

WORKSESSION MINUTES
College Park City Council
Tuesday, April 20, 2021
7:30 p.m. – 11:03 p.m.

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

PRESENT: Mayor Wojahn; Councilmembers Kabir, Kennedy, Dennis, Esters, Day, Rigg, Mitchell (arrived at 7:51 p.m.), and Mackie.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Bill Gardiner, Interim City Manager; Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Gary Fields, Director of Finance; Robert Marsili, Director of Public Works; Brenda Alexander, Assistant Director of Public Works; Terry Schum, Director of Planning; Miriam Bader, Senior Planner; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; 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 announced that Saturday is the final April clean up day at the Public Works yard; Park & Planning is sponsoring a tree giveaway on Saturday May 1 at the CP Airport; College Park/Green Line metro station closures beginning soon; and the Arbor Day event, Friday April 30, 6:30 p.m. at James Adams Park.

Amendments to /Approval of Agenda: A motion was made by Councilmember Kennedy and seconded by Councilmember Rigg to approve the agenda without amendment. The motion passed 7-0.

Discussion items:

1 Update on budget revisions prior to budget introduction to account for funding from the American Rescue Plan:

Mr. Gardiner reviewed the staff report and expected revenue from the American Rescue Plan (ARP). He reviewed the anticipated allocation to the City in FY 21 and FY 22 and the balance remaining to be spent through 2025. He reviewed the lost revenue projections for which we can be paid back from the ARP funds and the proposed uses.

Councilmember Rigg asked about a possible contract with a hydrologist and accelerated sidewalk construction.

Mayor Wojahn said additional uses or changes to use of ARP funds would be handled through a budget amendment.

Councilmember Kabir asked about the administration of the funds, and if businesses, families and individuals would be eligible. Mr. Fields said we will get this money up-front rather than

requesting reimbursement. One of the intended uses of the funds is to stabilize businesses and provide assistance to individuals and families. We will discuss this further as we go along.

2 Discussion with John Campbell, Regional Director of Post Office Operations, and Christopher D'Ambrosia, North College Park Post Office, about Calvert Road and Hollywood Road Post Offices:

Issues reported by residents included: misdelivered, lost, and stolen mail; mail deliveries at 8 p.m.; not getting mail for three days in a row; customer phone calls not being returned from the post office staff; lack of regular carriers; poor customer service by employees inside the facility; complaint escalation process; long term improvements planned for Calvert Road facility.

The discussion touched on the longevity of assigned letter carriers; replacement carriers; high turnover/attrition rate; challenge to retain employees; challenges presented to the postal network by unplanned volume due to vote by mail election; COVID impact to commercial airlines slowed movement of mail; impact of COVID on postal employees who lost childcare or had to deal with in-person learning for their children.

Mr. Campbell and Mr. D'Ambrosia said they have secured landscaping and snow contract services for Calvert Road post office; the Calvert Road post office is a leased facility, lease is coming up for renewal, they are limited in the repairs they can make; they are training new staff and welcome feedback; postal inspectors have made arrests involving a regional problem of missing mail; use of "mystery shoppers" to measure customer service; Q-code surveys on customer receipts; informed delivery; complaint escalation process; busiest times are at open and close; they are using performance metrics. U.S. Postal Representatives:

Mr. D'Ambrosia: christopher.j.dambrosia@usps.gov

Mr. Campbell: John.Campbell@usps.gov

3 Update and follow-up presentation from M-NCPPC about airport tree trimming / removal - Brenda Alexander; Christine Fanning, M-NCPPC Division Chief; Bill Tyler, Director, PG County Parks and Recreation; Lee Sommer, CP Airport Manager.

Ms. Alexander said this is the 3rd presentation by P&P about the safety work at the Airport. Ms. Fanning reviewed the PowerPoint. Phase 1 of the safety project in 2012 included the Obstruction Analysis, which is when they learned the airport was not in compliance with FAA and MAA standards. She reviewed the phases of the safety project. They now meet or exceed all standards. Obstruction mitigation work is complete: 387 trees removed; 1,173 trees trimmed. DNR completed their inspection. She reviewed where they under- and over-estimated the number of trees that needed to be removed and/or trimmed. Counting estimate is done from the air and is not completely accurate. She reviewed tree planting done and planned: a total of 1,765 trees by end of this year. Tree donation to the community of 500 trees on May 1. Improvements to the Calvert Road Park: they added 2 shade structures and tree art sculptures. They received feedback from the disk golf community at on-site meeting. Send suggestions for where trees can be planted. Potential to use unused space in front of the airport. Contact for Ms. Fanning: PublicAffairs@pgparks.com.

Questions: Are all the trees that are being planted native species? She will check and send a replanting list. What steps were taken to mitigate stream erosion? Renewed request for a trail connection over the creek from the airport to the park. Unrelated question: Improvements to Hollywood Park.

4 Discussion with the Tree and Landscape Board re updated recommendations for an Urban Tree Protection Policy. Rashawna Alfred, Chair, and members of the Tree and Landscape Board.

Ms. Alexander reviewed the staff report. The TLB is returning with a revised proposal that takes into account the community feedback they heard.

Councilmember Kennedy discussed potential resistance by residents and asked if people are ready to make these changes and how we can go out into the public to promote the plan. A one-pager.

Councilmember Mitchell said there are still concerns in the community about this proposal so we may not be ready to market it yet. She asked about a survey. Some people may not have the correct information.

Dr. Lea-Cox said the community expressed concerns with the number of trees being removed by development and added that the mitigation of that tree loss is not within City limits. The Strategic Plan goal of restoring the tree canopy to 40% by 2025 is a very heavy load.

Councilmember Rigg asked about the intersection of the County's Tree Canopy Enhancement Program with the City's TCEP. Ms. Alexander said the County said they would revisit the guidelines. Funding for the City's TCEP program has been increased. Councilmember Rigg suggested we consider raising the fine for removing a tree without a permit. He asked if there is plantable land along the Trolley Trail that we could use.

Councilmember Mackie said some residents are concerned about who is controlling their property. We don't want residents to feel like they are being punished and have another rule put on them. We should do more education. She is not sold on this yet. A survey for people to give their input might be good. Sometimes trees die a natural death and it doesn't seem fair to punish the homeowner.

Dr. Lea-Cox said the TLB is a group of dedicated volunteers who have spent a substantial portion of their time the last two years on this project and are still being asked to do more. They don't have a budget. CBE has been silent on this. Many of the TLB members are ready to resign. He has been City forester for 23 years and this is likely his last year.

Ms. Alfred responded that the homeowner can get a permit to remove their tree at no cost, but replanting is a requirement. The TCEP can help with the cost of replanting, and if there is no room on their own property, it can be replanted on a neighbor's property.

Councilmember Day said tree removal is a big business in his neighborhood. Many trees are older and are dying a natural death. We have to come up with something. Can we plant more trees on state property between Edmonston Road and Kenilworth Avenue?

Councilmember Esters asked if aspects of the proposed policy can be phased in. Ms. Alexander said the Council can decide which options they would be willing to support sooner rather than later.

Councilmember Kabir asked if the City can fund an arborist to inspect trees on private property? He supports an education campaign. He thinks it is time to move forward with this but suggests a phased approach.

Dr. Lea Cox said we should try to engage the University of Maryland. Trees and green infrastructure are powerful ways to mitigate stormwater runoff. The private landowners have the majority of the land.

Councilmember Rigg said without strong leadership we will not achieve the SP goal. We have set these targets for ourselves. The TLB has done their job. Regarding a phased-in approach: front-load the carrots and back-load the sticks.

[10:30 Rigg/Kennedy to extend the meeting for 30 minutes, 8-0.]

Mayor Wojahn said more talking is not going to make this any less controversial. He suggested one to two meetings between members of the Council and the TLB to determine a phased-in and/or roll-out approach; return in May or June to move forward with an introduction. There will always be residents who are opposed to this idea. Council subcommittee: Esters, Kabir, Kennedy, Wojahn, Mackie expressed interest. Staff to schedule the meeting. Return in June.

5 Presentation by Terrapin Development Company on the general development plans for Parcels B and C in the Discovery District adjacent to The Hotel. Guest: Ken Ulman, President, Terrapin Development Company, LLC

Mr. Ulman said these parcels were owned by the state, and the Board of Public Works recently approved their transfer to the TDC. They will go through the entitlement process and be added to the tax rolls. They have not submitted any plans to the county yet and will further engage with Council when they do. He reviewed the PowerPoint presentation. No loss of trees. The properties are currently brownfield and surface parking lots with no stormwater management.

Mayor Wojahn would like to see more green space and less pavement; would like to see a defining characteristic on the SE corner of the intersection to complement the Iribe Center.

Councilmember Kabir asked about having a town center there.

Councilmember Rigg commented on the amount of parking. Mr. Ulman said he wants to minimize the parking. The residential piece will not be in the first phase; they will watch the market and let us know more in the future.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Kabir to adjourn the meeting. With a vote of 8-0, the meeting ended at 11:03 p.m.

Janeen S. Miller
City Clerk

Date
Approved