

MINUTES
Special Session of the College Park City Council
Council Chambers
Tuesday, October 7, 2014

PRESENT: Mayor Fellows; Councilmembers Kabir, Wojahn, Brennan, Dennis, Day, Hew and Mitchell.

ABSENT: Councilmember Stullich.

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Nagro, City Manager; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Terry Schum, Director of Planning; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Steve Groh, Director of Finance; Steve Halpern, City Engineer; Cole Holocker, Student Liaison.

During a regularly scheduled Worksession of the College Park City Council, a motion was made by Councilmember Day and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to enter into a Special Session to act on County legislation that is time sensitive. The possibility of the Special Session was listed on the Worksession agenda. The motion passed 7 – 0 – 0 and the Council entered Special Session at 8:11 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS

14-G-96 Approval of a letter in support of CB-82-2014, Prince George’s County Nuisance Abatement Board

A motion was made by Councilmember Wojahn and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to send a letter in support of CB-82-2014 and to authorize staff to testify at the October 9 hearing in support of this bill.

County Council Member Eric Olson said they have passed several nuisance abatement laws over the last few years, and people are now realizing that having a nuisance abatement board is a good thing and they identified a few things they can do to strengthen the nuisance law. The committee hearing is scheduled for October 9. The States Attorney’s office is interested in having this as a tool.

City Attorney Ferguson is authorized to testify on behalf of the City at the October 9 hearing.

Councilmember Wojahn said this is one of the strategies in the Neighborhood Quality of Life report.

Comments from the audience:

Dave Dorsch: We are all trying to have a nice livable community but there are some people who do not like students, period, and they will file grievances for no good reason. When you adopt legislation like this that takes away licenses based on complaints it is dangerous and we need to make sure they are really valid complaints and not someone trying to take advantage of this.

Andrea Hawvermale: There are different types of complaints and it is not clear in the bill what is part of the demerit structure. She is all for the general principal but if she slips one day and the grass gets too tall she shouldn’t get a demerit. Does it include red cups, grass too high? It doesn’t seem clear.

Student Liaison Cole Holocker said that the SGA has not taken a formal position but he believes it is a great tool and he is in support. He appreciates that there are opportunities for warnings and that it provides a structure for landlords to get problem tenants out of their properties.

Councilmember Day asked whether this would diminish the capacity or operation of our current Noise Control Board. City Attorney Ferguson said this would not impact the City's authority in any way.

Councilmember Kabir asked if this bill could help with the prostitution issue in the north College Park motels. Councilmember Olson said we have a variety of issues all over the County and that this bill is designed to address quality of life issues in neighborhoods. Councilmember Wojahn said these amendments can help us.

The motion passed 7 – 0 – 0.

At 8:23 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Dennis and seconded by Councilmember Day to recess the Special Session

At 8:26 p.m. with a motion by Councilmember Mitchell and seconded by Councilmember Dennis, the Council returned to Special Session.

14-G-97 Approval of a letter in support for CB-22-2014, Length of Service Retirement Award

Bob Ryan and Frank Underwood joined the Council for this discussion. Mr. Ryan said Chief Corrigan from College Park, who could not attend tonight, is in support of this bill. Mr. Underwood explained how this bill can help volunteer fire fighters who retire after 25 years of service and have reached the age of 55 by increasing the amount of retirement benefits they would receive. It also adds in a County line-of-duty death award.

Amendments to the draft letter were suggested.

A motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell and seconded by Councilmember Wojahn to approve the letter as amended in support of CB-22-2014.

The motion passed 7 – 0 – 0.

ADJOURN:

A motion was made by Councilmember Dennis and seconded by Councilmember Wojahn to adjourn the Special Session, and with a vote of 7 – 0 – 0 Mayor Fellows adjourned the Special Session at 8:29 p.m.

Janeen S. Miller, CMC
City Clerk

Date
Approved