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**SNOW HILL MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING**

**Work Session Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday, May 30th, 2023**

**4:30pm – Regular Session**

A Work Session of the Mayor and Town Council of Snow Hill, Maryland was held at The Old Fire Hall on Green Street on Tuesday, May 30th, 2023, with Mayor Pruitt presiding.

**PUBLIC OFFICIALS PRESENT**

Mayor Mike Pruitt

Councilperson Regina Blake

Councilperson Janet Simpson

Councilperson Jenny Hall

**STAFF IN ATTENDANCE**

Jerry Jeffra, Communications Officer

Lorissa McAllister, Economic Development Director

Andy McGee, Police Chief

Rick Pollitt, Town Manager

Carol Sullivan, Executive Administrator

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1. **Discussion on the Sustainable Communities Program renewal process.**

Mayor Mike Pruitt called meeting to order at 4:31pm. The Mayor highlighted the agenda for tonight’s meeting, remarking that the Sustainable Communities Program is of vital importance, which prompted an in-person zoom meeting with Sustainable Communities Program Manager Carter Reitman and Eastern Shore Project Manager Bill Hersch from the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

Before beginning the presentation from DHCD, the Mayor asked Economic Development Director Lorissa McAllister to describe the community’s program renewal process first. Ms. McAllister explained that the Town of Snow Hill has been a designated Sustainable Community since 2013 with a renewal in 2018, which sets up the framework to achieve community goals, promote environmentally, economically and socially responsible growth, provide access to resources the Town wants and needs, and more. The next renewal is due in December of this year and the application must be formed and the action plan developed by a work group comprised of members of Snow Hill’s community. Ms. McAllister then turned the meeting over to Sustainable Communities Program Manager Reitman.

Mr. Reitman shared a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted the importance of the Sustainable Communities Program and explained a thorough step-by-step process on how the program works, how it begins and how it helps the communities it supports. He also explained the action plan with detailed steps and areas to focus on, and displayed maps including a map of Snow Hill where areas are considered a Sustainable Community and areas that are Priority Funding Areas. Mr. Reitman passed the last half of the presentation to Eastern Shore Project Manager Bill Hersch.

Mr. Hersch introduced himself as the project manager and reviewer for all of the grants for the State revitalization programs for the Town of Snow Hill. The Town has been able to use the funds provided by these programs for the past 8 years, amounting to $750,000 which has been used to help revitalize the town in various ways, such as the Strategic Demolition Fund Project of the Mason’s Opera House building. Another program the Town utilizes is the Community Legacy fund, which is targeted toward physical improvements to residential and commercial structures. Being enrolled in the Sustainable Communities Program will keep the Town eligible for these types of funds.

The Mayor stated that he wants the Town to continue its enrollment in the Sustainable Communities Program. Councilperson Simpson agreed with the Mayor’s comments and remarked that we have people eagerly willing to serve as the community board to help get the Town through the renewal process.

The Mayor asked the DHCD representatives if matching funds are often required for the various grants that are available for projects involving the parks and green spaces. Mr. Hersch replied that projects requested by the Town would be reviewed and rated according to the degree of local support provided for a particular project and the ability to leverage other funds to make the project achievable. Some would require a one-to-one match of the grants, whereas others would require no match, depending on a variety of criteria. He also recommended approaching the Department of Natural Resources for additional assistance.

The Mayor asked if the goals and objectives of the Program are flexible or if they lock the Town into a specific path. Mr. Reitman replied that to his understanding, nothing is binding when it comes to the action plan. Their team understands that plans and needs of a Town change and would work to accommodate this. If there is a radical change however, there is a process to follow.

Councilperson Simpson asked Mr. Reitman if he could show the map of Snow Hill again and explain the areas and why these areas were designated as such. Mr. Reitman replied that the geographical zones displayed on the map were created during the term of Governor Parris Glendening, who steered the state into a Smart Growth trajectory that used certain geographic places and zones to encourage development in a defined pattern. The idea was to incentivize development with additional benefits on top of what the private market has to offer. Mr. Reitman then explained that zones marked as ‘Priority Funding Areas’ are focused on infrastructure improvements, water and sewer, transportation, and other related purposes, and can take advantage of additional state funding resources. Sustainable Communities were created around 2010 and are a further elaboration of this concept, being more targetable with additional State resources. One of the major differences between the two is that Priority Funding Areas are designated by the locality and approved by the State, whereas the Sustainable Communities areas are submitted for designation for the Smart Growth sub cabinet, which then either approves or disapproves such a requested designation.

Councilperson Hall wanted to know what’s involved with preparing successful and unsuccessful applications? Mr. Reitman replied that the process would be able to advise and direct the Town on what is and isn’t successful.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Mayor Pruitt thanked our guests from the State for their attendance and support.

1. **Board & Commission Vacancies**

The Mayor announced that the terms of a number of our Board & Commission members have expired. He asked all present to think about any likely candidates that might be willing to accept appointment to one of the panels and to forward any names to him or to Mr. Pollitt.

Mr. Pollitt added that while these memberships need to be updated, this does not prevent the boards from meeting as members serve until their replacements are appointed. The groups under discussion include the Board of Zoning Appeals, Ethics Commission, Housing Review Board and the Board of Elections Supervisors.

1. **Adjournment**

With no other business to conduct, on a motion from Councilperson Blake, seconded by Councilperson Hall, the meeting was adjourned by the following vote. The time was 5:02pm.

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| **NAME** | **AYE** | **NO** | **ABSTAIN** | **RECUSED** | **ABSENT** |
| **Regina Blake** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Janet Simpson** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **Jenny Hall** | **X** |  |  |  |  |
| **TALLY** | **3** |  |  |  |  |

 Respectfully Submitted,

 Jerry Jeffra

 Communications Officer