

WORKSESSION MINUTES
College Park City Council
Tuesday, September 1, 2020
7:30 P.M. – 11:07 P.M.

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

PRESENT: Mayor Wojahn; Councilmembers Kabir, Kennedy, Brennan, 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; 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 announced that Campus Drive under the CSX tracks has reopened; provided an update on the City’s COVID assistance programs; said yard signs will be deployed to publicize our assistance programs; and announced the October 10 and 24 Public Works clean up events. He responded to questions about mosquito control since the County isn’t spraying; information is in the weekly bulletin.

AMENDMENTS TO/APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

A motion was made by Councilmember Kennedy and seconded by Councilmember Rigg to add a Special Session to tonight’s agenda on the DACA Amicus Brief (20-G-143). The motion passed 8-0. A motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell and seconded by Councilmember Day to adopt the agenda as amended. The motion passed 8-0.

#1: Discussion of and possible Special Session to approve the recommendations of the BOES for the District 2 Special Election – Jack Robson, Chief, Board of Election Supervisors:

Ms. Miller and Mr. Robson reviewed the staff report and the proposed election date of November 10. That date was determined because it is 28 days after the County’s voter registration closes for the Presidential Election, which is a requirement of the City Charter. The Mayor and Council expressed interest in holding the election on a weekend and discussed possible alternatives. A new date of Sunday, November 8 was suggested. The BOES indicated they could make that date work, and that the City’s voter registration closing date would be adjusted accordingly.

A motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to enter into Special Session to approve a plan for the District 2 Special Election. The motion passed 8-0 and Council entered the Special Session at 8:05 p.m.

20-G-142 Approval of the Special Election to be held on Sunday, November 8, from 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. at the College Park Community Center: *See Special Session minutes*

ADD Agenda Item:

20-G-143 Amicus Brief to support DACA: *See Special Session minutes*

[Motion to suspend the rules and take item #5 next. Kabir/Mitchell, pass 8-0.]

#5. Charter Resolution Of The Mayor And Council Of The City Of College Park, Amending Article III, “Mayor And Council”, § C3-1, “Membership; Election; Term Of Office”, To Delete The Requirement That Elected Officials Shall Be Registered To Vote For One Year Prior To Their Election And To Add A Requirement That Elected Officials Shall Be Domiciled In The City For At Least One Year Prior To Their Election – Suellen Ferguson:

Ms. Ferguson said this amendment changes the requirement from being registered to vote in the City for a year prior to the election to living in the City for a year prior to election. She added that this is not an unusual change. You still need to be a registered voter but have to show that you have lived in the City for a year prior to the election.

Councilmember Mackie asked what the criteria would be with this change. The requirement that a candidate be registered to vote will remain. Ms. Ferguson will make a clarifying amendment to retain wording in the Charter Resolution “a current registered voter.”

Mr. Robson said when the Board discussed this they agreed that the broader language in the Charter was better than trying to account for every possible way the candidate could prove residency for one year. He discussed various methods the BOES could accept: a lease, a utility bill or an affidavit, for example. If the candidate can’t prove their residency, the Board wouldn’t qualify them, but the Board’s goal is to qualify candidates, not prevent people from running for office.

Introduce next week: Kennedy

#2. Presentation on the Final Report of the Senior and Community Recreation Needs Assessment GreenPlay – Tom Diehl:

Mr. Diehl reviewed the PPT. There are short, medium (3-5 years) and long term (6-10 years) recommendations.

Comments from Council:

- Should these recommendations be considered in the context of the Strategic Plan discussion? Mr. Somers said Council should discuss the recommendations, make

amendments as desired, then bring it back for approval to make it clear that this is the Council's direction. Mr. Diehl added this is meant to be a standalone document, but parts can be incorporated into a Strategic Plan.

- Members of the Seniors Committee are interested in parts of this report. Is there an opportunity to include them?
- Some of these recommendations are "shovel ready" and could be considered separately.

Return Future Worksession.

#3: Discussion about participation in the AARP Livable Communities Program - Kiaisha Barber, Bonnie McClellan, Robert Thurston:

Ms. Barber said the Seniors Committee researched what it would take for the City to become an AARP livable community. She reviewed the staff report and the steps: An application from the Mayor and Council, a commitment letter signed by the Mayor supporting the basic tenets of an AARP Age Friendly community, plus a Resolution that outlines City support for age friendly initiatives.

Council acknowledged this is a huge project and asked if they have reached out to other cities to see what tangible results they have seen.

Ms. McClellan agreed it is a huge project but with item #2 and the Strategic Plan, a lot of the initial work is being addressed.

Council suggested the Seniors Committee come up with a priority list – i.e., the low-hanging fruit.

Next step is to develop a Workgroup; Resolution to enable them to proceed with the program and create a workgroup. To agenda next week on consent. Resolution should not be prescriptive about who is on the workgroup.

#4: Review of the Tree and Landscape Board's Urban Forest Protection proposal – Robert Marsili, Brenda Alexander, Rashawna Alfred, John Lea-Cox, Todd Reitzel, Christine O'Brien:

Ms. Alexander reviewed the staff report and that changes that have been made since last presentation. Ms. Alfred said they wanted to minimize the burden to residents.

Council comments:

- Reference to the mostly negative public comment we have received.
- Requested a comparison chart of what neighboring municipalities are doing.
- Statement that an incentive approach is easier to sell rather than a punitive approach.
- Request to phase this in or do some public education.
- Concern that there might not be room on someone's lot for three replacement trees.
- Could the replacement tree be planted on a neighbor's property?

- Is there a basis for the 20% pruning designation?
- What if the homeowner wants to put an addition on their house but have to remove a healthy tree – is that a \$500 fee in that case?
- Can a person ask for permission to take down a tree that is healthy?
- Appeal process if their application is denied
- What are the criteria for the TLB to consider?
- How much of the loss of the tree canopy is coming from residential v. other areas?
- Example of how much a homeowner would have to pay to remove a tree
- How quickly is a decision made? Residents don't want this to hold them up.
- Push the Tree Canopy Enhancement Program – perhaps increase program funding.
- If the City denied the removal of a tree, and it later damaged personal property, would the City have liability?

[Motion to extend Kabir/Rigg 8-0 10:30 p.m.]

Discussion of how to proceed: Community forum to get feedback similar to previous listening session on the fence ordinance. Are we striking the right balance between the carrot and the stick? Did we get the tree diameters right, the payment into the TCEP right, the interaction with the tree expert right? Review the grounds for allowing a tree removal. Consider phasing this in by starting with incentives rather than penalties. Explore an option to allow replanting on neighboring properties. Focus on incentives and making sure the TCEP is doing what it should be doing.

Ms. Alexander stated that the only way to combat loss of tree canopy is to replant. It takes 20 years from replanting for a tree to reach canopy height. Replanting has to be continuous. The City doesn't have the acreage necessary to perform mitigation. Once the mitigation happens on a property it has to remain as is, which is why the TLB focused on residential property.

#6 - Future Agenda items:

- Kabir – Commemorative bench program. Sponsoring family takes care of the cost of the benches/trees. Kabir/Mitchell. 8-0
- Dennis – Rising concern about permit parking for guests/visitors at the Metropolitan development. Tabled from previous W/S. Request to bring it back in the near future. Request for D. 2 councilmembers to consult first.

#7 – Comments:

- Mayor – Kudos to Staff for work on response to COVID issues re students return to campus

Adjourn: Motion by Councilmember Rigg/second by Councilmember Mackie, passed 8-0. Meeting adjourned at 11:07 p.m.

Janeen S. Miller
City Clerk

Date
Approved