

MINUTES
Regular Meeting of the College Park City Council
Tuesday, September 23, 2008
8:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Brayman; Councilmembers Molinatto, Wojahn, Catlin, Perry, Stullich, Mark Cook, Hampton and Mary Cook; Student Liaison Dan Hartinger.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Nagro, City Manager; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Sara Imhulse, Assistant to the City Manager; Robert Ryan, Director of Public Services; Terry Schum, Director of Planning; Steve Halpern, City Engineer; Peggy Higgins, Director of Community Resources.

Mayor Brayman opened the meeting at 8:02 p.m. Councilmember Molinatto led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Minutes: The minutes from the September 9, 2008 Public Hearing and the September 9, 2008 Regular Meeting were submitted for approval. A motion was made by Councilmember Perry and seconded by Councilmember Stullich to approve the minutes as submitted. The motion carried 8-0-0.

Announcements:

Councilmember Molinatto announced the VECNA College Park Cares 5K Charity Race would be held on Saturday at 9:00 a.m. at the Ellen Linson Pool.

Councilmember Wojahn announced a fall community clean-up of the Hollywood commercial district on Saturday, October 25 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Councilmember Mark Cook reminded everyone that the deadline to register to vote in the November 4 election is October 14.

Councilmember Mary Cook stated that the College Park Woods Neighborhood Watch would hold their Fall Fest on Saturday October 4 from 12-4.

Acknowledgement of Dignitaries:

Mayor Brayman recognized Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk, North College Park Citizens Association President Larry Bleau, and Berwyn District Civic Association President Jerome Anzulovic.

Acknowledgement Of Newly Appointed Board And Committee Members: None.

Amendments To The Agenda: Resolution 08-R-18 was withdrawn by Councilmember Wojahn.

City Manager's Report: Mr. Nagro stated that the Council needs to appoint a Subcommittee to review and make recommendations on the Community Services and Public School Education grants. He announced that there is no Council meeting next week because it is the 5th Tuesday of the month, and that the College Park Legislative Dinner would be held on Wednesday, October 1, at 6:30 p.m. at the University of Maryland Golf Course.

Student Liaison Comments: Mr. Hartinger discussed the Terps Vote campaign to get out the vote on campus. He has been working with SGA on lobbying strategies for legislative initiatives that focus on student concerns, such as tuition.

Comments From The Audience On Non-Agenda Items:

Larry Bleau, President, North College Park Citizens Association, 4901 Niagara Road: Mr. Bleau announced the NCPCA has reelected Peter Lakeland as Vice President, and informed the Council that there were presentations about pedestrian way-finding signs in north College Park, and on the proposed skatepark in the Sunnyside park. NCPCA has set up a design committee to work with Park and Planning and the City to design the skatepark. The NCPCA briefly discussed the Route 1 Corridor Sector plan, but because there was not enough information, no position was taken. They also did not have an opportunity to take a position on the proposed Rhode Island Avenue/Edgewood Road intersection improvements, which is on tonight's agenda.

Mohammed Talukdar, 4714 Mangum Road: Mr. Talukdar expressed concern about a police traffic stop and increased taxes.

Consent Agenda: The Consent Agenda consisted of the following items:

08-R-16 A Resolution Of The Mayor And Council Of The City Of College Park, Maryland To Approve A Project To Expand Maryland History Day Participation In Schools In Prince George's County

08-R-17 A Resolution Of The Mayor And Council Of The City Of College Park, Maryland To Participate In The Maryland Municipal League Geocache Trail Project

A motion was made by Councilmember Hampton and seconded by Councilmember Catlin to adopt the Consent Agenda. The motion carried 8-0-0.

Action Items:

08-G-93 Intersection Improvements Eastbound On Edgewood Road at Rhode Island Avenue

Mayor Brayman invited City Engineer Steve Halpern to give an overview of the proposed changes to the intersection. Mr. Halpern stated that concerns were raised about eastbound Edgewood Road where two lanes enter the intersection with Rhode Island Avenue. The road surface is not striped for two lanes and is not wide enough for two lanes. Mr. Halpern pulled accident records for three years: there were seven accidents of which four were considered intersection related and three involved cars making right turns from Edgewood to Rhode Island. To improve safety, staff recommends striping that lane to indicate single lane traffic entering the intersection. This is considered a temporary measure until the County proceeds with their CIP to improve the intersection.

Councilmember Wojahn asked Mr. Halpern to estimate the costs of the proposed improvements; Mr. Halpern stated \$2,000. Councilmember Wojahn asked how much wider the street would need to be to accommodate two lanes entering the intersection. Mr. Halpern stated 4 to 8 feet. Councilmember Wojahn asked approximately how much it would cost to widen the road to accommodate two lanes. Mr. Halpern gave a rough estimate of \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Councilmember Catlin questioned the impact of the proposed improvements on traffic flow, and is concerned that the changes would slow traffic.

Councilmember Perry asked about the rules for four way stops and asked about other methods that could be used to accomplish the same goal.

Mr. Nagro reminded Council that there is a bus stop there.

A motion was made by Councilmember Molinatto and seconded by Councilmember Wojahn that the City Manager be authorized to implement the City Engineer's recommendation that the eastbound lane of Edgewood Road at the intersection with Rhode Island Avenue be designated as a single lane, by method of pavement striping, and that a sign indicating "single lane ahead" be installed at the appropriate location.

Mr. Molinatto clarified that this motion is for painting lines on the road and installing one sign; not for any construction. It is a temporary measure to make eastbound Edgewood Road consistent with the other legs of the intersection, and is needed for safety.

Comments from the audience:

Larry Bleau, 4901 Niagara Road: The North College Park Citizens Association has not taken up the matter, and it would be nice to have the matter come to the NCPCA before Council action. He thinks striping is a reasonable, low cost alternative.

Fazlul Kabir, 9817 53rd Avenue: He believes this is a very important decision because Edgewood Road is the main street gateway for north College Park. This proposal will increase traffic congestion. He discussed the petition that was submitted in opposition to the proposal. He requested that action be delayed until after the October NCPCA meeting.

Councilmember Wojahn pointed out that the petition discusses “the narrowing of Edgewood Road” and clarified that the road would not be narrowed by this proposal. It was asked if the people who signed the petition understood this difference.

Ruth Herbert, 5004 Cheyenne: The community did not have time to discuss the proposal and most people are not aware of it; the item should be postponed to allow time to make more people aware. She does not believe the intersection improvements are necessary and thinks it will back up the traffic on Edgewood Road.

Mohammed Talukdar, 4714 Mangum Road: Believes there is an engineering problem due to the service road, and recommends re-engineering the road to make it two lanes, and moving the bus stop 100 feet back from the intersection. He believes the new design would solve the traffic and safety issues.

Sarwar, 5013 Nantucket Road: Believes the entire intersection needs to be studied and questioned why you would make a change only on this side.

Lourene Miovski, 9818 53rd Avenue: She thinks the approach to Rhode Island Avenue is confusing and has seen two cars side-by-side both trying to turn right. She also believes there may be some confusion about the proposal.

Vaqar Ahmed, 5028 Branchville Road: He is concerned that people trying to turn right would turn onto the service road. Thinks it would be better to make Edgewood Road two lanes at that intersection.

Councilmember Wojahn stated that many people had come forward to express their opinions on this proposal, and he was reluctant to postpone action due to safety concerns.

Councilmember Mary Cook raised questions about the bike lanes on Rhode Island Avenue.

Councilmember Catlin is opposed to the motion. He believes other options should be studied.

Councilmember Mark Cook proposed delaying action until the NCPCA can vet the proposal and the community can discuss it more fully.

Councilmember Molinatto reiterated that the proposal is not to narrow the road, it is only to paint the roadway to indicate that it should be a single lane.

Councilmember Stulich stated this is a difficult decision and would feel more comfortable if the NCPA had taken a position.

Councilmember Catlin thinks it could be made more clear how to proceed at the intersection without designating a single lane and that no study has been done on the impact of the suggested change.

Councilmember Perry expressed his support for the proposal.

A motion was made by Councilmember Catlin and seconded by Councilmember Mary Cook to table the item until the regular Council meeting on October 28.

Mayor Brayman entertained comment on the proposal to table the motion to a time definite:

Councilmember Mary Cook supports the motion because the residents need an opportunity to discuss this.

Councilmember Molinatto does not support the motion because he does not think any new suggestion will come from waiting.

Councilmember Wojahn has received community input and is concerned about the safety issues that may be caused by a delay. He reminded everyone that this is an interim measure until the County undertakes their improvements to the entire intersection.

The motion to table the item until the October 28 meeting was approved by a vote of 5–3–0 (Molinatto, Wojahn and Perry opposed). Mayor Brayman requested the item be placed on the Worksession on October 21 prior to the October 28 meeting. Mayor Brayman stated further public comment would be taken on October 28.

08-CR-02 Introduction Of A Charter Resolution Of The Mayor And Council Of The City Of College Park, Maryland Amending Article I “General Provisions”, By Adding §C1-2, “English As Official Language” Of The City Charter To Declare That English Is The Official Language Of The City, To Prohibit The Mayor And Council From Adopting Any Ordinance Or Policy Which Diminishes Or Ignores The Role Of English As The Common Language Of The City, And Providing That The Law Shall Not Be Construed Or Applied To Violate Any Other Applicable Federal Or State Law.

A motion was made by Councilmember Perry to Introduce Charter Amendment Resolution 08-CR-02. Councilmember Perry read the title into the record. The motion did not receive a second; the motion failed.

08-R-18 A Resolution Of The Mayor And Council Of The City Of College Park Recognizing the Value of Diversity in Our Community and the Importance of Providing Municipal Services to All College Park Residents

The Resolution was withdrawn by Councilmember Wojahn.

08-G-94 Authorize the Mayor To Sign A Letter To The Prince George's County Planning Board Recommending Boundaries For The New Central U.S. 1 Corridor Sector Plan And Sectional Map Amendment

A motion was made by Councilmember Catlin and seconded by Councilmember Molinatto that the Mayor be authorized to sign a letter to the Prince George's County Planning Board indicating the City's position on the proposed boundaries for the new Central U.S. 1 Corridor Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment. The City recommends removing the Seven Springs village apartment complex, the Park and Planning property north of Cherry Hill Road, and the single family residential neighborhood in Hollywood that lies between U.S. 1 and the Hollywood commercial district. The City also supports removing all property south of the existing southern boundary including the Cafritz property but not excluding the Executive Office building.

Councilmember Catlin read the comments into the record. The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on October 2, 2008 and the District Council will hear this matter on October 21, 2008.

Larry Bleau, President, North College Park Citizens Association, 4901 Niagara Road: NCPCA passed a motion not to take a position on the proposed boundaries largely because there was not enough information presented at the time. He asked a clarification question – would the motion effectively remove residential properties from the boundaries?

There was review and discussion of the proposed new boundaries displayed on the overhead projector. There are some residential neighborhoods still included in the proposal, including some homes in Autoville/Cherry Hill. The Paint Branch Stream Valley is also included in the hopes that it would receive some resources for restoration.

Mayor Brayman said this plan would treat three different neighborhoods two different ways. Regarding the two neighborhoods on the west side of U.S. 1, it was agreed at the Worksession that language should be added to reserve the right to petition those neighborhoods out of the Sector Plan at the end of the planning discussion, depending on the strength of the language that would help to preserve the neighborhoods.

Councilmember Mary Cook stated that the residents of Cherry Hill and south Autoville will attend each part of the process and watching carefully to make sure that those parts

of College Park are carefully guarded against encroachment, and that the Paint Branch will be sufficiently taken care of.

The motion carried 7-1-0 (Perry opposed).

08-G-95 Appointments to Boards and Committees

None.

Council Comments:

Councilmember Mary Cook encouraged residents to ride the Shuttle UM and to take advantage of the pilot program. Mayor Brayman asked riders to request that the bus driver log the ride.

Councilmember Catlin commented that the Diamondback On-line edition ran comments about resident ridership of the Shuttle UM.

Councilmember Perry asked that the item raised in the memo from the Airport Authority about the College Park Airport's 100-year anniversary be placed on the next Worksession agenda.

Comments From The Audience:

Delegate Joseline Peña-Melnyk: She spoke about the state cutting funds for U.S. 1 in order to pay for the Inter County Connector. The 21st Delegation and the County have requested a meeting with Gov. O'Malley to request the funds be restored. If the funding is not restored, there will be another march for U.S. 1. She noted that funds for the University of Maryland campus connector road study were not cut. The priority should be U.S. 1.

The SHA road show will come to Greenbelt on November 12.

Councilmember Perry questioned why the state had money for "studies" but not for roads.

Adjournment:

A motion was made by Councilmember Wojahn and seconded by Councilmember Molinatto to adjourn the Regular Meeting and reconvene in Executive Session to discuss a proposal from the Board Of Education and to discuss a negotiating strategy regarding the development of the City Hall Site. The motion carried 7-1-0 (Councilmember Perry opposed) and the Regular Meeting was adjourned at 9:52 p.m. Mayor Brayman stated the Council would not be returning to public session tonight.

Janeen S. Miller, City Clerk

Pursuant to §C6-3 of the College Park City Charter, at 9:52 p.m. on September 23, 2008, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, a motion was made by Councilmember Wojahn and seconded by Councilmember Molinatto to enter into an Executive Session to discuss a matter directly related to a negotiating strategy and the contents of a proposal. The motion passed 7-1-0 (Councilmember Perry opposed). The Executive Session began at 10:00 p.m.

Present: Mayor Brayman, Councilmembers Molinatto, Wojahn, Catlin, Perry, Stullich, Mark Cook, Hampton and Mary Cook.

Absent: None.

Also Present: Dan Hartinger, Student Liaison; Steve Groh, Director of Finance; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Joe Nagro, City Manager; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Terry Schum, Director of Planning, and Elisa Vitale, Planner.

Topics Discussed: 1) A proposal from the Board of Education concerning the Calvert Road School site, and, 2) A negotiating strategy regarding the development of the City Hall site.

A motion was made by Councilmember Stullich and seconded by Councilmember Wojahn to adjourn the Executive Session. The Executive Session was adjourned at 10:55 p.m. by a vote of 8-0-0.
