

WORKSESSION MINUTES
College Park City Council
Tuesday, April 16, 2019
Council Chambers
7:30 P.M. – 10:01 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Wojahn; Councilmembers Kabir, Kennedy, Brennan, Dennis, Day, Kujawa, and Mitchell.

ABSENT: Councilmember Rigg.

ALSO PRESENT: Scott Somers, City Manager; Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Robert Marsili, Director of Public Works; Brenda Alexander, Assistant Director of Public Works; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Gary Fields, Director of Finance; Alex Tobin, Student Liaison; Serena Saunders, Deputy Student Liaison.

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

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT: Mr. Somers said Public Works is open on Saturdays in April; reviewed the US 1 lane closures due to utility projects; advertised the compost sale; reviewed the food scrap drop-off program; announced the Arbor Day event and the PGCMA meeting.

AMENDMENT TO/APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA: The agenda was approved without amendment (Mitchell/Brennan) 7-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- 1. Presentation of Citywide Tree Canopy Assessment-Mike Galvin, SavATree:** Ms. Alexander introduced Mr. Galvin who reviewed his study on the City’s tree canopy. At present, 38% of the City is covered by tree canopy. In 2014 it was 40%, and in 2009 it was 44%. The state goal is 40%; most cities strive for 33%. “Canopy gain is a process; canopy loss is an event.” Land use decisions are made at the parcel level so there are hundreds of contributing factors. Do we track City removal of trees on public property? Removal of trees on private property? TLB is looking at a permitting process for tree removal on private property. There are existing state forest conservation rules, but the City can be more stringent than the state. Encourage residents to plant/replant trees on their properties. Highlight use of the City’s Tree Canopy Enhancement Program.

Dr. Jon Lea-Cox, the City Forester, said canopy loss offsets in other parts of the state by developers do not benefit the City. He urged effective urban canopy measures at the street level for developers and for private property. He cautioned against increases in impervious surface. He recommended that offset locations be identified within our city limits.

Explore: Discussions with our County representatives; use of developer funds to decrease impervious surface and to plant trees; can we have developers pay a fee-in-lieu and fund a grant program to plant trees where we want them? Return Future W/S.

2. Property Use Agreement for Benjamin Epstein and Brian McClimens, Owners, The Board and Brew, and application for a Class B, Beer, Wine and Liquor License for the use of Ben & Brian Games, LLC:

Mr. McClimens said they currently have a beer and wine license and want to expand to include liquor. Staff is recommending approval. Council asked why this is coming before them so late in the process? Staff replied that the applicant is not represented by an attorney so may not have known. Request for their new menu. They never charge a cover. Brunch is a large portion of their business and want to be able to serve Bloody Marys. *See Special Session Minutes 19-G-64 for approval.*

3. Update of City Hall project and timing – Scott Veith, Design Collective, Architects; Katie Hearn and Bill Rowland, Redgate, Project Managers; Matt Weirich, Davis Construction:

Mr. Somers said since last fall the project team has worked to finalize the program and prepare the schematics. The schematics were then turned over to Davis Construction to provide construction cost estimates, which are higher than anticipated in 2018.

Mr. Veith said last time they presented, it was at pre-design phase. Now that they are at the schematic phase, which is when costs can be provided. He provided a high-level design overview. He reviewed the PowerPoint from last November and the guiding principles for the project. He then reviewed the schematic design slides. Last fall, we had 39K gross square feet of City Hall space, 45K gross square feet of University office space, and 10K gross square feet of retail. The first two levels are City space and upper two levels are the University space. The schematic plans are the first step into providing dimensions and measurements, which allows for pricing. He discussed the plaza and the retail spaces. He said the cost for the plaza itself is a significant number.

Mr. Veith then discussed building revisions dated March 1, 2019: When the scheme was measured, they had 45K for City Hall. They did a belt tightening exercise and lowered the size of offices and workstations, the number of conference rooms and pantries, and lowered the square footage to 31.9K square feet. The challenge was how to reduce about 10K square feet on levels 1 and 2 where the City is, without also reducing the square footage of the upper floors. They targeted the space in the back corner (in the red outline) which provides more outdoor space on the Yale side. He reviewed an internal diagram showing where the building has been tightened. The lobby has been reduced 1,000 square feet, and the perimeter reduced by a foot.

Ms. Hearn reviewed the Budget Comparison from last July to now. Early estimates of about \$13M were based on \$350/square foot building cost and about 10,000 square feet less than where we are now. We are currently estimating costs of just over \$20M based on \$420/square foot for construction costs. The building is larger by about 10,000 square feet, shared. The design team is not surprised by the higher cost: schematic design is always higher than the budget because we want a lot, we design it the way we want it, then we say we might not be able to afford that, so we bring it back down. We believe we can value engineer at least \$5M out of this project without materially altering the building, but we don't believe we can design a \$350/square foot building, and if we did, you wouldn't like it.

Mr. Weirich said there are opportunities for about \$5M of savings. The cost of the site work was higher than they usually see, and the cost of the ratio of the façade to the square foot of the building was also higher than they usually see.

Mr. Somers talked about the funding sources for the project: bond bill, community legacy grant, retail rent, I-Net PEG funds, and the CIP, totaling about \$6.9M at our disposal for the project. The unknown variable is the credit from the University of Maryland; how the land will be divided. We are working with our consultant, HR&A, to draft a proposal for University negotiations. The rest will be raised through the sale of General Obligation bonds. He reviewed various debt service scenarios.

Mr. Somers said when we talked last year about the budget, we were hovering around \$12.5M. Since then we have gone through the programming exercise and built in anticipated growth and a community room. We want to design a building that will last for 40 years. If Council is willing to raise their \$12.5M budget up to \$14.5M, we think we can fill the rest of that gap (between \$14.5M and \$18.5M) with the funding sources just discussed. This is the first time we have had a more accurate understanding of the actual costs, but we think we can still move forward. We need to have our conversation with the University, fine tune the numbers with some value engineering, then come back and ask Council to take action to move forward.

Mr. Weirich discussed the escalation of construction costs in the mid-Atlantic region.

In response to Council questions, Mr. Somers said the CIP budget line items are just estimates based on the information we had at the time. This is the first time we have seen a budget based on this schematic. Mr. Fields said we prepared the FY '19 budget in January of 2018 before Redgate and Design Collective were on-board so those were old numbers. He added that these costs do not include interest payments. Mr. Somers said the square footage has stayed about the same but the cost per square foot has increased. Council asked when the prices actually lock-in? GMP – the guaranteed maximum price – is when the drawings are 90-95% complete and we get bids from all the subcontractors. That will be in late 2019 at best.

What are the decision points that will come back to Council?

- 1: Release the architect to move to the next phase of “Design Development.” They need to know which project/which budget is moving forward. This will require Council action.
- 2: Finalize a Development Agreement with the University. The agreement will come to Council for approval.

Ms. Hearn said the Schematic Design phase is now done and the design team is pencils-down. Council needs to give clear direction on the next phase, which is the Design Development Drawings. That is the direction they are looking for before they move on.

Mr. Somers explained that the drawings presented tonight do not show the lower square footage.

To agenda next week (Councilmember Day).

4. **Agenda items for April 24 Four Cities meeting in Greenbelt:** Ask Greenbelt for the status of the MAGLEV project.
5. **Boards and Committees:** Branson Cameron to Complete Count Committee; Christine O'Brien to TLB; Rosemary Peticari to Seniors; David Turley to AWC; Mary Ann Hakes to Seniors.
6. **Future Agendas:** None.

COMMENTS: Good Neighbor Day; Egg Hunt; Budget Town Hall; Coffee Club; SGA/PHA neighborhood clean-up; SGA elections and Student Liaison applications; Mayor's schedule; appointment recommendations from the College Park City University Partnership.

Student Liaison Selection Committee: Mayor Pro Tem Dennis as the Mayor's designee, Robert Day and Dustyn Kujawa.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Councilmember Dennis and seconded by Councilmember Day to adjourn the Worksession and enter into a Closed Session to consult with Counsel to obtain legal advice and to consult with staff about pending/potential litigation. The motion passed 7-0 and the Worksession was adjourned at 10:01 p.m.

Janeen S. Miller
City Clerk

Date
Approved