

**WORKSESSION MINUTES**  
**College Park City Council**  
**Tuesday, March 16, 2021**  
**7:30 p.m. – 10:03 p.m.**

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

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

**ABSENT:** None.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Bill Gardiner, Interim City Manager; Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Terry Schum, Director of Planning; Miriam Bader, Senior Planner; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Kiaisha Barber, Director of Youth, Family and Senior Services; Bridgette Johnson, Economic Development Manager; Adam Rosenbaum, Student Liaison; Julia Nihinson, Deputy Student Liaison.

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

**City Manager's Report:** Mr. Gardiner discussed the impact that the American Recovery Act might have on the City; gave an update on COVID vaccines; asked residents to complete the CBE Sustainability Survey on the City website; and said Public Works will host April clean up dates on April 10 and 24.

**Amendments to /Approval of Agenda:** A motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to approve the agenda without amendment; motion passed 8-0.

**Discussion items:**

**1. Discussion with the Education Advisory Committee, Guest: Carolyn Bernache, Chair joined by Mary Daniel and Kiaisha Barber:**

Ms. Bernache reviewed EAC's recent activities and how they continued as many activities as possible given the pandemic. They are trying to figure out what to do about the scholarships for the UMD summer programs. Ms. Daniel discussed the survey they are planning to send to principals about possible new initiatives.

Councilmember Kabir discussed the Strategic Plan goals relating to education. Ms. Bernache said the EAC is exploring the possibility of a tutoring program for College Park students. They can work with the PTSA's to see how they can help them reach parents, and can explore working with someone at PGCPs to get information out to the community.

Councilmember Kennedy asked about year-round schooling and if they can add a question about access to technology to the survey. Councilmember Mackie asked about a summer reading

program. Mayor Wojahn asked about busing. Councilmember Day asked if we can help the students meet their summer reading requirement from the County. Councilmember Mitchell asked about the County's updated boundary plan.

The EAC will integrate some of their new initiatives into their 2021 Workplan.

**2. Aspen/Maryland Detailed Site Plan 20031 and Declaration of Covenants (Student Housing Project):**

Ms. Schum said the Council reviewed the Preliminary Plan of Subdivision in December and voted 6-2 in support with conditions. All of the City's conditions were included in the Planning Board's Resolution. Some of them were intended to be addressed now, at the time of Detailed Site Plan.

Ms. Bader reviewed the staff report. The applicant is York Acquisitions LLC. The Planning Board date is April 8. The project consists of two parcels across the street from one another at the corner of Knox and Guilford. The Applicant is requesting a reduction in parking spaces. She reviewed the staff conditions.

Mr. Tedesco, attorney for the applicant, introduced the team. They are not requesting any modifications to the requested conditions.

Councilmember Mitchell asked if any of the apartments will be ADA accessible. Mr. Tedesco said building code requires retrofit for any tenants that require accessibility. Jeremy White added they are required to provide a certain number of Type A and Type B accessible units. Ms. Bader pointed out that a staff condition addresses accessibility to the building.

Councilmember Mackie asked about the request for a reduction in parking spaces. Mr. Tedesco said the requirement is for 137 spaces but code allows for a parking reduction, so the technical requirement is 114 spaces. They are providing 99. That area will be used for the stormwater vault and bike storage.

Councilmember Rigg advocated for small and minority owned local businesses in the retail, including some being displaced by development in other parts of the City.

Councilmember Kabir asked about the beds and pricing. There will be a mix of units (studios, 2, 3, 4 and 5). They don't have the rental rates yet; this is a market-rate, purpose-built student housing project. They hope to have a range of rental prices based on unit type.

Councilmember Day said this project will bring students closer to the campus.

Mr. Rosenbaum is interested in seeing a 5-bedroom unit.

Ms. Ferguson said this project will need to have a Declaration of Covenants attached to it.

To agenda next week (Rigg).

**3. Council discussion of a Revitalization Tax Credit (RTC) for the Tempo Student Housing Project:**

Ms. Johnson reviewed the staff report. Mr. Haller and Mr. Cerria reviewed a PowerPoint to provide an overview of the project. Mr. Cerria said Gilbane will not raise rents if they don't get this tax credit. He said Gilbane relied on the approval of the tax credit in order to make the project a reality. He highlighted the project's characteristics.

Councilmember Dennis does not see this as a district-only concern and hopes the full Council will weigh-in.

Councilmember Esters asked what the potential impact to the project would be should they not get the tax credit. Mr. Cerria said they have not had those discussions.

Councilmember Rigg expressed his continued support of the project.

Councilmember Dennis proposed offering a RTC for the project in an amount equivalent to 75% of the full tax credit.

Councilmember Kennedy would support a partial credit in an amount of 50 to 75% and thinks it makes sense to discuss a cap.

Ms. Johnson said these are estimates provided by Gilbane and the true number will not be known until the project is built.

Councilmember Mitchell requested more information about other projects coming on-line in the next three years and how much revenue the City will get.

Mayor Wojahn shared the estimates that were provided in the red folder (Full, 75%, 50%, and 40%).

Councilmember Mackie supports a cap. She is not a supporter of the tax credit and hopes we will be fiscally conservative as we make this decision.

Councilmember Esters supports a partial tax credit of 50% with a cap.

Councilmember Day supports the 75% credit with a cap.

Suggestion of 75% with a \$500,000 cap or 50% with a \$300,000 cap.

Councilmember Rigg wants to maintain a good relationship with Gilbane who has other projects in the City. He supports 75% with a \$500,000 cap.

Straw Poll:

- 75% of the full credit with \$500,000 cap = 4 (Dennis, Day, Rigg, Kennedy)
- 50% of the full credit with a \$300,000 cap = 2 (Esters, Mackie)

- No credit at all = 2 (Mitchell, Kabir)

Councilmember Dennis to agenda next week: 75% of the full credit with a \$500,000 cap.

**4. Possible Special Session 21-G-40: Award of contract to Price Modern for City Hall furniture in an amount not to exceed \$2,406,650; the City's portion will not exceed \$875,672.**

Ms. Ferguson said this is a contract for the furniture in both the UMD and City portions of the new City Hall building. It went out to bid in an unusual way because the two parties are requiring different types of furniture, so the prices were compared for the workstations which are common to both parties. The recommendation is based on the price, the quality of the furniture, and the warranty. It is not the lowest bidder. The amount is within the amount of the budget that has already been approved for this project.

Councilmember Kabir asked where the funding will come from. Ms. Ferguson said it is from the amount that was bonded for the project. He asked how the cost share with the University was calculated. Ms. Ferguson said the architect costed it out based on the needs of each of the parties; it is not based on the square footage. This contract does not include ancillary furniture such as Council Chambers, conference rooms, and lobby. We are requesting a Special Session to approve this tonight because there is a long lead time for the furniture. He asked about approving this next week so residents can weigh in.

Councilmember Day said we have already approved the budget for this project and it was stated that the cost is within the budgeted amount for this portion of the project. We are not asking for more money at this point.

At 9:43 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Dennis to enter into Special Session to vote on this matter. The motion passed 8-0. *See Special Session minutes for 21-G-40 for approval.*

**5. Consideration of legislation / Possible Special Session to take action on time sensitive matters**

Councilmember Mitchell asked staff to take a look at SB 89 re Special Elections in municipalities. She thinks we should be given the right to maintain our own procedures without state intervention. If the staff agrees with this understanding, we may want to oppose the bill. *See Special Session minutes for 21-G-46 for approval.*

Council Mackie asked for more information about the Medicare for All bill. Councilmember Mitchell will provide.

**6. Requests for/Status of Future Agenda Items**

Councilmembers Mitchell and Rigg are interested in a conversation about Small Business Enterprise Programs. They will submit a form.

**7. Mayor and Councilmember Comments:**

- Councilmember Kabir announced Saturday's D 1 and D 4 budget town hall at 4:00 p.m.
- Councilmember Esters announced Thursday's BDCA meeting.
- Councilmember Mackie provided information for vaccinations for people who are homebound.
- Mayor Wojahn mentioned the article in the Sunday Washington Post about the College Park Community Library. He is coordinating an effort by Prince George's County Mayors in support of the MDOT Promises Act. There is a TEDx College Park event on Friday. The City's Budget Worksession Saturday March 27.

Mr. Gardiner mentioned that we have added a presentation from M-NCPPC about tree cutting around the airport to the April 20 Worksession.

**ADJOURN: A motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell and seconded by Councilmember Esters to conclude the Worksession and reconvene 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 on March 16, 2021 to discuss the appointment of individuals over whom this public body has jurisdiction. Specifically, the Mayor and Council will review applications for appointment to the Restorative Justice Steering Committee. The Mayor and Council will not return to public session after the closed session ends.

**The motion passed 8-0 and the Worksession was adjourned at 10:03 p.m.**

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Janeen S. Miller  
City Clerk

Date  
Approved