

**WORKSESSION MINUTES**  
**College Park City Council**  
**Tuesday, February 1, 2022**  
**7:30 p.m. – 11:00 p.m.**

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

**PRESENT:** Mayor Wojahn; Councilmembers Kabir, Kennedy, Esters, Whitney, Adams, Rigg, Mackie and Mitchell.

**ABSENT:** None.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Kenneth Young, City Manager; Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Terry Schum, Director of Planning; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Steve Halpern, City Engineer; Robert Marsili, Director of Public Works; Michael Williams, Economic Development Manager.

Mayor Wojahn opened the virtual Worksession at 7:30 p.m. and asked for a moment of silence to remember Hyattsville Mayor Kevin Ward who lost his life last week.

**CITY MANAGER’S REPORT:** Mr. Young announced that the City will host an Earth Day tree giveaway; the City will celebrate Earth Day on April 23; the City will distribute COVID at-home test kits to residents; we are recruiting for the Restorative Justice Commission.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** Motion to approve the agenda without amendment, Kabir/Esters, passed 8-0.

**1. PROCLAMATION:** Mayor Wojahn read the proclamation for Transit Equity Day.

**DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**2. Presentation and Discussion by Washington Gas: Daminique Branch, Maryland Community Outreach; Paul Zohorsky, VP Operations; and Brandon Todd, Director, Public Policy:**

Always call 9-1-1 if you smell gas either inside or outside. How fast they fix it depends on the grade of the leak. Grade 1 they stay on site until it is fixed. Grade 2 or Grade 3 in 60 days or less.

Washington Gas will respond in writing to the questions submitted in writing.

Issues raised by Council: Frustrations expressed by residents (feel like their calls aren’t taken seriously; lack of trust; lack of transparency; no way to know the outcome; poor communication); how old and what types of gas pipes are in College Park; can the grade of the

leak and repair timeline be reported to the residents; role of fire department in detecting leaks; notification to residents when there are projects in the community; a strategic instead of piecemeal approach to neighborhood repairs; how to deal with subcontractors and the workers in front of their house; do they do inside-the-house checks; environmental impact of leaks; find out which neighborhoods were surveyed last year.

Response: They recognize they have technology challenges; plan to roll-out a mobile app later this year; customers should get an appropriate response; 20 year program to replace all infrastructure in Maryland; it is unacceptable if the yard isn't properly restored; they will send information on their energy efficiency programs.

### **3. November 2021 City Election Debrief with Board of Election Supervisors – Chief John Payne and Supervisors Lynea Cooper-Pitts, Yousuf Jaleel and Cameron Thurston:**

Mr. Payne reviewed the BOES report. Council suggested pre-recorded training that a candidate can watch at their convenience and sign a certificate once completed. Suggestion for a survey of residents asking why they don't vote in City elections, what they think about different initiatives, open ended questions to get feedback. Longest interval between Election Day and canvass could be one week.

Tell people to contact the county if mail is still coming to a house after a voter moves or dies.

Agreed to BOES request for a letter to the County BOE about using data from our application mailing for voter list maintenance (Consent).

### **4. Amendments to the New Neighbor Homeowner Grant Program – Terry Schum:**

Ms. Schum reviewed the program and two new changes being recommended tonight to increase the number of grants.

- Eliminate the requirement for the property to have been a rental property. Housing stock is limited, and when you layer on the requirement that the property has to be a rental, it limits the supply of eligible properties.
- If the property *was* a rental, double the grant amount.

Interest in more marketing. This would still require that the buyer be an owner-occupant. The maximum grant amount would be \$10K. Consider additional eligibility: teachers, journalists.

Resolution to agenda next week with staff recommendation. If you anticipate an amendment, please provide it in advance to allow enough time for consideration. Rigg to agenda.

[Motion to extend the meeting Mitchell/Whitney at 10:32 p.m., passed 8-0.]

## 5. Review of Legislation:

Letter of support for HB 254 Vision Zero. *See Special Session minutes for item 22-G-47.*

Letter of support for HB 381 Charter Amendment notice requirements. *See Special Session minutes for item 22-G-48.*

Letter of support for HB 39 Surplus State Property. *See Special Session minutes for item 22-G-49.*

SB 413 Voting Rights Act of 2022 – no hearing date set. Get more information.

SB 486 public accommodations – hearing is 2/15. Get more information.

HB 656 – Consent for support next week.

HB 398 – County delegation. Inclusionary zoning requirement. Consent for support next week.

HB 551 – Consent for support next week.

HB 404 speed limits – get more information.

## 6. Request for/Status of Future Agenda Items:

- Mitchell/Kennedy – request to invite County Council Member Tom Dernoga and M-NCPPC to discuss the feasibility study for a M-NCPPC Community Center in north College Park, passed 8-0.
- Adams/Rigg - discussion regarding possible City match for County Rain Check Rebate Program – this is a larger policy discussion that should be held outside of the budget. Get CBE and staff/legal input. We have a lot on our plate right now; schedule for after budget. 8-0.

7. Announcements: Mayor Wojahn announced we will return to a Hybrid meeting format next week with a combination of in-person and Zoom meetings.

**Adjourn:** Mackie/Adams, 8-0, 11:00 p.m.

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Janeen S. Miller  
City Clerk

Date  
Approved