

**WORKSESSION MINUTES**  
**College Park City Council**  
**Tuesday, July 7, 2020**  
**7:30 p.m. – 11:26 p.m.**

**Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this was a Virtual Meeting.**  
[Due to technical difficulties, this meeting was not cablecast or streamed.]

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

**ABSENT:** Councilmember Mitchell.

**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; Kiaisha Barber, Director of Youth, Family and Senior Services; Frank Pacifico, Assistant Director Public Works; Adam Rosenbaum, Student Liaison; Julia Nikhinson, Deputy Student Liaison.

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

**City Manager's Report:** Mr. Somers said the new economic development manager has been hired and will begin in August; discussed the Strategic Plan survey; said COVID-19 assistance grants are available; announced the book giveaway on Saturday at the College Park Food Bank sponsored by the City's Education Advisory Committee.

**Amendments to and Approval of the Agenda:**

- A motion was made by Councilmember Mackie and seconded by Councilmember Rigg to add discussion of a letter to the County and Sheriff's office to reevaluate the no-knock warrant process. The motion passed 7-0.
- A motion was made by Councilmember Kabir and seconded by Councilmember Mackie to add a Proclamation for Juneteenth National Freedom Day. The motion passed 7-0.
- A motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Mackie to approve the agenda as amended. The motion passed 7-0.

**Discussion Items:**

- 1 **Proclamations:** Mayor Wojahn read the following:
  - a. the City of College Park Proclamation in Honor of LGBTQ+ Pride Month June 2020;
  - b. the City of College Park Proclamation in Honor of Juneteenth National Freedom Day.
- 2 **Detailed Site Plan 19042 for Branchville Gardens multi-family apartment building and approval of a Declaration of Covenants:** Dan Lynch, Attorney for the applicant, Cruz Development Corporation. Ms. Schum reviewed the history of this project which goes back to the 1980s. The project was previously called Branchville Crossing or Branchville Corner. She said the turning radius for the Branchville Fire Department is not shown on the final plat. She reviewed the various agreements that date back to 1987 and 1988, and the history from 2015-2016. She said the existing fence erected in 2016 will be removed if this DSP is approved.

Councilmember Rigg asked what currently binds the City with this parcel. Ms. Schum said different requirements are in effect now and this is a de novo review. Councilmember Brennan asked about paragraph 14 in the agreement between Cruz development and the Berwyn District Civic Association from 1987: does that language still apply? Ms. Ferguson said she understands that to mean that if what the two parties have agreed to is not acceptable to the public authorities that have to approve them, the parties will attempt to work together reach their goals. That agreement is not binding on the City.

Ms. Bader reviewed the staff report. This is a 7-story, 81-unit, affordable housing project. The Planning Board date is July 23.

Councilmember Mackie asked if the parking is considered adequate for this number of units. Ms. Bader said yes, it meets the standard of 128 spaces.

Councilmember Brennan asked about the offsite tree planting requirement: will the trees be in the City boundaries? Ms. Bader said the County has a prioritization system and the location has not been determined. Councilmember Brennan asked if the trees can be kept in the City, even if on private property. Ms. Schum said there is currently a separate conversation with M-NCPPC about suitable locations for tree planting and she will keep the Council informed. Councilmember Brennan asked about providing connectivity to the recreational amenities that are in walking distance to this site. Ms. Schum acknowledged that the site is limited in what it has to offer because most of the green space is for stormwater management. She said we are seeking a sidewalk on the eastern boundary to help connect to the area of Duvall Field. Councilmember Brennan asked about sustainability. Ms. Schum said there is no County requirement for this project because of its location and zone.

Mayor Wojahn asked if the sidewalk connects to the crosswalk across University Blvd? Ms. Schum said there is a storm drain outflow pipe which impedes connectivity. There is interest in discussing the addition of a crosswalk with the applicant.

Councilmember Rigg asked what the staff recommendation is about the turning radius. Ms. Bader said we want to upgrade/improve the existing condition by keeping the curb cut and adding a reinforced sidewalk. We may need a public access easement. He asked about safety of pedestrians in that area. On-site amenities were discussed. Ms. Schum said the applicant met the County requirement for providing recreational facilities by paying a fee-in-lieu in 1988. Councilmember Rigg wants to make sure that the County is not double-counting trees being planted in mitigation of the airport tree loss.

Councilmember Kabir asked about the turning radius area. Ms. Schum said it will be south of the sidewalk but will adjoin the sidewalk and there may be times that the fire department may have to traverse the sidewalk. This is on City right-of-way; not on private property. Ms. Schum said the City Engineer measured the site and believes the area is adequate but that the fire department may feel differently. The goal is to accommodate the fire department in the City right-of-way.

Dan Lynch, Attorney for the applicant, and Civil engineer Barry Caisson: This project started in another form in the 1980s. They approached the City again in 2015 regarding the financing and a fence. They took the fence to Circuit Court and prevailed. The Branchville Volunteer Fire Department filed an adverse possession claim against Cruz, and again Cruz prevailed. This property is unusual because of the zone it is in – the R-10 zone. The current proposal is

approximately 10 units less than approved in 1988. Standards have changed since then. They are providing 2-tiered structured parking which enables them to comply with the parking requirement. The only deviation from the zoning ordinance is the alternative compliance for landscape, which has been approved. They agree with the proposed conditions. The only concern is about the public art; he has not had a chance to discuss with his client.

Councilmember Brennan is excited about the opportunity to introduce affordable housing in the City. He asked about sustainability. Mr. Lynch said their application to the state for financing addresses sustainability and he will provide that information. Councilmember Brennan asked if they believe the prior agreement between the BDCA and Cruz still stands. Mr. Lynch said that document was drafted for the special exception/variance related to the prior development, neither of which moved forward, so in his opinion, it is not relevant today. He is willing to reach out to the BDCA. Cruz development has its own management company. Councilmember Brennan said the community is concerned about the impact of this project to the operation of the fire department and discussed the turning radius. He asked if there is an opportunity to work this out. Mr. Lynch believes the turning radius is met in the City right-of-way. He is not aware of any incident with the fire department not being able to get in or out of their bays with the fence that is currently there. Councilmember Brennan hopes that there can be a conversation with the fire department to understand their concerns.

Councilmember Dennis asked if we could predict how construction of the building might impact fire department operations. Ms. Schum said the applicant will have to work with the City Engineer to discuss staging areas and construction parking during the permit process with the City. The sidewalk will be done in a phased manner so as not to impact operations. They will coordinate with the fire department.

Councilmember Mackie asked what measures are taken to ensure this is low income housing into the future and asked if they did a shadow study. Mr. Lynch said they shared the program with City staff. The existing trees are 35 feet tall and already creating a shadow.

To agenda next week – Brennan.

**3. Detailed Site Plan 18047 for the College Park Marriott located at Campus Drive and River Road:** Ms. Schum said this is an application by Republic Properties for a 5-story, 161 room hotel with 80 surface parking spaces and ground floor retail. Council supported the Preliminary Plan in January. There were conditions placed on property at that time, some of which are carried forward in this application. This is the first project in the College Park Aviation Village neighborhood and will be the beginning of redevelopment in this area. The site is in the flood plain and the infrastructure in this area is substandard, so this is an opportunity to create a new neighborhood.

Ms. Bader reviewed the staff report. The Planning Board date is July 30. This site is currently a County-owned surface parking lot. The Applicant has received a determination of no-hazard from the FAA. She reviewed the conditions that staff supports, and the modifications that staff does and does not support.

Councilmember Rigg asked about the design and elevation of the street level retail fronting Campus Drive. He is skeptical that outdoor dining is optimal at this location due to proximity to the road and the sun exposure.

Art Horne, attorney for the applicant; David Bickel, Civil Engineer: The hotel industry has been hit hard by COVID-19 and they are watching the industry closely. They follow the design standards of the Marriott Corporation. The retail is under 7,000 square feet. The Staff recommendations/conditions the applicant does not agree with:

- The pylon sign – they would like the flexibility to keep that. Marriott wants the visibility.
- Parking - The developer wants the additional parking spaces on Lehigh in case there is an overflow of parking in the area. Lehigh Road already has cars parked on it and they are attempting to park as many cars on site rather than on Lehigh. They would like to see those parking spaces stay.
- Re Streetscape lighting – M-NCPPC has some street lighting on Cpl. Frank Scott Drive and the applicant has no objection to doing the same thing, but prefers language that says “to the extent practicable;” they will work with staff.

Councilmember Rigg asked about the retail. Mr. Horne said it is market driven. Councilmember Rigg expressed concerns about parking and the free-standing pylon sign.

Councilmember Day said other people are using that surface lot at this time – where are those cars going to park? Parking in that area needs to be addressed.

To agenda next week - Day

**4. Discussion of request by College Park Housing Authority to lease land adjacent to Attick Towers (Parcel 92) free-of-charge to expand the existing parking lot - Michelle Johnson, Executive Director; Bob Catlin, Chair, College Park Housing Authority; Massoud Towhidi, Capital Development Design, Inc.; and the Housing Authority Commissioners.**

Mr. Somers reviewed the staff report. The request is to add 12 parking spots on the City’s property at the corner. Currently zoned for open space.

Ms. Johnson: The building has 108 units and 44 parking spaces for residents and staff. The building houses low-income seniors and disabled persons. Some residents park across the street, which is dangerous. They are requesting to use City land free-of-charge for additional parking.

Mr. Massoud Tawhidi, civil engineer: He said 16 additional parking spaces were approved on the property in 2015 but not built. Mayor Wojahn asked why they weren’t built, and why they are asking for City land for 12 spaces when they haven’t built the 16 spaces that were previously approved. Mr. Somers said we hadn’t heard about that before tonight so that wasn’t taken into account when we proposed alternative designs. Mayor Wojahn suggested staff and the CPHA go back to the drawing board based on the information that there are 16 additional spaces approved but not been built.

Commissioner Bob Catlin said the 2015 parking project was stopped because of other financial needs at the building. He believes those permits have expired. He doesn’t see the need for 28 (12 + 16) additional spaces.

Mr. Towhidi said residents didn’t want to lose green space around the building to add the 16 spaces that were previously approved.

Mayor Wojahn asked staff and the Housing Authority to continue to meet off-line and bring forward a proposal that they agree on. Possibly return future W/S.

**5. Discussion of Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) policy and project: Team members Kiaisha Barber, Tracey Clayton, Bill Gardiner, Frank Pacifico and Teresa Way-Pezzuti Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager and Kiaisha Barber, Director of Youth, Family and Senior Services:**

The team reviewed the PowerPoint presentation (attached).

[At 10:33 p.m., Motion to extend meeting, Dennis/Kennedy 7-0.]

Potential next steps:

- Look at examples of what other communities have done.
- Have additional conversations going forward.
- GARE cohort cut short by COVID and ended June 2020. Consider continued participation in coming year.
- Look at racial composition of staff, committee membership.
- Recommend policies that would lead to more equitable committee membership and hiring.
- Resolution spoke to issues specific to the Lakeland community – hear from those members.
- Analyze results of staff survey.

Council discussion:

- Forming a Council Committee or Task Force:
  - Support in general;
  - Involving the Lakeland community specifically:
    - Look at what allowed that to happen in the first place
    - Conversation about how to make that right
  - How can we attract and retain black committee members?
  - Should have a lot of community input, be forward-thinking
  - Should be action-oriented for the near- to mid-term
- How do we have Community Conversations – how residents interact with one another, how we can help that discourse.
- Broader discussion of communities of color that aren't black – widen the lens to include other racial and ethnic minorities
- Further Council discussion about how to address Lakeland
- Need to have the conversation within our Council first
- Look at how we conduct community engagement – good opportunity with our Strategic Plan. Work with our consultants to make sure we are meeting that goal
- The lens should be used to look at all of our actions and policies to understand what the impacts are. Always focusing on enforcement can lead to disparate impacts and exacerbate existing disparities. Is there a tool to help us as decision makers (senior staff and Council) to look through that lens?
- Include strategy for engaging low-English proficiency populations

[At 11:00 p.m., motion to suspend the rules and continue the meeting, Day/Kennedy, 7-0]

Return in next two months.

**ADD:** Letter to County and Sheriff’s office re no-knock warrants: Councilmember Mackie wants the City to send a letter to encourage the reevaluation of the no-knock warrant process to keep residents and officers safe. We don’t want a repeat of what happened to Breonna Taylor. Councilmember Day said we need to be careful—we don’t want to tell them what to do. Encourage them to review their policies and perhaps work toward elimination of no-knock warrants. Mackie will draft. To Agenda next week - Consent.

**7. Mayor and Councilmember Comments**

- Kabir – D1 and D4 are hosting a community conversation on CB-48-2020 re property tax cap.
- Kabir – next Monday is the monthly community police meeting at 7:30. Virtual.
- Kennedy – Council Member Dernoga is holding a community gathering about the Stone property. Virtual.
- Dennis – Coffee Club 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month in summer. Virtual.
- Dennis – Thursday, Lakeland Civic Association, 6:30, regular meeting. Virtual.
- Mayor – MML virtual conference last month; Council Member Glaros is interested in how we support our social services.

The Mayor read a statement from the Mayor and Council about an approval in error of a Revitalization Tax Credit for the Northgate project (attached).

**8. City Manager's Comments:** Mr. Somers responded to the statement read by the Mayor.

**ADJOURN:** On a motion by Councilmember Kennedy and seconded by Councilmember Rigg, the Worksession was adjourned at 11:26.

[The previously announced Closed Session was not held.]

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Janeen S. Miller	Date
City Clerk	Approved