

MINUTES
College Park City Council Meeting
Tuesday, June 6, 2023

7:30 p.m. – 8:10 p.m.

**This was a hybrid meeting: Online via Zoom;
In-person in the Council Chambers of City Hall.**

PRESENT: Mayor Kabir; Councilmembers Kennedy, Esters, Whitney, Adams, Rigg (arrived 7:49 p.m. by Zoom), Mackie and Mitchell.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Kenneth Young, City Manager; Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Yvette Allen, Assistant City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Miriam Bader, Director of Planning and Dhruvak Mirani, the Student Liaison

Mayor Kabir opened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Kennedy announced the North College Park Civic Association will meet this Thursday at Davis Hall at 7:30 p.m.

Councilmember Esters announced that the Lakeland Civic Association will meet this Thursday at the College Park Community Center at 7:00 p.m., and the District 2 Walking Tour will continue on June 17.

Councilmember Whitney announced that Saturday, June 10 is Trolley Trail Day

Mayor Kabir announced that on June 24 the Council will hold a town hall in the City Hall Council Chambers from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. for residents to ask questions, make suggestions, and discuss issues with the Mayor and Council.

Councilmember Mackie announced the College Park Woods Neighborhood Watch Community will hold a picnic and meet and greet at the neighborhood park this Saturday. Also announced that the Bee City USA Committee will hold a free Pollinator Resource Fair at the University of Maryland, The Clarice from 1:00 pm to 2:30 p.m.

Councilmember Adams announced that on Thursday, June 22, 2023, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., the Storm Water Management and Climate Change Public Form in the main auditorium of the UMD School of Architecture.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT:

Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager announced that beginning July 1, the speed cameras on Rhode Island Avenue between Greenbelt Road to Paducah Road will be enforced 24/7/365. Also announced the Friday Night Live this Friday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on the plaza at City Hall. This event will celebrate Pride Month with lapel pins and stickers honoring College Park Pride.

PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS:

A. Mayor Kabir read the Proclamations for Immigrant Heritage Month, Juneteenth, and LGBTQ+ Pride Month.

AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

A motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell and seconded by Councilmember Mackie to remove item 23-G-82 from the agenda. Motion passed 7-0.

A motion was made by Councilmember Whitney and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to add 23-G-89 to the agenda, Per City Code §C3-6(3)(b) I move to approve the applications from Kamthorn Clary; Mary Cook; Bryan Haddad; Jacob Hernandez; Alan Hew; Nikesha Pancho; Kelly Reinke; Brian Roan; and Mark Shroder; as nominees for the District 1 Council seat. Motion passed 7-0.

A motion was made by Councilmember Kennedy and seconded by Councilmember Mitchell to add 23-G-90 to the agenda, A Nomination by any Councilmember for the District 1 Council Seat. Motion passed 7-0.

A motion was made by Councilmember Mackie and seconded by Kennedy to add Action Item #13 to the agenda - Referral By The Mayor Of Nominations To The District 1 Council Seat, For Review And Comment, To The Council As A Committee Of The Whole, Pursuant To §C-6(B)(3)(B) Of The Charter, For The Purpose Of Reporting On The Qualifications Of The Nominees. Motion passed 7-0.

A motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell and seconded by Councilmember Whitney to approve the agenda as amended. Motion passed 7-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON CONSENT AGENDA AND NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Oscar Gregory – non-resident: Stated that the discussion regarding the District 1 candidates should be done in public and not in a Closed Session since we will be violating the Open Meeting Act.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Councilmember Esters and seconded by Councilmember Whitney to adopt the Consent Agenda, which consisted of the following items:

23-G-88	Authorize the City's continued participation in the Community Development Block Grant program under Prince George's County during the Federal FY 2024-2026 qualification period, and for City staff to execute the required forms.
23-G-87	Minutes of May 23, 2023

The motion passed 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARING AND CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCE 23-O-06:

An Amended Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the City of College Park to increase the salary for the Mayor to \$15,000 per year, to increase the salary for a Councilmember to \$10,000 per year, and to establish a separate level of pay for the Mayor Pro Tempore at \$12,500 per year. Salary increases will be effective after the next General Election.

Teresa Way-Pezzuti, Director of Human Resources, reviewed the staff report.

Oscar Gregory – non-resident: stated that he agrees with the Ordinance.

A motion was made by Councilmember Adams and seconded by Councilmember Whitney to adopt Ordinance 23-O-06 to increase the salary for the Mayor to \$15,000 per year, to increase the salary for a Councilmember to \$10,000 per year, and to establish a separate level of pay for the Mayor Pro Tempore at \$12,500 per year to be paid on a bi-weekly basis beginning on or around December 15, 2023.

Councilmember Mitchell thanked staff for bringing this Ordinance forward.

Councilmember Adams stated that he has heard positive remarks on this ordinance and hopes this increase encourages others to run for Council in the future.

Mayor Kabir stated that a Compensation Review Committee of residents should be established every election year for any future reviews.

The motion passed. 7-0

ACTION ITEMS

23-G-88 Acceptance of qualified applicants for appointment as nominations to the District 1 Council seat, to enable referral by the Mayor for review and comment by the Council as a committee of the whole, for the purpose of reporting on the qualifications of the nominees.

Suellen Ferguson explained City Code §C3-6(3)(b) states vacancies are to be filled by appointment, the Mayor and Council shall review the applications at the next regular meeting after the deadline or at a meeting specially called for that purpose.

Nominations may also be taken from the floor from any member of Council. The Mayor shall refer all nominations to a committee of the whole Council for review and comment for the purpose of reporting on the qualifications of the nominees. Upon the report of the committee of the whole, a vote on the nominee or nominees shall be taken with no further nominations being allowed from the floor. Should no nominee receive a majority of the votes cast, a second vote shall be conducted between the two nominees receiving the highest number of votes. The nominee receiving a majority vote shall thereby be appointed to fill the vacancy.

Once the vote is taken, the individual may be sworn-in at next week's meeting.

A motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell and seconded by Councilmember Kennedy, per City Code §C3-6(3)(b), to approve the applications from Kamthorn Clary; Mary Cook; Bryan Haddad; Jacob Hernandez; Alan Hew; Nikesha Pancho; Kelly Reinke; Brian Roan; and Mark Shroder; as nominees for the District 1 Council seat.

Oscar Gregory – non-resident: stated he hopes that everyone being nominated is from District 1. Mayor Kabir verified that each nominee is a resident of District 1.

Carl Macknis – resident: asked to repeat the names of the nominees. Councilmember Mitchell repeated the names of the nominees.

Motion passed 7-0.

23-G-89 Nomination by any Councilmember for the District 1 Council seat

There were no nominations from Council.

Mayor Kabir made a referral of the nominations to the District 1 Council seat, for review and comment, to the Council as a committee of the whole, pursuant to §C-6(b)(3)(b) of the Charter, for the purpose of reporting on the qualifications of the nominees.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Discussion of lowering the speed limit (currently 35 mph) on Rhode Island

Steve Halpern, City Engineer, stated that the City hired The Traffic Group to perform a seven-day traffic study along Rhode Island Avenue this past October after the road was resurfaced and restriped. The City hired Lenhart Traffic Consultants (LTC) this past April to perform a Posted Speed Reduction Study. LTC determined that the City is justified in reducing the speed limit to 30 MPH at this time. LTC recommends that a posted speed limit of 30 MPH be considered first if no other physical improvements are proposed to be included at the time of speed limit reduction. Reducing the speed limit further to 25 MPH, in an effort to increase the safety of all transportation modalities, should be employed only with installation of traffic calming techniques such as the installation of raised crosswalks, chicanes, or speed humps, which would likely decrease the prevailing speed enough to justify a 25 MPH speed limit.

Suellen Ferguson stated that at this time, we are requesting to lower the speed limit to 30 MPH and then, after all of the calming techniques are installed, another speed reduction study must be taken to justify a 25 MPH speed limit.

Steve Halpern stated that the second study will take place sometime in September. Discussion consisted of: holding a neighborhood meeting prior to reducing the speed limit on Rhode Island Avenue or installing electronic signs informing drivers of the reduced speed limit, and if the study recommended the speed limit be reduced to 25

MPH on Rhode Island Avenue now, why can't the speed limit be changed to 25 instead of 30 MPH especially if there are safety issues. The study recommended changing the behavior of the drivers with the traffic calming devices prior to reducing the speed limit. Also recommended contacting the Prince George's County Fire Department to make sure that reducing the speed limit wouldn't change which fire department would be dispatched for fastest service. Council would also like clarification that a second study must be done after the installation of traffic calming techniques.

B. Discussion of closing the alley between 49th Ave and Blackfoot Road to drive through vehicles.

Bob Ryan reviewed the staff report. This alley, which is not paved, is used mainly by residents as a walking path and should not be used for drive through traffic. To eliminate the occasional vehicle traffic installing a bollard midway between 49th Place and Rhode Island Avenue should fix the issue.

Council asked that a report be made of where all the paper streets are located in the City.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No vote taken as these items were previously discussed:

Mitchell: Update on the Youth Advisory Council and request a presentation from Prince George's County on Housing Affordability.

Mackie: Meeting/discussion the Prince George's County School Board.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE:

Carol Macknis – resident: Happy to see the speed limits being reduced on Rhode Island Avenue and would like to see bicyclists educated on the rules and regulations of the roads. Would also like to know what the City is doing regarding crime prevention.

Oscar Gregory – non-resident: Agrees with reducing the speed limit on Rhode Island Avenue but is concerned that people may start using the service road. Also, a group of volunteers have to help residents with code issues and they would like to work with Code Enforcement prior to issuing any citations to residents.

Elizabeth McMahon – resident: Stated that Rhode Island Avenue is used by pedestrians and vehicles are not stopping for pedestrians in the cross walks. Would like to see pedestrian safety issues be reviewed, especially when vehicles are turning off of Rhode Island Avenue to the service lane.

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR, COUNCIL, STUDENT LIAISONS:

Councilmember Whitney Faded cross walk at Quebec Street and Potomac Avenue.

Councilmember Mitchell – At the end of 35th Avenue the lighting on the street is not adequate and parking is becoming an issue. Would like staff to collaborate with the Veterans Memorial Committee to make a list of all veterans in the City.

Councilmember Mackie – Thanked the Veterans Memorial Committee for the Memorial Day program and thanked HR for hosting the staff picnic.

Councilmember Adams – Attended the Metropolitan Washington Council Air Quality Committee meeting. We have few Code Red days ahead of us.

Councilmember Rigg – Representing the City at the International Town Gown

Dhruvak Mirani - Community Engagement meeting tomorrow.

Mayor Kabir – Attended the Memorial Day event and attended the US Conference of Mayors.

ADJOURN: Mitchell/Rigg, passed 7-0 at 9:29 p.m.

Submitted by Yvette Allen, Assistant City Clerk

**Closed Session
June 6, 2023**

At 9:29 p.m. on June 6, 2023, at the conclusion of the Council meeting, a motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell and seconded by Councilmember Rigg to adjourn into a Closed Session. Mayor Kabir read the closing statement:

Pursuant to the statutory authority of Maryland Annotated Code, General Provisions Article § 3-305, the Mayor and Council will meet in a closed session after this meeting to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals. Council will not return to open session.

The motion passed 7-0.

Mayor Kabir, and Councilmembers Kennedy, Esters, Whitney, Adams, Rigg (by Zoom), Mitchell, and Mackie were present. In addition, the meeting was attended by Assistant City Manager Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Clerk Yvette Allen, City Attorney Suellen

Ferguson and Dhruvak Mirani, Student Liaison. Mayor Kabir was the designated Open Meetings trainee.

Council reviewed and discussed all applications received for the vacant District One Council Seat. The criteria for rating the applicants was established. Council planned the next steps. No action taken.

A motion to adjourn the Closed Session was made by Councilmember Adams and seconded by Councilmember Mackie. The motion passed 7-0 and the Closed Session adjourned at 11:38 p.m.