Minutes
Meeting of the Town Council
Monday, March 9, 2026; 7:30 p.m.
Online by Zoom Videoconference
Access information below
Approved April 13, 2026

Minutes

All documents for this meeting (referring to PDF) may be obtained until at least July 1,2026, at the following link: Agenda and Agenda documents for the Town Council meeting 030926.

Call to Order: Mayor Compton called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Present were Councilors Warfield, Raimondo, Portor, Nagrod and Grisham. Councilor Rob Gilmore was unable to attend. Also present were Treasurer Jean Moyer and a number of other residents.

Approval of the Agenda (PDF) (Compton)
Peter Nagrod moved to approve the agenda. Mayor Compton included Eva Patrone (Director, SITP) under the Agenda item "Permit for Operation of Summer in the Parks". His proposal to defer the playground purchases discussion to the next meeting in view of the long Agenda was not accepted.

Action: Vote: 6-0, Agenda approved as presented.

Approval of the Minutes: None. The Minutes of the February 9 Town Council meeting were not ready.

Safety and Vandalism:
Councilor Kriss Grisham reported on information provided him by Melanie Romano, the Community Services Officer for District 6, Montgomery County police:

a. On recurring incidents of indecent exposure. To strengthen their investigation, the police are in need of eye-witnesses of the individual involved in the indecent exposure incidents.

b. On recent vandalism, ransacking and theft of vehicles. Over several days last week, 6 to 10 were broken into, vandalized and or stolen. Police strongly encourage *all residents to report all vehicular incidents* directly to them using the non-emergency number. Council discussion and ideas included:
- Creation of a Safety committee.
- Reactivation of the Neighborhood Watch program.
- Reporting incidents to the MoCo police
- Hiring a security guard.
- Increased surveillance; increased use of Ring cameras.
- Greater community involvement.
- Forming a work group (six people volunteered)

Peter Nagrod moved to create a work group to follow-up on these criminal problems, and Mary Warfield seconded.

Action: Vote: 5-0, Workgroup created.

Mayor Compton asked for volunteers to join him on the task force, and Councilor Grisham and residents Adam Eig, Howard Harrary, Sylvie Favret and Patty Klein were included in the group. The group will meet with Officer Romano to discuss actions by the police and recommendations of ways to discourage these criminal activities.

c. Noting the recent reports of vehicles on walkways, the Mayor reminded residents of rules regarding vehicle use the Grove's walkways. Contractors are allowed to drive on Town walkways when needed and when they have permission, but are not allowed to park there all day. All users of walkways for residential access must get permission from the Mayor. A reminder should be in the next Town Bulletin.

Regular Business

Public Appearances - Attendees may address the Town Council
Eva Patrone expressed concerns over the recent discovery that the Town has been operating Summer in the Parks without a required permit for years, and the implications for liability of volunteers. Her suggestions for insuring that regulations and requirements are not overlooked are in her written testimony (appended and incorporated into these Minutes).

Paul Patrone, referring to the Summer in the Parks liability concerns, stated that the Town Council should clarify the liability incurred by town volunteers and the Town when engaged in various activities on behalf of the Town, and referred to his written testimony for more details (appended and incorporated into these Minutes).

Treasurer's Report:
Treasurer Jean Moyer commented on the February report and answered questions. It was moved and seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report.

Action: Vote 5-0, Treasurer's report accepted.

On the FY27 Town Budget, Jean reported that work on the Mayor's draft was nearly finished. Peter Nagrod gave big kudos to Jean for her proactive work encouraging committees and residents to provide their requests for the budget. The Council will review the draft Budget at a March 23 Town Council meeting

Mayor's Report

a. *Kudos:*
To residents, RJ Landscapers and Pepco for their quick response clearing debris and downed trees around town that blocked roads, and restoring power caused by the recent wet snowfall.

b. Testimonies submitted:

- To the Legislature opposing SB36/HB0239 “Starter and Silver Homes Act 2026”
- To the Legislature in support of HB50 “County and Municipal Street Lighting Investment Act”
- To the Legislature in support of HB1142 “Task Force to Modernize County and Municipal Revenue Structures”
- To the County Council in support of funding the Shady Grove West Library in the FY27-FY31 Capital Improvement Program

c. *The Washington Grove Connector Shared Use Pathway:* The 95% engineering plans received by MCDOT in February will be shared with the Town’s Liaison group. A draft easement to MCDOT from the Town for the portion of the pathway at the end of Brown Street is being prepared by MCDOT. No timeline for construction as yet.

d. *Cracks in the Hard Tennis Court:* Approved a test of a crack repair proposal to evaluate a short-term repair approach.

e. *SWIM Project status:* The 100% engineering plans have generated changes to the proposed contract work and cost. These are being reviewed.

f. *Playground Spring Cleaning Event:* To take place on Saturday, March 21, from 9:00 am to noon. Volunteer activities may include shoveling engineered wood chips for play area floors, staining, and other small cleaning and maintenance jobs.

Town Archiving Project – Presentation by Bob Booher, HPC Chair.
Bob explained the scope of the Archive Project to organize and digitize records and objects accumulated and stored in the Hall, the work of Archivist Pat Patula to digitize the Camp Meeting records (pre-1937) into the PastPerfect database, and the extensive work remaining to accomplish on post-1937 records. Progress has been slower than planned as Pat has been unable to work the expected hours. To make greater progress on the Project, the HPC is exploring hiring a new Archivist, while retaining Pat to finish with the Camp Meeting records

The Council and Bob discussed what Pat has accomplished to date, the Town’s Records Management Plan, the Camp Meeting Records, status of transferring records to the State Archives for safe storage, and bringing on another person to help with the organization, entering records into PastPerfect and migrating to the online version of PastPerfect.

Marilynn Frey, the Town’s Records Management Officer, encouraged everyone to review the Records Management Plan to see the significant tasks remaining to be done.

Administrative Matters

Permit for Operation of Summer in the Parks
Eva Patrone, Director of the 2026 Summer in the Parks program (SITP), explained it was discovered that our Summer in the Parks program is not meeting State or County requirements. With assistance from resident Laurel Goldberg, Eva was undertaking the task of meeting State requirements and obtaining the necessary permit to operate a youth camp.

The Council thanked Eva for her diligence. There was a lengthy discussion about previous programs, the absence of assigned responsibility to insure that the Town meets regulations and requirements in in all areas, liabilities incurred by the Town and town volunteers.

Action: To move forward there was consensus directing the Mayor to consult our insurer (LGIT) and obtain legal advice from Town Attorney

Status of the McCathran Hall Sprinkler System Project
Councilor Kriss Grisham reported that they expected to obtain the permit from the County to perform the system replacement any day. There has been lots of prep-work, and our Chesapeake Fire still expects it will take only 3-4 weeks to install the system.

Mayor Compton reported on upgrades to the Hall in conjunction with the project: new replacement ceiling fans and the addition of 12" of insulation in the Main Hall, and new light fixtures in the old Council room.

Re-approval or Locking the Tennis Court Gates **(PDF)**
Discussion and action on the motion to continue the locked gate policy.
At the outset Mayor Compton noted the many public comments received, but that they addressed not only whether the tennis court gates should be locked, but also the existing restriction of court use to residents only. The Mayor explained that the current motion to continue locking did not address the residents-only restriction on use.
Discussion resumed from February, touching on the following:

- The distinction between locking for protection and locking to keep others out.
- Whether locks were an unfriendly policy.
- Difficulty monitoring the courts for inappropriate uses.
- The effectiveness of the locked gates at reducing non-tennis uses of the courts.
- Costs to repair court damage, specifically to the clay courts.
- Instituting a sign-up system versus the "first come, first served" policy.

Peter Nagrod moved to amend the motion to approve continued locking of the gates to separate voting on locking the hard court from a vote for the clay courts. The amendment was seconded and passed.

Action: Vote 5-0, to continue locking the clay court gates.
Action: Vote 3-2 (Raimondo, Warfield), to continue locking the hard court gate.

Stream Crossing Safety Assessment (PDF). Trails Safety Panel proposal to use culverts at stream crossing in the East and West Woods.
Mayor Compton reviewed the history and purpose of the Trail Safety Panel. Panel member Patty Klein reviewed the Panel's Report titled "East-West Woods Stream Crossing Safety Assessment", concluding with their recommendation to install culverts to carry the three trails over streams that have created difficulties. Kris Grisham moved to adopt and approve the Panel's culvert recommendation. Peter Nagrod seconded the motion.

Action: Vote 5-0, Panel recommendation approved.

Hiring the Next Town Clerk (PDF) (Raimondo, Compton, Warfield): Job description drafted for distribution.
Councilor Raimondo briefly reviewed how the job description was created, noting the extensive responsibilities of the next Clerk, and proposed that the expansion in duties warranted a change to the job title "Town Clerk". "Town Manager" and other titles were suggested. The title and job description will be finalized for Council approval at the March 23rd Town Council meeting

Replacement of the Town Webmaster and Town Bulletin Producer.
Mayor Compton reported progress, announcing that Arlene McCrehan will take over formatting and distributing the Town Bulletin, and will also serve as the project manager for changes to the website executed by a contracted website developer. The regular updates to content on the website may be performed by a contractor and later assumed by the new Town "Clerk".

New Business

Proposal to Purchase Playground Equipment
The presentation and proposals of the Playground Committee were deferred to the April Town Council meeting.

However, Councilor Nagrod noted that the Playground Committee intends to propose purchasing a "train car set" for climbing. To avoid the lengthy RFP process, he moved that the Council, agree tonight to accept vendor proposals for this purchase as bids rather than require an RFP.

Action: Vote 4 - 0 (Raimondo abstaining), to not require an RFP for this purchase, and instead evaluate vender proposals.

Resolution 2026-02 "Call for Commitment to the Right of All Individuals in the United States, Regardless of Immigration Status" (PDFs) (Raimondo) Introduction and Discussion. Barbara Raimondo move introduction of the resolution (Peter Nagrod seconded). She explained the resolution has language largely the same as originally suggested by Larry French, rather than as offered in a draft edited by Mayor Compton. There was about the several versions.

Mayor Compton proposed to form a subcommittee of three Councilor's to resolve any differences and determine whether to amend the resolution. John Porter moved to defer a vote until a subcommittee can report back at the next meeting (Kriss Grisham seconded).

Action: Vote 4 – 1 (Raimondo). The subcommittee members will consist of Mayor Compton, Barbara Raimondo, Larry French, and Mary Warfield.

Other Regular Business

Town Council Reports (PDF) – of note:

a. *Roads (Gilmore)* Road work RFPs are being written now. The work will take place in June or early July.
b. *Planning Commission (Nagrod)* An Ordinance revision is being considered to create a Historic Commission Waiver option.

c. *Historic Preservation Commission (Raimondo):* The HPC is re-evaluating the Town archiving to project.
d. *Lake Committee (Warfield):* Steve Hansen is the new Chair. There is a need for policy and procedure documents. It will be drafted in March.

Next Meetings:

Town Council FY27 Budget Work Session, virtual Monday March 23, 2026 at 7;30 pm
Town Council meeting, virtual, Monday April 13, 2026 at 7:30 pm

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Submitted by Mayor John Compton

From: **Eva Patrone** evamarie.patrone@gmail.com
Subject: SITP licensure and certification
Date: March 5, 2026 at 8:33 PM
To: mayorandcouncil@washingtongrovemd.org
Cc: Laurel Goldberg laurel_goldberg@me.com, Jean Moyer treasurertwg@gmail.com, Paolo Patrone mangiapasta@gmail.com

Dear Town Councilors,

I want to get you all in the loop about what is currently going on with Summer in the Parks. I met about this earlier in the week with John, Jean, and Laurel Goldberg, who is assisting me with SITP management this year.

The situation is this: recently it came to my attention that Summer in the Parks is not properly licensed or certified, and likely has not been in all the time it's been in operation. Maryland Youth Camps (SITP qualifies as such) **must be certified by the state through the Maryland Department of Health and must obtain a recreational camp license through the county.** This involves following certain regulations and completing a lot of paperwork.

Laurel and I are currently working hard to make sure we can get all the requirements for both certifications completed before camp starts in July.

Apparently SITP has been operating for many years under the assumption that we were somehow exempt from doing this, but I have now watched two MDH youth camp regulation online trainings plus I've scoured the state and county websites, and I can find no reason why we would be exempt. Even if we *were* for some reason exempt (which I don't think we are, or ever were), it's important that we follow these regulations, both for the legal protection of the town, god forbid something were to happen to a camper, and because complying with these regulations means doing things that we *should* be doing anyway for the safety of our campers.

For example, we will need to get all staff and volunteers background checked since they work directly with children. We will need to comply with current swim safety regulations and proper camper-to-staff ratios. We will also need to have MDH-approved written safety and emergency plans and procedures and give the staff trainings on these protocols.

So, that's the update: Laurel and I will be working to get SITP licensed by the state and county by July. This also means we may change how we do some things at camp. For example, background checks for staff and potentially raising the age of campers from 5 to 6 for next year. (It's probably too late to do that this year as we already have several 5 year olds registered).

This situation brings up something that's concerning to me. I'm sure most people who send their children to SITP assume that a camp run by a town government has all the proper licensing, when in fact that has not been true. When I took over SITP as Camp Moderator (a volunteer position), I was given almost no instruction or guidance. I worried that, as a volunteer with no experience running a camp, there were things I wasn't thinking about or wasn't doing correctly. I've been doing my best, and each year I have implemented more safety standards and organizational protocols, but obtaining a license was the piece that was missing, and in this case my ignorance could have been catastrophic, given that the camp is *caring for other people's children*. We have been extremely lucky.

This is a town run by volunteers, which means often things are being done for the town by people who have little to no experience, or who don't know the proper legal protocols. In my opinion, Summer in the Parks should have never been allowed to operate without the proper licensure. This puts the town, as well as volunteers like me, at risk. What if I had hired a staff member who had abused a child? Would I be held liable since I hired that person and did not run a background check on them? **It calls into question if volunteers can be held liable while doing work for the town.**

It's unprofessional that we've been running this unregulated camp. I feel extremely embarrassed that we have been, for example, offering scholarships to Washington Grove Elementary School students for a camp that is not properly licensed. Some of this is embarrassment on my part for not realizing this problem sooner, but I'm a volunteer with no experience running a day camp. At some point in SITP's very long history, someone in the town government should have checked to make sure the camp was meeting regulations. **The fact that it's taken until now for the camp to get licensed is concerning, but of course our town government is made up of volunteers as well. We are all doing our best, but sometimes our best lacks the necessary knowledge or experience.**

I have said this before, and I will say it again: the town desperately needs a paid Town Manager. We need someone who is a paid professional with experience managing a government body to work for the town to make sure things are running smoothly and correctly. Someone who makes sure, for example, that we are not running an unlicensed summer camp.

running an unlicensed summer camp.

I'm happy to answer questions about the license and certification procedures. I'm still figuring everything out and I have a lot of work ahead of me. I'm very appreciative to Laurel for helping me out on this, and also to Jean who came to the same conclusion about SITP licensure right around the same time that Laurel and I did.

Sincerely,
Eva

From: Paolo Patrone mangiapasta@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Written statement for public appearances at tonight's meeting
Date: Mar 9, 2026 at 12:48:33 PM
To: Christine Dibble christinedibble@outlook.com
Cc: Eva Patrone evamarie.patrone@gmail.com,
mayorandcouncil@washingtongrovemd.org,
clerk@washingtongrovemd.gov, Christine Dibble
councilorchristine@gmail.com, Laurel Goldberg
laurel_goldberg@me.com

Dear Mayor and Council,

I would also like the following text to be noted in the minutes and recorded on the town website.

In light of Eva's comments, I would like the council to clarify what liability town volunteers and committee members assume when they are operating at the direction of town committees and/or in official support of town activities.

For example, I would expect that someone acting in bad faith or not with consent of a town organization could be held liable for their actions.

But in the event that there was a preventable incident / injury during Summer in the Parks, would the camp director be held legally liable, or would the liability fall to the town? If the camp director or volunteers were acting in good faith and to the best of their abilities, would they be liable? Who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that requisite state regulations are being followed? Is it committees, volunteers, the council?

In other words, I think these issues need to be clearly stated and communicated to town volunteers, along with proof that any protection from liability is in fact meaningful (e.g. insurance policies specifically referring to liability coverages).

Best,

Paul Patrone

Inviato da iPhone

> Il giorno 9 mar 2026, alle ore 12:07, Christine Dibble <christinedibble@outlook.com> ha scritto:
>
> Hi folks, I am leaving town tonight, returning in a week. Eve's letter will be the last one posted on the website until I return. So if you have a letter to the Mayor and Council for posting on the website, it will have to wait until I return.
>
> Cheers,
>
> Christine
> 240-702-6719
> christinedibble@outlook.com
> ***The best way to get a quick response from me***
> ***is to email me rather than to call or text me.***
> ---
>
> *America is open to receive not only*
> *the Opulent & respected Stranger, but*
> *the oppressed & persecuted of all Nations & Religions.*
> —George Washington