

MINUTES
Regular Meeting of the College Park City Council
Tuesday, February 25, 2020
7:30 p.m. – 10:28 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Wojahn; Councilmembers Kabir, Kennedy (arrived at 7:50 p.m.), Brennan, Dennis, Day, Rigg (arrived at 7:32 p.m.), Mackie, and Mitchell.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Scott Somers, City Manager; Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Gary Fields, Director of Finance; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Dan Alpert, Student Liaison; Julia Nihinson, Deputy Student Liaison.

Mayor Wojahn opened the Regular Meeting at 7:30 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Kabir said the monthly Community Police Meeting will be held at the Youth and Family Services Recreation Room.

Councilmember Dennis announced the Coffee Club tomorrow.

Councilmember Mitchell said this is the last week of “wear red for heart health” month and also announced a meeting about the Kirwan Commission report at the Hyattsville Elementary School.

Councilmember Rigg announced the College Park Scholars In Action Technology event.

PRESENTATIONS: Mayor Wojahn and members of the City’s Education Advisory Committee presented ceremonial checks for public school education grants to Hollywood Elementary School, Paint Branch Elementary School and Greenbelt Middle School.

PROCLAMATIONS: Mayor Wojahn read the proclamation For Women’s Heart Health Month.

AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

- Motion by Day/Mitchell to move 20-G-42 to the Consent Agenda. 7-0.
- Motion by Rigg/Brennan to delay the presentation of the Community Survey Results to the March 10 meeting. 7-0.
- Motion to approve agenda as amended Mitchell/Day 8-0 (Councilmember Kennedy arrived).

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CONSENT AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS:

Miss College Park 2019, Arcadia Ewell: Ms. Ewell commented on her experiences and her achievements as Miss College Park 2019 and thanked the City Council for their support of the scholarship fund.

Michael Cummins, non-resident, President, Free State Flying Club based at College Park Airport: Tree trimming is routine at most airports so that the flyways are safely maintained. They have thousands of safe flying hours from the College Park Airport.

Stuart Adams, resident: The disk golf course is a unique amenity that many people from around the region utilize. Did the airport consider that when the trees were removed? He suggested the name of the Disk Golf Course be renamed.

Jan Van Zutphen, resident, licensed arborist: Airport tree “trimming” is a misnomer, it should be tree “removal.” Safety is important, but so is proper notification with information on the location, species, health and diameter of each tree slated for removal. In 2014 many trees were topped; why now were so many removed. This project should have been posted on the website for review. He requests the tree work be stopped until the information has been provided. This looks extreme. What is the tree replacement plan?

Terry Roberts, non-resident, pilot: Fully endorses the tree cutting for safety especially when pilots fly in at night. Believes this is reasonable. Trees will be replaced with trees that won’t grow as high.

Kathy Flamm, resident: Spoke in favor of Compassion & Choices which advocates for medical aid in dying. She wants to have the choice as to how her death occurs if she had a terminal illness. Told the story of her friend with a terminal illness who had the benefit of medical aid in dying because he lived in Hawaii.

Robert Landau, non-resident, Compassion & Choices, Marylanders for End-of-Life Options Act: Spoke in support of current state legislation and asked the Council to consider sending a letter of support to our state delegation. He discussed aspects of the bill.

Oscar Gregory, resident: Addressed the slaughter of the forest that surrounds the College Park Airport. Safety is important but this was a complete removal of a significant number of healthy trees. He is also concerned that the highrises going up on US 1 are a safety hazard.

Dave Dorsch, resident: Talked about the award of contract for \$4M for City Hall two weeks ago as Change Order #2. Have we seen the contract? When are we going to get the plans and specs completed and go out to bid? This is big trouble.

Mayor Wojahn explained this didn’t change the cost of the project at all, it was not an increase in the total cost of the contract, it was simply pulling out a portion of the project and paying it up front.

Sue Blasberg, resident: She is surprised more people aren’t here tonight to talk about the trees that came down. It is clear cutting. There is a swath of open space where trees used to be. It needs to stop.

Discussion with Lee Sommer, Manager, College Park Airport, about the current tree trimming project:

City Manager Somers said this is a continuation of the discussion we had two weeks ago and gave an overview. He toured the area over the weekend and showed the pictures he took. Concerns were expressed about the clear cutting in the disk golf course, the removal of trees on the banks of the Paint Branch Stream, and the deep ruts left from the heavy equipment.

City Forester Jon Lea-Cox said he counted over 40 stumps in a small area that had been clear cut. He attended the presentation at the airport two weeks ago where they identified 200 individual trees or clusters of trees that would be removed. He discussed the harm to the tree canopy by the removal of these trees and asked how that can be replaced. The replacement trees they have identified will not withstand the wetland, are in an area with a heavy deer population, and will not reach tree canopy height. Many of the trees that were felled were only four- or five-inch diameter and should have remained. He discussed the erosion that is now likely to occur along the Paint Branch, the impact of the sediment on the stream bed, and the flood hazard in the area. This project should have been done in lockstep with the Maryland Department of the Environment and the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Representing and airport from M-NCPPC: Lee Sommer, Airport Manager; Phil Wilson, Assistant Division Chief, Horticulture and Forestry Division; Laura Connelly, Acting Park Planning Supervisor for the Department of Park & Recreation; Steven Edgin, Assistant Airport Manager: Mr. Sommers reviewed the presentation from two weeks ago. Their commitment is to safety. The tree canopy is more substantial than he realized. He now believes that 440 trees will be removed (150 East side + 290 West side) plus 80 more trees will be trimmed = 520 total trees impacted.

The Mayor and Council expressed shock at the clear cutting and said they don't believe they got the full understanding of the project in the first briefing. They expressed surprise that there was no consideration of the storm water impact of this project. They asked if there would be a change in the number of trees that would need to be removed if there were no nighttime operations at the airport. They said they value the airport but also value the tree canopy. Council expressed concern that the City wasn't informed last fall when the project was first being discussed. They want to see the tree replacement plan and want answers about the impact to the Paint Branch Stream and on Lakeland flooding.

Mr. Sommer said he would make a plan with the disk golf people. The M-NCPPC team said they would work with Brenda Alexander and the Tree and Landscape Board to develop the replacement plan for the fall. They said the sawdust will be cleaned up and that they will install silt fencing

Councilmember Day discussed the lack of communication on this project. He asked M-NCPPC to consider adding a gazebo to the park now that there is a loss of tree cover/shade and asked them to connect the park to the trail. Ms. Connelly said they would need to do an engineering study and said she would take the request back to Park and Planning.

CONSENT AGENDA: A motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to adopt the Consent Agenda, which consisted of:

20-G-34 Approval of FY '20 Community Services Grants to: 1) the Embry Center for Family Life for the B.O.O.S.T program in the amount of \$2,500; 2) Holy Redeemer Catholic Church for the Safe Haven program in the amount of \$2,500; 3) the National Museum of Language for their Summer Camp program in the amount of \$2,500; 4) the College Park Nursery School for \$2,500; and 5) to the Pregnancy Aid Center for the Food Pantry in the amount of \$2,500.

Additionally, approval of a sponsorship in the amount of \$1,000 for College Park Nursery School's Fun Fair.

20-G-35 Approval of EAC Recommendation for public school grant award to Buck Lodge Middle School in the amount of \$2,750 for "Positive Behavior Intervention & Supports Incentive Program."

20-G-36 Adoption of revised Mayor and Council Rules and Procedures, with the exception of Section S (Conduct of Councilmembers), #5 (Disclosure of Communication).

20-G-37 Approval of a letter to PGCPs requesting the relocation of the elementary school bus stop on Cherry Hill Road

20-G-38 Approval of a letter to US Department of State Secretary Pompeo stating that the City of College Park consents to receive refugees (reference Executive Order 13888, "On Enhancing State and Local Involvement in Resettlement")

20-G-39 Approval of a letter in support of HB 130 / SB 319, Vehicle Laws – Move Over Safety Monitoring System – Authorization

20-G-40 Approval of a letter in support of HB 1526 - Transportation Carbon Reduction Fund – Establishment (Transportation Carbon Fund Act)

20-G-41 Approval of minutes from the December 14, 2019 Mayor and Council Orientation; the January 6, 2020 Legislative Dinner; and the January 7, 2020 Worksession

20-G-42 Approval of Section S (Conduct of Councilmembers), #5 (Disclosure of Communication) in Mayor and Council Rules and Procedures.

The motion carried 8-0.

ACTION ITEMS:

20-G-45 Approval of traffic modifications on Calvert Road in connection with the Purple Line closure of Campus Drive.

Mr. Somers said Purple Line construction will cause the closure of Campus Drive at the underpass. WMATA and UMD have requested that busses that usually use Campus Drive be rerouted to the west side of the College Park Metro Station via Calvert Road, which will bring a lot of new traffic to that residential street. The question is how balance the need for noise mitigation from the additional busses with safety. Staff recommends removal of the speed humps, providing better delineation of cross walks, and using flashing speed limit signs. Staff does not recommend removing any stop signs.

Councilmember Rigg reviewed the history. He asked that we also consider lowering the speed limit.

A motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Day to approve the removal of speed humps on Calvert Road to mitigate noise from anticipated increases in bus traffic due to the temporary closure of Campus Drive for Purple Line construction, and to direct staff to install flashing speed limit signs, and, as appropriate, consider lowering the speed limit, and, as appropriate, install flexi bollards, per the City Engineers recommendation.

Comment from the audience:

Stuart Adams, resident: Recommends putting something physical in the road to delineate the crosswalk.

The motion passed 8-0.

20-O-03 Introduction of Ordinance 20-O-03, An Ordinance Of The Mayor And Council Of The City Of College Park Amending City Code Chapter 11, "Authorities", Chapter 15 "Boards, Commissions And Committees", Chapter 138, "Noise", Chapter 179, "Tree And Landscape Maintenance"; To Discontinue The Cable Television Commission; Set Consistent Terms For All Board, Commission And Committee Members Appointed Under Chapters 15, 138 And 179 And Airport Authority Members Appointed Under Chapter 11; Remove Overly Prescriptive Staff Liaison And Membership Requirements, And Require Annual Work Plans For Mayor And Council Review And Approval, From Certain Advisory Boards.

Ms. Ferguson said this ordinance will codify the recommendations of the Committee on Committees for those committees that were created by ordinance.

A motion was made by Councilmember Kennedy and seconded by Councilmember Kabir to introduce Ordinance 20-O-03.

Mayor Wojahn said the Public Hearing will be held on March 10 at 7:30 p.m. at Davis Hall.

20-CR-01 Introduction of Charter Resolution 20-CR-01, A Charter Resolution Amending Article IV Voting and Elections, Section C4-3, Supervisors of Elections, to amend the appointment date for the Supervisors of Elections

Ms. Ferguson said this will implement the recommendations of the Committee on Committees with respect to the Board of Election Supervisors, which is created in the City Charter, and that the BOES will have a two-year term instead of a three-year term to ensure there isn't a new Supervisor in an election year.

A motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell and seconded by Councilmember Kennedy to introduce 20-CR-01, A Charter Resolution Amending Article IV, Voting and Elections, Section C4-3, Supervisors of Elections, to amend the appointment date for the Supervisors of Elections.

Mayor Wojahn said the Public Hearing will be held on March 24 at 7:30 p.m. at Davis Hall.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Day to adjourn the Regular Meeting, and with a vote of 8-0, the meeting was adjourned at 10:28 p.m.

Janeen S. Miller, CMC
City Clerk

Date
Approved