

**MAYOR AND COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 3, 2014**

Mayor Cerino called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. In attendance were Council members Liz Gross, Linda Kuiper, Samuel T. Shoge and Mauritz Stetson, W. S. Ingersoll, Town Manager, Jennifer Mulligan, Stenographer, and guests.

Mayor Cerino asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes of the Mayor and Council meeting of January 27, 2014. **Mr. Stetson moved to approve the minutes of the Mayor and Council meeting of January 27, 2014 with clarification made to the portion of the meeting dealing with the name and amount of the County grant for the War of 1812 reenactment, was seconded by Mr. Shoge and carried unanimously.**

Mayor Cerino asked for a motion to pay bills. **Ms. Gross moved to approve payment of the bills as presented, was seconded by Mr. Stetson and carried unanimously.**

Ms. Nancy McGuire was present on behalf of the Downtown Chestertown Association. She presented an overview of the DCA organization and what they do for the downtown. She said that on February 20, 2014, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Occasion's Boardroom, there will be a Board meeting and a new slate of officers will be introduced. She invited the Mayor and Council to attend. She pointed out that her tenure as President of the DCA would be ending.

The incoming slate of officers was Kristen Owen (Chesapeake Bank), president; Barbara Jorgenson, 1st vice-president; Bob Ortiz, 2nd vice president; Kate Bursick, secretary, and; Bob Ramsey, treasurer.

Ms. McGuire stated that the DCA would like to propose that the Town create a driveway to the Town yard and to have parking designated for merchants in that area. She said that parking has always been a problem in the downtown and thought that merchants would not park in front of their stores if they had a designated parking area.

Ms. McGuire also proposed that if the meters are bagged, the bags should be stamped, "Our meters have been retired because we appreciate your business". She said that the meters should be left in place, however, until which time the survey was complete and it was proven they were not necessary.

Ms. McGuire stated that the Town could help the businesses by marketing Chestertown. She said that teamwork with Kent County Tourism, the DCA and the Town Council was necessary. Ms. McGuire said that volunteers were critical to the success of Chestertown.

Ms. McGuire asked that the Council have a discretionary fund established so the Town Council can express appreciation and support initiatives from time to time during the year. She said that that waiting for the annual budget does not always relate to an organization's need for funding.

Mayor Cerino stated that if there was anything he could do to attract more downtown members to the DCA he would be happy to help. He said that it was a good group to talk with before considering any changes that might have a negative effect on business owners.

Ms. Gross stated that the directional parking signs may be helpful in Town. Ms. Gross asked who was conducting the parking survey that was mentioned. Ms. Kuiper stated that she was surveying people downtown as to their thoughts on the parking meters. Ms. McGuire stated that finding out what other small towns do for parking would also be helpful.

Mr. Ingersoll asked Chief Baker if he was going to present the Annual Report for the Police Department at this meeting. Chief Baker stated that he distributed the report to the Council but would present the report at the next meeting.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that the Mayor and Council received a proposal from South Fork Studio Landscaping for a soil and turf restoration project at the Fountain Park and asked if the Council was ready to act on it. Mayor Cerino stated that the Garden Club was excited about Mr. Barnard performing this work at the Fountain Park, noting that there was a need to do something about the soil compaction. Mr. Stetson stated that he did not understand the need for the work and thought that the Town should have the University of Maryland check the soil as that would have no cost associated with it. Ms. Gross stated that she thought before any work was done, the use patterns of the park should be changed. Ms. Kuiper stated that the hardscape design of the park should change to incorporate the use of the park.

Mr. Ingersoll suggested that Mr. Barnard be asked to attend the next meeting to describe his proposal and how it differed from what has been done in the past. The Council agreed.

Mayor Cerino stated that the Farmer's Market was very important to the Town of Chestertown, so whatever solution was decided upon, the Farmer's Market had to be located in a central spot.

Mayor Cerino stated that he had a meeting with Ms. Barbara MacBeth, head of the Garden Club, and the Garden Club was interested in an official Task Force of interested stakeholders to decide the future of the Fountain Park.

Ms. Kuiper introduced Ms. Wanda Gorman, who was taking charge of the Artisans' Market this year.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that People's Bank was hosting Chestertown Gras on Saturday, March 1st from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m. to benefit the Backpack Programs. There will be a tent in the parking lot with gumbo served from different local restaurants and activities for children and adults. There will be a parade around the Fountain Park as well.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that Mr. de Mooy was working on the National Fish and Wildlife's Hurricane Sandy Resiliency Competitive Grant Program which was open by the Department of Natural Resources and the Center for Watershed Protection. He said that this project would be a good compliment to Chestertown's current work that contributes to the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort, which includes wetland restoration, living shoreline, rain gardens and other stormwater projects including a step pool conveyance that treats runoff from a substantial portion of Chestertown's fourth ward commercial district.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that another grant in the works was Chesapeake Green Streets, Green Jobs and Green Towns grant program which was funded by the EPA and the State of Maryland's Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bay Trust Fund of the Department of Natural Resources. He said that the goal of this was to implement sustainability programs that reduce stormwater runoff, increase tree canopy, improve local and bay water quality, enhance the quality of life and communities in Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, D.C., West Virginia, Virginia and portions of the Chesapeake Bay.

Mr. Cerino stated that stormwater should be one of the "green" priorities of the Town and grant opportunities like what were mentioned were a good opportunity to pioneer retrofit stormwater management in Town.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that Kent Center was hosting the Best Buddies 5k Run/Walk/Wheelchair event on Saturday, March 29th from 8 a.m. to noon on the Washington College Campus and the Rails-to-Trails.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that he thought the S.O.S. child care program was being taken over by Carrot Top Child Care and Learning Center. He said that the children who were involved in the daycare were able to stay in the program and other children were added. He said that this helped with the stability of the S.O.S. Center.

Ms. Kuiper stated that individual offices, furnished or un-furnished, were available for rent at the S.O.S. building at a very good price.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that he discussed the "If I Were Mayor" contest with the Maryland Municipal League staff and the principal at Garnett Elementary. He said that this year's theme was "Engaging My Community" and asked if a representative from the Council could speak with the Fourth Graders about how to engage a community. Ms. Kuiper stated that she thought it would be nice to get copies of the essays and invite the children to read them at a meeting.

Mr. Ingersoll went over a letter from the Local Government Exchange for the Eastern Shore for Agro-Ecology concerning an upcoming Eastern Shore program.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that an email was received by the Town from Washington College concerning a proposed academic building on Washington Avenue and their efforts to

secure funding from the State of Maryland. He said that the College requested a letter of support from the Mayor and Council for the building which would provide classroom and office space for the recently established departments of Anthropology and Environmental Sciences and Studies. **Ms. Gross moved for a letter of support from the Mayor and Council regarding the proposed building on Washington Avenue, was seconded by Ms. Kuiper and carried unanimously.**

Mr. Ingersoll stated that the Recreation Commission was holding a meeting at 6:00 p.m., on Tuesday, February 4, 2014 at Town Hall to discuss recreation issues in Chestertown.

Mayor Cerino stated that there will be public feedback accepted on the Task Force's recommendations regarding the waterfront on Monday, February 10, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. He asked that everyone read the report before making comment.

Mayor Cerino stated that he would like to begin meeting with business leaders in Town and would like to begin by inviting owners of businesses in the C1-Commercial District to attend a meeting on Monday, March 10, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Cerino stated that he was talking with some members of the community to try to have a signature weekend in December for Chestertown. He said that he spoke with Mrs. Elizabeth Reiss of Washington College about Colonial Chestertown, which was held last December. He said that this year he would like to work this tour into a larger-scale weekend event for Chestertown's holiday season.

Mayor Cerino asked for ward reports.

Ms. Gross stated that this round of snow removal was much better than last week's clean-up.

Ms. Gross stated that a resident of the First Ward expressed concern over the speed of school busses speeding on Campus Avenue. She said that the police department ran a survey on bus traffic and there was no speeding; the busses were loud and big so it seemed as though they were speeding. She thanked Chief Baker for his quick response to the request.

Ms. Kuiper stated that for anyone wishing to claim property tax credit, applications will be out this month. If an application is not received by mail, you can call 800-944-7403 to request one. Ms. Kuiper stated that this is for credits which are tied to your income and both property owners and renters were eligible.

Ms. Kuiper stated that she would be contacting the Garnett Elementary School to see if they completed their reading contest. She said that former Councilmember Gatto has promised pizza to the winners.

Ms. Kuiper stated that the Kent County Chamber of Commerce hosted the "Best of the Best" 2013 Excellence in Business Awards this past Friday at the Prince Theatre. She

said she had two winners in her ward, they being J. R. Alfree of the Lemon Leaf and J.R.'s Pub and Larry Hauck of Hauck's Menswear. East Coast Shredding and Crow Farms also were given awards.

Ms. Kuiper stated that she would like to have the \$5,000.00 approved that she requested for the Tourism Department for the War of 1812 reenactment. She said that the time for the donation was now, not at budget time. Ms. Kuiper stated that she received emails from Ms. Diver and there was no reason that \$5,000.00 could not be appropriated right now. Ms. Kuiper said that she spoke to Ms. Bowman on Friday night who indicated that the County would accept a letter of commitment.

Ms. Gross stated that she was not against the expense in principle, but she was surprised at Ms. Kuiper's motion for an expenditure of that size with no warning.

Mr. Cerino stated that he thought there should be a contingency line item in the budget for this type of situation and said a discretionary amount could be set aside in this budget for this type of request.

Ms. Kuiper stated that there was not even a capital improvement fund in the budget. Mr. Ingersoll stated that there was, in fact, a capital improvement budget but it was not based on or connected to revenues from a hotel tax. Mr. Ingersoll stated that there was enough money in the budget to make the donation this year or in next year's budget. He said that to the extent possible, requests for large amounts of funding outside of budgeted items, should be made at one meeting and approved at a second meeting. He said that too much time was spent arguing over what account things were going to come from when they were general fund items. He said that there was money in hand and in the banks to cover Council approved amendments.

Ms. Kuiper stated that she has been asking for figures over the past week as there was over \$90,000.00 received from the hotel tax and wanted to know where it was spent. She said that she knew that \$48,000.00 went to the Visitors Center expenses but she has been asking for an itemized list of FY2013 expenses. She wanted to see vendors and costs for the \$42,000.00 remainder. Mr. Ingersoll stated that minor incomes such as the Hotel Tax revenues were not specifically budgeted for expenses. Ms. Kuiper stated that the money was spent and she wanted to know where it was spent. Mr. Ingersoll stated that the \$42,000.00 went into the general fund and paid for things like the overtime costs of the street crew to clean-up of events, the police overtime for event support, fireworks, holiday decorating, music in the park, website management, Constant Contact, Earth Day, advertisings, etc. He said that there were many things that the Hotel Tax was spent on each year that would not show up as vendor costs. He recommended that if Ms. Kuiper wanted a \$5,000.00 donation to the War of 1812 activity, that she make a motion to that effect.

Ms. Kuiper moved to approve a \$5,000.00 donation from the hotel tax revenue to give to the Tourism Department for their matching grant for the War of 1812

reenactment, was seconded by Mr. Shoge and carried with four (4) in favor, Mr. Stetson opposed.

Mr. Cerino stated that he was going to vote for this at budget time because he thought it was cleaner to do it at budget time. He said that there should be line item in the budget for discretionary funds. Mr. Stetson agreed that he would have voted in favor of it at budget time. He said that he would like to know when someone was going to make a motion for a large expenditure.

Ms. Kuiper stated that she would like a separate budget for the Hotel Tax revenue. Mr. Ingersoll stated that he thought there could be a justification in the budget process, but they could not itemize every individual source of revenue or offset them with expenses in the same category.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that it would be helpful if the Council would take new information at one meeting and then make a motion, if necessary, at the next meeting. This way everyone had a chance to digest all information that was presented.

Ms. Kuiper asked when the Council would like to begin meeting for the budget. Mr. Ingersoll stated that by the end of March the Town will have a good idea of what revenues they will be getting from the State and would have a three-quarter year handle on current year expenses. He said that he would like information from the Council on capital items. He said that \$200,000.00 would be spent on road repair in the spring.

Ms. Kuiper asked when the meters went back into effect. Mr. Ingersoll stated that the meters immediately went back into effect after the last meeting and the public had been made aware of it with one week of warnings only.

Mr. Shoge stated that he received an email from an employee of the College who was looking to begin a cycling club for Chestertown and the surrounding area. A meeting would be held on Friday, February 7th at 4:00 in Hodson Hall, which was open to anyone who was interested.

Mr. Shoge stated that it would be nice if the Chester River Rowing Club hosted a regatta in Town. He said that they were held in Annapolis and it was a successful event. He said that he would like to work with different recreational clubs to get some activities in Town started. Mr. Cerino stated that the Maryland High School Crew championship is held each year at Wilmer Park and it was a large event, but the crowd did not seem to funnel through Town.

Mr. Shoge stated that he sent some feelers out to colleagues of his outside of Chestertown to take a look at the Town website and provide feedback. He said that the deadline for feedback was the end of next week, but he had heard so far that the site did not work well with cell phones. Mr. Cerino stated that he would like Mr. Wootten to come before the Council and explain the site and the Council could relay some things that the Council would like to see in way of enhancements.

Mr. Stetson stated that the Council received a draft ordinance for campaign finance reporting at the last meeting. He said that he would like to have it on the next agenda for discussion. He said that he thought there should be a charter change to include a primary if more than four (4) candidates were to run for Mayor at one time.

Mr. Shoge asked for Recreation Commission minutes. Ms. Mulligan stated that she would try to get the minutes from Mr. Arrowood, noting that the minutes of the Recreation Commission were not posted online.

Mr. Ingersoll stated that he had been in contact with the three bank-owned properties on Maple Avenue and Cannon Street that had water damage from pipes bursting. He said that the banks, at first, were unaware that they had mortgages on the properties but were now working with the Town to take possession through a mortgage in lieu of foreclosure method. He said that the bank that owns Widehall already has a restoration company at the house.

Ms. McGuire stated that she would like the DCA to be included in any discussions concerning the Fountain Park.

There being no further business, **Mr. Stetson moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:07 p.m., was seconded by Ms. Kuiper and carried unanimously.**

Submitted by:


Jennifer Mulligan
Stenographer

Approved by:

Chris Cerino
Mayor



Downtown Chestertown Association

P. O. Box 745 • Chestertown • Maryland 21620

Nancy McD. McGuire, President • 410 778 9319

J R Alfree, Vice President

Kristen Wright-Owen, Vice president

Bob Ramsey, Treasurer

Andy Goddard, Secretary

Nancy Butler, Membership & *Curb.Appeal*

Good evening,

For those who are not familiar with Downtown Chestertown Association, we are a 501c6 organization as described in our Bylaws as:

The association an organization dedicated specifically to the promotion of business in the Town of Chestertown. It shall vigorously pursue objectives considered by the membership tantamount to creating a healthy, prosperous and sustainable downtown environment.

Four years ago we discussed including the shopping area but quickly realized that they are private property with their own dynamics. We also realized that we have peculiar issues and that, much the shopping areas, all citizens (no matter what District) use the downtown with expectations of its vitality and excitement.

I am here as current President of the Downtown Chestertown Association I say current for my second term ends at the Annual Meeting in February. The meeting is February the 20 5:30 -7:00 at Occasions Catering Board Room on Cannon Street. We wish to formally invite the Mayor and Town Council.

New blood and new ideas often create new opportunities. It keeps an organization fresh and alert, I believe. Therefore, I will not be running for President this term.

However, I will not be fading away, our Bylaws state that the immediate Past President remains as an ex- officio member of the Board for two years. There are many projects and focuses we have started to which I hope to contribute.

The important part of my message is that there will be a seamless transition. The Slate of officers has been carefully considered. Only members of the DCA are permitted to vote so I encourage all to join as a full member. Of course, nominations by members from the floor are permitted.

SLATE OF OFFICERS:

President: KRISTEN OWEN, Chesapeake Bank & Trust

Kristen has been a Vice President for DCA and very active in the DCA decision-making.

First Vice President: BARBARA JORGENSON, Attorney

Barbara has been attorney for DCA for 4 years. Was moderator for our Candidate Forum in November and has been a trusted advisor for the DCA.

Second Vice President: BOB ORTIZ, Robert Ortiz Studios

We all know Bob and his great vision and enthusiasm. We feel fortunate to have him willing to devote time to our Association.

Secretary: KATHRYN BURSICK, Garfield Managing Director, and Chief Administrative Officer.

Highly efficient and organized with a young vibrant approach.

Treasurer: BOB RAMSEY, Finishing Touch

Bob has been Treasurer for many decades. Having one Board Member return seems important to a seamless transition. He is also an excellent representative for the retail businesses.

The DCA remains informed and connected to what is happening in Chestertown. We regularly attend Town Council meetings and other meetings and events of other organizations such as Greater Chestertown Initiative, Garfield, RiverArts for they are important to our knowledge of what Chestertown is all about.

We sponsor business seminars and informational sessions with an eye to build relationships. We look forward to more concrete ways to relate and help each other. The DCA is responsible for events, tasks and projects such as Taste of Town, Fountain Park Fourth of July, Crazy Days, Holiday lights and pine roping (with enormous help from the Town especially Kees DeMooy and the Town workers), Thanksgiving through Winter Holiday events such as Santa's arrival, Christmas Parade. DCA's host the American Cruise Line visits. The Digital Sign remains very important and will be fully functioning. I personally promise. This year we sponsored the Candidate Forum for Mayor.

CURBAPPEAL, conceived by Nancy Butler, was added to the DCA as a way to emphasize how beautiful Chestertown is and show how much we care. CurbAppeal volunteers have worked diligently to improve the appearance of our downtown by weeding, restacking borders and nurturing the tree under beds. Boxwood planters, troughs and flowers have been added. The painted bench project, in Fountain Park, painted by our five Chestertown schools, was a CurbAppeal project lead by Patricia Pfeiffer. A new project in the alley at Spring and High for the boarded windows and doors will be tromp l'oeil scenes through windows of the historic sites around town (including George Washington at the College) is planned for this Spring. We will work

with RiverArts. This year we plan to emphasize the War of 1812 with a theme of red, white and blue flowers and War of 1812 flags. If we are able to raise the funds, we would like to add hanging baskets where possible. Much of what we have accomplished has been because the Town has supported our efforts.

As mentioned in the last meeting, DCA will be focusing on the War of 1812. Although there was never a specific happening here in Chestertown, we have been graciously invited to participate in the East Coast and Canadian celebration. We are planning an overnight encampment by the Eastern Shore Militia re-enactors with opportunity to learn about the Militia and the War, a parade on Saturday of possibly 100+ re-enactors – both British and American militias and a flag raising and wreath laying ceremony.

DCA would like to continue working closely with the Mayor and Town Council to improve our economic equation. We wish to enhance the link between the College and the downtown businesses and services. We wish to work together to design a strategic plan to encourage new businesses. We would like to see more residential opportunities within business district such as apartments above stores so that we are alive day and night.

PARKING – Forever we have heard that there is a parking problem and that a permanent solution is complicated and costly. Merchants park often in front of their stores or on side streets close to their businesses. They are encouraged to park “elsewhere” but where?

The DCA would like to propose an inexpensive temporary solution. We propose that a driveway be created into the back of the Town Yard and that portion of the Yard be cleared for Merchant parking designated as such with signage of “Merchant Parking Only”. Bob Ramsey of Finishing Touch is able to reproduce the Town map on metal. We propose a double-sided map be placed at the entrance to the public parking area on Cannon Street (behind High Street) with signage designating this area is for “Welcome Chestertown Visitors”.

METERS - If it is decided that meters will be “bagged” indefinitely, we propose that the bags be stamped with, “Our meters have been retired because we appreciate your business.” We do not propose that the actual meters be removed until we have a better idea of their importance. We are aware that there is a survey of businesses about the meters. We look forward to the results.

THE MARKETING OF CHESTERTOWN - The one area that has been neglected and where the Town can help is to assist with general marketing of Chestertown. Not a specific organization nor business but simply the magic of visiting our historic river Town. We highly recommend teamwork between Kent County Tourism, DCA and the Town Council. As a member of the Tourism board, we are constantly looking for avenues and ways to emphasize our importance. May I recommend inviting Bernadette Bowman to a meeting to present what is being done now. You will be pleasantly surprised how vast that coverage is. However there are many ways we can improve and expand.

VOLUNTEERS - As Mayor Cerino stated, volunteers are important. We NEED volunteers. At the last meeting, it seemed apparent that an understanding of the magnitude and importance of our non-profit community along with both minor and major events and/or projects is lacking. The first step to that understanding is to imagine what Chestertown would be without those organizations and their many cultural events. Those all volunteer organizations – for the most part – are self-sustaining. Having staff is rare. Their budgets are maintained by memberships, events, grants and donations. Visitors to Chestertown do not come here because of our shopping centers; they come here, participate and spend because of the character of our citizens, businesses and events. The Arts, our history, the environment and our businesses play a major role to that end. So when an organization comes forward asking for support, they are not, necessarily, asking for money but general support for the project. However, a tangible way to show that support is to donate something – large or small. As a town Council, we know this. When an event or project is met with distain, it reverberates throughout the community. It is not a matter of them and us. We are one in “marketing” Chestertown.

I am compiling how many volunteer hours that are donated each year by our organizations. I hope to have an idea of their budgets they support. If one were to equate those hours to an hourly wage, I believe it would be easily found that those organizations more than contribute their fair share. I will be back to you with those numbers.

May I propose that a discretionary fund be set aside – no matter how large or small – so that the Town Council can express their appreciation and support from time to time through out the year. Waiting for the annual budget rounds, most often, does not relate to an organization’s ability to understand what they need. A simple application can be submitted for needs as they are found.

To finish, we welcome our new Mayor the new members of the Town Council. We have a fresh slate from which to grow and improve. We look forward to an inventive and exciting working relationship. DCA stands ready to assist.

Respectively submitted,

Nancy McGuire, President and
The DCA Executive Committee.

AGENDA
FEBRUARY 3, 2014

7:30 p.m.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL MEETING

1. Minutes of Mayor and Council meeting of January 27, 2014
2. Payment of bills
3. Nancy McGuire - DCA
4. Town Manager's Report
 - a. Soil and turf restoration at Fountain Park
 - b. People's Bank Chester Gras – Mardi Gras Celebration
 - c. Center for Watershed Protection Grant
 - d. CBT Green Streets – Green Jobs – Green Towns Program
 - e. Reminder of Recreation Commission's Meeting on February 4, 2014
 - f. Kent Center and Washington College Best Buddies 5k Run/Walk/Wheelchair Race on March 29, 2014
5. Mayor Cerino's Report
 - a. Reminder – Meeting on Task Force Report, Monday, February 10, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.
 - b. Set date for March business forum
 - c. Christmas in Chestertown
6. Ward Reports
7. Questions or comments