



July Work Session | Regular Town Hall Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, July 08, 2026 at 6:30 PM

3820 40th Avenue Cottage City, Maryland 20722

This meeting will be hosted hybrid: Town Hall & Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89728708676?pwd=sdb9QENww2uKO3gG2dfgcGamJbs1zP.1>

Phone: 301-715-8592 | Meeting ID: 897 2870 8676 | Passcode: 736137

Work Session:

Call to Order and Roll Call 6:43 PM

Attendees

- 1.) Commissioner Salsich- Ward 1
- 2.) Commissioner Durant- Ward 2
- 3.) Commissioner Chair Wheatley- Ward 3
- 4.) Commissioner Campos- Ward 4
- 5.) Commissioner Brooks- At-Large
- 6.) John Hoatson- Town Manager
- 7.) Chief Martini-Chief of Police
- 8.) Todd Frankenfield-Accountant ALTA CPA
- 9.) Kevin Best- Town Attorney
- 10.) Malcom Augustine-Senator
- 11.) Denise Hamler- Resident
- 12.) Stephanie Tincher-Architecture
- 13.) Brandon Freeman-CPJ
- 14.) James Gittens-CPJ
- 15.) Mike Nastick-Advantage Technology
- 16.) Chris May-Advantage Technology
- 17.) Bill Kopecky- Resident

Senator Malcolm Augustine spoke and represented the Town in Annapolis. He stated that they are pleased to support the Town and also give \$750,000.00 from the Maryland State Authority for the Welcome Center (Firehouse Project).

Review of Agenda

Public Comments

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

Denise Hamler spoke as the Co-Chair of the Cottage City Green Team to give a mid-year report. All under the third year of the decade of the tree canopy, invasive workshop with the Chesapeake Bay Trust grant through Parks & Planning. She also spoke about the Tree Ordinance 2024-04, identifying to the residents what they can and can't do with tree removal. She also mentioned the program for residents to receive tree maintenance work done on their property by August 1, 2026.

Presentations:

1. Presentation: Architect Presentation - Old Firehouse - Community Outreach Center - (Stephanie Tincher, Murphy & Dittenhafer)

Stephanie Tincher stated that although the firehouse isn't a historical building on the register, it is a historic building on the Trust, and they must keep that in front of mind. She gave a presentation on the plans for the new firehouse building.

The Town Manager stated that he spoke with Stephanie about putting the same type of door on the side of the building to allow it to be connected to the patio area so the gathering can extend inside and outside, connecting the two spaces.

Stephanie stated that this is one of the things they would have to run by Maryland Historic Trust first to make sure they don't have any objections, since it would be a significant change to the current envelope. She stated that it would be a great idea.

Commissioner Durant inquired if there would be a need for a wider entrance to get sculptures, furniture, or anything else in, and if they wanted to take this opportunity to consider a French door style that would give them a larger entryway into the building.

Stephanie stated that the door could be expanded if the Commission wanted to make that change.

Commissioner Durant also inquired if the fence has a gate so that it can be completely closed off if there were children at the location.

Stephanie stated that they can extend the fence to the building so it can be a lockable gate.

Commissioner Durant inquired if balustrades can be put in front of the fence for protection due to the heavy traffic area and for safety reasons.

Stephanie stated that would be a great idea.

Commissioner Durant inquired about solar panels on the roof and if the electrical upgrades would be sufficient for that.

Stephanie stated that they did investigate the solar panels being installed, but the Town wouldn't make much revenue because it is a fairly wooded area, and they would be puncturing the membrane roof.

Commissioner Durant stated that they wanted to have the solar panels.

Stephanie stated that they can revisit that.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired about a green roof in the infrastructure in the building. The patio was on the lower level when the lower level would be open green space.

Stephanie stated that the desirability of having a large gathering area with the neighbor feet away wouldn't be in the best interest of how to develop the building. Other considerations came to mind. The previous proportions for the outdoor gathering space in the lower level weren't conducive to feeling comfortable; it would feel oppressive vs. festive, along with the maintenance issues for a lower-level gathering area. They felt it was in the best interest of the project to have the patio upward.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired about parking and whether the parking lot is off the table because she doesn't see it in the design.

Stephanie stated that the parking lot is going to be a very challenging part to solve. Due to the structure of the building, they are working on how to figure that out.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired about a hinge door being in the previous design and what a hinge door is.

Stephanie stated that a hinge door is a door.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that they wanted to keep the old door and have it roll up.

Stephanie inquired if they were to have that door open, would that be a benefit or a distraction.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that it would be a benefit.

Stephanie stated that they can definitely look into it more.

Commissioner Campos inquired about an accordion door (folding door) to make it accessible to bring equipment in.

Stephanie stated that they like to work in conversation with the client to make it functional to how the client wants the space to be.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he is good without the solar panels because the Town has the Public Works building where the solar panels can be installed with access to sunlight. He also thinks a trifold for the front doors, and there is a lot of foot traffic, so it may be good to have some retractable fence to go up against the glass panels in front to avoid shattering glass.

Kevin Best stated that the Town owns a lot on the street at 3708, if he is correct.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that he was correct and that the Commission did talk about possibly using that lot as additional parking. She asked Stephanie if they were aware of the additional lot and if they wanted to provide a rendering of the lot made into the parking area, that would be great.

Stephanie stated that they will keep that in mind.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he thinks it is more feasible to use the other lot.

Senator Augustine inquired about the lower level of the building and the basement and what would happen there.

Stephanie stated that there is no exterior access to the basement at this time. The stairs and elevators downstairs would be a gathering space, with a little kitchen, restrooms, conference rooms, and some storage.

Senator Augustine inquired if it was enclosed.

Stephanie stated that it was enclosed.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired if a door could be added there.

Stephanie stated that you could possibly add a door.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked how many bathrooms.

Stephanie stated that there will be two bathrooms.

Senator Augustine inquired about the Public Works building.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that there is a fence around that property and that's a different property.

Senator Augustine asked if there was something in between the two properties and if there had been any thought of connecting all the Town properties together. He stated that's why he mentioned access from the back.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that if Senator Augustine could get the Town more funds, we could definitely connect all the buildings.

Senator Augustine stated that it could be a possibility for them to do that, then they can work on getting the Town additional funding.

Brandon stated that they were thinking about also limiting the storm maintenance with the building because the Town does have drainage issues.

Commissioner Durant stated that an established walkway from the Town Hall to the firehouse would need to be created, also with a fence separating the alley and the Public Works Building. He thought Mr. Best was talking about the empty lot on 38th,

and he knows there are some restrictions that it can be used, and the neighbors use it for a parking lot.

The Town Manager stated that maybe they can get some EV charging stations and do paving and make it a lot and use it as parking for the firehouse, and they can investigate this.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that a parking lot can be used there.

The Town Manager also suggested having a mural painted on the wall space to pay homage to the original firehouse.

Stephanie stated that was a great idea. Also, in the basement area, there is a lot of space to create a historical homage mural on the wall as well.

James stated that there are a lot of great ideas to improve everything. He also stated that they can look at things in a short amount of time if need be.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked Senator Augustine if the Town needed to have more time, could he grant that.

Senator Augustine stated that he could give more time.

2. Presentation: Coalition Against Bigger Trucks (CABT) - (Josh Collins)

The Town Manager stated that Mr. Collins was going to do a presentation to talk about the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks. He was hoping for letters of opposition for large trucks. Also, if the Commissioners wanted to sign on against this issue.

Commissioner Salsich stated that she supports sending the letters.

Commissioner Durant stated that he supports it, and the only comment is grammatical changes.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she supports sending the letter of opposition.

Commissioner Campos stated that he supports signing the letter of opposition.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he supports sending the letter of opposition.

3. Presentation: Advantage Tech Municipal IT & Cybersecurity Policy (AI) - (Mike Nastick & Chris May)

Chris gave a presentation on AI and data security and what that looks like for municipalities.

Commissioner Salsich inquired how the data centers tied to AI.

Chris stated that everything runs off data centers. If the stance is that the Town doesn't want to use AI, you can put it into a policy. He informs people how to write a policy on their thoughts and processes.

Commissioner Durant stated that they need to simplify it and flush it out for the Town.

Chris stated this is true; it's just a starting point.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the Town does need a policy and that PEAKE Technology can make sure that it's in effect.

Commissioner Campos stated that they have to take baby steps.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he thinks the Town needs this and it's a great starting point.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated, what is the next step?

Chris stated that they can do a working session, but it's whatever the Town needs. He also stated that they can set up a free training session.

Business

4. Cottage City Scholarship 2026 (Commission Discussion)

The Town Manager stated that there were four applications that came through for the Cottage City Scholarship. He also gave a breakdown of the scholarship awarding process. The Commissioners discussed.

Commissioner Salsich thanked all the applicants and chose Kailyn Williams number one, Aliany Romero second, and Xzayvilys Sparkman third place.

Commissioner Durant stated that he needs to look at the package.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she chose all the same three as Commissioner Salsich, but she needs to decide the order. Williams one, Sparkman two, and Romero third place.

Commissioner Campos stated that Kailyn Williams is number one, Romero second, and Sparkman third.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he chose Romero first, Sparkman second, and Williams third place.

The Commissioners all agreed that Kailyn Williams would be first place, Aliany Romero second place, and Xzayvilys Sparkman third place.

5. Wayfinding Branding & Signage Strategy (Commission Discussion)

The Town Manager stated that they attended the BCCE meeting, and they would like the Commission to decide what they would like to see as the Wayfinding.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley suggested that they take a small recess to discuss the renderings in the Town Hall.

Commissioner Durant stated that he would like to see a mural painted on the trail that leads to the bike trail on the hill near the Cottage City Park.

Commissioner Brooks inquired if there are any monuments and artworks proposed for the Cottage City side. He stated that the Town needs to push for that.

The Town Manager stated that they are trying to find spots to add for the Town to get more. He also stated that they will be identifying more things for the Town.

Kevin Best stated that the Battle of Bladensburg happened in Cottage City and there is no identification for Camp Casey. Cottage City lays on sacred ground.

Commissioner Durant inquired where the historical artifacts get stored and if it is possible to have them displayed.

Adjournment 8:40 PM

Commissioner Brooks made a motion to adjourn at 8:40 PM.

Commissioner Campos seconded the motion.

Ward 1- Salsich Aye, Ward 2-Durant Aye, Ward 3-Wheatley Aye, Ward 4-Campos Aye, At-Large- Brooks Aye.

Motion Passes. No nays or abstentions.

Regular Town Meeting:

Call to Order and Roll Call 8:41 PM

Attendees

- 1.) Commissioner Salsich- Ward 1
- 2.) Commissioner Durant- Ward 2
- 3.) Commissioner Chair Wheatley- Ward 3
- 4.) Commissioner Campos- Ward 4
- 5.) Commissioner Brooks- At-Large
- 6.) John Hoatson- Town Manager
- 7.) Chief Martini-Chief of Police
- 8.) Todd Frankenfield-Accountant ALTA CPA
- 9.) Kevin Best- Town Attorney

Pledge of Allegiance

Review of Agenda

Public Comments

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Consent Agenda

6. Approval of Minutes (June)

Commissioner Brooks made a motion to postpone the approval of minutes for June until next month.

Commissioner Campos seconded the motion.

Ward 1- Salsich Aye, Ward 2-Durant Aye, Ward 3-Wheatley Aye, Ward 4-Campos Aye, At-Large- Brooks Aye.

Motion Passes. No nays or abstentions.

7. Approval of Financials (June)

Commissioner Brooks made a motion to postpone the approval of the June financials until September.

Commissioner Durant seconded the motion.

Ward 1- Salsich Aye, Ward 2-Durant Aye, Ward 3-Wheatley Aye, Ward 4-Campos Aye, At-Large- Brooks Aye.

Motion Passes. No nays or abstentions.

8. Public Safety Report (Chief Martini)

Chief Martini gave a brief report on the Public Safety report.

Commissioner Grant inquired about procedure. When an arrest happens in Cottage City, what is the reporting chain for the Town?

Chief Martini stated that they don't have an obligation to tell the Town beforehand, but after the fact, if there is a good working relationship, they will try to let the Town know. Chief Martini stated that he will try and be diligent to put out as much information as he can when situations arise in the Town.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that she believes the Commission approved a Ford Explorer vs. the Chevy Tahoe.

Chief stated that they ran into issues about making sure that the truck could be delivered and the check written before the end of the Fiscal Year. The Grant Manager put the Chief in contact with a dealer in Philadelphia so that he could purchase the Chevy Tahoe and have it delivered in two weeks within the requested time frame.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired if the prices were the same.

Chief Martini stated that it was around the same ballpark.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired about the color of the vehicle and stated that the Town's fleet is gray vs. black.

Chief Martini stated that the only available color was black.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the process is that the Commissioners need to be made aware if anything changes with the purchases prior to the purchase. Just FYI. She inquired what the Chief will do with his old vehicle and if he plans to reassign it to someone.

Chief Martini stated that he will reassign the vehicle.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired about the officer that was interviewed and where they are in the process.

Chief Martini stated that the candidate is coming into the office tomorrow morning for the voice stress, and in the afternoon, he has his psychological test. His background is getting processed, and he has the paperwork to take the urinalysis and physical tests. Chief Martini also mentioned that he is campaigning for new officers as well.

9. Public Works Report

The Town Manager gave a Public Works report.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired when Public Works would be painting the curbs.

The Town Manager stated that public works would be working on painting the curbs next. Also, they will be creating a public art piece in front of the Town Hall.

Commissioner Brooks stated that he would like to add to September's agenda the discussion on replacing the Town signs to the entrance of the Town.

The Town Manager stated that that's the plan for the wayfinder. Once he receives all the Commissioners' feedback, they can move forward with that plan. He plans to have mockups ready for the September meeting.

Commissioner Reports

10. Ward 1

Commissioner Salsich asked if the events could be sent out in the month before. Is it too late for people to sign up for Cottage City Day?

The Town Manager stated that residents are still able to sign up for Cottage City Day.

11. Ward 2

Commissioner Durant stated that he has been receiving noise complaints from the residents. Since it's summer, is it possible that something can be sent out in the newsletter or via email advising people of the Town's ordinance and code about noise complaints and what steps can be taken about the noise complaints?

Chief Martini stated that whenever he receives a complaint about noise, he follows up at the address and provides them with the ordinance and codes and a flyer for whatever violation, and he has Mr. Hoatson post it. He also stated that he provides the residents with the non-emergency number.

Commissioner Durant stated, how can the Town follow up on it even when it's outside the normal police working hours?

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the Town has SeeClickFix so that the residents have a way to communicate with the Town during non-working hours. That may address some of those concerns, and the system is 24/7.

The Town Manager stated that we are in a conversion of the Town's website, which will happen July 15th, and SeeClickFix will be launched.

12. Ward 3

13. Ward 4

Commissioner Campos stated that in his ward there are issues with vultures and if everyone needs to play their part with the trash and make sure it's out on time. He also mentioned that he wanted to provide the residents with updates regarding CSX and the various trees that need be cut from their property.

The Town Manager stated that he is still working with CSX and it's a process, but the Town is still on their radar.

Commissioner Salsich asked the Town Manager if he can make CSX aware of the Tree of Heaven because of the lantern flies.

The Town Manager stated that he can make CSX aware of that as well.

14. At-Large Report

Commissioner Brooks stated that he will go back around the Town and do a survey of the streetlights around the Town.

The Town Manager stated that he will be bringing up legislation to address feeding of the vultures in the community.

Old Business

14. Letter of Opposition To Proposed Increases In Truck Size & Weight Limits Specifically House Bills 3372 & 2948 (Commission Vote)

Commissioner Brooks made a motion to move forward with the Letter of Opposition to Proposed Increases in Truck Size & Weight Limits Specifically House Bills 3372 & 2948. Commissioner Durant second the motion.

Ward 1- Salsich Aye, Ward 2-Durant Aye, Ward 3-Wheatley Aye, Ward 4-Campos Aye, At-Large- Brooks Aye.

Motion Passes. No nays or abstentions.

15. Cottage City Scholarship 2026 Awards (Commission Vote)

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that the Commission was all in agreement that Kailyn Williams would be the first-place winner, Aliany Romero would be the second-place winner, and Xzayvillys Sparkman would be the third-place winner.

Commissioner Brooks made the motion to move forward with the Cottage City Scholarship winners, First Place Kailyn Williams, Second Place Aliany Romero and Third Place Xzayvillys Sparkman. Commissioner Campos seconded the motion.

Updates

16. Town Manager Update

The Town Manager stated that the only question he had for the Commission was whether it was okay for the Town to advertise for the Police Clerk position.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley stated that it's okay to post the position.

The Town Manager stated that the theme for Cottage City Day is to Celebrate Your Heritage, and he hopes everyone dresses in their heritage.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley asked Mr. Best about a motion made by Commissioner Brooks to update the Employee Handbook because all the items weren't on the document that was signed. Does that need to be updated, and does the Commission need to resign?

Town Attorney Kevin Best stated that when the Town Manager codifies the new policies, he can take it back before the Commission to ratify the documents.

Commissioner Chair Wheatley inquired when the Commissioners will need to ratify the documents.

The Town Manager stated that they can do it before July 22, 2026.

Adjournment 9:45pm

Commissioner Brooks made a motion to adjourn at 9:45pm. Commissioner Salsich seconded the motion.

Ward 1- Salsich Aye, Ward 2-Durant Aye, Ward 3-Wheatley Aye, Ward 4-Campos Aye, At-Large- Brooks Aye. Motion Passes.

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