

Town of Odessa
MINUTES FROM THE PUBLIC HEARING
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2025 - 6:00 PM
OLD ACADEMY BUILDING
315 MAIN STREET
ODESSA, DE 19730

Those present at 6:00 PM:

Mayor: Harvey C. Smith Jr.
Council Member: Lenny Aguilar
Council Member: John Freeman
Council Member: Lionel Hynson
Treasurer: David Sheats
Town Secretary: Amy Marie Ottinger
(14) community members

- I. Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 6:08 PM.
- II. Roll Call – All council members were present with the exception of Councilwoman Yeni Ocampo who was not able to attend.
- III. Public Comments – High Street Widening & Repaving Project - Mayor Smith began the meeting with having the town secretary read a prepared synopsis of the High Street Widening & Repaving Project which discussed the timeline of events leading up to tonight's public hearing:
 - Mayor Smith first met with Senator Stephanie Hansen in April 2023 to discuss the current status of our streets. He impressed on her at that time that as residents of the Town we do not have a tax base that can support roadway paving. He stated that our streets are in various levels of disrepair and wanted to know how we could go about bringing our streets up to the state's current roadway standards. Senator Hansen stated that she would be willing to help the town and its residents secure funding through either Bond Bill monies or Community Transportation Funds (CTF) and that the first step was to have DelDOT rate the streets.
 - Mott McDonald, a DelDOT approved contractor, came out in the summer of 2023 at the request of the Senator and rated all of the Town of Odessa's streets. They determined that two streets – Front Street and High Street – were ranked very poor under the state's standards and needed to be repaired and/or resurfaced.
 - The town's worst ranked street according to the Mott McDonald report was Front Street. Mayor Smith was tasked with getting bids from DelDOT approved contractors, and council was tasked with approving the bids. At the March 2024 monthly town hall meeting, council approved one of the bids and the town secretary was tasked with requesting monies from the CTF fund. Grant funding was secured, and the Front Street repaving project was completed in the beginning of September 2024. Due to the success of that project and the willingness of Senator Hansen and Representative Hensley to provide additional funding, Mayor Smith began the process once again of obtaining comparative bids to address the deterioration of our longest and second worst rated street - High Street.
 - In March 2025 Mayor Smith brought the High Street Widening & Repaving Project before council at the monthly town hall meeting. Council voted to approve the bid prepared by Cirillo Brothers in the amount of \$238,088.25. After the bid was approved, the town

secretary followed through with the State to request monies from the Community Reinvestment Fund (CRF). The Mayor stated at that monthly meeting that he would work closely with the residents along High Street whose properties may be affected by the street widening.

- At the July 2025 monthly meeting of Mayor & Council, Mayor Smith reported that the town had been awarded the \$238,088.00 for the widening and repaving of High Street from Front Street to Fourth Street. He stated that he would be meeting with the contractor as well as having a resident meeting to hear concerns over the project.
- At the August 2025 monthly meeting of Mayor & Council, Mayor Smith stated that we would need to have the town engineering firm, i3a LLC, perform a right-of-way survey and/or deed research at a cost of \$4,500.00. Council voted unanimously to approve the expense.
- At the September 2025 monthly meeting of Mayor and Council, Mayor Smith stated that he had met with the awarded contractor, Cirillo Brothers, and signed the contract to move forward with the project. Letters were sent to the various utility companies requesting utility maps and easements. He met in August with the property owners on High Street that were going to be directly affected by the approximately 7 foot widening of the roadway. He provided council members with a copy of his meeting notes, pictures of current conditions on the stretch of roadway between Front and Second Street, and results of a self-performed traffic study. The town's engineering firm, i3a LLC, performed deed research and a right-of-way survey which verified that the proposed widening falls within the town's right-of-way. The Odessa Fire Company provided a letter of support for the widening and repaving project stating that over the years they have encountered difficulties navigating emergency equipment safely and efficiently during emergencies, particularly when vehicles are parked on both sides of the street. Several High Street residents attended the meeting and voiced concerns over the proposed project. Due to their concerns, Councilman Hynson made a motion to hold a public hearing on the project.
- At the October 2025 monthly meeting of Mayor & Council, Mayor Smith reported that the town's engineering firm had performed a stormwater management assessment and provided an opinion, which stated "The increase of stormwater flow and volume produced by the proposed 7 foot widening of High Street is negligible, as the Appoquinimink River handles a substantial amount of stormwater by itself. Our Rational Method computations demonstrate the increase in flow and volume between pre-construction and post-construction scenarios to have minimal impact based on the capacity of the outfall." Since this project will disturb more than 5,000 square feet, it will require approval from the DE Sediment and Stormwater program, which is enforced in this case by NCC Conservation District. They advised the town to reach out to New Castle County Conservation District to review the project, provide next steps, and overall approval for the project. Mayor Smith also reported that Artesian Water Company requested that the town put the project on hold as they are providing public water service to 303 High Street and Cantwell's Tavern and will be cutting into the existing paving to install water mains. Artesian stated that they will reach back out to the town when services have been installed.
- The town's engineering firm is currently working on preparing Erosion and Sediment control plans to show proposed measures to mitigate sediment-laden runoff during construction so that they can be submitted to New Castle County Conservation District for review and project approval.
- The town secretary received two letters from residents prior to the meeting, attached hereto as Attachment A (*1-page letter from Dennis Seibert*) and Attachment B (*1-page statement from Matt Goetting*) which were provided to council members and copies were placed on the sign-in table for residents to read.

- Mayor Smith stated that the town attorney advised council to hear the residents' concerns and that back-and-forth commentary at this public hearing was not required. He stated that after all comments have been received, council can decide to take no further action on the matter and the project will move forward as presented, or if they choose, they can rescind the prior motion, and the project will be put on hold. He then opened the floor to comments.
 - Matthew Dolamore (110 Third Street) wanted to reiterate concerns on how we are using the right-of-way. He wanted to know how we preserve the town's character and ensure that the core of Odessa remains at a human scale. He cited a google study that states that for every additional foot of asphalt adds approximately 1-3 miles per average in car speed. His position is that asphalt addresses automobile safety only and does not address pedestrian or bicycle safety. He is proposing a solution to engage the advice of the Living Labs program, a program hosted by the University of Delaware in cooperation with DelDOT, to postpone the project for approximately six months so that the Living Labs individuals can provide alternative solutions. He stated he was happy to work with the town and council members to prepare an application for the proposed program.
 - Matthew Fiedler (211 High Street) felt getting the Living Labs people to perform a study was a good compromise. He asked if all the other streets in town were going to be widened.
 - Carole Coleman (109 High Street) agreed with getting the Living Labs involved with the project. She suggested making Front Street a one-way street. She stated that sidewalks should be continuous on High Street and there are two residents that do not have walks in front of their houses. She also expressed concern over possibly losing trees with the widening and repaving.
 - Nicholas Malone (407 Main Street) stated that the way the road is currently designed makes it difficult for vehicles as well as school buses to navigate the streets properly. He feels something needs to happen because it's only a matter of time until an emergency vehicle is unable to get thru. He said he has lived in this town long enough to see two houses on that street suffer major fire damage and he would hate to have any one of the residents suffer in an emergency situation because we didn't act. He supports working with the Living Labs program and suggested that we have them look at all the streets.
 - Jim Grant (105 High Street) stated that he was opposed to Front Street being a one way but would like to see stop signs installed at the corner of High Street and Front Street.
 - Andrew Ward (307 High Street) voiced concerns over speeding on High Street and people not stopping at the stop signs. He also voiced concerns over there not being a continual sidewalk on the one side of High Street.
 - Matt Harris (Living Labs) spoke about the free program that the University of Delaware offers. He stated that they are currently soliciting new projects. The philosophy of the program is that your physical environment has to reflect how you want people to drive and behave. They come into a community and provide a community driven process in which they hold meetings and talk to residents about the challenges and then help think creatively about what the solutions can be. He reiterated that their program is free and felt that working with the lab was low risk. He stated that their program results in a temporary physical change.
 - Alexis Turner (215 Main Street) expressed concerns over pedestrian safety as she frequently walks on High Street. She feels that traffic safety is real issue in town, especially on Main Street.
- Mayor Smith stated in a closing remark that the Town of Odessa's tax revenue is \$55,000.00 a year collected from property taxes and that it is almost impossible for our

town to perform any capital projects without the assistance of the State of Delaware. He feels that we were very lucky to get the \$238,088.00 that we did. He stated that the cost of asphalt has already gone up 10% since June and the project that began at this cost could increase exponentially, especially if we add additional expenditures. He doubts seriously that we can go back for additional funding. He stated that the grant we received was contingent on two factors: widening for safety and repaving. The grant requires that the funds are used for the purpose in which they were applied for, and any alternative use of funds will result in us having to repay the monies and will make us ineligible for future awards.

IV. Adjournment

MOTION BY JOHN FREEMAN, SECONDED BY LENNY AGUILAR TO ADJOURN THE PUBLIC HEARING AT 6:49 PM.

MOTION CARRIED. VOTE: 4 AYES, 0 NAYS

Minutes Submitted: 11/13/25

By: Amy Marie Ottinger
Town Secretary

Approved: _____