

MINUTES
Special Session of the College Park City Council
Council Chambers
Tuesday, March 15, 2011
10:37 p.m. – 10:45 p.m.

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

ABSENT: Councilmember Cook.

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Nagro, City Manager; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Chantal Cotton, Assistant to the City Manager; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Brian Burrell, Student Liaison.

During a regularly scheduled Worksession of the College Park City Council, a motion was made by Councilmember Afzali and seconded by Councilmember Wojahn to enter into a Special Session to consider a matter of state legislation. The motion passed 6 -1 – 0 (Perry opposed, Cook absent) and the Special Session convened at 10:37 p.m.

Action Items:

11-G-38 Approval of letters in support of HB 852 / SB 634 – The Marcellus Shale Safe Drilling Act of 2011

A motion was made by Councilmember Wojahn and seconded by Councilmember Afzali to send letters in support of HB 852 and SB 634, The Marcellus Shale Safe Drilling Act of 2011, to the House Environmental Matters Committee and the Senate Education Health and Environmental Affairs Committee, with copies to the 21st District Delegation.

Councilmember Wojahn requested the City take a position on the practice of acquiring natural gas called hydraulic fracturing, or “fracking.” This is being done in western Maryland, and if it is not done safely, it could have an impact on groundwater around the state.

Councilmember Afzali said there is a lot of interest by City residents and the Committee for a Better Environment on this issue.

Councilmember Perry asked what impact this practice, which occurs in western Maryland, would have on the City of College Park.

Councilmember Wojahn said the Potomac Watershed extends into western Maryland, and that this material could affect the groundwater and the groundwater travels all the way down here. The process injects a lot of chemicals into the ground to break up the shale, and we don’t know the impacts of all of these chemicals. The wastewater from the process is often disposed of into water treatment plants, and there have not been any studies to determine if the water treatment is sufficient to address the chemicals.

Councilmember Catlin said the gas producers often claim the chemicals they use are proprietary and do not disclose what chemicals they are using and some can be hazardous to our water.

Councilmember Stulich pointed out this bill is requesting a study of the impacts of the process and is a reasonable approach to addressing the health concerns.

The motion passed 6 – 1 – 0.

Adjourn:

A motion was made by Councilmember Afzali and seconded by Councilmember Stulich to adjourn the Special Session. Mayor Fellows adjourned the Special Session at 10:45 p.m. with a vote of 7 – 0 – 0.

Janeen S. Miller, CMC
City Clerk

Date
Approved