

MINUTES
Public Hearing of the College Park City Council
Ordinance 08-O-02
An Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the City of College Park, Maryland to
Adopt the Fiscal Year 2009 Operating and Capital Budget of the City of College
Park, Maryland

Tuesday, May 13, 2008
7:30 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Brayman; Councilmembers Wojahn, Catlin, Perry, Stullich, Mark Cook, Hampton and Mary Cook; Student Liaison Danielle Kogut.

ABSENT: Councilmember Molinatto.

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Nagro, City Manager; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Sara Imhulse, Assistant to the City Manager; Steve Groh, Director of Finance; Leo Thomas, Deputy Director of Finance; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Bob Stumpff, Director of Public Works; Terry Schum, Director of Planning.

Mayor Brayman opened the public hearing at 7:38 p.m. This public hearing is to take public comment on the FY 2009 Budget Ordinance and proposed tax increase. Mayor Brayman invited Steve Groh to provide an overview.

Mr. Groh described the documents in the public hearing handout. The proposed real property tax increase of 2.3¢ would yield \$430,000, part of the \$500,000 requested to fund full-time contract police services. The other \$70,000 needed for the proposed full-time contract police program is coming from the operating budget. The operating budget includes various increases in order to maintain the current level of City services, including a cost of living adjustment and merit increases for employees and increases in utility costs and fuel. Those increases come to almost \$480,000, which will be paid using increased revenue from real property taxes due to increased assessments.

There was discussion of the City's homestead tax credit rate, which is currently set at 4%. This means that resident homeowners (in owner-occupied properties) would not pay more than a 4% increase in their assessments.

Mayor Brayman invited public comment:

Dave Dorsch, 4607 Calvert Road: This is the worst time to raise property taxes since the county just raised assessments. He is concerned about retired citizens not being able to afford the increase. He does not support paying for full time contract police when he is

already paying the County for police services through his property taxes. He believes this is the start of a full-time City police force which will just grow every year.

Alan Tyler, 7204 Bowdoin Avenue: Believes its OK to raise the taxes somewhat, but wishes they wouldn't raise it as much as they have proposed. Wants to have plainclothes police and cars to make the neighborhood safer. Believes a safe neighborhood would increase property values. Take advantage of the Homestead Tax Credit to save on your property taxes.

Chuck McCormick, 7410 Wellesley Drive: Voted against a police department when he had the chance, and doesn't see a benefit in his neighborhood. Has a degree in economics and believes that higher property taxes usually result in lower property values.

John Shea, 8302 49th Avenue: Believes in the importance of critical infrastructure: police, community services, animal control.

Christine Nagle, 9506 52nd Avenue: Doesn't think the budget should be increased at this time for contract police when the agreement with the County has not been finalized and people don't understand what those services would be. She believes a lot of items in the budget can be cut. A 7.9% increase is higher than what the state and county are proposing. The amount paid for dues seems high.

David Lunsford, 4707 Tecumseh Street, #202: He is opposed to the tax increase because he lives in a condo and doesn't receive the benefit of City trash services. Is also concerned that increased taxes will increase foreclosures.

Stacia Hutchison, 4710 Kiernan Road: Believes this is a bad time for a tax increase with the economy as it is now. Wonders if three police officers will really make a difference. Suggested cost saving measures.

Mayor Brayman announced the Council is scheduled to discuss the budget during next week's worksession, and is scheduled to adopt the budget at the May 27 regular meeting.

There being no further public comment, the public hearing was declared closed at 8:10 p.m.

Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk