consultant for the CDC. The Town Manager stated that this was when they asked if the \$15,000 dollars would be a hard lift, the Town Manager stated that he didn't know where the dollar amount came from and that was the first time he heard of the dollar amount. The Town Manager stated that he has to bring it to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the Town should be apart of the discussion and that the Town shouldn't just be hearing about a dollar amount after it has already been decided. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she does feel as if the Town joining the CDC would be a great benefit, she just would like to have the Town included in the details.

Commissioner Young stated that she doesn't understand why the Town didn't take the money from the previous CDC.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he agrees with the other Commissioners and that the other Port Towns shouldn't be just informing the town about a dollar amount, the Town should be included in the conversation to decide what the dollar amount should be and the process.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley wanted to know how they came up with the \$15,000 dollars and that the Town is a small municipality and it would have been appropriate for the other Port Towns to have had a conversation with the Town first before deciding this amount.

Ms. Hamler stated that the original CDC of the towns did contribute for a number of years, and it was prorated based on the percentage of each of their budgets. Ms. Hamler stated that this may be a good suggestion to bring up to the Port Towns.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the Commissioners and the Town Manager can bring that up to the other Port Towns. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated to Commissioner Young that the reason why the Town didn't take the money was because there were some concerns and that is all she can mention in regard to the matter.

Commissioner Henderson stated that he attended the meeting and that he didn't hear any discussion on the Towns contributing \$15,000 dollars.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he would like the Town Manager to find out how that amount of \$15,000 dollars was decided.

Ms. Hamler stated that on the resolution on page four it stated that each participating town shall contribute at least 20% of the total annual expenses, or an equal share of the organization's operational cost. Number 2 grants and external funding. CDC shall serve as a collaborative entity to pursue grant funding and leverage financial resources for community capacity building and infrastructure improvements. Ms. Hamler stated that it appears that they're asking for that on an annual basis, so Ms. Hamler thinks the Town needs to ask the question about the initial money, and then the ongoing contributions.

Commissioner Young stated that in the past they would have yearly meetings and then they stopped. Commissioner Young stated that she feels the one thing that needs to be emphasized is that they need to be yearly public meetings where any and every one can attend.

Amy Sawyer stated that she is thrilled that this is moving forward she thinks that the Town really need a CDC in place. Ms. Sawyer stated when is the meetings happening, is it open to the public, are the minutes available because she doesn't know anything is happening. Ms. Sawyer stated that What is the main difference between the Gateway Development Authority, which includes Mount Rainier and what Brentwood and Brentwood and this new CDC. Ms. Sawyer stated that what happened to the CDC and that the Town needs more clarification on what the amount of contribution would need to be and what the Town is committing to.

The Town Manager stated that he would be happy to speak with Ms. Sawyer about any questions that she had that evening and that she can come by his office.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley requested that the Town Manager speak with the Port Towns and get clarification and then come report his findings at the next meeting.

3. Port Town Composting (Commission Discussion)

The Town Manager stated that while he was meeting with the Port Towns Managers there was a discussion about having the Town of Cottage City and the Town of Cheverly participate in composting. The Town of Edmonston has received a grant to start composting for their town and they have asked for the Town of Cottage City, the Town of Bladensburg and all the other towns to participate in doing composting. This is a free program that will run from June up until November. Once November arrives the town will need to revisit the matter because it will be a fee to continue so the Town can discuss the cost and see how they would like to move on from there.

The Town Manager stated that he spoke with Ms. Hamler from the Green Team and she was very excited that this was something that the Town was interested in.

Commissioner Young asked if the Town is going to do it will it be specific instructions on how the residents should do it.

The Town Manager advised Commissioner Young that in the packet it provided instructions.

Commissioner Henderson stated that he wants to make sure that the containers are made very well and sealed.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the community tried out a composting pilot program and she supports it.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he is excited about it and looking forward to it.

Commissioner Elect Salsich asked what happens to the compost once it turns into soil does it come back to the residents.

The Town Manager stated that he will look into it.

Commissioner Brooks stated that usually it will go to a farm that can use the soil.

Ms. Hamler asked how people will opt into the program and that the compost crew has been doing this for many years. Ms. Hamler stated that she believes that the program should be for a year pilot project to get the people going. Ms. Hamler informed Commissioner Henderson that the company makes the containers great.

Commissioner Young asked how many containers there will be and where they will be located.

The Town Manager stated that each individual will have their own container, and he will get more information to inform the residents and the Commissioners.

4. America In Bloom Tour Date: July 21 to July 25 (Commission Discussion)

The Town Manager stated that the town has signed up for the American in Bloom and that they will be coming to tour the town on July 21, 2025, through July 26, 2025. The company will be visiting the town on Monday July 21, 2025, and the town will be providing them with a great tour of Cottage City.

The Town Manager informed the Commissioners that the town had to put up \$500.00 for the American in Bloom members hotel accommodations, and they will be staying in College Park.

Commissioner Young stated that she isn't clear on what the American In Bloom team is doing and why the town needs to pay the \$500.00.

The Town Manager stated that the Port Town has all signed up and because of the good things the town is doing like the Green Team and Community Garden, and it would be a good designation to have for the town.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that because the town is a sustainable community this program helps the town get certified and helps the town on how the town can beautify the community. Commissioner Chair Wheatley also stated that it goes towards keeping up with the town's sustainability certification.

There was no objection to the town giving the \$500.00 for the American in Bloom visit.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked the Town Manager where the \$500.00 would be taken out from the budget.

The Town Manager stated that he would let the Commission know and report back at a later date.

5. **Cottage City Resident Stickers (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager stated that Ms. Proctor provided a design for the Town for residents' stickers.

Commissioner Young stated that she feels that it's a good idea and she inquired where the stickers would be located.

The Chief of Police stated that it can be located on the right side of the driver's window.

Commissioner Henderson thinks the stickers need to have dates on them and that the Town Hall can create a record.

The Chief stated that there is no need for a visitor pass, it's just for the purpose of the residents so that they can come through to alleviate the long lines.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she agrees with the Chief that there isn't a need for the visitors pass it for the residents. Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she prefers the first one.

Commissioner Givens stated that there is no need for an expiration date.

Commissioner Brooks stated that the visitors pass isn't necessary, take the 2025 off and just get the stickers for the residents.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked how soon this can be given out and how many will be given out to the residents.

The Chief stated that the resident has to provide proof that the vehicle is registered to the town.

Commissioner Givens stated that it should be a do not enter sign for the residents from 4 PM to 7:00 PM.

6. **43rd Avenue Stormwater Maintenance RFP (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager stated that three of the water maintenance projects have been completed and they are currently working on the final project.

Ms. Barnhart with CPJ informed the Commissioners on what she plans to do in reference to the 43rd Avenue storm water maintenance.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked if they will be still doing a French drain.

Ms. Barnhart stated that they will be doing that in two locations so that it can bleed the water off into the trench drain.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked if the homeowners would need to be involved.

Ms. Barnhart informed Commissioner Chair Wheatley that the residents don't need to be involved.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked how long the RFP will be out for.

The Town Manager informed Commissioner Chair Wheatley that it will be 30 days.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked if there would be enough grant money to cover the project.

The Town Manager informed her that there is still enough grant money to cover the project.

Commissioner Givens gave feedback about the project.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked Ms. Barnhart if they could set up a meeting at a later date.

Ms. Barnhart stated that she could have a meeting.

Amy Sawyer, resident, asked if this project needs to be reviewed by the Critical Area Commission.

Ms. Barnhart informed Ms. Sawyer that it's not needed because the ground isn't being disturbed through this project.

7. **1st Reading: Ordinance 2025-02: Adopt Budget & Levy Property Taxes FY 2025-2026 (Commission Discussion)**

The Town Manager read into the record the record the 1st read for the Adopt Budget & Levy Property Taxes FY 2025-2026.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired about the numbers that were listed on the slide in reference to the budget.

Mr. Frankenfield informed Commissioner Chair Wheatley that the number was for the assessed value for residential and commercial.

Commissioner Givens inquired about the cost for the street sweeper for the \$20,000 being placed in the budget.

Mr. Frankenfield informed Commissioner Givens that there was an appropriation of \$25,500 and \$20,000 was for the street sweeper.

Commissioner Brooks stated that this was put in the budget, and it wasn't voted on.

Commissioner Givens stated that the floor is open for further discussion.

Mr. Frankenfield informed the Commission that the total includes the Salt Spreader, Plow 500 and the Street Sweeper.

Commissioner asked that the conversation be tabled for further discussion.

Public Comments

Anyone seeking to speak under Public Comments must sign in prior to the end of the Board 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).

Felix Resident stated that he is grateful for everything that they are doing and that he can volunteer if they need any assistance.

Amy Sawyer stated that she doesn't fully understand the timeline for the budget, she didn't see a line item for the translation of the meetings. Can the residents still add things to the budget and if the town can publish a timeline for the residents. Ms. Sawyer stated that she would love the town to acknowledge, and public appreciate the teachers and schools in the area.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that it wouldn't be an issue and that the town has done this in the past.

The Town manger informed Ms. Sawyer that the acting Office Manager Ms. Taylor has gotten some quotes for translation services. The Town Manager also informed Ms. Sawyer that there is a budget calendar on the new town's website which is in the middle of June.

Updates

Motion To Go Into A Closed Session:

Motion to suspend the rules and go into a closed session

The motion was made by Commissioner Givens and seconded by Commissioner Brooks.

There was a unanimous vote by the Commissioners. Young-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye & Brooks-Aye. Motion Passes no nays or abstentions.

Motion to go into a closed session

Motion 8:23 PM

The motion was made by Commissioner Givens and seconded by Commissioner Brooks. There was a unanimous vote by the Commissioners. Young-Aye, Henderson-Aye, Wheatley-Aye, Givens-Aye & Brooks-Aye. Motion Passes no nays or abstentions.

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".

The Commission plans to go into a closed session to conduct interviews for the Skilled Public Works Laborer Position.

Open Session Following Closed Session

Adjournment

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.