

**TOWN OF ELSMERE
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
August 13, 2026
6:30 p.m.**

CALL TO ORDER: Mayor Personti called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Mayor Personti asked for those who wish to remain standing for a moment of silence, to remember former Councilwoman of the Second District, Patricia Frantz, who passed away this past weekend.

ROLL CALL:

MAYOR	JOANN I. PERSONTI	PRESENT
1 ST DISTRICT	JANE MCDANIEL	PRESENT
2 ND DISTRICT	SALLY JENSEN	PRESENT
3 RD DISTRICT	BRIAN REINBOLD JR.	PRESENT
4 TH DISTRICT	JOHN HOLLOWAY	PRESENT
5 TH DISTRICT	MARC HENRY	PRESENT
6 TH DISTRICT	ERIK ELLISON	PRESENT

Town Solicitor, James McMackin – Present
Chief of Police, Laura Giles – Excused
Police Lieutenant, Phil Young – Present
Town Manager, Steven Martin – Present
Finance Director, Valarie Strzempa – Present
Code Enforcement, Mark Bowers – Present
Public Works Department, Anthony DiSanto - Excused

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Pursuant to 29 Del. C. Section 10004(b)(4), the Mayor and Council will adjourn into an executive session for strategy discussions, including legal advice or opinion from an attorney-at-law, with respect to pending or potential litigation matters. The Mayor and Council intend to return to public session at 6:45 p.m.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Jensen to adjourn into executive session. The motion was seconded by Councilman Ellison.

VOTE: 7-0 All in Favor Motion Carried

The Mayor and Council adjourned into executive session at 6:32 p.m.

RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION:

The Mayor and Council returned to public session at 6:45 p.m.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Jensen to return to public session. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman McDaniel.

VOTE: 7-0 All in Favor Motion Carried

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ed Zielinski of 1334 Maple Avenue commended Lieutenant Young and Sergeant Davis for the awesome job they have been doing on Facebook and interacting with the public. He stated that it shows positive feedback from the public. Mr. Zielinski thanked them for continuing the radar patrols which have been helping significantly with speeders.

Giovanni Granados of 1322 Maple Avenue expressed disappointment with the direction of the Town and stated that greater attention should be given to improving the community. Mr. Granados stated that the leaders of the Town are not doing enough. He continued by advocating for the implementation of live streaming the Town's public meetings, which would increase accessibility, transparency, and resident engagement, and stated that live streaming could potentially be implemented at little to no cost to the Town. Mr. Granados also thanked the Town's residents for their hard work and contributions to their families and community, stating this is a working-class Town, and wanted them to know they are appreciated.

Tim Sedlacek of 212 Filbert Avenue stated he has been dealing with an ongoing quality-of-life issue involving a neighboring property where seven cats are being kept. He stated that unsanitary conditions and strong odors are affecting his home and surrounding properties. He stated that he has contacted the State, and Town's Code Enforcement regarding the matter and that efforts are being made to address the situation, but his frustration remains with the ongoing conditions and their impact on his home and quality of life. He asked whether there were any additional agencies or resources he could contact to assist in resolving the issue.

Town Manager Steven Martin instructed Mr. Sedlacek to meet with him so they could discuss the issues and solution.

Mr. Sedlacek replied that Code Enforcement Officer Mark Bowers has been making strides to have the property remediated but understands that our Code Enforcement Officers still have their limitations.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes of the July 9, 2026, Council Meeting.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Jensen to approve the minutes of the July 9, 2026, Council Meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman McDaniel.

VOTE: 6-0 with 1 Abstained All in Favor Motion Carried

SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

The Mayor and Council would like to recognize two Elsmere residents on pride and dedication shown to the Town in recent months.

At this time, Mayor Personti turned the meeting over to Councilwoman Jensen for a presentation.

Councilwoman Jensen recognized Roland and Maximus, two young residents, for their efforts in cleaning storm drains on Maple Avenue and other streets following the July 10th storm. The boys, ages six and eight, were commended for their initiative and community service, with recognition prompted by a Facebook post and a recommendation from former Councilman Ed Zielinski. Mayor Personti and the boys' family were asked to join the Councilwoman on a presentation.

Mayor Personti then proceeded to read two letters of recognition that the boys were being presented with, which read as follows:

"In recognition of your outstanding initiative, community spirit, and voluntary efforts to help maintain the town of Elsmere by cleaning debris from storm drains along Maple Avenue, your hard work, sense of civic responsibility, and pride in your community are commendable and serve as an inspiring example to others. The Mayor and Council of the Town of Elsmere proudly recognize your contributions and extend their sincere appreciation for your commitment to making our Town a better place for everyone.

Presented this 13th day of August 2026."

Councilwoman Jensen presented the boys with a goodie bag and their letters of recognition.

At this time, Lieutenant Young and State Representative DeShanna Neal were asked to join.

Lieutenant Young presented the boys with a goodie bag and thanked them for their outstanding work in the community.

Representative Neal presented the boys with tributes from the State House of Representative which read as follows:

"From the State of Delaware House of Representatives, be it hereby known to all that the House of Representatives recognizes Max and Roland as the Town of Elsmere's Super Volunteers.

We acknowledge these outstanding individuals for their dedication and commitment in keeping our community clean. Cleaning storm drains and picking up litter helps the streets stay safe and the neighborhood looking beautiful. We commend both of you for your hard work, responsibility, and caring attitude to make Elsmere a nicer place for everyone.

You are truly an inspiration to all. The House of Representatives extends its sincere appreciation and directs this tribute to be presented on this 13th day of August 2026."

Representative Neal noted that the tribute was signed by the Speaker of the House, Melissa Miner-Brown, Chief Clerk of the House, Richard L. Puffer, and herself.

Councilwoman Jensen stated that while New Castle Councilman Toole could not attend the meeting, he asked if Councilwoman Jensen would present the following tribute on his behalf which read as follows:

“This is a tribute from New Castle County Council recognizing Roland and Maximus White for community service in Elsmere. On behalf of the New Castle County Council, I, Mr. Toole, want to express my sincere gratitude and pride for two outstanding young heroes in Elsmere, Roland, age eight, and Maximus White, age six. With their father's encouragement and supervision, these proactive brothers took it upon themselves to clear out clogged storm drains after a major storm. Rather than stopping at just one, they have continued their hard work along Maple Avenue and surrounding streets. Their initiative helps prevent neighborhood flooding, keeps our roadways safe, and protects nearby homes.

Actions like theirs demonstrate a remarkable level of civic responsibility far beyond their years. It is dedicated young leaders like Roland and Maximus who remind us what makes Elsmere such a special place to call home. Thank you both for your hard work, extraordinary service, and community spirit.

New Castle County Councilman Brandon Toole extends his sincere congratulations and directs this tribute to be presented on this 13th day of August, 2026, signed Brandon Toole, Councilman, New Castle County Council, First District.”

Lastly, Councilwoman Jensen asked Elsmere Volunteer Clean Up founder Lauren Sheldon to join the presentation.

Founder Lauren Sheldon presented Roland and Maximus with the Earth Warrior Award in recognition of their hard work and community service on behalf of the Elsmere Volunteer Cleanup Crew. The boys received an award provided by the World Wildlife Fund. Ms. Sheldon thanked the boys for their efforts and dedication to the community.

At this time, there was a round of applause for the boys.

The Mayor and Council would like to recognize two Elsmere Hometown Heroes:

a. Francis A. Marinelli Sr.

At this time, Mayor Personti announced that a Hometown Hero banner would be installed in Mr. Marinelli's honor and continued by reading the tribute aloud for the record.

“HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF FRANCIS A. MARINELLI, SR.

WHEREAS, Francis A. "Frank" Marinelli, Sr. was a devoted husband, father, grandfather, veteran, public servant, and respected resident of the Town of Elsmere whose life was marked by courage, integrity, and a commitment to serving others; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Marinelli honorably served his country during World War II in the United States Army, earning the Soldier's Medal for heroism in Italy in recognition of extraordinary bravery and selfless action, in addition to numerous campaign and service decorations earned throughout his distinguished military service; and

WHEREAS, following his military service, Mr. Marinelli continued his lifelong commitment to public safety by joining the Delaware State Police on May 12, 1947, where he faithfully served the citizens of Delaware for more than twenty-five years in positions of increasing responsibility, including detective, detective sergeant, detective lieutenant, and ultimately Captain and Director

of the Records Division; and

WHEREAS, throughout his law enforcement career, Mr. Marinelli earned the respect and admiration of his fellow officers through his professionalism, leadership, dedication to justice, and unwavering commitment to protecting the people of Delaware; and

WHEREAS, after retiring from the Delaware State Police, Mr. Marinelli continued serving the public as Superintendent of Records at the Delaware Correctional Institution, where he faithfully served for an additional thirteen years before retiring in 1977; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Marinelli was a proud resident of the Town of Elsmere and remained active in his community while maintaining membership in the Association of Retired Delaware State Police and honoring the values of service and sacrifice that defined his life; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Town of Elsmere recognize that individuals such as Francis A. Marinelli, Sr. help define the character of a community through lives dedicated to service, leadership, and selfless commitment to others.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Mayor and Council of the Town of Elsmere do hereby pay tribute to the memory of Francis A. Marinelli, Sr., for his lifetime of dedicated service to the Town, state and nation.

BE IT FURTHER, that the Mayor and Council of the Town of Elsmere recognize Mr. Marinelli as an Elsmere "Hometown Hero," with his banner proudly displayed on Kirkwood Highway, as a lasting symbol of the Town's immense pride in his life, patriotism, and distinguished service.

HONORED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF ELSMERE, THIS 13th DAY OF AUGUST 2026."

A relative of Mr. Marinelli was present and accepted the tribute and stated that while his children and grandchildren never met Francis, they will now be able to see him in Town.

b. Daniel W. Fucella

At this time, Mayor Personti announced that a Hometown Hero banner would also be installed in Mr. Fucella's honor and continued by reading the tribute aloud for the record.

"HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF DANIEL FUCELLA

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Council of the Town of Elsmere recognize that individuals such as Daniel Fucella help define the character of a community through lives dedicated to service, patriotism, and unwavering commitment to both their country and hometown; and

WHEREAS, Daniel Fucella was born on August 6, 1924 and answered his nation's call by enlisting in the United States Navy in January 1943 during World War II; and

WHEREAS, after completing basic training in Williamsburg, Virginia, and further assignment in California, Mr. Fucella was deployed to the island of Guam, where he honorably served until the conclusion of World War II, earning the rank of Machinist's Mate Second Class in recognition of his skill, dedication, and service to the United States; and

WHEREAS, following his military service, Mr. Fucella returned home to build a life rooted in family and community, residing on Locust Avenue beginning in 1954 with his beloved wife, Ellen, who later became the first female Mayor of the Town of Elsmere, where together they became a part of the history of our Town for generations; and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, Daniel Fucella exemplified the values of duty, humility, perseverance, and civic pride, leaving a legacy that inspired all who knew him and now reminds us of the sacrifices made by the Greatest Generation to preserve the freedoms we enjoy today; and

WHEREAS, Daniel Fucella passed away in March 2023 at the age of 98, leaving behind a grateful community that honors his distinguished military service, devotion to his family, and lifelong commitment to the Town of Elsmere;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Mayor and Council of the Town of Elsmere do hereby pay tribute to Daniel Fucella with heartfelt gratitude and profound respect for his service to our nation and his many years as a valued member of our community.

BE IT FURTHER, that in recognition of his service and legacy, the Town of Elsmere shall proudly display a Hometown Hero Banner bearing the name and likeness of Daniel Fucella, ensuring that his sacrifice, patriotism, and contributions to our community will be remembered and honored by present and future generations.

HONORED BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF ELSMERE, THIS 13th DAY OF AUGUST 2026."

Mayor Personti presented the tribute to Mrs. Fucella.

OLD BUSINESS:

Consideration of Third and Final reading of Ordinance 691.

An ordinance amending multiple sections of the Town Code to establish immediate fines for failure to obtain required licenses, permit or pay applicable fees and to authorize the issuance of instant summonses for such violations.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Jensen. The motion was seconded by Councilman Holloway.

Mayor Personti asked Town Solicitor Jim McMackin if there were any concerns with this ordinance regarding lack of due process.

Town Solicitor Jim McMackin replied there is no concern since there is an appeal process.

VOTE: 7-0 All in Favor Motion Carried

Consideration to authorize the expenditure of \$50,000 from the Long-Term Planning Department's Infrastructure Maintenance prior year carryover line.

Finance Director Valarie Strzempa stated that the \$50,000 represents prior-year infrastructure funds and cannot be transferred into the current-year budget. Essentially, authorization is needed for the Town Manager to utilize \$50,000 in prior-year funds for infrastructure repairs. No budget change or

budget amendment is necessary, as the funds are from a prior fiscal year. The intent is to authorize use of the funds without inaccurately increasing the current-year budget.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilman Ellison to approve the expenditure of \$50,000 from the Long-Term Planning Department's Infrastructure Maintenance prior year carryover line. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman McDaniel.

VOTE: 7-0 All in Favor Motion Carried

NEW BUSINESS:

Introduction of First and Second reading of Ordinance 692:

An Ordinance amending Ordinance 683 due to a typographical error, which prohibits the use of masks or facial coverings.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Jensen to approve the First and Second reading of Ordinance 692. The motion was seconded by Councilman Reinbold.

VOTE: 4-3 All in Favor Motion Carried

ROLL CALL: 1st District – Yes, 2nd District – Yes, 3rd District - Yes, 4th District – No, 5th District – No, 6th District – No, Mayor – Yes

Consideration to implement live streaming of public meetings at Town Hall.

Councilman Reinbold updated the Council of the potential to implement live streaming of public meetings. He stated that a YouTube channel was established and tested, and it was discovered that this approach would come at no cost to the Town while still providing residents with access to meetings.

Mayor Personti stated that her concerns are the potential for audio and technical issues. She believes live streaming should be done professionally and not without proper planning. The Mayor stated that that other municipalities have incurred varying costs for live streaming and she expressed concern that the Town would incur expenses for equipment, technology, and technical support.

The Mayor recommended further researching and developing the proposal for consideration during the next budget cycle since there is currently no budget allocation for this. She stated that, if additional funds become available during the current budget year, her priority would be addressing road repairs based on the concerns she regularly receives from residents.

Councilman Ellison stated that he is not opposed to transparency or live streaming public meetings, and clarified that his concern is about spending funds that were not included in the adopted budget. He then asked for clarification on whether the proposed method of live streaming would be just audio or audio and video and how the equipment and associated costs would be funded. He stressed that the proposal should identify a practical and financially feasible implementation method before moving forward.

Councilman Reinbold stated that a test video had already been posted to the Town's YouTube page, which demonstrated that meetings could be recorded with clear audio using existing equipment and stated that professional-level equipment may not be necessary to provide residents with access to

live-streamed meetings. He further stated that other civic associations already utilize live streaming and questioned why the Town could not do the same without significant expense.

Councilwoman Jensen stated her concern is also the cost and that residents may object to spending funds on live streaming while road repairs remain a priority. She recommended further research into the various options, including Zoom and YouTube. She also raised questions regarding potential costs for video storage to archive the meetings. Councilwoman Jensen then suggested establishing a working group to study the options, costs, and implementation process and report its findings to Council before a decision is made.

Councilwoman Jensen then asked what the Town Manager's stance on this topic?

Town Manager Steven Martin replied that while that a test of the laptop had been conducted he still has concern about ensuring that any live-streamed meetings are presented in a professional and reliable manner. Town Manager Steven Martin stated that there may still be additional equipment needed and even additional personnel may be necessary and that Council and staff would need to understand appropriate protocols, as meetings would be subject to greater public scrutiny and FOIA standards. He stated he supports the concept of live streaming but would like further evaluation to ensure the Town provides a quality product rather than implementing the process hastily.

Mayor Personti agreed and stated that we should explore any grants that would fund this.

Councilwoman McDaniel stated she has concerns regarding both the cost of live streaming and the safety of Council, staff, and residents attending meetings. She stated that other municipalities have experienced confrontations and altercations associated with public meetings and suggested that the Town consider security measures, such as police presence and monitoring of the building. She stated she also has concerns about staff safety following meetings in the event residents become upset about matters discussed during a meeting.

Councilmembers briefly discussed whether live streaming would allow members of the public to participate remotely during public comment. An idea was brought up that the Town could potentially limit public comment to individuals attending meetings in person. Council also referenced the Town's experience using GoToMeeting during the COVID-19 pandemic and stated that current technology, including artificial intelligence could present additional considerations that would need to be addressed.

Councilwoman Jensen stated the need for protocols for both public participation and Council conduct during live-streamed meetings. She suggested that the camera could be positioned toward the Town seal rather than directly at Council members as one option for addressing privacy concerns, but also acknowledged that Council members' identities and addresses are otherwise publicly available.

Councilman Ellison then asked the Town Solicitor whether unofficial meeting minutes could be distributed to the public prior to formal approval of the minutes.

Town Solicitor Jim McMackin replied that distributing unofficial minutes could create issues because the information may be subject to interpretation, taken out of context, or differ from the final approved minutes. He cautioned that unofficial minutes could potentially lead to confusion or disputes regarding what was discussed during the meeting.

Councilman Ellison suggested that the Town could provide residents with a brief summary of agenda items that were acted upon at each meeting, along with information regarding presentations and other matters, and distribute the information through social media. He reiterated that he is not opposed to live streaming but simply concerned about spending funds that were not currently

available in the budget. He stated that funding constraints could require other Town events to be delayed or canceled and requested further information regarding the potential cost of live streaming.

At this time, there was elevated discussion between multiple Council members to which Mayor Personti called for a motion.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilwoman Jensen to proceed with further exploration of implementing live streaming options, including any available grants for funding. The motion was seconded by Councilman Holloway.

VOTE: 6-1 All in Favor Motion Carried

ROLL CALL: 1st District – No, 2nd District – Yes, 3rd District - Yes, 4th District – Yes, 5th District – Yes, 6th District – Yes, Mayor – Yes

Councilwoman Jensen asked if a working group would be formed for this?

Town Manager Steven Martin replied yes and believes that members of Council should be included.

Town Solicitor Jim McMackin reminded that we must keep FOIA standards in mind, and suggested that the Town Manager ask for volunteers, but limit the Council members to three and have constituents involved.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Code Enforcement

Code Enforcement Officer Mark Bowers gave a brief overview of the Code Enforcement Report, which is attached to these minutes:

- Councilwoman Jensen asked about the status of the property that was referenced earlier in the meeting under Tim Sedlacek's public comment.
- Code Officer Mark Bowers replied that multiple inspections have been performed in coordination with Animal Control and determined there is an odor resulting from multiple cats, but the owner is taking steps to have the sanitation remediated. There are more inspections scheduled to ensure continued progress.

Finance Department

Finance Director Valarie Strzempa gave a brief overview of the Finance Department Report, which is attached to these minutes:

- Councilman Ellison asked if it is possible to put a presentation together of what the Town has been doing, especially with the recent tax bill adjustment.
- Finance Director Valarie Strzempa stated that everything is posted publicly on the Town's website.
- Town Manager Steven Martin replied that we can explore something simplified to be published.
- Town Manager Steven Martin asked the Finance Director to expand on the monthly budget reviews that have been occurring.

- Finance Director Valarie Strzempa replied that we've typically always had these meetings with all department heads to do budget reviews.
- Mayor Personti asked if there have been more residents applying for payment plans?
- Finance Director Valarie Strzempa replied that residents may request installment payment plans after taxes become delinquent. She stated that only a small number of residents had inquired about payment assistance and stated she has encouraged residents to make partial payments throughout the year to reduce their principal balance before establishing a payment plan for any remaining balance. She also stated that residential property owners generally remained in a net savings compared to the tax bills issued prior to the 2024 reassessment, due in part to the adjusted tax rate implemented following the reassessment. The Finance Director stated that commercial properties also remain in a net savings compared to prior tax years. She further stated that changes to the tax structure, including the removal of the base tax, have resulted in reduced tax bills for many residents receiving senior exemptions. She noted that these changes have provided additional savings for senior and lower-income property owners.

Public Safety

In Chief Giles' absence, Lieutenant Young gave a brief overview of the Public Safety Report, which is attached to these minutes:

- Mayor Personti commended the department's recent community outreach efforts on Facebook. She stated that residents appear to be more engaged and appreciative of the efforts to solicit public input and encouraging the residents to identify issues or problematic areas.
- Lieutenant Young stated that the efforts are intended to increase community engagement and provide residents with a direct line of communication. He reported that the Department's social media content had received approximately 1.3 million views over a 28-day period, with some posts exceeding 100,000 views. He credited Sergeant Davis with significant work in developing the initiative and stated that the Department will continue expanding its social media presence and using it to better communicate with residents and address community concerns.
- Councilwoman Jensen also commended the great work on social media and stated it has been noticed quite a bit.
- Councilman Ellison also commended the Department and stated that the increased communication with residents has been outstanding. He referenced a recent incident near Wawa where the Department provided information and a statement within 24 hours, noting that timely and straightforward communication helps keep residents informed and demonstrates that their concerns are being heard.
- Lieutenant Young stated that they are working to involve more officers in their social media efforts and create content that is engaging and relatable to residents. He stated the goal of humanizing the Department and strengthening relationships with residents who may have limited direct interaction with officers.
- Mayor Personti asked if the flock camera we have at Rt. 100 and Kirkwood Hwy is the only camera we have.
- Lieutenant Young confirmed, stating that the other cameras are not flock cameras, but regular surveillance cameras.
- Mayor Personti asked if we pay for the flock camera.
- Finance Director replied yes, we pay a monthly service for it.
- Mayor Personti asked if we get any benefit for it, to which Lieutenant Young replied no.
- Mayor Personti then stated this should be placed on next month's agenda for discussion.

- Lieutenant Young stated that Chief Giles instructed him to address concerns regarding speeding on Rt. 100 and as a result, the Department has adjusted officer schedules to provide increased traffic enforcement. He reported that there is now a dedicated traffic enforcement detail operating on a regular basis, with Sergeant Smith and Corporal Sowden conducting traffic stops throughout the month.

Public Works

Town Manager Steven Martin gave a brief overview of the Public Works Department Report in Public Works Supervisor Anthony DiSanto's absence, which is attached to these minutes:

- Councilman Ellison asked who is responsible for the median on Kirkwood Hwy near Poplar Avenue due to receiving multiple complaints of lack of visibility from the greenery that was planted.
- Town Manager Steven Martin replied that he will take a look at it and see if the greenery needs to be trimmed or removed from that location.
- Councilman Holloway added this is a problem in the median on Kirkwood Hwy turning onto Tamarack Avenue as well.
- Councilwoman Jensen asked if the stop signs and the "No Right Turn" signs at Domino's have been replaced.
- Town Manager Steven Martin replied yes.
- Councilwoman Jensen asked if we were planning to resume the street sweeping program.
- Town Manager Steven Martin replied yes, we plan to resume in September.
- Councilwoman McDaniel asked if we could request DelDOT to replace the "No Turn On Red" sign at the intersection of New Rd and DuPont Rd due to the safety hazard of oncoming traffic coming off the DuPont bridge.
- Town Manager Steven Martin replied that he did report this to DelDOT but has not gotten a response back from them, but that he will follow up.

Town Manager

Town Manager Steven Martin gave a brief overview of the Town Manager's Report, which is attached to these minutes:

- Town Manager Steven Martin reported that the Patty Blevins Walking Path Drainage Project is now underway and is anticipated to be completed in 30 days.
- Mayor Personti asked if this is the project being funded by the remaining ARPA funds.
- Town Manager Steven Martin replied yes, and the Vilone Village Stormwater Project.
- Mayor Personti asked the status of that project.
- Town Manager Steven Martin replied that all the structures have been ordered and there have been meetings to discuss the scheduling of the project due to the upcoming school year's bus schedule, the trash collection, and the possibility of Richard Avenue being temporarily shut down during the project.
- Town Manager Steven Martin updated on the Congressional Direct Spending, stating that we have made it through the first two steps.
- Councilman Ellison stated that his concern is that there will be a stopgap of funding considering the U.S. Government will not be shutting down on October 1st, but rather December 31st and the funding will be at a standstill until they approve a budget.
- Town Manager Steven Martin reported that he spoke to Senator Mantzavinos and Representative DeShanna Neal and both have agreed to donate \$75,000 each for the street

repairs.

- Town Manager Steven Martin reported that Paoli Services will be installing a full drainage system at the Maple Avenue basketball court within the next few weeks.
- The Town Manager gave an update regarding potential uses for the rental of the lower level of Town Hall, stating that following a meeting with the Fire Marshal, it was determined that use as a daycare would require the installation of a sprinkler system throughout the entire building and therefore would not be feasible at this time. However, there are three parties that have expressed interest in utilizing portions of the space. One potential tenant, a Montessori school, expressed interest in using a portion of the basement, specifically the former rec room. Another individual expressed interest in renting the kitchen area for a small baking business, subject to applicable Board of Health requirements and approvals.
- Town Manager Steven Martin provided an update on the proposed Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return (TNVR) ordinance and thanked Scott for his extensive work in drafting the proposed ordinance. He then stated that additional research and revisions are needed before the ordinance is presented to Council. Under the proposed program, residents participating in TNVR would be required to register with the Town and pay a \$25 fee. He stated his concern is that the program could increase complaints and nuisance issues associated with feeding animals and attracting wildlife. However, he believes that the ordinance could be finalized for consideration at the September meeting.
- Lieutenant Young thanked the Town Manager for making space available for an employee gym. He reported that Detective Mitchell coordinated with Planet Fitness, who donated cardio and weightlifting equipment following recent renovations. The Town incurred costs for moving the equipment, but staff were able to install the equipment without modifying the building. The gym currently includes five pieces of cardio equipment and five pieces of commercial-grade strength equipment, a treadmill, Stairmaster, a rowing machine, bicycles and other equipment, with additional expected. Lieutenant Young stated that he and Detective Mitchell are available to provide employees and Councilmembers with tours and instruction on the proper use of the equipment. He noted that additional equipment may also be donated in the future.

STATEMENTS BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL:

Councilwoman McDaniel provided an update on the Town's historic preservation project. She stated that discussions with the Mayor and Council are anticipated during the September or October meetings, with the goal of presenting the proposed ordinance to the Planning Commission by November. The proposal would establish a local historic preservation ordinance and either create a Historic Preservation Commission or utilize the Planning Commission to review and consider historic properties. It would also establish designation criteria and procedures for the inventory and nomination of historic properties and landmarks within the Town. She stated that a few properties and potential landmarks have been identified throughout the Town, including long-standing local businesses and other historically significant locations. The goal is to recognize and preserve Elsmere's history while promoting community identity and complementing the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Councilman Reinbold stated he would like to consider reinstating the second public comment section on the Council agenda's at the end of the meeting to allow residents an opportunity to speak at the conclusion of Council meetings.

Town Solicitor Jim McMackin stated this would be at the discretion of the Mayor and Council, as the statutes only requires public comment to occur before any votes are taken on agenda items.

After a brief discussion, it was agreed to place this on a future agenda for discussion and potential action.

Councilman Ellison commended the recognition of the young residents for their community cleanup efforts and stated that the initiative demonstrated the value of community involvement and great parenting. He also praised the Police Department for its continued outreach and engagement with residents. Councilman Ellison then thanked residents for attending the meeting and encouraged greater involvement, noting that participation provides residents with a better understanding of the challenges facing the Town, including the costs associated with roadway improvements. Councilman Ellison also commended the Town Manager for his work and dedication to the Town and recognized the difficulty and importance of his position.

EXECUTIVE SESSION AND ADJOURNMENT:

Pursuant to 29 Del. C. Section 10004(b)(4), the Mayor and Council will adjourn into an executive session for strategy discussions, including legal advice or opinion from an attorney-at-law, with respect to collective bargaining. The Mayor and Council will not return to public session.

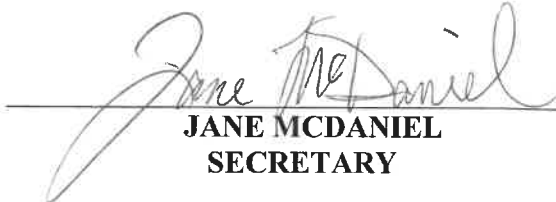
Mayor Personti stated that the need for an additional executive session was no longer needed.

ACTION: A motion was made by Councilman Henry to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilwoman McDaniel.

VOTE: 7-0 All in Favor Motion Carried

These minutes summarize the agenda and other issues discussed at this Council Meeting. Votes are recorded accurately. The audio recording of this meeting will be available at Town Hall for a period of two years from the date these minutes are approved. The audio recording may be reviewed at Town Hall by appointment and in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.


JOANN I. PERSONTI
MAYOR


JANE MCDANIEL
SECRETARY