

MINUTES
Regular Meeting of the College Park City Council
Tuesday, May 26, 2020
7:30 p.m. – 9:29 p.m.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this was a virtual meeting

PRESENT: Mayor Wojahn; Councilmembers Kabir, Kennedy, Brennan (arrived at 7:44 p.m.), Dennis, Day, Rigg, 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; Terry Schum, Director of Planning; Steve Halpern, City Engineer; Dan Alpert, Student Liaison; Adam Rosenbaum, incoming Student Liaison.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Kabir said the College Park Food Bank and Meals on Wheels need volunteers.

Councilmember Mackie said the Pregnancy Aid Center will take non-perishable food donations.

Councilmember Mitchell discussed the Primary Election on June 2, an incident in College Park Woods yesterday, and speeding in the neighborhood. She would like to see a plan to curb speeding.

Regarding the reopening of UMCP, Mr. Alpert said the UMD System Chancellor will release guidelines at end of this week, then each President will make determinations for their own campuses.

Ms. Nikhinson said she is returning as Deputy Student Liaison next year.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT: Mr. Somers reported on the June public focus groups on the Strategic Plan; the City's COVID-19 page on website; gave a Census reminder; and reminded residents that the City's 4th of July event has been cancelled.

FAREWELL: Mayor Wojahn said farewell and thanks to Student Liaison Dan Alpert, whose term as the Student Liaison ends this month. Mr. Alpert has been elected to be the next SGA President. He also thanked Deputy Student Liaison Julia Nikhinson, who will return as DSL next semester.

WELCOME: Mayor Wojahn welcomed incoming Student Liaison Adam Rosenbaum

AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

1. A motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Day to move the Trolley Trail item (20-G-101) to the Consent Agenda. Motion passed 8-0.
2. A motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to add a letter to our Congressional representatives regarding 21st century water infrastructure (the NLC letter). Item 20-G-103. Motion passed 8-0.
3. A motion was made by Councilmember Day and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to add a letter to our Congressional representatives about University Communities. Item 20-G-104. Motion passed 8-0.
4. A motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell and seconded by Councilmember Day to remove the presentation about ClearGov from tonight's agenda. Motion passed 8-0.
5. A motion was made by Councilmember Mackie and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to add a Chesapeake Bay Awareness Proclamation to tonight's agenda. The motion passed 8-0.
6. A motion was made by Councilmember Kabir and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to add a letter to SHA MDOT to thank them for starting Phase 1 of the US 1 reconstruction project, and to request funding for Phases 2 and 3. Discussion. Staff to research status and report back. Table until next week.
7. Motion by Councilmember Kennedy and seconded by Councilmember Dennis to approve the agenda as amended. Motion passed 8-0.

PROCLAMATION: Mayor Wojahn read the proclamation for Chesapeake Bay Awareness week.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CONSENT AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

David Gray, resident: He wanted to clear up something he said last week regarding fee waivers for hotels: two of the hotels are already receiving Revitalization Tax Credits so it seems overly generous to also give them fee waivers. Regarding waiver of sign regulations, you need to be careful and consider problems that could occur if people think they could do whatever they want. Regarding the parking garage tenant: it appears that the City has failed to collect over \$110,000 in rent over the last 32 months. What's the story there?

CONSENT AGENDA:

A motion was made by Councilmember Dennis and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to adopt the consent agenda, which consisted of the following:

- 20-G-99** Approval of a letter of support for H.R. 6175, The REHAB Act.
- 20-G-100** Approval of minutes from the March 17, 2020 Worksession; the March 17, 2020 Special Session; the March 24, 2020 Regular Meeting.
- 20-G-101** Approval of an amendment to the contract with NZI Construction Corporation to construct the remaining section of the Trolley Trail between Berwyn Road and Rhode Island Avenue

- 20-R-14 Adoption of Resolution In Support Of Fair, Direct, Federal Emergency Support To Reopen And Rebuild Local American Economies.**
- 20-G-103 Letter to Congressional representatives re Water Now/NLC 21st century federal water infrastructure funding**
- 20-G-104 Letter to Congressional representatives calling for federal support for university communities**

The motion passed 8-0.

ACTION ITEMS

- 20-O-07 Adoption of Ordinance 20-O-07, an Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the City of College Park, Maryland to adopt the Fiscal Year 2021 General Fund, Capital Projects Fund and Debt Service Fund budgets for the City of College Park.**

Mr. Fields addressed some comments we received. The budget document contains two parts: the spreadsheets for each fiscal year, and the ancillary information containing narratives. The ancillary information is not a statutory requirement and is not in the budget ordinance. The error that was pointed out was in the revenue narrative description. That information was correct on spreadsheet. Regarding Debt Service fund: It's not unusual for the information to change as new information comes in. The Debt Service fund is the fund where we account for the long-term debt of the City and payments are reflected there, but the funds are transferred over from the General Fund. The General Fund is responsible for paying the debt, not the Debt Service Fund.

A motion was made by Councilmember Kennedy and seconded by Councilmember Dennis to adopt Ordinance 20-O-07, an Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the City of College Park, Maryland to adopt the Fiscal Year 2021 General Fund, Capital Projects Fund and Debt Service Fund budgets for the City of College Park.

Councilmember Kennedy said the City has done a good job of putting money away over the last several years which has enabled us to move forward with some of our projects right now.

Mayor Wojahn said that we have already held a public hearing on the budget so will take no further public comment at this time.

Councilmember Kabir said we are not changing the property tax rate – it is still \$.325 – but there have been some requests to reduce the tax rate. The additional revenue is most likely due to extra development added to our tax base. COVID-19 will have an impact. We will continue to assist the community in the next weeks and months.

The motion carried 8-0.

20-G-102 Consideration of additional COVID-19 economic assistance related to the CARES Act

Mr. Somers reviewed the staff report. The City has been allocated \$1.95M in funds from the federal CARES Act through the county. We think these programs can be reimbursed from this funding, but we will make sure. Mr. Somers reviewed:

1. Small Business Assistance Grants
2. Business Promotional Assistance: Provided for information only. Not ready to move forward tonight.
3. Emergency Financial Aid to Families
4. Additional funding for non-profits: Specifically, tonight the Council is requested to consider additional funding of \$20K each to CP Meals On Wheels and CP Community Food Bank.
5. Modified business assistance and façade improvement program: No match required.

Mr. Somers said we submitted our CARES Act plan to the County last Friday and will hear back in 30 days. We want our programs to sunset by December 1 so we can submit for reimbursement by December 15. We have not set up our internal processes yet.

Councilmember Kennedy said our eligibility criteria say a business is ineligible if they have received funding from the County; some businesses have applied for funds from the County but have not heard back. How will that be handled? Mr. Somers said we will check this out. Mayor Wojahn suggested speaking with David Iannucci.

Councilmember Brennan asked about emergency financial aid to families: We need objective criteria to identify a person in need. If someone is a dependent, but on paper it appears they are not receiving income, it should be explored further. We want the funds to get to people who need it, and not be seen as an entitlement. Mr. Somers said there would be a dual qualification – they have to show need and the necessity that a payment is due. The City will pay the vendor directly, not pay the resident. He is not sure how many applications we will get or how far the funds will stretch, so staff will check in frequently with Council.

Discussion of various eligibility criteria that could be used. Consider reaching out to the UMD Office of Financial Aid for ideas. Staff will research further.

A motion was made by Councilmember Dennis and seconded by Councilmember Brennan to approve the COVID-19 economic assistance programs listed as numbers 1, 3, 4, and 5 in the staff report.

The motion carried 8-0.

20-O-08 Introduction of Ordinance 20-O-08, An Ordinance Of The Mayor And Council Of The City Of College Park Amending Chapter 110 “Fees And Penalties”, By Repealing And Reenacting §110-1 “Fees And Interests” And §110-2, “Penalties”; And Chapter 151, “Permit Parking”, By Repealing And Reenacting §151-2, “Petition Requirements”, §151-4 Issuance Of Permits And § 151-6 Return Of Parking Permits; Refund Of Permit Fee And Loss Of Refund For Failure To Return, To Delete The Annual And Bi-Annual Permit Parking Fee In Residential Zones

Mr. Ryan said staff have discussed various improvements to our parking program over the years. Residential permit parking is the best way to relieve overcrowding of neighborhood streets, but some residents complain about having to pay to park on their street. This ordinance will eliminate residential permit parking fees, but not residential permit parking zones. The lost revenue is about \$25K per year.

Mr. Ryan said in the future, new license plate reader equipment will allow us to transition to parking permit registration and enforcement by license plate number rather than by hang tag, which will save the cost of buying and mailing plastic hang tags. We will also be introducing an online application and permit process in the future. All of this will reduce expenses by about \$18K.

Councilmember Kabir asked about the impact of these changes on staff workload. Mr. Ryan said staff will continue to enforce parking in the permit zones, and that using the LPR enabled cars will help to facilitate that enforcement. Councilmember Kabir asked staff to provide how much time is spent on enforcing the residential zones.

Councilmember Brennan asked about online registration. Mr. Ryan said he hopes the online program will be introduced in FY 21. He added that we will honor the FY ‘20 hang tag in the coming year until the transition to license plate permit registration. Ms. Ferguson added that this is spelled out in the ordinance.

Council asked staff to return at a future meeting to explain more about the cost of the entire permit parking program and the savings and/or additional costs associated with online registration for permits and the LPR enforcement software.

Councilmember Mackie pointed out that not everyone can do these things online and wants options presented at the time this is discussed. Mr. Ryan suggested they could register over the phone. Staff will also provide options for visitor parking permits when you weren’t expecting a visitor and didn’t have a chance to register the car online.

A motion to introduce Ordinance 20-O-08 was made by Councilmember Brennan and seconded by Councilmember Day.

Mayor Wojahn said the virtual Public Hearing will be held on June 9, 2020 at 7:30 p.m.

GENERAL COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

David Gray, resident: We should be informed when the income tax revenue is received since the tax deadline was extended. He discussed the Constant Yield and the triennial assessments. He said the bond number shouldn't change very much from one year to the next.

Dan Alpert, resident: He thanked Council and staff for their support over the last year and looks forward to working with us in his new role as SGA President.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Day to adjourn into a Closed Session to consult with Counsel to obtain legal advice and to consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business to locate in the State. Mayor Wojahn said the Council will not return to public session after the Closed Session. With a vote of 8-0, the Regular Meeting was adjourned at 9:29.

Janeen S. Miller	Date
City Clerk	Approved

CLOSED SESSION

May 26, 2020

Pursuant to the statutory authority of the Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions Article, Section 3-305, the Mayor and Council met in a Closed Session after the meeting on May 26, 2020 for the following purposes: To consult with Counsel to obtain legal advice; To consider a matter that concerns the proposal for a business to locate in the State.

At 9:29 p.m., at the end of the regularly scheduled Council Meeting, a motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Day to enter into the closed session. The motion passed 8-0 and after a recess the City Council began the closed session at 9:35 p.m. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this was a virtual meeting. Mayor Wojahn was the designated Open Meetings trainee.

The Mayor and all Councilmembers were present. In addition, the meeting was attended by City Manager Scott Somers, Assistant City Manager Bill Gardiner, City Clerk Janeen Miller, and City Attorney Suellen Ferguson.

The Mayor and Council discussed a lease agreement, the possibility of a business locating in the City, and received legal advice from the City Attorney on these matters. No action was taken.

ADJOURN: At 10:42 p.m., on a motion by Councilmember Brennan and seconded by Councilmember Day, and a vote of 8-0, the closed session was adjourned.