

WORKSESSION MINUTES
College Park City Council
Tuesday, June 2, 2020
7:30 P.M. – 9:32 P.M.

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

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

ABSENT: Councilmember Rigg.

ALSO PRESENT: Scott Somers, City Manager; Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Terry Schum, Director of Planning; Miriam Bader, Senior Planner; Adam Rosenbaum, Student Liaison.

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

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT: Mr. Somers reported on the Strategic Plan focus groups; gave a census reminder; announced US 1 lane closures due to the SHA MDOT US 1 reconstruction project; said there would be no mosquito spraying this season due to state budget constraints; and announced that the College Park Woods Pool project kicked off this month.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

- A motion was made by Councilmember Kennedy and seconded by Councilmember Kabir to add a discussion of continuation of virtual meetings through the summer to the agenda. Motion passed 7-0.
- A motion was made by Councilmember Kennedy and seconded by Councilmember Day to add a Proclamation of Mourning and Lament for COVID-19 victims to the agenda. Motion passed 7-0.
- A motion was made by Councilmember Kabir and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to add to next week’s agenda a Proclamation/Resolution regarding the homicide of George Floyd (Black Lives Matter). Motion passed 7-0.
- Motion to adopt the agenda as amended Councilmember Dennis/Councilmember Mitchell passed 7-0.

1. Proclamations:

- a. Mayor Wojahn read the Proclamation for “Wear Orange on June 5 for Gun Violence Awareness Day.”
- b. Mayor Wojahn read the Proclamation “To Recognize June 1, 2020 as a National Day of Mourning and Lament for those lost from COVID-19.”

2. Review of Detailed Site Plan for The Standard on Hartwick Road and discussion of the Declaration of Covenants:

Ms. Schum said the City Council supported the Preliminary Plan with conditions on May 12. On May 14, the County Planning Board approved the application with all of the City's conditions. The Applicant intends to apply for a Revitalization Tax Credit. It will come back to Council when/if submitted.

Ms. Bader presented the staff report. The Planning Board date is June 25. The applicant is Landmark Properties, a student housing developer from Athens GA. The project is 9-10 stories mixed use with 951 beds/283 units and 6K square feet of retail. She reviewed the pocket park and the departures, waivers and modifications being requested. Staff recommends approval of the DSP with conditions, and approval of departures, as outlined in staff report.

Councilmember Brennan asked about the tree canopy departure. They are required to provide 8,059 sq. ft. of tree canopy but can only provide 5,030 sq. ft. due to site constraints, so they are requesting a partial waiver. He asked if they could purchase offsets instead? Ms. Schum said that option does not apply here, but we could negotiate this with the developer and include it in the Declaration of Covenants.

For the applicant: Eric Leath, Landmark Properties, and Chris Hatcher, Attorney: Mr. Leath said Landmark Properties is not just the developer, but also the contractor and owner. The site is currently a parking lot and an office building with no stormwater management or landscaping. Regarding the conditions: They agree with continuous expression line along Hartwick Road and will share that detail with Council next week. They have readjusted the building slightly to provide additional space for the new road, sidewalk and landscaping. Regarding the tree canopy: they will plant street trees in the right-of-way, not on their actual site. If you include those street trees, they would meet the requirement.

Councilmember Brennan said the reason that street trees aren't incorporated into that calculation is because they don't mature to canopy height. He would like to see continued discussion on this topic.

Mr. Hatcher discussed the issue of the NGBS vs. LEED rating system. They looked at what it would take to move the building from NGBS Bronze to NGBS Silver. They will move in that direction, but it comes with a cost. They have submitted their letter of intent to apply for a Revitalization Tax Credit. They have reviewed the conditions and the Declaration of Covenants (DOC) and agree with them in substance.

Discussion about the NGBS vs. LEED rating systems: The requirement for this location is LEED Silver. There is a requirement in the DOC for the applicant to prove up that NGBS Bronze is at least equivalent. We should have that information prior to approval next week. Then the tax credit application will come back in the future and it will rely on the equivalency. This is not determined until after the building is built and has to be proven up before the tax credit is paid. M-NCPPC staff will make the determination on equivalency.

Cindy Wasser, Home Innovations Research Lab, a certification lab that supports the home building industry and certifies the NGBS standards: She described the NGBS program and said some jurisdictions recognize NGBS as well as LEED. Discussion of the scorecards of LEED and NGBS: NGBS has different point requirements and requires minimums in each chapter. LEED is just a total. This makes NGBS more rigorous. LEED was designed for commercial use and wasn't a good fit for the residential. NGBS emerged from the need for something better suited for residential.

Councilmember Day said it would be helpful to see a comparison matrix of LEED vs. NGBS. Regarding the trees: He is more interested in the comparison of what was there before vs. what is planned for the new development. He supports asking if they can address that gap somewhere else in the City.

Councilmember Kabir would like to see the applicant address the loss of canopy somewhere in the City.

Continue to discuss the tree canopy and LEED v. NGBS in the coming week.

To agenda – Day.

3. Discussion of a letter on Phases 2 and 3 of the US 1 reconstruction project:

Mr. Gardiner reviewed staff report. There is no funding in the MDOT budget for Planning, Design and Engineering for the segments of US 1 north of 193. We have an opportunity now with the beginning of Phase 1 Construction to thank SHA and repeat our requests for Phases 2 and 3. The County Council also sends an annual letter to the state with their list of County priority projects. US 1 Reconstruction Phases 2 & 3 is currently 3rd out of 9 listed priorities for the County. We can also send a letter to the County.

Prepare both letters for approval next week. Consent.

ADD: Discussion of meetings for the summer:

Council discussed continuation of virtual meetings through the end of summer, and changing the August Worksession date back to Tuesday since National Night Out has been delayed.

To Consent next week: Postpone NNO to October (if feasible at that time), Change the October W/S date to Wednesday to accommodate NNO, and change the August Worksession date back to Tuesday.

COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Councilmember Kabir announced the resumption of the north College Park community/police meetings as a virtual meeting next Monday at 7:30. He added that a no-contact community clean up event is being planned.

Mayor Wojahn said he reached out to our COPS officers in light of death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. He said this could be an opportunity to have a discussion with the police about the concerns that people have about issues of racial bias in the police department.

Councilmember Kennedy discussed plans for the Hollywood Farmers Market.

Councilmember Dennis announced the resumption of Coffee Club via teleconference call beginning tomorrow. The dial in information is on City website calendar.

Councilmember Brennan supports a dialog about diversity, justice, and bias in local policing. He recognized local beautification efforts he sees in the community but said litter continues to be prevalent. He asked if we could create a litter map so interested residents know where they can pick up litter. He wants us to ask CSX to clean up the litter on their tracks. Mayor Wojahn mentioned "PGC litter track" on the County's website.

Councilmember Day extended condolences to John Rigg and his family on the loss of John's mother.

Councilmember Mitchell said the West College Park Civic Association will hold a town hall meeting tomorrow with the 21st delegation. She said the last few days have been very difficult for her thinking about the homicide of George Floyd and what is happening in this country today. She is tired of being tired of the continuous killing of our black men at the hands of the police. We need to have real conversations face-to-face.

Councilmember Mackie echoes these comments and hopes as a City we can do something to make a difference.

Mr. Rosenbaum echoed the sentiment about what is going on in the country. He is talking with the SGA about what they can do.

Mayor Wojahn said the events of the last few days is another stark reminder that racial bias still exists and the impact particularly in the African American community can be deadly. He wants to engage with the community and hear solutions and ideas about things we can be doing better. He invited people to come to us with ideas and suggestions. He said it is difficult to have a dialog during a pandemic but we can do it virtually. He encouraged people to participate in our Strategic Planning forums.

ADJOURN: At 9:32 p.m., a motion was made by Councilmember Brennan and seconded by Councilmember Mackie to adjourn the Worksession and enter into closed session. The motion passed 7-0.

Janeen S. Miller	Date
City Clerk	Approved