

MINUTES
College Park City Council Meeting
Tuesday, July 11, 2023

7:30 p.m. – 10:53 p.m.

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

PRESENT: Mayor Kabir; Councilmembers Hew, Kennedy, Whitney, Adams, Rigg, and Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell

ABSENT: Councilmembers Esters and Mackie

ALSO PRESENT: Kenneth Young, City Manager; Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Janeen S Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Robert Marsili, Director of Public Works; Steve Halpern and Jacob Vassalotti, Michael Williams, Economic Development Manager; Dhruvak Mirani, Student Liaison.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Hew announced the North College Park Community Association ice cream social.

Councilmember Whitney announced the Lakeland Civic Association meeting on Thursday at College Park Community Center.

Councilmember Adams congratulated Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell on successfully hosting the MML Summer Conference

Mr. Mirani recognized the success of receiving a \$40M grant for electric busses at the UMD and thanked the UMD for publicly affirming their commitment to ensuring a diverse student body.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

Mr. Young reminded the group that ARPA grants are still available and that information is on the website. He also announced the Friday Night Live event this Friday.

PROCLAMATIONS AND AWARDS:

Mayor Fazlul Kabir and City Manager Kenneth Young presented an award to Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell thanking her for her service as the President of the Maryland Municipal League this past year.

Miss College Park, Kennedy Patrice Williams, reported on her year of service. She is a dance major at Towson University and was named Miss College Park last October.

AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Motion by Adams/Rigg to approve agenda as written, passed 6-0.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- 23-G-99 Approval of a request for a Commemorative Bench to be installed on the Trolley Trail near the corner of Amherst Avenue to honor Dr. Richard Wagner, founder and chair of the College Park City University Partnership, who dedicated his career to preserving historic buildings and stabilizing neighborhoods.
- 23-G-100 Approval of a request from the Lakeland community for a Commemorative Bench in Lakeland to honor Mr. J. M. Chesley Mack who was a civic leader, entrepreneur, business owner, and served on the City Council from 1945 (when College Park was incorporated) until 1957.
- 23-G-102 Award of two contracts: 1) Purchase of one (1) new 2023 all-electric Aebi Schmidt ESWINGO Street Sweeper in the amount of \$353,957.97 to Intercon Truck of Baltimore, Inc., utilizing pricing from competitively bid Sourcwell Contract #093021; 2) Purchase of one (1) 2023 Crane Carrier Chassis and 25 cubic yard Loadmaster, 25 cubic yard Split body packer in the amount of \$379,045.00 to Grand Turk Equipment Co. Inc., under Sourcwell contract #060920; both are subject to the approval of the City Attorney.
- 23-G-101 Approve the appointments of Nora Eidelman to the Ethics Commission, Jeff Lemieux to the Bicycle Pedestrian Committee, Jennifer Konish to the Tree & Landscape Board, and Maria Ulloa-Bustos, reappointment to the

Bee City USA Committee, Frank Cifaldi and Jennifer Lindstrom to the Bee City USA committee.

23-G-105 Approval of the Strategic Plan priorities for FY '24

23-G-106 Approval of a letter of support for a grant application to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Housing Affordability Planning Program for the Community Preservation Trust

The motion passed 6-0.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

23-G-103: Public Hearing and action on the petition request for traffic calming in the 4700 Block of Navahoe Street:

Jacob Vassalotti, GIS Specialist, reviewed results of the traffic study on this block. The volume warrant was met; speeding warrant was not met. Mayor Kabir invited public comment.

There was no public comment.

A motion was made by Councilmember Whitney and seconded by Councilmember Adams to approve the installation of traffic calming and direct the City Engineer to install it at his discretion.

The motion passed 5 – 0 (Councilmember Kennedy was out of the Chambers).

23-G-104: Public Hearing and action on the petition request for traffic calming in the 6800 Block of Dartmouth Avenue:

Steve Halpern, City Engineer, presented the results of the traffic study on this block. The volume warrant was not met, and the speeding warrant was not met. However, the traffic data showed that 10% of the traffic was travelling in the wrong direction on this one-way street. There was one accident in the last 5 years. Mayor Kabir invited public comment.

Lee Havis, resident: Strongly supports the results of the traffic study which does not support traffic calming; it's an unnecessary expense.

Francie Wasser, resident: Opposes the speed hump proposal: safety concerns about having a speed hump, difficulty with snow/ice removal, and the addition of noise from the cars going over the speed hump, especially trucks. Concern that speed humps reduce property values. You can add a speed limit or slow down sign instead.

Aaron Yoches, resident: Opposes the speed hump, agrees with what was said before. The traffic data does not support the need.

Councilmember Adams said there is an option for a choker that will help with the wrong-way traffic.

A motion was made by Councilmember Adams and seconded by Councilmember Kennedy to approve the installation of choker(s) to be located at the discretion of the City Engineer.

Councilmember Hew asked if chokers will hinder emergency vehicles? The City Engineer will determine.

The motion passed 6-0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Discussion with College Park Board of Election Supervisors: debrief of Special Election and plans for General Election – Board of Election Supervisors; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; R. C. Carter, ElectionGuard, and Pam Geppart, Hart InterCivic.

BOES Chief John Payne reviewed the reports provided and opened discussion on the plan for the November election. Ms. Miller introduced R. C. Carter (ElectionGuard) and Pam Geppart (Hart InterCivic) and outlined their role in the November election. Mr. Carter and Ms. Geppart provided background on their companies and specifically the trial of the ElectionGuard software that is in development.

There was specific discussion about the BOES's updated recommendation on Early Voting: the BOES previously hoped to provide four days of Early Voting at Davis Hall and four days at City Hall, however after the experience at the Special Election they realize this is not feasible. Their new request is to have one day of Early Voting at Davis Hall and one day at City Hall. The BOES answered questions on the new recommendation.

Council direction to place the BOES recommendation for Early Voting dates on the Consent Agenda next week.

B. Discussion of an advisory question for the November ballot for potentially changing M&C terms from 2-years to 4-years – Kenneth A. Young, City Manager and Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney

Mr. Young wanted Council to have the opportunity to discuss this and give direction if they want this to be on the ballot this fall. Councilmember Mitchell explained why she asked for this question to be placed on the agenda: as a courtesy to the newer members of the body and to have a robust discussion on this question. She described the previous Charter Review Commission report and the question that was placed on the 2019 ballot. The City Attorney said a ballot question is advisory only; after the results Council may decide whether to continue to discuss the matter. A change in terms would be made by Charter amendment and will require public notice and a public hearing.

Council discussed the pros and cons of two- and four-year terms, and of staggered or concurrent terms: The cost of running an election (this year budgeted at \$70K, plus staff time). The impact on Councilmembers to run every two years. Support for putting advisory questions on the ballot to get feedback. Consider which is best for student engagement. Staggered terms will aid the stability of the Council; with concurrent terms, the entire Council could turn over in one election. Increased possibility of Special Elections with a four-year term. Need for public education about the question. Problems that result from a compound question. Discussion of the wording of the question. Specific outreach to students.

Move forward with drafting a question on four year, staggered terms, with election every two years. Return next week.

C. Discussion of plans for the additional revenue from the 3-cent increase in taxes on commercial, industrial and apartments:

Mr. Fields said the 3-cent additional tax on commercial, apartments and industrial property was approved with the budget. The 3 cents will result in about \$340K. It was discussed at the April 11 Council meeting. Suggestions for its use were made but no decisions. Tonight's discussion is to determine how to use those funds and give

direction to staff. Mr. Young said we had to put the numbers in the budget in order to have this discussion.

Councilmember Adams feels there was Council consensus about providing additional funding for the Business Retention Grant and Senior Tax Credits, although the amounts can still be discussed. In addition, we have a significant number of students who can't afford the new apartments that are being built. He would like to see a pilot program for housing affordability for students who live in apartments.

Councilmember Rigg mentioned small business grants, new construction commercial build outs that are conducive to small businesses, ways to make housing more affordable for student residents. Councilmember Kennedy proposed a Council subcommittee that includes students to move this idea forward and come back with a presentation. Councilmember Whitney sees the need to sustain small businesses. She sees a bigger picture problem of affordability beyond the student population and wants affordable housing in general to be part of the conversation. Councilmember Hew doesn't want to leave this to staff to figure out. Mr. Mirani said this is one way to incentivize students to stay in College Park after they graduate. Councilmember Rigg said this is also an opportunity to ask the UMD to step up and match any funds the City contributes.

[10:30 p.m. Mitchell/Whitney motion to extend meeting, 6-0.]

Move forward with a subcommittee to be chaired by Councilmember Adams. 1 CM per district, plus Student Liaison, and Staff. Return future Worksession with a proposal for using the funds.

D. Discussion of the Mayor Pro Tem position - Kenneth A. Young, City Manager and Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager

Motion by Councilmember Rigg, second by Councilmember Kennedy, to table this to a future meeting due to the late hour, passed 6-0.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – Add Ranked Choice Voting and Fair Elections to the Master List.

ADJOURN: Motion by Adams, second by Kennedy, passed 6-0 at 10:53 p.m.

Submitted By: Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk