

MINUTES
College Park City Council Meeting
Wednesday, August 2, 2023

7:30 p.m. – 11:52 p.m.

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

PRESENT: Mayor Kabir; Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell; Councilmembers Hew, Kennedy, Esters, Whitney, Mackie, and Adams.

ABSENT: Councilmember Rigg.

ALSO PRESENT: Kenneth Young, City Manager; Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Janeen S Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Gary Fields, Director of Finance; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Robert Marsili, Director of Public Works; Michael Williams, Economic Development Manager; Dhruvak Mirani, Student Liaison; Miriam Bader, Director of Planning; Erik Valentine, Community Development Planner; Rakhmel Rafi, Grants Coordinator; Jim Miller, Parking Management; Ryna Quinones, Communications Manager; Jen Bice, Event Planner.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Hew announced a back-to-school event at Al Huda School and an event at the College Park Aviation Museum.

Councilmember Esters thanked members of M-NCPPC who met with residents about trees in the Berwyn Neighborhood Park.

Councilmember Whitney thanked all who participated in National Night Out.

Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell also commented on National Night Out events.

Councilmember Mackie said its time to submit Good Neighbor Day proposals.

Mayor Kabir announced another backpack event at Duvall Field.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT: Mr. Young introduced Jen Bice, new Events and Volunteer Specialist, and discussed website enhancements. Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell asked about resources to help Council use the equity and inclusion lens when considering policy matters.

PRESENTATIONS

- A. Presentation by University of Maryland on UMD Facilities Master Plan and other allied items – Carlo Colella, Vice President & Chief Administrative Officer and Kris Phillips, Director of Facilities Planning: The Master Plan will be presented to the Board of Regents in early fall. It is focused on University land, but the connection with community is important. The UMD owns/operates 9,500 beds, and an additional 3,000 beds in public/private partnership. They anticipate some modest increase in housing in 10-12 years, and a modest increase in student population. No increase in parking inventory. Students - 25% out of state; 75% in state. Mr. Phillips reviewed the PowerPoint.

- B. 2023 Quarterly Financial Presentation – Gary Fields, Director of Finance: Mr. Fields presented the quarterly report and responded to questions.

AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Motion by Mitchell/Mackie, to adopt the agenda without amendment, passed 7-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Carol Nezzo, resident and senior citizen: she is grateful for the Neighbors Helping Neighbors program, it is really helping her.

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

- 23-G-113 Approval of revisions to the Mayor and Council’s Rules and Procedures with correction to titles per Councilmember Esters’ comments.

- 23-G-114 Approval of minutes from the June 6, 2023; June 13, 2023; July 11, 2023; and the July 18, 2023 meeting, with corrections as noted.

- 23-G-117 Approval of an application for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Community Parks and Playgrounds Program grant for a new play structure for 5–12 year olds at the Calvert Hills playground.

The motion passed 7-0.

PUBLIC HEARING - ORDINANCE 23-O-07

Presentation of background and Public Hearing on 23-O-07, an Ordinance to amend City Code Chapter 184-18 and 184-24 and Chapter 110-1 to update the hourly parking rate to \$2 and reflect that bills and coins will no longer be accepted as payment for parking meters; and Chapter 110-1 (referencing 151-4) to eliminate reference to the monthly parking programs in the downtown garage and add a reference to the St. Andrew's parking lot permits.

Mr. Ryan said this Ordinance reflects the increase in the parking fees to \$2/hour. We have gone cashless and equipment has been updated. Not all debit cards are accepted the way credit cards are, though it is being worked on. The City also manages two private lots (Curtis and Willard property lots) under contracts that are renewed annually and last amended in the 1990s.

Public Comment:

Dave Dorsch, resident: He has a problem with the City saving money by eliminating cash, but doubling the parking fee. Many nearby areas have free parking so customers bypass College Park and go where parking is free. City could help senior citizens by letting them buy a parking permit that allows them to park at a meter.

John Payne, resident: Look carefully at the cost to citizens before changing the cost. Find a way to reduce the negative impact to citizens who need to dash in to get a coffee or a prescription. Allow a short period of free parking to residents. Their license plates are already in the parking system.

Ruth White, resident: This needs to be remedied. Can we extract ourselves from managing the private lots? What is the long-term plan for parking?

Michelle Akaras, resident: This is an equity and inclusion issue. Not everyone has a credit card. Go back to coins – its so much easier to do a quick in and out. If it's too burdensome to the City, stop managing the private lots.

James Garvin, resident: Echoes the comments of prior residents. Seeking relief from the credit card requirement. When he tried tonight, the machine said "network not available."

Norma Ruiz, non-resident: Not everyone has a credit card. In essence, this increases the cost of food or drink by \$2.35. Can't you have first hour free in garage and other lots.

Stephanie Stulich, resident: uproar in neighborhood listserv, suddenly discovered when they visited the College Park Shopping Center, without any prior notice. \$2.35 is a lot to pay for a 15-minute quick trip. Parking fees do have an impact on retail customers' decisions.

Jacob Hernandez, resident: Newly immigrated residents have a challenge getting a credit card. Lack of handicap parking at the CVS near Cambria. This was not well communicated.

Anna Lee, non-resident, business owner of Stripe 3 Adidas: Merchants have been ignored; businesses were negatively affected. Many customers make quick trips and can't pay for 15 minutes anymore. She is losing customers; this needs a quick resolution.

Public Hearing was closed.

Motion by Kennedy/Adams to move the discussion on this item to this portion of meeting. 5-1-1 (Mitchell abstained; Mackie opposed).

14C: Follow up discussion on 23-O-07:

Concern that now you can't pay a quarter for 15 minutes. Remove ourselves or renegotiate the agreement regarding management of the Curtis and Willard lots or renegotiate the contracts. There should be a reasonable cost for a quick trip. Reinstate cash. 50 Cents for 15 minutes. Have the private businesses come and talk to us about managing their parking lots.

ACTION ITEMS

23-G-111 Approval of a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Maryland concerning division of proceeds from VeoRide Bike Share system

Ms. Ferguson introduced Marta Waldu from the University of Maryland and described the proposed division of the proceeds from VeoRide. The UMD and Town of University Park are in agreement.

[10:27 p.m. Motion to extend Mitchell/Mackie 8-0.]

A motion was made by Councilmember Esters and seconded by Councilmember Mackie to approve the MOU with the University of Maryland, in substantially the form attached, to set the terms of the operation of the mobility share system between the City, the Town of University Park and the University of Maryland, and to provide for the division of any fees and expenses between the parties.

There were no comments from the audience.

The motion passed 8-0.

23-G-115 Presentation on closure of Knox Road for Special Events and decision on next steps

The City's consultant, Soumya Dey, Vice President, Sam Schwartz Company, gave the presentation. The consultant recommends an incremental approach with short-term, mid-term and long-term plans. Start with weekend closures to see how its received. For long-term closure, start with a traffic circulation study. Consider other nearby development when considering long-term closures, and speak with area businesses. Possible grant resources.

[11:10 p.m. Whitney/Mackie, motion to extend the meeting, 8-0.]

A motion was made by Councilmember Adams and seconded by Councilmember Esters to proceed with design and purchase of Thomas Steel Barrier pin down system at 3 pin down locations.

There were no comments from the audience.

The motion passed 8-0.

23-G-116 Discussion and Selection of Future Veo Parking Hub Locations

Mr. Valentine said we were awarded a grant to build out our Veo infrastructure. We estimate we can build out 20 new parking stations. We have identified priority locations in each district.

District 4 needs to do some community engagement. For now, go forward with St. Andrews Place and Crystal Springs.

District 2 wants Berwyn House Road/James Adams Park; College Park Community Center; Lakeland Park; Oasis Apartments.

District 1 is good with the suggested priorities. There was a general request for more bike racks throughout the City.

District 3 is in support of what is being proposed, and would also like to get the other four done.

Motion by Councilmember Adams, second by Councilmember Whitney, to approve the locations listed above, subject to additional input by councilmembers.

The motion passed 8-0.

[11:30 p.m. motion to extend the meeting, 8-0.]

23-G-118 Council consideration of a splash pad for Duvall Field and approval of additional work by consultant KCI due to County requirements

Cost overrun: Our consultant, KCI, has incurred a cost overrun. There are 2 unexpected additional costs for the project due to stricter county floodplain requirements.

Splash pad: The proposed location for a splash pad would be where the two permanent cornhole lots were. Council is interested in providing some kind of water feature but the splash pad is too cost prohibitive and there are too many unknowns. Options: somewhere else by a developer, some other type of water amenity like misting stations, or a water slide rental from a company like Kaboom.

Timing: Permits are causing a delay – expect approval in early 2024.

A motion was made by Councilmember Kennedy and seconded by Councilmember Mackie to approve the extra work authorization requested by KCI in the amount of \$18,720, and to decline including a Splash Pad option for the Duvall Field project.

The motion passed 8-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

- A. Discussion of legislative priorities for the Legislative Dinner: Mr. Gardiner will send a memo to Council to solicit input and place the item on an agenda in September.
- B. Amendment to the remainder of the Zoning chapter to conform to the County: Ms. Ferguson intends to bring back amendments to the rest of the Zoning chapter to conform to the County's ordinance. The first part has been approved by County Council.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

County bill 69 for walkable urban streets (Adams)

COMMENTS FROM MAYOR, COUNCIL, STUDENT LIAISONS:

Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell commented on the NLC conference.
Councilmember Mackie discussed the Chesapeake Bay Policy Committee.
Mr. Mirani said the fall semester is starting soon.

ADJOURN: Adams/Whitney, 11:52 p.m. passed 7-0.

Submitted By: Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk