

WORKSESSION MINUTES
College Park City Council
Tuesday, February 19, 2019
Council Chambers
7:30 P.M. – 10:01 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; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Gary Fields, Director of Finance; Alex Tobin, Student Liaison.

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

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: Mr. Somers discussed upcoming utility work on US 1 that will result in lane closures, refuse/recycling delays due to Monday's holiday, and early closures due to tomorrow's snow forecast.

AMENDMENT TO/APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: A motion was made by Councilmember Brennan and seconded by Councilmember Dennis to remove item #4. The motion carried 8-0. The agenda was approved as amended (Brennan/Rigg) 8-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1. Presentation on Western Gateway Project:** Christian Cerria from Gilbane, Siva Venkataramani and Matt Bender from Torti Gallas & Partners, Tom Haller, attorney and Ed Maginnis, UMD, presented on the Gilbane Western Gateway development.

Mr. Cerria said they are interested in annexation into the City and have reached out to local community groups. There are access challenges with the assembled 17-acre property that is ¼ mile from a Purple Line stop. They anticipate a mixed-use development with 81 Townhomes, 300 subsidized apartments for graduate student housing, and small-scale retail on the campus-side of the development. They will create a new east-west access road. There will be a surplus of parking.

Mr. Haller said they are coming to the City early in the process to get feedback. They propose an MOU to discuss the framework for moving forward with an annexation agreement. They will need legislative amendments, then will go through Preliminary Plan of Subdivision and Detailed Site Plan. Next will be annexation into the City, then the development applications. It will take several months. In response to a question, Mr. Haller said there will be no connection to Windsor Lane. Council expressed an interest in pursuing connectivity in a manner that the community agrees with.

Regarding the annexation: if an agreement is reached and this property is annexed into the City, we would provide them with services. The townhouses are fee-simple and the City

would receive property taxes. We will have to determine which Council district the development is in.

2. **Property Use Agreement for Hard Times Café:** This is for a change of corporate owners; no change to the operations. The original owner, Mr. Swint, is retiring, so this store is returning to corporate ownership. We have updated the earlier agreement which was a recorded Declaration of Covenants to the more current Property Use Agreement. Mr. Kelly is in agreement with the City's conditions. 35% alcohol to food ratio. Council is asked to act in Special Session because the BOLC hearing is next week. *See Special Session minutes for the approval.*
3. **Discussion of financing options for City Hall and other capital projects – Guests: Joe Mason and Jennifer Diercksen, Davenport & Company, Financial Advisors:** Mr. Mason and Ms. Diercksen reviewed their report. Their recommendation is a public issuance of a General Obligation (GO) bond. They reviewed the 20 year vs. 30 year options. This is a good time to move forward and lock in a lower interest rate. Council wants to know how much of the annual payment is interest in the 20 year and 30 year projections. This will be a bond on the open market and the City will receive a bond rating, estimated to be AA. Council asked how the garage financing was done – that was a private bond sale with SunTrust bank that was subsequently refinanced. Council asked how much debt service is left. Other large capital projects might be included in the bond to help them move forward – more detail on this will be provided when this returns to Council. Bonds typically remain outstanding for 10 years before refunding. Return next week with approval to pursue the public sale of a GO bond for City Hall financing and possible financing of other projects.
- ~~4. **Discussion of new bike share / scooter program:** Removed from agenda.~~
5. **Approval of lease agreement for 8400 Baltimore Avenue for relocation of City Hall staff and offices during construction of the new City Hall:** Mr. Somers said demolition and construction of the new City Hall will begin in early 2020, so we will need to be out of City Hall four months prior. He reviewed the various options that have been explored for relocation of City Staff. There is enough space available at 8400 Baltimore Avenue adjacent to the space currently occupied by Public Services. We would need about 4,200 square feet which will be a tight-but-workable accommodation. Planning would go into the Public Services side. The University is offering us the space at \$19/sq. ft. and a build-out credit of \$80,000. We believe the space at 8400 is the best option and that being co-located with Public Services is best for customer service.

Councilmember Kabir asked why the space at Davis Hall is not an option. Mr. Somers said the space is on the second floor through a narrow stairwell and is not ADA compliant. It is a smaller space (1100 square feet) that would require a lot of renovations (HVAC, windows, lighting). We may use that space for storage in the future.

Council meetings will be held at Davis Hall when we move out of City Hall. Mayor Wojahn asked if there is any opportunity to get additional meeting space at 8400. Mr. Somers said if they have additional space they would probably be able to rent it for a price.

Approval on consent next week.

6. **MOU with SHA for pedestrian lights on US 1 from College Avenue to MD 193:** Mr. Gardiner reviewed the staff report. Last year we were told we should consider installing pedestrian lights as part of the US 1 rebuild. SHA has a program where they pay 100% for the underground portion and split the cost with the municipality for the above-ground portion. In the past, the City has installed pedestrian lights as parcels have redeveloped, which has led to an inconsistent streetscape. The draft MOU is for more lights (155) than we would need (134) so the price will be less than shown; still, it is an expensive project. The bid opening is March 7 and will determine the actual cost to the City and SHA. SHA has a policy where the City has to sign the MOU before they open the bids. He reviewed the payment options in the staff report. Mr. Somers added that this is an expensive endeavor but it is a way to avoid a piecemeal approach and will get it done all at once rather than waiting for each property to develop and could help encourage revitalization. This is also an opportunity to get SHA to help offset the cost.

There were questions about the locations of the new lights; some seem to be places where we already have lights. Mr. Somers said we would not replace the lights in front of Varsity or University View, but would replace some of the other lights that were previously installed that aren't up to the specifications we want. Ms. Ferguson said this MOU isn't final yet.

Councilmember Brennan is hoping for an integrated approach between the pedestrian lights and the streetlights. He wants a comprehensive look at cleaning up the streetscape, i.e. placement of poles and signage that are integrated.

Councilmember Dennis asked about the timeline. Bid opening is March 7; SHA expects to have a firm under contract and provide the notice to proceed in May; from College Avenue to Lakeland Road is a 2 year project, then from Lakeland to 193 is another four years.

There was discussion about which properties could redevelop in the future that could provide reimbursement to the City. Ms. Ferguson said that developers have to install pedestrian lights as part of the Sector Plan, so if the City has already done it, we will ask to be repaid. Several properties that could be redeveloped were identified.

Councilmember Rigg supports the idea of fast-tracking pedestrian lights for the enhanced walkability in this area.

General consensus to move forward, pending the actual cost which is to be determined after the bids are opened. Return March 12.

7. **Discussion of legislation:** *See Special Session minutes.*
8. **Appointments to Boards and Committees** – Lisa Fischer to VMC pending application, Diane Ligon to BOES, Robert Thurston to Senior Committee pending application, Oscar Gregory to CBE, Alan Hew to CBE.

9. Requests for/Status of Future Agenda items:

- Mayor Wojahn wants to add a discussion of enhanced language access. Brennan/Kennedy. 8-0.
- Councilmember Rigg wants to discuss a potential tax credit for flood insurance. Rigg/Brennan. Discussion. Explore the feasibility and advise in an information report before scheduling a W/S. 7-1 (Kennedy opposed).
- Greater use of the Duvall Field concession stand. Kabir/Mitchell. Staff can explore; Worksession not needed.

10. Mayor and Councilmember Comments: Impending snow; County's Capital Improvement Plan meeting; County Board of Election data; If I Were Mayor visits.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Councilmember Brennan and seconded by Councilmember Day to adjourn the Worksession, and with a vote of 8-0, Mayor Wojahn adjourned the Worksession at 10:01 p.m.

Janeen S. Miller
City Clerk

Date
Approved