

MINUTES
Regular Meeting of the College Park City Council
Tuesday, March 9, 2010
8:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Fellows; Councilmembers Nagle, Wojahn, Catlin, Perry, Stullich, Cook, Afzali and Mitchell.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Nagro, City Manager; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Terry Schum, Director of Planning; Jill Clements, Director of Human Resources; Bob Stumpff, Director of Public Works; Elisa Vitale, Senior Planner; Steve Halpern, City Engineer; Student Liaison Jonathan Sachs; Deputy Student Liaison Becca Lurie.

Mayor Fellows opened the meeting at 8:00 p.m. and Councilmember Stullich led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: The minutes of the Special Session on February 16, 2010, the February 23 Public Hearings on Charter Amendment 10-CR-01 and the Request for the Withdrawal of Permit Parking in the 8100 block of 54th Avenue, and the Regular Meeting of February 23, 2010 were presented for approval. A motion was made by Councilmember Perry and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to adopt the minutes. The motion carried 8-0-0.

Announcements:

Councilmember Mitchell announced the College Park Woods Swim Club Chili Dinner on March 16 at 5:30 p.m. Tickets are \$15.

Councilmember Cook discussed the construction of the earth bag house by the University of Maryland engineering students in advance of their trip to Haiti. Also, he is still collecting crutches, canes and walkers to send to Haiti.

Councilmember Perry announced that, due to a scheduling conflict at Fealy Hall, the next Berwyn District Civic Association meeting would take place across the street at the Four Seasons Room in Holy Redeemer and would begin at 8:30 instead of 8.

Councilmember Catlin announced the Lakeland Civic Association would meet next Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at the College Park Community Center.

Councilmember Wojahn announced a City-wide Neighborhood Watch meeting on Wednesday at 7:00 p.m. at City Hall.

Councilmember Nagle said there will be an Irish Dinner on Saturday from 3:30 – 7:00 at the College Park United Methodist Church. Proceeds will benefit Meals on Wheels.

Proclamations: Mayor Fellows presented a Proclamation In Support Of The College Park Public Works Department to thank them for their tremendous work during the back-to-back February snow storms.

Amendments to the Agenda: None.

City Manager’s Report: Mr. Nagro reminded Council that their budget wish list items are due on Friday. He discussed last Wednesday’s UMD-Duke game, and the “riot” that resulted in the aftermath. He said there was minimal damage in the City thanks to the police response. Mr. Nagro introduced Major Jagoe from the University of Maryland Police Department to discuss police response to the events. Major Dusseau from the Prince George’s County police was here earlier but was called away on an emergency.

Major Jagoe discussed the police response to the March 3 incident and answered questions. There was discussion about possible preventive steps such as a sanctioned post-game event that could handle large crowds.

Student Liaison Comments: Mr. Sachs stated that the actions of a few members of the student body are not indicative of the majority.

Comments from the Audience on Non-Agenda Items:

Larry Bleau, 4901 Niagara Road, President, NCPCA: Reported on last month’s meeting and announced the agenda for the upcoming meeting.

Action Items:

10-G-34 Approval Of Health, Dental, Workers’ Compensation And Liability Insurance Contracts

A motion was made by Councilmember Catlin and seconded by Councilmember Afzali that the Mayor and Council award the following contracts for medical and prescription insurance, dental insurance, workers’ compensation, and liability insurances for FY 2011. The contracts submitted for approval and award were negotiated using authorized informal purchasing procedures including brokers, agents and staff research and therefore require an extra-majority vote of the Mayor and Council. The total cost of the medical and dental insurance contracts will depend upon the type of coverage selected by each employee. Therefore, the amount listed represents the estimated FY 2011 budgeted cost for this coverage and should approximate the actual cost.

Contract with CareFirst for two HMO and one Open Access HMO insurance plans at a budgeted cost of \$674,300.

Contracts with MetLife and DentaQuest for dental insurance at a budgeted cost of \$42,200.

Contract with Injured Workers Insurance Fund (IWIF) for workers' compensation insurance at a budgeted cost of \$145,284.

Contract with Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) for general liability, public officials' liability, auto, property, boiler and machinery, personal injury protection, and uninsured motorists protection insurances at a budgeted cost of \$169,495.

A motion for the division of the question was made by Councilmember Perry and seconded by Councilmember Nagle. The motion failed 3-5-0 (Mitchell, Afzali, Stullich, Catlin and Wojahn opposed).

There were no comments from the audience on the main motion.

Councilmember Perry stated this is a \$1M question. He complimented the staff for obtaining the prices that they did. Health insurance premiums have gone up approximately 3% and are split 80/20 between the employer and the employee. These figures will be included in the upcoming budget.

Councilmember Catlin said that handling all the insurance items as a group is standard practice and there was ample time to discuss them at last week's Worksession. He said the amount for next year will be less than for the current year and it's not a budget buster.

Councilmember Catlin read the comments into the record.

Councilmember Nagle stated she would abstain from this vote because she doesn't feel the Council has been provided with enough information to make an informed decision.

The motion passed 6-0-2 (Councilmembers Nagle and Perry abstained).

10-G-35 Approval Of FY 2011 Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) Grant Application

A motion was made by Councilmember Wojahn and seconded by Councilmember Stullich that the City Council approve the submission of a Fiscal Year 2011 grant application to the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) in the amount of \$35,000. These funds would be used for two projects. A grant of \$25,000 would fund a landscape architect to design and prepare plans for construction of Hollywood Gateway Park at the southeast corner of Route 1 and Edgewood Road. Matching funds for this project are available in the FY 2010 Capital Improvement Program #103004 for Hollywood Commercial Revitalization. A grant for \$10,000 would fund an expansion of the ATHA banner program in downtown College Park, the Hollywood Commercial District and along Route

1 in Lakeland. Matching funds for this project are in the Planning Department's FY 2010 Operating Budget for Economic Development, Account #3014.36-35, and from the Downtown College Park Management Authority (DCPMA).

Councilmember Wojahn read the comments into the record.

Comments from the Audience:

Larry Bleau, 4901 Niagara Road, President, NCPCA: Mr. Bleau reported that in November 2008 the NCPCA supported the idea of the City buying the property at Route 1 and Edgewood Road and turning it into something that was more attractive for that area. They did not take a position on the banners.

Councilmember Perry asked how many people the civic association represents. Mr. Bleau said there are 170 members and 100 addresses. He asked how many people voted in favor of the purchase of the property. Mr. Bleau did not know but said attendance ranges from 20-30 people. He said he was personally in favor of the banner program.

Councilmember Nagle does not think this grant application is a wise use of tax dollars and does not feel all options for obtaining design services for the gateway park have been fully explored.

Councilmember Wojahn said that at the last NCPCA meeting many people expressed concern that the City does not devote sufficient resources to north College Park. When the NCPCA voted to support the purchase of the property, they added an amendment to the motion requesting community input into the park. Using a professional landscape architect to design the project is the best way to ensure community input.

Councilmember Perry did not support the purchase of this property with tax money. It has no value to the City; no one will go to a park there. A park is not his idea of a "gateway."

Councilmember Catlin supports the motion; urban pocket parks are not unknown to him. It's a challenging site and a terrible place for a house or a business but he thinks we can come up with a good plan for this small space.

Councilmember Nagle said the \$25,000 match has already been allocated to north College Park but she prefers to see it spent in the commercial district near the intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and Edgewood Road.

Councilmember Wojahn said the US 1 Sector Plan talks about more green space on Route 1 and this is a good place to start.

Councilmember Stullich said a lot of people complain about the appearance of Route 1 and you have to look for opportunities to fix it piecemeal. It is a difficult site to do something productive with, but now we own the property and we can turn it into something that will be an asset instead of a detriment to the City.

Councilmember Afzali said this area is the first impression of College Park for some people and anything that can be done to beautify it is a good thing. The last thing people want to see is a fast food restaurant. The opportunity to build a green space is good.

Councilmember Nagle clarified that this motion is not whether to proceed with the park, it is whether to move forward with the grant. There are other ways to move forward with the park without approving the grant.

The motion passed 5 – 3 – 0 (Nagle, Perry and Cook opposed).

10-G-36 Approval Of A Letter In Support Of SB 276/HB 472 – Real Property – Residential Property Foreclosure Procedures – Foreclosure Mediation

A motion was made by Councilmember Wojahn and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to send letters in support of SB 276 and HB 472, legislation that would require lenders to provide notice and an opportunity to engage in mediation before foreclosure on a property.

There were no comments from the audience.

Councilmember Afzali supports the letters, stating we should do everything we can to help our residents keep their homes.

Councilmember Nagle used to volunteer with the pro bono resource center and helped with foreclosure mediations and supports this motion. These bills were supported by the Administration.

Councilmember Mitchell is glad to see these letters going out.

The motion carried 7-1-0 (Perry opposed).

10-G-37 Appointments To Boards And Committees

A motion was made by Councilmember Wojahn and seconded by Council Nagle to appoint Fazlul Kabir to the Committee for a Better Environment and Marcia Booth to the Animal Welfare Committee. The motion carried 8-0-0.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Nagle announced the next public hearing on the US 1 Corridor Sector Plan would be held on Tuesday, April 6 at 7 p.m. in Upper Marlboro.

Councilmember Wojahn announced that people will soon receive their Census questionnaire and reminded everyone to complete and return their forms. Responses are confidential and will not be shared with other agencies. Students who do not live with their parents should be counted where they live, not with their parents.

Councilmember Catlin discussed the need to actively manage the parking garage during large events.

Councilmember Perry asked when the Council would discuss the March 2 letter from Dr. Mote. The response was at next week's Worksession. He said a group of people came down after the game last week and expected that something was going to happen. Where does the responsibility of the individual come in? If he saw a situation like that, he would stay away.

Councilmember Afzali said we need to make sure last week's post-game incident does not happen again. He would like to see the University take initiative to have supervised celebratory events on campus.

Councilmember Mitchell requested that the Council invite Board of Education representatives to an upcoming Worksession to discuss the impact of the recently approved budget.

Mayor Fellows thanked the police for being prepared last week and said the University and student leadership both should be involved in the solution.

Jonathan Sachs said he would do what he could to address the issues raised tonight with student leadership.

Comments from the Audience:

Thomas Barrett, employee and resident at 4819 Indian Lane: Had questions about the purchase of the house at 4903 Edgewood.

Councilmember Perry commented on the earth bag construction project that the City donated space for.

Mr. Nagro said he is organizing a tour of the former Washington Post plant for those Councilmembers that are interested.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Councilmember Perry and seconded by Councilmember Stulich to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Fellows adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m. by a vote of 8-0-0.

Janeen S. Miller, CMC
City Clerk

Date Approved