

PUBLIC FORUM
FEBRUARY 10, 2014

Mayor Cerino called the public forum to order at 7:06 p.m. In attendance were Council Members Liz Gross, Linda Kuiper, Samuel T. Shoge and Mauritz Stetson, W. S. Ingersoll, Town Manager, Kees de Mooy, Zoning Administrator, Jennifer Mulligan, Town Clerk and guests.

Mayor Cerino stated that he was happy to see such a large turnout. He said that this meeting was being held in public forum style. He asked that everyone present please sign in.

Mayor Cerino made statements about the dissolution of the Task Force and said that it was now time for the public to comment and to move forward.

Mayor Cerino stated that he would like to try to keep everyone's comments to 3-minutes in order for the meeting to move along.

Mayor Cerino stated that the Task Force worked very hard to put together an impressive report and invited Washington College President, Mitchell Reiss, to make opening comments.

Mr. Reiss thanked the Task Force for all of their work, especially John Moag. He said that the Task Force was the first time that anyone from the Town had ever asked the College about their plans and hopes, as well as how the College could contribute to the community. He said that the College was a good neighbor and partner to Chestertown.

Mr. Reiss stated that the College sponsors over five hundred (500) events on or around campus that are open and free to everyone. The College also employs over five hundred (500) people. He said that this year there was a \$1.7-million shortfall in their budget, but they did not lay off any employees. He said that students and staff are responsible for twenty thousand hours of community service with the local schools and non-profits every year. The Center for the Environment and Society helped Chestertown to reduce its energy consumption by more than 300,000 kilowatts which provides a savings to the Town of \$130,000.00. He said that the College was responsible for almost \$100,000,000.00 in economic activity this past year alone.

Mr. Reiss stated that the question now was what happens with the Task Force report. He said that he thought the Town and College should work together with the major stakeholders to move forward. He said that the right type of change should be embraced to enhance and revitalize the community.

Mr. Reiss stated that he agreed with many of the recommendations of the Task Force, but not all of them. He said that everyone at the College was ready, willing and eager to work with the Town Council to enhance Chestertown.

Mr. Kevin Shertz stated that he was the owner of an architecture firm in Chestertown and founder of the Chester River Brewing Company, which was soon to be open. Mr. Shertz stated that the Town did not have a standing committee of the College and the Town. He thought that this was an important committee to have, given the mutual goals for the College and Town. He said that he would be happy to be a member on that committee if it was formed. Mr. Shertz stated that he thought the purchase of the marina property was a mistake in that they did not

acquire the Fish Whistle Restaurant as a part of the deal. He said that he was hopeful that the owner would negotiate with the Town on mutually beneficial terms for that transaction. He did not think it was a good business strategy for that parcel to be underwater during high tide. Mr. Shertz stated that there was mention in the report about Farmer's Market activities in Wilmer Park. He said that he thought that there were many activities in Wilmer Park already and before decisions were made to move the market everyone had to be aware of those activities. Mr. Shertz stated that there was a culture of "no" in the Town. He said that as the founder of Chester River Brewing Company he saw the culture of no firsthand and said that economic disadvantages for the community were being created. He said that those other Towns saying "yes" were taking opportunities away from Chestertown. Mr. Shertz stated that the community had to get out of their comfort zone and step up to change.

Ms. Alice Macnow of South Kent Street stated that she was a member of the Planning Commission and would like to see the Comprehensive Plan finalized before moving ahead with the marina and other parts of Town.

Mr. Tom Pierson, Assistant Sailing Coach for Washington College, stated that communication was key for the Town, County and College. He suggested a better form of communication to alert residents and visitors of what the area has to offer.

Ms. Wanda Gorman of the Artisan's Market stated that the report recommended moving the Artisan's Market and Farmer's Market to the Wilmer Park. She said that having the market in the center of Town brought a lot of business to Chestertown and thought that moving it would not have the same effect.

Mr. Keith Thompson of WCTR stated that there were many good recommendations in the Task Force Report and that it was a good starting point to framework the future.

Ms. Carol Neimand, resident of Chestertown, stated that she was an avid sailor and said that Chestertown was a diamond in the rough. She said that she went to Cambridge about 15-years ago and there was nothing, but they have changed the dynamics of the Town and it was now absolutely beautiful. She said that already existing was an arts community, a theater, the waterfront and a fresh Council with new ideas. She said that the time to do something was now.

Mr. Craig Kimmel, Captain of the Chester River Packet and general manager of the Chester River Packet Company, stated that he believed in the future of Chestertown and that it was time to seize the moment. He said that he supported Chestertown but there has to be a way to turn the waterfront around.

Ms. Isabelle Junkin, the Chester Riverkeeper, stated that she would urge that whatever was decided for the best of the waterfront, to at the same time maintain and improve the health of the Chester River.

Mr. Mike Davenport, rowing coach at Washington College, stated that there were many conversations about what happens at the high water mark to the shore and said that there was a community that made their living on the river and a community that enjoyed the river. He said that this was part of the culture and should not be lost. He said that he would be happy to take anyone out on the river to see Chestertown from the waterside as they would gain a new appreciation for the Town seeing it from that perspective.

Ms. Lolly Sherry, Kent County resident, stated that she had a trawler and belonged to a group of trawlers consisting of several hundred trawlers who would love to come to Chestertown for rendezvous. She said that she believed many boaters would want to come to Chestertown once the marina was expanded. She added that she thought the Farmer's Market should have the vendors on the sidewalks in an attempt to keep it downtown while not harming the grass at the park.

Ms. Freddie Ottinger, Chestertown resident, stated that she had great difficulty launching her kayak shell from her house and has attempted to find storage space at the College boat house but was not successful. She said that despite the fact that the river existed, there was terrible access to it for those who don't have waterfront property. She asked for consideration for storage and launching space for small, non-motorized boats at the marina.

Mr. Jay Yerkes, owner of Yerkes Construction, stated that Chestertown was designed for a live here play here community but it was not that anymore. He said that the community depends on tourism. He saw parking as a large problem in Town and said that he thought that additional parking had to be designed for downtown. Mr. Yerkes stated that some people are not beginning businesses in Town because there is no parking available.

Ms. Marjorie Adams, owner of Mimi's Closet and Chestertown resident, stated that she recently moved from Cannon Street to High Street. She said that her business is doing very well now, but when she was located on Cannon Street business was terrible. She said that she would like to see the Farmer's Market expand and grow, but not move from the center of Town as it would impact the attendance of people in Town on Saturdays.

Mr. Coby Stohrer, Chestertown resident, stated that there were comments in the report about changing the Ethics Law. He said that he thought it was a bad idea because it was important to depend on the fact that elected officials will not be making private deals. He added that he thought relocating the Farmer's Market to the Wilmer Park would be a mistake, adding that he thought it was a good idea to move the artisans over to Monument Park. Mr. Stohrer also added that hi-speed internet to households was something that needed to be addressed, perhaps with a broadband co-op. Mr. Stohrer stated that the discussion of moving the Fish Whistle and the parking area were addressed and he said that he thought those things were needed to make a good marina and there needed to be transient traffic.

Ms. Mary Pritchard, Chestertown resident, stated that she thought the report was very interesting and had many good ideas. She said that she thought the Town should not get too specific in following recommendations. She said that she agreed that there should be a single area to find out what is going on in the Town, County and at the College. Ms. Pritchard added that she thought that larger events should be added to in order to make them last longer and draw a larger crowd. She said that spreading events out over the year was also a good idea.

Mr. John Seidel, resident of Chestertown and director of the Center for the Environment and Society at Washington College, stated that a part-time Council and small staff cannot do everything. He said that Town Commissions and Boards are the lifeblood of a small community and they make things happen. He said that training for Boards and Commissions was critical and it did not happen enough. Mr. Seidel added that the Town Council should follow their recommendations as well if they expected people to invest their time. Mr. Seidel stated that the

remarks on tourism and websites were on the mark and more can be done in that area, noting that the Town had to be proactive. He suggested providing itineraries (regional) for more than a day's visit. Mr. Seidel stated that he thought shuttles were a great idea and were useful. He said if they did not work at first, he thought after time it would, especially if it linked the College waterfront, Stepne, the Marina, downtown shopping, Washington College and uptown shopping. Mr. Seidel stated that he also thought the Stepne development as described in the report was good for the near-term as long as Chestertown looked to the long-term to remedy things that are keeping young people from staying in Chestertown. Public access was necessary to the river.

Ms. Bernadette Bowman, Kent County Tourism and Economic Development Director, stated that the three largest industries in Kent County are agriculture, marine and tourism, in that order. She said that tourism related business and organizations brought in \$50-million dollars in 2012. Ms. Bowman stated that the Task Force deserved an incredible amount of credit for their work.

Ms. Hope Clark, a resident of Kent County, stated that she coordinates the Kent County Diversity Dialogue Group. She said that she read the report and said that it acted as a type of needs assessment that should be expanded upon. She said that the narrative missed that the economic engine from the beginning was by free blacks. She said that the development of the Town had to encompass the entire community, including all demographics. Ms. Clark stated that the tension mentioned between the County and the Town should be explored through dialogue.

Mr. Zane Carter, Kent County resident, stated that Chestertown had so many assets that other Towns did not. There was community interest and a story to tell. He said that there was a wonderful opportunity to make this plan work and people would want to come and stay for a long visit. He agreed with an earlier statement that there should be a single spot to locate all that is happening in Town each week that could be passed out to businesses and the story of Chestertown and events for that week could be told.

Mr. Gibson Anthony, resident of Chestertown, stated that he had discussed in the past a scheme to put subtitle signs over the street signs to show the original name of the street going back to 1706. He said that the community had to describe specifically what was going to happen with the Stepne parcel in an effort to protect the area and provide a clear playing field for the entity that wanted to develop there. He said that site lines for the grid were very important to the design, with the most valuable site line to being the river.

Mr. Peter Sweitzer, resident of Chestertown, stated that he moved here just a year ago from Greenwich, Connecticut and what he liked most was the fact that there was not a chain store on the corner. He said what exists is lovely and it was a simple way of living with pleasant people. He encouraged to not allow this study to rest. He said that change takes courage but it was worth it if it was done in the correct way.

Ms. Kelly McIntyre, owner of Occasions Catering and resident, stated that she echoed everyone's comments this evening and said that she has been on many committees at the College where there were recommendations made about what could be done in Chestertown. There were many study groups and reports also available. Ms. McIntyre stated that the Town would have not been able to afford the expertise of the people who were appointed to this Task Force and the study should be utilized, but cautioned against "reinventing the wheel".

Mr. Jeffery Carroll of the Fish Whistle stated that he thought the Farmer's Market was great the way that it was now, but had too much foot traffic on the surface of the park. He said that additional brick pavers in the park or moving the market across the street to Court Street and Memorial Row were options that should be reviewed. Mr. Carroll said that the owner of the Fish Whistle was waiting for a new plan for the marina before he made a decision on what to do with the restaurant building.

Mr. Armond Fletcher, Chestertown resident, stated that he thought the children in the community should be reached out to in an attempt to keep them interested in staying in the community. He said that he also did not want to see the African American story lost in any changes that were made to Chestertown.

Ms. Holly Geddes, resident of Chestertown, stated that the Task Force should be commended for their work and said that the report should be implemented. She said that economic development was necessary in Chestertown and a big component was marketing. She said that the Town itself and events should be marketed and there should be a staff member for it at Town Hall. She said that signage was also important. Mixed-use should be extended through the general downtown area. She said that she thought parking meters should be removed as they cost the Town money and thought they created a negative image for Chestertown. She said that additional parking could be generated at the street crew location.

Mr. David Foster, resident of Chestertown, stated that more of the community had to be involved. He said that this could not be done by the Town only. He said that he would have liked to see some County Commissioners at the meeting. Mr. Foster stated that the public school system had to be addressed as well.

Mayor Cerino stated that Mr. Bill Short, County Commissioner, had anticipated coming to the meeting but was ill. He said that he has been very proactive recently in attending meetings.

No one else in the audience wished to speak.

Mayor Cerino stated that there would be many opportunities moving forward for more public input. He said that in March a series of business forums would begin. The General Commercial Zone (C-1) would be the subject of the March 10th meeting. Each zone would be invited to attend a meeting to discuss ways in which to improve business in Town.

Mayor Cerino stated that the Town would be hiring an engineer to develop a design for the marina and there would be a charrette where anyone interested will be invited to help with the plan.

There being no business, the meeting ended at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted by:

Jennifer Mulligan
Town Clerk

Approved by:

Chris Cerino
Mayor

PUBLIC FORM
PLEASE SIGN IF YOU WISH TO COMMENT

NAME	ADDRESS	EMAIL
1. Hope Clark	4775 Cliffs City Rd	Clarkhpg@gmail.com
2. GREG Kimmel	327 Cannon St.	info@chestertownpa.org
3. Wanda	Chestertown	wanda.wanders@yahoo.com
4. Carol Diamond	210 Rolling Rd. CTown	Carolnick@verizon.net
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PUBLIC FORM
PLEASE SIGN IN

Attendance

NAME	ADDRESS	EMAIL
1. NANCY McGUIRE	103 S MILL	n.mcguire@dmv.com
2. Allan Schanker	KQA Rescue Squad	mddecayld@hotmail.com
3. Mike HANSON	BRAMPTON IWN	inwkeeper@BramptonIWN.com
4. Lucas Houscom	Brampton IWN	ll
5. Robert Lee Davis Jr	P.O. Box 630 21620	leedavisreedstate@verizon.net
6. JAY YERKES	112 SOUTH CROSS ST.	jayeyerkesc@instruction.com
7. KENT KEABEL	HERON POINT	KERBELHERONPOINT@AOL.COM
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10. FRANK STURT BILOWIA	110 S MILL ST	franksturt@gmail.com
11. FRED OTTINER	102 RIVERSIDE TERRACE	fredottiner@comcast.net
12. Alice Macnow	P.O. Box 337 Chestnut Hill	alicejmacnow@netzero.net
13. BOB GREENLEE	EASTON / TRAPPE	rbgreenlee@access.net
14. John Stinchfield	413 S. Cross St.	johnstinchfield@agnal.ca
15. John Huffer	415 S. Cross St.	hufferjw2@verizon.net
16. BROOKE HARWOOD	214 N. Queen St.	brooke.harwood@gmail.com
17. Keith Thompson	WCTP	ktthompson@wctp.com
18. Peter Seetser	114 Little Harbor Way	PJS-Seetser@yahoo.com
19. Carolyn Plunk	108 Riverside Ter	Colinick@AOL.com
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**PUBLIC FORUM
MAYOR AND COUNCIL
DISCUSSION ON TASK FORCE REPORT
FEBRUARY 10, 2014**

7:00 P.M.

1. Mayor Cerino's opening comments regarding the Task Force and process
2. Remarks from Washington College President Mitchell Reiss
3. Comments from the public (All comments will be limited to 3-minutes)
4. Comments from Council
5. Adjournment by Mayor and announcement of any future meetings