

MINUTES
Regular Meeting of the College Park City Council
Tuesday, October 23, 2007
8:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Brayman; Councilmembers Milligan, Krouse, Catlin, Perry, Fellows, Stullich, Hampton and Cook; Student Liaison Danielle Kogut.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Nagro, City Manager; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Robert Ryan, Director of Public Services; Terry Schum, Director of Planning; Steve Halpern, City Engineer

Mayor Brayman opened the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Councilmember Milligan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: Minutes from the Public Hearing on October 9, 2007, the Regular Meeting on October 9, 2007 and the Special Session on October 16, 2007 were presented for adoption. A motion was made by Councilmember Fellows and seconded by Councilmember Cook to adopt the minutes. Councilmember Stullich proposed an amendment on little page 9 regarding her comments on the Homestead Tax Credit: it should read “the County does not itemize the City portion of the Homestead Tax Credit.” Councilmember Krouse seconded the amendment, which carried by a vote of 8-0-0. The motion to adopt the minutes, as amended, passed 8-0-0.

Announcements:

Councilmember Milligan announced the College Park Boys and Girls Club would host a “Meet The Candidates Night” on Monday at 7:30 p.m. at the Hard Times Café.

Acknowledgement of Dignitaries: Mayor Brayman acknowledged Jerry Anzulovic, President of the Berwyn District Civic Association.

Newly Appointed Board and Committee Members: None.

Amendments To The Agenda:

Add 07-G-113, Appointments To Boards and Committees

City Manager’s Report: Mr. Nagro discussed the Greenbelt Pedestrian Bridge Survey that was recently mailed to an area in north College Park. He discussed leaf season and reminded residents to rake their leaves to the curb and watch for the signs. No leaves in plastic bags will be picked up; only paper bags will be taken. The Oral Argument on the

Historic District is scheduled for Monday, November 19 at 10:00 a.m. On November 5, District Council will conduct the mandatory review of College Park West.

Student Liaison Comments: Ms. Kogut reported that the Communiiversity clean up was very successful last weekend. The SGA has ordered the “M” stencil.

Comments From The Audience On Non-Agenda Items:

Alexander Radichevich, 7210 Dartmouth Avenue: He received a Beautification Award from Prince George’s County for the garden he maintains on Calvert Road at Dartmouth Avenue. The City also received an award for the Trolley Trail. Members of the Council congratulated Mr. Radichevich.

Larry Bleau, 4901 Niagara Road: Announced the County meeting on November 19 at BARC Building 003 regarding their proposed improvements to Rhode Island Avenue.

Consent Agenda: None.

Action Items:

07-G-108 Authorize the City Manager To Explore The Matrix Consultant’s Recommendations For Increased Police Services With Prince George’s County.

A motion was made by Councilmember Fellows and seconded by Councilmember Milligan to authorize the City Manager to explore an agreement between the City and the Prince George’s County Police Department which would allow the City to hire additional County police officers full time.

Councilmember Fellows discussed the study conducted by the Matrix Consulting Group and their recommendations. He stated the current MOU with the County for part-time Contract police officers does not include provisions for contracting directly with the police department for full-time officers. This motion would allow staff to explore this option. He discussed the City’s increased funding of the Contract Police program.

Comments From the Audience:

Larry Bleau, 4901 Niagara Road: He is generally in favor of this motion because it addresses the need for increased police services without raising property taxes extraordinarily. He would want to keep control of the routes with the City Manager’s office.

Douglas Shontz, 4707 Fordham Road: He likes the accountability the Contract program would provide. How will the County meet the increased demand for officers?

What about infrastructure to support the officers? How do you break the relationship after investing so much into it?

Adele Ellis, 4608 Beechwood Road: Thanked the previous speaker for raising some good questions. She believes it is important to move forward with this because we need a greater police presence. She was a supporter of a municipal department but if that is not going to happen, we at least need to do this. Also encourages the City not to let up on code enforcement.

Rick Ellis, 4608 Beechwood Road: Asked about the other recommendation in the study to explore additional policing by the University of Maryland Police. He requests that the City continue to pursue this recommendation.

Mayor Brayman said efforts to work with the UMPD will continue.

Bill Montgomery, 4614 Harvard Road: He applauded the Council for adding more police officers in the City and hopes this is just one more step toward a municipal police force.

Jonathan Molinatto, 5210 Huron Street: As a candidate, he has spoken with a lot of people who raise crime and safety as a priority, and believes they would be in favor of this motion. He supports a larger police presence.

Councilmember Catlin discussed the full time contract officer program the City had in the mid-1990s. He's optimistic that we would have a better program now than we had before. He discussed the situations in Bowie, New Carrollton and Greenbelt.

Councilmember Milligan believes the contract program is a real bargain and is making a difference. He wants to make the contract cars more visible. He thinks full time contract officers will make things even better.

Councilmember Fellows said one of the benefits of having an outside professional consultant do this study is that they suggested specific improvements that can be made with the County. We need to continue to explore collaboration with the UMPD. He liked that the study presented a set of recommendations that can be pursued over time.

Councilmember Stulich expressed mixed feelings about this motion because she believes a municipal police force would have benefits for the city and would be worth the additional cost. She believes this proposal will help put more officers on the street and will be less costly than a municipal department. She wants our contract police to help reduce response times. Believes we have seen substantial improvements in police services but we're not where we want to be.

Councilmember Krouse says there are many aspects of a municipal department he would support. He believes the contract program is a tremendous success and a huge value.

Councilmember Perry commented on the number of police studies that have been done over the years. He commented on the prior contract program. He believes the current contract officers have had a tremendous impact in the city, but they are disconnected from District 1. He's concerned about the cost. No one has said if we get more police there will be less crime.

Councilmember Cook said she supports this motion, and believes more people need to be involved in neighborhood watch. It has been very successful in her neighborhood.

Councilmember Catlin discussed current crime trends. He stated the University of Maryland police are operating below their authorized strength.

Mayor Brayman is a proponent of the contract program but is also willing to pay more for a municipal department. He thinks we would need more officers in a municipal force than the study recommended. He thinks we do need to explore what more we can do with the county and itemized the details that need to be worked out. He hopes one day the state will do more to address this – it is a state issue.

The motion carried 8-0-0.

07-G-109 Approve the Staff Recommendation To Deny A Driveway Apron Variance Request For 9021 50th Place.

A motion was made by Councilmember Perry and seconded by Councilmember Catlin to support the staff recommendation to deny the request for a driveway apron variance at 9021 50th Place.

Councilmember Perry stated the owner of the property applied for and received a curb cut permit for the construction of a new singlewide driveway apron along Blackfoot place for his new garage. The permit was issued under the condition that he remove the existing curb cut along 50th Place, because it is City policy that each home have only one singlewide driveway apron, unless there are mitigating circumstances that warrant the necessity for a variance. The County building permit was also issued with the same condition. Staff determined that there are no mitigating circumstances that warrant the necessity for the variance.

There were no comments from the audience.

There were no comments from the Council.

The motion to deny the driveway apron variance passed by a vote of 8-0-0.

07-G-110 Approve the Request for Vacation of Right-of-Way and Lots for Mazza GrandMarc Apartments

A motion was made by Councilmember Hampton and seconded by Councilmember Perry to approve a letter consenting to the vacation of Lots 1 through 8, Block D, Lots 10 through 17, Block E, part of Autoville Drive, and an unnamed public alleyway in the subdivision known as Autoville.

Councilmember Hampton read the comments into the record.

Mr. Thomas Haller represented the applicant. He stated everything is in order with this motion, the applicant is moving forward with the project, and this is an administrative item that is required.

Mayor Brayman asked about the timing of the project. Mr. Haller anticipates opening in August 2009 at the earliest, depending on issuance of permits and weather.

Councilmember Perry asked about the commercial aspect of the development.

There were no comments from the audience.

There were no comments from Council.

The motion passed 8-0-0.

07-G-111 Approve A Letter Stating The City's Priorities For The FY '09 Maryland Department of Transportation Consolidated Transportation Program

A motion was made by Councilmember Fellows and seconded by Councilmember Catlin that the City forward a letter to John Porcari, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) indicating the City's position on the state's FY '08 Draft Consolidated Transportation Program. The city supports funding for the engineering of US Route 1 improvements and planning for the Purple Line Study, and opposes funding for planning of the University of Maryland Connector and construction of the Inter County Connector.

Councilmember Fellows read the letter into the record. He commented that Route 1 improvements have moved up on the Prince George's County priority list to #4, but is still unfunded.

There was discussion about adding language about pedestrian safety to the letter.

Larry Bleau, 4901 Niagara Road: He supports the letter. He was on the focus group that considered how US Route 1 should look if it was ever reconstructed, and would like to see it funded. He agrees that pedestrian safety should be added to the letter and also suggested bicycle safety be added. The purple line study does need to get done. He is opposed to the UM Connector because that funding would take away from Route 1 funding.

Danielle Kogut: In favor of the letter. She discussed the location of the Purple Line at the East Campus development. She favors having the purple line go through the East Campus project rather than be located on the perimeter, and discussed the pros and cons of the various location scenarios. She urges public dialogue about the location.

Councilmember Catlin requested a future Worksession presentation about the Purple Line.

Douglas Shontz, 4707 Fordham Road: He encouraged the Council to include language in the letter requesting the state create a fully integrated, full capacity expansion of the metro rail system through the Purple Line.

Councilmember Fellows commented that the reason the Purple Line has gained support is because it could happen much sooner and would be less expensive than an expansion of metro rail. The idea is that light rail complements the metro rail system by providing the east-west connection.

Alexander Radichevich, 7210 Dartmouth Avenue: He does not drive and uses public transportation. He has requested that bus schedules be posted in the metro bus shelters for many years.

Councilmember Perry said he supports the motion but has difficulty with the Purple Line because it completely ignores development on New Hampshire Avenue (NOL) and Konterra. He asked about using a monorail because it can go through a building. We have to get people out of their cars. We need to obtain the funding for Route 1.

A motion was made by Councilmember Catlin and seconded by Councilmember Stulich to amend the letter by adding the following language in the second paragraph, “The improvements proposed for Route 1 are urgently needed to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety in the City. In addition....”

Councilmember Perry said the amendment is not necessary because the adopted plan for Route 1 includes pedestrian safety.

The motion to amend the letter passed 8-0-0.

Councilmember Stulich supports the letter and said it reflects the priorities the City has discussed for a long time. She commented on each item.

The motion to send the letter, as amended, passed 7-0-1 (Krouse abstained).

Mr. Nagro reminded Council that the “road show” on the CTP is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on November 15.

07-G-113 Appointments To Boards And Committees

Councilmember Perry nominated Jacqueline Mathey to the Animal Welfare Committee. A motion was made by Councilmember Stulich and seconded by Councilmember Catlin to approve the nomination.

The motion passed 8-0-0.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Fellows urged everyone to vote on November 6.

Councilmember Perry commented on some recent criminal activity in Berwyn. He said a resident was put on hold when he called 9-1-1, and suggested a letter go from the City to the County about issues with Communications. He will work with staff of this. He discussed the County’s voter rolls, asked whether any survey cards had been returned due to bad addresses, and discussed the Berwyn Bonfire.

Councilmember Catlin commented on the Berwyn Bonfire.

Councilmember Krouse commented on the Greenbelt Pedestrian Bridge survey and urged residents to understand the issue and return the survey card. He hopes residents will support the bridge.

Councilmember Milligan also hopes residents will complete and return the bridge survey card. He also enjoyed the Berwyn Bonfire.

Mayor Brayman urged everyone to vote on November 6. He urges the County to step up to the plate on the police issue and act quickly. He would be in favor of putting additional money toward police mid-year so we can evaluate how it’s working at budget time. He discussed future funding levels for police services.

Comments From The Audience:

Stacey Baca, 8408 49th Avenue: She contacted Councilmember Olson’s office about the two residents that were put on hold when they called 9-1-1 and told him it was unacceptable.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Councilmember Krouse and seconded by Councilmember Cook to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss the proposal for a business to locate in Prince George's County. The motion passed 8-0-0. The regular meeting adjourned at 9:55. The Council will not go back into public session.

Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk

Pursuant to §C6-3 of the College Park City Charter, on October 23, 2007 at 9:55 p.m. p.m., in the Council Chambers at City Hall, a motion was made by Councilmember Krouse and seconded by Councilmember Cook to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate in Prince George's County. The motion passed 8-0-0.

Present: Mayor Brayman, Councilmembers Krouse (departed at 10:50 p.m.), Milligan, Catlin, Perry, Fellows, Stulich, Hampton and Cook. Also in attendance were Danielle Kogut, Joe Nagro, Janeen Miller, Sara Imhulse, Terry Schum, Otis Warren and Steve McBride.

Topics Discussed: A proposal for a new development in the City.

A motion was made by Councilmember Perry and seconded by Councilmember Hampton to adjourn the Executive Session. The Executive Session was adjourned at 11:11 p.m. by a vote of 7-0-0.
