

**COUNCIL RETREAT MINUTES**  
**College Park City Council**  
**Sunday, January 6, 2019**  
**Council Chambers**  
**9:02 a.m. – 2:12 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Wojahn; Councilmembers Kabir, Kennedy, Brennan, Dennis, Day, Rigg, Kujawa, and Mitchell.

**ABSENT:** None.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Scott Somers, City Manager; Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Terrie Glass, Zelos (consultant/facilitator)

Mayor Wojahn opened the meeting at 9:02

**Approval of the agenda** – Councilmember Day motioned to consider adding a brief discussion on potential purchase and preservation of the WMATA property for sale south of Albion Rd. Brennan seconded. Motion passed and agenda adopted unanimously.

**Welcome and warm up** – Terrie Glass of Zelos asked the Mayor and Council to participate in a warm up exercise by asking several questions including the following:

What things are we doing better?

Day noted communications have improved. Glass commented that the website was great.

Wojahn said that we are tracking projects better and moving projects forward.

Rigg said we have less personal conflict and disagreement is respectful.

Kabir said we are more respectful.

Brennan said the City is more responsive to residents.

What do we still need to improve?

Kabir said he's observed better communication with colleagues and suggested that colleagues should meet in other settings.

Kennedy said they need to be more strategic about communicating to certain groups to ensure we are reaching them.

Mitchell said we should be more productive in our meetings; meetings go too long.

Brennan said we need to create an environment to invite everyone to speak up and be allowed to disagree.

Glass commented that the challenge is to keep conversation at a high level. If we focus on the small stuff, then there's not enough time to address the big issues.

Dennis said it would be good to have the background and analysis early on to resolve some of the challenges to avoid long discussions

Kujawa said we should work to stay on topic and be pro-active and less reactive on issues to address problems early.

Brennan discussed the Charter changes that promote a whole city focus, council changes to advance goal of having council more focused on higher level issues, citywide focus. Sometimes we have the same end goal but end up focusing on different means to accomplish it. Need to focus on common ground.

Wojahn said we can improve on engaging with the entire city. Big challenge engaging with speakers of other languages.

Kennedy discussed constituent services and the role of the elected official. How do we effectively carry out role of constituent services and have time for policy development?

### **Review/update on 2018 projects**

City Manager Somers provided an overview of the list of projects provided with the agenda.

Assistant City Manager Gardiner noted that if City Hall staff move to 8400 Baltimore Ave., we would not submit bond bill for Davis Hall improvements because the project would be too small.

Kabir asked if projects could be added to the list.

Somers noted that it was the Council's list of projects and priorities.

Wojahn said there is a process in place for adding items.

Glass suggested to prioritize existing and current projects then in a future Worksession to discuss creating new items if the Council wanted to. Glass asked the Council to think in term of priorities; where do staff spend their time.

Kennedy said constituent services was a priority.

Rigg said process and technical improvements were a priority.

Glass provided red and green dots to the Mayor and Council and said green dots are for top priorities and red dots are for lowest priorities. The following is the outcome of the exercise:

City Hall – 6 green

Stormwater – 3 green, 4 red

Process Improvements – 3 green

Aging in Place – 3 green

Hollywood Streetscape – 2 green

Wood Pool Property – 2 green

Dog Park – 2 green, 1 red

Baltimore Ave Improvements – 2 green, 2 red

Complete Streets – 1 green

Duvall Field – 1 green

Police and Public Safety Improvements – 1 green, 4 red

Bringing Building Code Inspection In House – 1 green

Rhode Island Improvements – 3 red

Pay As You Throw Study – 5 red

Charter Changes – 3 red

After the exercise, several Councilmembers explained they didn't put green dots on certain items since they understood those items were moving forward anyway and therefore didn't need a green, but explained they remained a high priority.

### **Ends vs means – concepts informing roles/responsibilities**

Glass explained that when roles are clear, things go well without much confusion. She discussed John Carver who identified that ends are the impact, difference, change, outcome, results for a group at a certain cost and that means are how to achieve the ends—all the work—services,

programs, activities, day-to-day operations. She explained that it takes discipline for Council to stay focused on ends.

Glass used the Hollywood Streetscape project to describe ends vs. means. Ends are beautification, economic development, place-making; Means are the contracting, project management.

Brennan said that ends are providing a rich environment, improved economic development, beauty, place making and at what cost and level of priority?

Glass discussed how with the Complete Streets priority, Ends are walkability, safety, improved congestion, usable for all users and that Means are the types and locations of trees and location and design of the sidewalk.

Glass asked, how should we think of addressing new issues, ideas, projects? Have conditions changed? What resources are required? How does it compete with other priorities? Is it a time-sensitive opportunity? What is the ends focus? What questions should be asked?

Brennan suggested that new and shiny objects that can be distracting should be approached from a proactive vs reactive position.

### **Engaging with our community**

What kinds of things do we currently do?

Discussion occurred about committees, social media, community meetings, articles in community newsletter, emails, community service events, blogs, weekly email newsletter, city weekly bulletin.

Glass asked what work is working well and said once a Council decision is made, Council needs to speak as one voice.

Kujawa noted that sometimes the individual weekly updates from elected officials spin issues differently from the City weekly updates. Community needs to know the difference.

Questions were asked: How do we deal with the negativity on Next Door? How do we engage disenfranchised residents and un-engaged residents? What can we do to get more people engaged?

Dennis said more emphasis should be placed on the cable channel.

Rigg suggested holding some Worksessions at Davis Hall.

Wojahn said to take advantage of new technology.

Kennedy said we should leverage our committees.

Kabir said we should translate more documents into other languages.

Rigg suggested increasing Knock and Talks.

Kabir suggested improving Neighborhood Watch.

### **Relationship with the University**

Glass said there is an inter-dependency between the City and the University; that the University is core to the city's identity.

Kennedy pointed out that UMD is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest employer in the DMV.

Rigg said the City needs to leverage opportunities.

Glass asked what is going well?

- Economic development driven by UMD.

- Good level of trust and accountability.

- Do we have a strategy to capitalize on UMD research?

It was suggested to have a staff member to be the liaison to UMD and that the value students bring to the City should be communicated.

CPCUP issues – what can we do to mitigate these?

Wojahn said we need to identify what issues are best for CPCUP to focus on and what issues the City should focus on.

Brennan said the investment in the Partnership made by the City should be strategic. We need to have the Board ask the questions above to keep it focused.

Wojahn said the Partnership has a broad mission that perhaps should be tightened to reduce overlap and redundancy.

Glass said it would be productive to identify and clarify roles and responsibilities.

Wojahn said the threshold question is: How does it add value? How is it uniquely positioned?

Glass suggested the strategy be proactive such as taking on a specific project.

Brennan suggested a future Worksession on focusing dollars for economic development.

### **Wrap Up**

Dennis said today's level of discussion is the level we need to have on projects that will come before us.

Rigg said we did a good job raising issues, but not yet resolving issues.

Kennedy said she likes to see the big picture - what we should focus on and where we are.

Next Steps discussed include:

Deciding what to do with parking lot items.

Deciding on process for getting shiny new things on the agenda.

Discuss prioritization activity and what needs to go forward—results not clear.

Need new framework for bringing forward new ideas.

Need Worksession to follow up on prioritization.

The meeting adjourned at 2:12 pm.

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Scott Somers  
City Manager

Date  
Approved