

**City of Aberdeen Council Meeting
July 20, 2015**

Present: Mayor Bennett, Councilwoman Landbeck, Councilman Smith, and Councilwoman Young

Absent: Councilwoman Elliott

Also Present: Douglas Miller, City Manager
Phyllis Grover, Director of Planning and Community Development
Kyle Torster, Director of Public Works
Chief Henry Trabert, Aberdeen Police Department
Monica Correll, City Clerk
Doris Manner, Recording Secretary

Mayor Bennett called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The prayer was delivered by Reverend Merritt Schatz, Grover Presbyterian Church, and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Councilman Smith.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Councilman Smith and seconded by Councilwoman Young to approve the minutes of the Council Meeting held on June 8, 2015.

The minutes were approved by a vote of 4 – yes; 1 – absent.

Ayes: Mayor Bennett, Councilwoman Landbeck, Councilwoman Young, and Councilman Smith

Absent: Councilwoman Elliott

PRESENTATIONS:

1. Proclamation in Recognition of Nicholas Weber

Mayor Bennett presented a proclamation to honor Captain Nicholas Weber of the Aberdeen Fire Department for his community service. Captain Weber had been recognized by the American Institute for Public Service, Jefferson Awards Foundation at its 43rd Annual National Ceremony for “National Greatest Public Service” and also by Exelon, BGE’s parent company, at its 9th Annual Energy for the Community Employee Volunteer Awards Ceremony. The Mayor declared Monday, June 20, 2015, as “Captain Nicholas Weber Day” in the City of Aberdeen.

2. State of the City Address by Mayor Bennett, 2014- 2015

(Note: the first paragraph was delivered in person and the remaining paragraphs were presented as a video presentation.)

Hello; I'm Mayor Mike Bennett. Once again, I am honored to come before the citizens of Aberdeen to talk about some of the great things that have happened in our City over the past twelve months. We are committed to be fully transparent in all we do for you, our citizens. We realize that getting information out to our community and engaging our citizens was not working as well as we wanted. So, we have taken very deliberate steps to address that. This is our first attempt to pre-tape my State of the City address and then have it available on our website and on social media. Your City government has been on Facebook for over a year with over 5,000 friends. We find that Facebook is an incredibly effective communication tool. We also continue to produce a newsletter for delivery city-wide every other month and televise all of our meetings and work sessions. Our hope is to reach old and young alike; the wired and the un-wired. Let's talk about the State of our City.

The Aberdeen Police Department has had a busy year. We are at the finishing stages of having our police department CALEA certified. CALEA is the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies and if we pass, we will be only one of nine municipal police departments in Maryland that has this accreditation. During the preparation for our assessment we have had to examine every aspect of our department and of our operations. This was not easy. And, we thank and commend our Chief and our CALEA Manager for all their hard work and the extra hours that they put into this effort. Our aim is to provide policing services in the most compassionate professional and efficient manner possible.

During the past year, the City's bond rating was upgraded from AA to AA+. This simply means that Aberdeen is viewed as a municipality that is on solid financial footing and is a good credit risk. And, when we must borrow money for a capital project, we will get a favorable interest rate which saves the City money in borrowing costs. I wish to thank our Finance Director, Opiribo Jack, and his great staff for all that they do to keep our finance house in order. Not only did we get a bond rating upgrade but we also approved a balanced budget and stayed within that budget for the fiscal year.

One key development that has enhanced our financial situation is the passage of a hotel tax in Harford County. These taxes are usual and customary in almost every other part of the U.S., but Harford County did not have the ability to levy one until the General Assembly enabled the County to do so and until County Executive Barry Glassman and the County Council put it into law. What directly benefits our City is that the County Executive drafted the law so that the three municipalities receive half of the tax generated inside their corporate limits. This benefits us because we have historically sent about two cents of the property tax to maintain Ripken Stadium, which is a City owned facility, and is also the top single tourist attraction in Harford County. Now, with the hotel tax, we can continue to keep the stadium as a top rate facility and also reduce the property tax rate which I have done for the FY 16 budget.

Anyone who pays a water and sewer bill will notice that there are two fees listed on that bill that are dedicated to the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay. One of the fees is the Bay Restoration Fee which is collected by the City and then sent to the State. This fee is used to upgrade the 67 major wastewater plants in Maryland to Enhanced Nutrient Removal, or ENR, as it is commonly referred. The second fee on the bill is the City's ENR fee which goes to the City's portion of our recent ENR upgrade.

Over the past year, the City completed our upgrade to ENR technology. The entire project was over \$533,000 but the results have been outstanding. We are pulling out even more phosphorus and nitrogen than the plant was designed to. And, that's great for the Bay.

When I became your Mayor, I immediately realized that we needed to improve our relations with the State, APG, and with the County. To achieve this goal I thought that it was important to be active in state-wide and nationwide organizations. So, I continue to participate vigorously in the Maryland Municipal League, Maryland Mayor's Association and the National League of Cities. And, over the past year, I have served as President of the Mayor's Association, Chairman of the Military Communities Council for National League of Cities, and Chairman of the Legislative Committee for MML. This is a great group of municipal officials, elected and appointed; from all over the State that reviews legislation that may impact municipalities. The meetings are always informative and lively. Our key issue for the last several years is to have the Highway User Revenues (the State-shared revenue that we use for paving streets) restored to previous levels. I am happy and proud to say that we did get a significant restoration of that funding source, and here in Aberdeen, we will be able to use that money to pave even more roads.

Last year we had appropriated over \$3 million to resurface many of our streets. We used some Highway User Revenue and supplemented that with significant money out of our surplus funds. This effort didn't pave all that needed to be done but it did allow us to catch up on some of the paving that had to be put off due to the lack of State funding.

Aberdeen has a very robust group of businesses. Our City has been enhanced with several new businesses which we welcome with open arms. In the immediate future, we are reviewing plans for a new retail center and several additional commercial businesses. In addition, Frito Lay, Inc. and Medline Industries are expanding their operations in Aberdeen. That's not to say that we still have to promote and market some of our sites that were built for BRAC-related activity but were never filled. We want these facilities full of workers who will hopefully live and shop in Aberdeen.

Housing starts have been steady over that past year. And, we have seen a variety of housing types in the pipeline which will continue to keep Aberdeen a diverse City.

The City of Aberdeen is pleased to announce that we are officially a Smart Energy Community. During the Maryland Municipal League Annual Convention, the City of Aberdeen was welcomed as one of the newest Smart Energy Communities. The program, which is run through Maryland Energy Administration, is a program that supports energy projects. Aberdeen has exhibited leadership in smart energy management. Through our

participation in the program, Aberdeen will receive grants to fund energy efficiency, renewable energy, and/or clean transportation projects.

Aberdeen is more than a place on a map. We are a community full of excitement. And, what distinguishes a community from a mere place is its people. I grew up here, I graduated from high school here, I served in the fire department here. I know many of our citizens and I'm proud of the people who call Aberdeen home. We are hardworking, we are friendly and we are good neighbors. Your City government will continue to improve the quality of life in Aberdeen and we have several exciting projects on the books to do just that.

In sum, the State of the City is great! I believe that Aberdeen is a great place to live, work, and play and I also believe that we have a bright future and even greater days in front of us. My goal has always been to make Aberdeen a better place! Aberdeen might give me a hundred reasons to cry but it daily shows me a thousand reasons to smile! Speaking for the Council and me, there is no better place to live than in Aberdeen, Maryland and we are honored to serve as your elected officials.

Last year as I closed the State of the City Address, I challenged us to "remember that a journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step!" We stepped out together and have made a great start in our journey. I encourage you to get involved and be a part of the great things going on in Aberdeen. Thank you and God bless our City and our Nation.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

1. Mr. Bob Hartman, Paradise Road: Mr. Hartman expressed his concerns regarding the construction on Rt. 40 and Rt. 22, the lack of a dumpster for recyclables at the Waste Water Treatment Plant, and inappropriate attire and profanity at public areas.
2. Ms. Cynthia Randall, William Powell Court: Ms. Randall said that she needed help regarding a pond near her house that may be flooding her yard and basement.
3. Ms. Barbara Osborn Kreamer, Beards Hill Road, Aberdeen: Ms. Kreamer discussed her concerns about the City's water billing system.
4. Ms. Andrea Jenkins, Taft Street: Ms. Jenkins asked if the City was responsible for paving the roads in the Winston's Choice complex.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION:

1. Resolution No. 15-R-07, Community Legacy Application with the MD Dept. of Housing and Community Development (For Introduction and Adoption)

Mayor Bennett introduced the Resolution. A motion was made by Councilwoman Landbeck and seconded by Councilwoman Young to approve Resolution No. 15-R-07, Community Legacy Application with the MD Dept. of Housing and Community Development.

The motion passed with a vote of 4 – yes; 1 – absent.

Ayes: Mayor Bennett, Councilwoman Landbeck, Councilwoman Young, and Councilman Smith

Absent: Councilwoman Elliott

2. Resolution No. 15-R-08, Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund with the MD Department of Housing and Community Development (For Introduction and Adoption)

Mayor Bennett introduced the Resolution. A motion was made by Councilwoman Landbeck and seconded by Councilman Smith to approve Resolution No. 15-R-08, Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

The motion passed with a vote of 4 – yes; 1 – absent.

Ayes: Mayor Bennett, Councilwoman Landbeck, Councilwoman Young, and Councilman Smith

Absent: Councilwoman Elliott

BUSINESS OF THE CITY:

1. Unfinished Business – None
2. New Business - None
3. Business from Director of Planning & Community Development
 - a. Preliminary Site Plan for TLBT, LLC (formerly MGP Retail Site/Short Stop Beverage Barn)

Ms. Grover stated that the property was located at 621 and 623 South Philadelphia Boulevard; a 36,000 sq. ft. redevelopment project for a grocery store. It was reviewed and recommended by the Planning Commission and Architectural Review Committee. Representatives from Bohler Engineering and TLBT, LLC were present.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Landbeck and seconded by Councilman Smith to approve the Preliminary Site Plan for TLBT, LLC (formerly MGP Retail Site/Short Stop Beverage Barn).

The motion passed with a vote of 4 – yes; 1 – absent.

Ayes: Mayor Bennett, Councilwoman Landbeck, Councilwoman Young, and Councilman Smith

Absent: Councilwoman Elliott

- b. Preliminary Subdivision Plan for TLBT, LLC (formerly MGP Retail Site/Short Stop Beverage Barn)

The Council discussed traffic and parking matters.

A motion was made by Councilwoman Landbeck and seconded by Councilman Smith to approve the Preliminary Subdivision Plan for TLBT, LLC (formerly MGP Retail Site/Short Stop Beverage Barn).

The motion passed with a vote of 4 – yes; 1 – absent.

Ayes: Mayor Bennett, Councilwoman Landbeck, Councilwoman Young, and Councilman Smith

Absent: Councilwoman Elliott

- c. Decision to Withdraw Application for 727 and 811 Old Philadelphia Road, Zoning Reclassification

Ms. Grover stated that the zoning reclassification request from the Pomeroy family for the properties located at 727 and 811 Old Philadelphia Road had been withdrawn.

- d. Bid No. 15-10, Award for Demolition of 25 N. Philadelphia Boulevard

A motion was made by Councilman Smith and seconded by Councilwoman Landbeck to approve Bid No. 15-10, Award for Demolition of 25 N. Philadelphia Boulevard, to A2Z Environmental Group, LLC, Baltimore, Maryland, in the amount of \$29,900 to include remediation of any hazardous materials.

The motion passed with a vote of 4 – yes; 1 – absent.

Ayes: Mayor Bennett, Councilwoman Landbeck, Councilwoman Young, and Councilman Smith

Absent: Councilwoman Elliott

- 4. Business from Chief of Police

Chief Trabert reported that he planned to attend a CALEA (Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies) meeting in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This organization would determine whether Aberdeen had met the requirements for CALEA accreditation. Mayor Bennett added that, if awarded, Aberdeen would be one of only nine municipalities in the State have this designation.

5. Business from Director of Finance – Mr. Jack was not in attendance.
6. Business from Director of Public Works - None.
7. Business from City Manager

Mr. Miller stated that the Maryland Municipal League was asking Maryland municipalities for their legislative priorities for advocacy purposes.

He said that the Winston Choice developer was bonded for the development work and is expected to finish it; if not, the City would finish it.

BUSINESS OF COUNCIL:

1. Business from the City Council – The Council thanked the staff for their efforts and congratulated the Aberdeen Police Department on their CALEA work.
2. Business from the Mayor – Mayor Bennett made the announcements.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Next Business Meeting, Work Session:	Monday, August 10, 2015 at 4:00 p.m.
Planning Commission Meeting:	Wednesday, August 12, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.
Next Council Meeting:	Monday, August 24, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made by Councilwoman Young and seconded by Councilman Smith to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. The motion carried.