

WORKSESSION MINUTES
College Park City Council
Tuesday, April 5, 2022
7:30 p.m. – 11:32 p.m.

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

ABSENT: None.

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; Gary Fields, Director of Finance; Michael Williams, Economic Development Manager; Felicia Hutchinson, Community Development Planner; Megha Sevalia, Student Liaison.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT: Mr. Young announced the Community Public Safety Zoom meeting.

AMENDMENTS TO/APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Mitchell/Esters: Add Proclamation for Ramadan, 8-0

Whitney/Mitchell: Add Proclamation for International Transgender Day of Visibility, 8-0.

Mitchell/Esters: Approve the agenda as amended, 8-0

PROCLAMATIONS: Mayor Wojahn read the proclamations for Ramadan and the International Transgender Day of Visibility.

SPECIAL SESSION

22-G-61: Appointments to the Restorative Justice Commission – See Special Session minutes for 22-G-61

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Presentation from University of Maryland Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer Carlo Colella and Police Chief David Mitchell on live monitoring of security cameras:

Mr. Colella said the University leadership requests that the City reinstate payment for live monitoring of the security cameras in downtown College Park. He outlined various safety measures the University and City have taken over the last several years. Places that are monitored make people feel safer. They feel this is an important step for safety and economic development. They will extend the same rate from FY 22 into FY 23: \$592 per camera per month. There are 22 cameras.

Chief David Mitchell said this is a chance to reengage in the partnership. There are several examples of when live monitoring has been successful.

Mayor Wojahn did the math: 22 cameras x \$592/month is about \$156,000 year. He reviewed the history and discussed the FY '21 budget Worksession when the Council discussed the benefits of live monitoring vs. spending the same amount of money on additional police officers. At the time the decision was made to fund additional police patrols. During the pandemic crime was low and there were fewer students in the City. When students returned to the City, live monitoring was reinstated to ensure there were no large gatherings that could be super spreader events. The FY '23 proposed budget includes an additional \$200,000 for additional police patrols, showing our commitment to keeping our community safe.

Councilmember Kabir asked for data about the efficacy of live monitoring and asked for a response to privacy concerns. Councilmember Kennedy said we would expect annual reports with certain data points included so that it is more than anecdotal information. She also suggested we would want an MOU. What is the argument for investing in live monitoring vs. putting another officer on the street? Councilmember Esters thinks live monitoring is vital to addressing situations before things get out of hand. While she agrees that data is important, she doesn't want to let that get in the way. Councilmember Adams thinks it is best to be proactive.

Chief Mitchell discussed the past camera problems and Mr. Young responded by reviewing the recent investment in new cameras and camera infrastructure and technology. Councilmember Adams was surprised to see that cameras located on the Graham Cracker were not already included in the University's live monitoring. Councilmember Mackie said it is important for us to get real examples of when live monitoring helped prevent a crime. Councilmember Rigg is in support of this program and thinks it provides a tangible benefit to our central business district. He wants the Council to consider a special taxing district to fund the program.

Suggestion of a path forward: Consider use of remaining ARPA funds for FY 23, and consideration of a special taxation district for FY '24 and beyond.

2. Presentation of Hollywood Road Sidewalk Design - Mead and Hunt Consulting Engineers

Ms. Schum said this is a review of the 60% design-level plans for the Hollywood Road Sidewalk. It is not a huge project but is a challenging project. Doug Bob from Mead and Hunt is the project manager. These plans reflect feedback from a January stakeholders' meeting. Mr. Bob reviewed the PowerPoint.

Council discussion/questions: Is there a need for an additional speed hump closer to the post office? When the road is narrowed, can two vehicles safely pass? This item has been fully funded in FY '23 based on current cost estimates. Council is asked to submit any final comments in the next two weeks. If we proceed now with final design, we hope to start the project in the fall. We will move forward with 100% design.

3. Review and approval of additional recommended uses of remaining ARPA and Lost Revenue Recovery funds.

Mr. Fields said the Budget Ordinance will be introduced on April 26 so time is of the essence on these allocations. Mr. Young cautioned that we won't have this kind of funding available in future years so if they are ongoing expenses we will have to find another funding source in the future. We have to spend ARPA funds by December 31, 2025, but commit them by December 31, 2024.

- Discussion of continuing/operating expenses vs. one-time expenses.
- What can wait until FY '24?
- How much money remains for the family/individual assistance program? About \$480K - it has not had as much demand as we expected.
- Eliminate specific categories and show the \$850K as contingency
- Clarification that the \$100K for Lakeland initiatives is for a Planning initiative, not Restorative Justice
- Show the ARPA fund expenditures in a multi-year format to layout the spending plan and commitment.

4. Proposed 3-year contract with VeoRide (micro-mobility share vendor)

Details are in Exhibit A in the red folder. When previously discussed there was concern about the improper parking of vehicles. Original plan was to allow individuals to leave their vehicles anywhere that was legal, but VeoRide came back suggesting that the Geofencing plan is the better alternative. A rider will be unable to end a ride until they return the vehicle to the appropriate parking space determined by geofencing. If the vehicle is left in an improper space, the meter will keep running for the rider. Campus uses geofencing. With this plan, the correct parking will be enforced in the same way across the system (University Park, UMD and College Park). This does not relieve VeoRide of their obligation to pick up vehicles that are parked improperly. Staff recommends trying this model. The hours of operation remain different between campus and the City. We will add additional bike racks where we can using state grant funding. We are looking for suggestions for additional bike rack and geofence locations. A new type of vehicle is being added to the fleet. Review of the VeoRide dashboard. We are also using another service to give us additional information about how our policies are being enforced. Division of incoming funds still needs to be determined.

[Rigg/Kabir to extend meeting, 8-0, 10:33 p.m.]

5. Follow-up discussion of Mayor and Council Rules and Procedures

- Proposed red-line amendments are fine.
- #4 in the staff report: the current practice of allowing additional letters to be sent on a topic that Council has previously taken a position on, without additional Council action required – memorialize this in the rules to provide clarity for Council and staff. Staff to draft language to put current practice into the Rules.

- Community Forums held by District elected officials: A forum about a specific issue that is before the Council undermines the larger conversation, especially when staff resources are requested, and when the Councilmembers create their own PPTs. Runs the risk of skewing information and causing inconsistent messaging. Provide more opportunities for city-wide issue specific forums - ask the Council what they prefer when these issues come up. This is different from the Town Hall format where you are there to listen to residents' concerns and answer questions – no problem seen with that. No problem if a group invites a Councilmember to come speak to their group.
- Future Agenda items; requirement that you talk to the majority of the Council before bringing it forward.

[10:59 suspend the rules Mitchell/Kabir, 8-0.]

- #3 in the staff report: Future Agendas: Add requirement that you talk to and a majority of the Council agree to bring it forward. Form is not needed to add a letter on legislation to an agenda.

Return next regular meeting with revised rules for approval.

6. Review of legislation

- Get information about SB 405 - Seniors Retirement Tax Elimination Act of 2022
- Consent next week – letter of support for CB-14-2022 – disposable utensils

7. Requests for/Status of Future Agenda Items

- Discussion of the Student Liaison Stipend and of adding a Graduate Student Liaison position – Adams/Mitchell, 8-0
- Expansion of Community Outreach by providing brochures in Spanish – Mitchell/Esters, 8-0
- Discussion of a Special Taxing District to fund live monitoring of security cameras – Rigg/Kennedy, 8-0
- Expansion of mental health services in the City, and/or a subscription to on-line mental health services for residents – Esters/Kennedy, 8-0
- Presentation on the proposed curbside food scrap collection program – Kabir/Mitchell, 8-0
- Discuss possible expansion of the Homeowner's Property Tax Credit – Adams/Kabir, 8-0
- Presentation on the County Emergency Operations Plan and discussion of City emergency planning – Mitchell/Adams, 8-0
- Discussion of a health officer and/or provision of health services for residents – Mackie/Mitchell, 8-0
- Discussion of an education specialist (consultant?) to assist with education support strategies – Mackie/Esters, 8-0
- Discussion of a new City bicycle-pedestrian committee – Kabir/Whitney, 8-0
- Discussion of the Council Subcommittee proposal – Rigg/Mitchell, 8-0

Adjourn: Adams/Whitney 11:32 p.m.