

MINUTES
College Park City Council Meeting
Tuesday, September 19, 2023

7:30 p.m. – 10:09 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, Adams and Rigg.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Kenneth Young, City Manager; Bill Gardiner, Assistant City Manager; Yvette Allen, Assistant City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Gary Fields, Director of Finance; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Michael Williams, Director of Economic Development; Miriam Bader, Director of Planning; Jim Miller, Parking Enforcement Manager; Dhruvak Mirani, Student Liaison; Gannon Sprinkle, Deputy Student Liaison.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Councilmember Hew announced that Good Neighbor Day registration is now open; the American Legion will host a Suicide Prevention from Noon to 4 this Saturday; CBE will hold an Electric Vehicle event at the Hollywood Farmers Market from 10:00 a.m. to Noon this Saturday.

Councilmember Kennedy announced that the College Park Community Preservation Trust purchased and sold their first home. Since then, CPCPT has purchased two additional homes and have bids for four others.

Councilmember Esters announced the Berwyn Civic Association meeting for Thursday, September 21 at 7:30 p.m.

Councilmember Whitney announced the passing of her neighbor, Bob White.

Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell announced that the MNCPPC will hold virtual forums regarding their FY2024 Budget on October 4 and 17. Thanked the Prince George’s County Contract Police for their help and support last Sunday.

Councilmember Mackie thanked staff for the CP Resident Guide and information on Good Neighbor Day registration which can be found on the website.

Councilmember Adams announced that the Yarrow neighborhood party and potluck will be held on Saturday from 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. on Baylor Avenue.

Mr. Mirani said that they had fun at the CP Farmers Market registering students to vote.

Mr. Sprinkle announced that it’s National Voters Registration Day.

CITY MANAGER’S REPORT: Mr. Young announced that today is National Voter Registration Day. The last day to register to vote in the City’s General Election is October 21. If you are already registered to vote with the Prince George’s County Board of Elections at your current City address, you are ready to vote in this election. You will automatically receive a ballot if you are on the state’s Permanent Vote By Mail list by September 19. The public is invited to a public information session to learn about Election Guard. Night at the Movies will be held on Saturday September 22. College Park Day will be held on Saturday, October 7 from 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the College park Aviation Museum and Airport. Cleanup Saturdays will be held October 14 and 28, 2023 from 7:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. There will be a shredding event on October 14th only.

PROCLAMATION: Mayor Kabir read the proclamation for Mayor’s Monarch Pledge.

AMENDMENTS TO AND APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

Motion by Whitney/Esters to add agenda item 23-G-142, letter of support for the Federal Railway Safety Act of 2023, to the Consent Agenda, passed 8-0.

Motion to approve agenda as amended, Mackie/Mitchell, passed 8-0.

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

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| 23-G-137 | Approval of minutes of the September 12, 2023 Council Meeting |
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| 23-G-139 | Approval of street name recommendation from the Restorative Justice Commission, "Ancestors Lane," for a new City street, and to change the east entrance address of the College Park Metro station from 4931 Calvert Road to 4101 River Road, as requested by M-NCPPC – Miriam Bader, Director of Planning |
| 23-G-142 | Approval of a letter supporting the Federal Railway Safety Act of 2023 |

The motion carried 8-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

23-G-138 Petition request to remove permit parking in the 9100 block of Rhode Island

Jim Miller, Parking Enforcement Manager, reviewed the staff report. A petition was received from the residents of the 9100 block of Rhode Island Avenue, requesting to have the permit restrictions removed from their block since it is an unwelcomed burden to the eight homeowners, and it does not serve the purpose for which it was intended since their block is the furthest from the development and poses no parking issues on their block.

Jacob Hernandez resident: Requested that the permit parking in this block be removed.

Council is concerned that once permit restrictions are removed, the residents may want to reconsider.

A motion was made by Councilmember Kennedy and seconded by Councilmember Mackie to remove permit parking in the 9100 block of Rhode Island Avenue.

Motion passed 8-0.

ACTION ITEM

23-G-140 Approval of a Property Use Agreement in support of an application for a Class B, Beer, Wine and Liquor License by Teri Constantinou, Member/Authorized Person, for use at Terrapin Station MD, LLC, t/a Terrapin Station, 4738 Cherry Hill Road, College Park, 20740, transfer from Capital City Chili, Inc., t/a Hard Times Cafe, 4738 Cherry Hill Road, College Park, 20740, Richard J. Kelly, President, Cindy MacIntyre, Secretary/Treasurer, Thomas Abell, Assistant Secretary

Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney, stated that there is an updated Property Use Agreement in your red folders and the only change is the Entertainment License that the establishing will be seeking. There are no objections to the agreement, but will still work with the applicant.

Linda Carter, applicant Attorney, stated that the Family Entertainment permit must end at midnight, however, the establishment will only be open until 11:00 p.m. Ms. Carter gave an overview of the establishment.

A motion was made by Councilmember Kennedy and seconded by Councilmember Hew to approve the Property Use Agreement in support of an application for a Class B, Beer, Wine and Liquor License by Teri Constantinou, Member/Authorized Person, for use at Terrapin Station MD, LLC, t/a Terrapin Station, 4738 Cherry Hill Road, College Park, 20740, transfer from Capital City Chili, Inc., t/a Hard Times Cafe, 4738 Cherry Hill Road, College Park, 20740.

The motion passed: 8 – 0.

23-G-141 Approval of a Property Use Agreement in support of an application for a Class B, BLX Beer, Wine and Liquor License by Kyle Algaze and Christopher Michael Blanton, Members/Authorized Persons, for the use of Iron Rooster College Park, LLC, t/a Iron Rooster College Park, 7777 Baltimore Avenue, College Park, 20740.

Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney, stated that the updated Property Use Agreement is in your red folders and all changes are acceptable.

Linda Carter, applicant attorney, gave an overview of the establishment. There will be no drink specials and no two for one drink offers. This is an application for a new liquor license, not a transfer. The Iron Rooster open date is the end of October.

A motion was made by Councilmember Rigg and seconded by Councilmember Adams to approve the Property Use Agreement in support of an application for a Class B, BLX Beer, Wine and Liquor License by Kyle Algaze and Christopher Michael Blanton, Members/Authorized Persons, for use at Iron Rooster College Park, LLC, t/a Iron Rooster College Park, 7777 Baltimore Avenue, College Park, 20740.

The motion passed 8 – 0.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

A. Discussion of a different tax rate on vacant and blighted properties

Focus on establishing a registry for property owners, we need more info on similar policies currently active in other MD cities (specifically City of Frederick & Town of Upper Marlboro) and college towns.

Council recommends:

- More information needed to set rates; do we need consulting economics firm to get more info? (Rigg)
- "I lean strongly" towards property tax rate increase (Adams)
- A registry should be introduced, and it should involve a fee because it will cost the city to maintain a registry (Adams)
 - o Registry requires more information and clear definitions of terms like "vacant" and "blighted" (Adams)
 - o Registry should be top priority on this issue, it's a crucial first step (Adams/Mitchell)
 - o Consider phased in approach with annually increasing registry fees, but avoid too much complexity (Adams)
 - o Make sure registry stays private so that it doesn't attract shady businesses and real estate practices (Whitney)
- Consider waivers or an appeals board (maybe APC) instead of City Manager making final decisions (Adams & Kennedy)
- Revenue collected should cover costs of managing program, additional revenue should be used for business retention/support (Adams)
- Consider separate timelines for commercial & residential properties (Adams)
- Code Enforcement should have designated resources for vacant/blighted properties so City doesn't have to depend on reports from neighbors (Esters)
- Can we offer any resources, guidance, or support for heirs of vacant/blighted homes previously owned by deceased residents who can't afford back taxes/repairs/waiting for probate? (Whitney & Mackie)
- Personal preference: residential and commercial should go into place at the same time, if there's a choice (Whitney)
- We need more info on similar policies active in the City of Frederick & town of Upper Marlboro so that we can review all the details and make decisions accordingly (Mitchell)

- We should reach out to Frederick regarding the results of their program, including any negative impacts (Esters & Kennedy)
- How will we determine demographic impacts & equity? (Directed mainly towards City Manager) (Mitchell)
- Reach out to ITGA for a business round table or other effort to get feedback/experiences from other college towns (Kennedy)
- Consider a phased in approach to the entire program (Kennedy)
- We should not differentiate between "vacant" and "blighted"; it makes issue more complex than needed (Adams)
 - o We should be very, very careful and clear about how we define "blighted" (Esters/Whitney)
- Put a cap on repair times for properties so people can't drag out (Whitney)

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell asked if the discussion of Ranked Choice Voting could be discussed prior to January 2024. Mr. Young stated that it was Council decision to have this discussion after the General Election.

Mayor Pro Tem Mitchell requested a review of an Ordinance regarding Vehicle repair on Private Property. Mitchell/Mackie 8-0

Esters/Kennedy: Inviting WSSC to a meeting to discuss Billing and Rate Increase 8-0

Public Comment:

John Jennings – Resident: Requested that all public comment that is sent in by email be listed in the minutes.

ADJOURN: A motion to adjourn Rigg/Mackie passed 8-0 and the regular meeting was adjourned 10:09.

Submitted By: Yvette Jones, Assistant City Clerk