

WORKSESSION MINUTES

College Park City Council

Tuesday, May 18, 2021

7:30 p.m. – 9:33 p.m.

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

PRESENT: Mayor Wojahn; Councilmembers Kabir, Dennis, Esters, Day, Rigg, Mitchell, and Mackie. Councilmember Kennedy arrived at 9:18 p.m.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Bill Gardiner, Interim City Manager; Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Teresa Way-Pezzuti, Director of Human Resources; Terry Schum, Director of Planning; Robert Marsili, Director of Public Works; Kiaisha Barber, Director of Youth, Family and Senior Services; Gary Fields, Director of Finance; Bridgette Johnson, Economic Development Manager.

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

City Manager's Report: Mr. Gardiner announced the Great College Park Scavenger Hunt this weekend; the YFSS "Grief and Grow Garden" event; City youth scholarships to summer camps. In addition, it was noted that Bike to Work Day is Friday and the Hollywood Farmers Market will open on Saturday.

Amendments to /Approval of Agenda:

1. Add: Consideration of Greenbelt's comments on the MAGLEV DEIS - Motion by Councilmember Dennis; second by Councilmember Esters, passed 7-0.
2. Request for sponsorship by States Attorney's Office for a Gun Violence Awareness event: add as an action item to next week's agenda – Motion by Councilmember Rigg; second by Councilmember Esters, passed 7-0.
3. Approve agenda as amended, motion by Councilmember Dennis, second by Councilmember Rigg, passed 7-0.

Discussion items:

1. **Presentation by the "If I Were Mayor, I Would..." outstanding essayists:** Mayor Wojahn visited public and private school 4th graders virtually this year due to COVID for the annual MML Essay Contest. The outstanding essayists read their essays: Mohammad Humza Baber (Al-Huda School); Richard Rodriguez, Xing Yan Zhan and Kadisha Valdiglesias (Hollywood Elementary); and Jackson Meyers (Holy Redeemer School).
2. **Presentation from WMATA on summer closure of Metro Green Line stations, Charlie Scott, WMATA:** Mr. Scott reviewed the PPT presentation (attached). In addition to rebuilding the platforms, new amenities will be added to enhance the rider experience. The

stations from Greenbelt to West Hyattsville will be shut town from May 29 – September 5. He described the free shuttle bus service. Trips could take anywhere from 15 – 30 minutes longer, depending on traffic. He described Metro’s outreach efforts.

- 3. Consideration of the Request for Recommendation of Waiver of School Facility Surcharge by the developer of the Aspen/Maryland student housing project (on Knox Road):** Ms. Schum reviewed the staff report. The request is for building 1 of the 2-building project. The City has supported the Preliminary Plan and Detailed Site Plan subject to conditions and a Declaration of Covenants. The project is not eligible for a City Revitalization Tax Credit. Ms. Schum described this surcharge as an impact fee, and added that senior housing is exempt.

Matt Tedesco, Attorney for the applicant, York Acquisitions: Planning Board has approved the DSP. They have executed the Declaration of Covenants with the City. He reviewed the points in the request letter.

Councilmember Rigg expressed the difficulty he has supporting waivers of school facilities surcharges because he has children in the public schools and sees their financial struggles. He requested a Council policy discussion about this topic. He asked what public benefit this project brings the City besides tax revenue. Mr. Tedesco said the project redevelops student housing built in the 1960s, supports the University District Vision, and improves stormwater management.

Councilmember Esters also has difficulty waiving fees for a school system that needs the funds. She would support a partial waiver.

Councilmember Kabir is also struggling with this decision. “Partial waiver” is a vague term; he might prefer a set amount.

Councilmember Mitchell asked for the deadline for this decision.

Mayor Wojahn said we are in support of the development but at this time there appears to be reluctance on the part of the Council to bring a recommendation forward next week.

- 4. Discussion of the Calvert Road Playground proposed Basketball Court:** Mr. Gardiner reviewed the staff report. Mr. Rigg said when the Calvert Road School was redeveloped into the childcare facility we lost a basketball court. He described the community input. There would be some tree loss, which he hopes we can mitigate somewhere else on the property. The Child Care center doesn’t want the court too close to their playground. No single location has complete consensus, but this seems to be the best location. Place the proposed location on the consent agenda next week to start the process.
- 5. Discussion of City tax rate and changes to budget if the Constant Yield Rate is adopted:** Mr. Gardiner gave an overview of the staff report. Mr. Fields described ways we could accommodate the constant yield tax rate in the next fiscal year – it amounts to a reduction of

\$380,000. The statement that ARPA funds can't be used to reduce the property tax rate does not appear to apply to municipalities.

Councilmember Kabir said \$.31.31 is the CYTR amount; it might be helpful to see other options if a compromise is needed.

Councilmember Esters asked how this reduction would impact the City in future years. Mr. Fields said the reduction in revenue would continue in future years until the tax rate is changed.

Procedural discussion: amendment to reduce the tax rate next week prior to adoption; Council should choose one of the options to offset the reduced tax revenue - staff suggests option 3. Mr. Fields will prepare a revised ordinance reflecting a change in the tax rate. If we learn that ARPA funds can't be used, Council should select another option. Request to post this information on the City website.

6. **ADD:** Review of the City of Greenbelt's MAGLEV DEIS comments: *See Special Session minutes for 21-G-71.*

7. **Requests for/Status of Future Agenda Items:**

Councilmember Mitchell requested that Councilmember Rigg's item about the school facilities surcharge be schedule on the June W/S.

Councilmember Rigg asked to remove the parking prohibition at 4500 Beechwood Road from next week's agenda to allow time for further community discussion. Rigg/Day, 8-0.

Councilmember Mackie asked to put the vehicle fleet lease item on the action agenda.

Councilmember Kennedy discussed scheduling the City Attorney evaluation.

8. **Mayor and Councilmember Comments:**

- Hollywood Farmers Market opens Saturday.
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) week.
- Mayor Wojahn has been asked to be part of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee for the UMD.

ADJOURN: A motion was made by Councilmember Dennis and seconded by Councilmember Esters to adjourn the Worksession and reconvene in a Closed Session. Mayor Wojahn read the Closing Statement:

Pursuant to the statutory authority of the Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions Article § 3-305(b), the Mayor and Council of the City of College Park are providing notice that they will meet in a closed session after the meeting on May 18, 2021 to: consult with Counsel on a Legal Matter; consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation; discuss the appointment of individuals over whom this

public body has jurisdiction. The Mayor and Council will discuss negotiations on a litigation matter and will not return to open session after the closed session ends.

The motion passed 8-0, and the meeting ended at 9:33 p.m.

Janeen S. Miller
City Clerk

Date
Approved