

WORKSESSION MINUTES
College Park City Council
Tuesday, January 18, 2022
7:30 p.m. – 10:58 p.m.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this was a Virtual Meeting.

PRESENT: Mayor Wojahn; Councilmembers Kabir, Kennedy, Esters, Whitney, Adams, Rigg, and Mackie.

ABSENT: Councilmember Mitchell.

ALSO PRESENT: Kenneth Young, City Manager; Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Terry Schum, Director of Planning; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Teresa Way-Pezzuti, Director of Human Resources; Kiaisha Barber, Director of Youth, Family and Senior Services; Brenda Alexander, Assistant Director of Public Works; Gary Fields, Director of Finance; Steve Halpern, City Engineer; Michael Williams, Economic Development Manager; Ryna Quinones, Communication and Events Manager; Kevin Blackerby, Event Coordinator; Janet McCaslin, Sustainability Coordinator; Megha Sevalia, Student Liaison; Hayden Renaghan, Deputy Student Liaison.

Mayor Wojahn opened the Virtual Worksession at 7:30 p.m.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT: Mr. Young discussed last night’s virtual Martin Luther King event.

AMENDMENTS TO /APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

- Add a letter to Senators Van Hollen and Cardin and Congressman Hoyer opposing the sale of a mature forested parcel known as NASA Area 400 in Greenbelt and instead support a no-cost transfer of this land to the adjacent Patuxent Research Refuge (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) where it will be preserved. Special Session tonight, Mackie/Kennedy, passed 7-0.

- Approve agenda as amended, Mackie/Esters, passed 7-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 1. FY 2023 Budget Guidance and review of Homestead Tax Credit:** Mr. Fields reviewed the budget process and timeline. We’ll have information on property tax assessments in mid-February. The Homestead Tax Credit is currently at 0% which gives residents the maximum relief; staff recommends maintaining that rate. Motion next week on calendar and Homestead Tax Rate at 0% on Consent.

2. Discussion of decennial redistricting:

Consensus to establish a Redistricting Commission. Mixed thoughts about hiring a consultant - can they handle the uniqueness of our situation in College Park? Consider using a consultant for a smaller role such as interactive elements and public outreach. Mr. Young said the City will invest in the necessary technology.

Ms. Ferguson added that the City's way of counting is different than everywhere else due to the 1991 court case. The consultant will need to be able to deal with that.

There was a discussion of having a different number of districts and/or at-large members in the future. The City Clerk was asked to set a Calendar reminder for 2025 to schedule the discussion so decisions can be made well before the 2030 decennial redistricting.

Ms. Sevalia asked how the districts are drawn around student dorms.

Return future Worksession with a draft resolution for review.

3. Discussion of annual reports and workplans from advisory boards:

Education Advisory Committee: Concern about student and school staff mental health – how can we help? Question about Literacy Lab program – This began as a pilot program at Hollywood Elementary; will circulate mid-year report once received; there is potential to expand and implement in other schools. Budget Discussion - An after school on-line tutoring program available to any City student regardless of the school they attend. EAC workload is full – we might need a different approach.

Recreation Board: New name and mission. Do they still do field use/rentals? No, that's done through DPS now. Need to update regulations on website – they still reference the Recreation Board. Want to see our fields used more often instead of blanket reservations that prevent others from using. Update language in the field use rules. Consider an LGBTQ Pride Event.

Tree and Landscape Board: Use of City budget or ARPA funds for Urban Tree Canopy Master Plan (~\$40K); direction on tree canopy ordinance – schedule at a Worksession; support for ARPA funds for a program to assist residents with tree planting on private property; possibility of recouping fee in lieu funds from developers that are unspent.

Workplans on Consent next week for approval.

4. Review of community input and survey results for ARPA funding: How many people responded to the survey? Detail to be discussed during budget process. All of these monies are in the budget due to the last budget amendment but only some are already committed.

Funds for a north College Park Community Center – request for \$1M. M-NCPPC has finalized scope of work for site selection. Council Member Dernoga also seeking funds from 21st Delegation. Return Future Worksession and/or Closed Session discussion for more information about site and cost estimate pending request. Should funding come from ARPA or CIP?

5. Discussion of the Proposed Scope of Work for the City of College Park Storm Water System Assessment Project

Steve Halpern described the proposed scope of work for phase 1: a City-wide model of the watersheds in the City using the EPA Storm Water Management Model. Phase 2 would be to evaluate any recommendations. This study will provide us with the data we need to support future requests for grant funds.

Question about whether this study would duplicate the study that was done by DOE in Calvert Hills. No, this will not duplicate that work.

FEMA grant funding may be available for this study. We might ask the consultant to include potential policy recommendations.

[10:30 p.m., motion to extend meeting, Rigg/Esters, 7-0.]

Send any additional questions to be incorporated into the scope of work to Mr. Halpern. Return future with scope of work.

6. Review of legislation

- HB 100/SB 0014 – support for funding for Sustainable Maryland Certified Program. Letter from M&C and from CBE – *See Special Session Minutes for Item 22-G-16.*
 - HB 102 - Vehicle Laws – Race and Speed Contests – Penalties. *See Special Session Minutes for Item 22-G-17.*
7. Addition to the Agenda: Letter to Senators Van Hollen and Cardin and Congressman Hoyer opposing the sale of a mature forested parcel known as NASA Area 400 in Greenbelt and instead support a no-cost transfer of this land to the adjacent Patuxent Research Refuge (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). *See Special Session Minutes for Item 22-G-18.*

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Councilmember Esters and seconded by Councilmember Kennedy to adjourn the regular meeting and meet in a Closed Session. Mayor Wojahn read the Closing Statement:

Pursuant to the statutory authority of the Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b), the Mayor and Council of the City of College Park are providing notice that they will meet in a closed session after the Worksession to discuss:

- *The appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals;*
- *To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice; and*

- *To conduct collective bargaining negotiations or consider matters that relate to the negotiations.*

The Mayor and Council will review appointments to advisory boards, will discuss a proposed settlement agreement, and will discuss the union contract. The Mayor and Council will not return to public session after the closed session ends.

The motion passed 7-0 and the regular meeting adjourned at 10:58 p.m.

Janeen S. Miller
City Clerk

Date
Approved