

MINUTES
Public Hearing of the College Park City Council
Ordinance 09-O-02:

An Ordinance Of The Mayor And Council Of The City Of College Park, Maryland, Amending Chapter 34 “Elections” To Amend §34-7 “Runoff Elections”, §34-8, “Election Contests And Appeals” And § 34-10, “Additional Provisions” To Adopt A Requirement That Notice Of A Runoff Election Be Placed In A Newspaper Of General Circulation In The City, Delete The Requirements That Notice Of A Run-Off Election Be Sent To All Registered Voters In The Affected District And Be Given Using Posters, And Require That Notice Be Given In The Usual And Customary Manner, With At Minimum Publication Of A Notice In A Newspaper Of General Circulation In The City, Clarify That No Ballot Or Election Results May Be Rejected Except By The Unanimous Vote Of The Supervisors Who Are Present, And Clarify That Election Records And Documents Shall Be Maintained By The Election Supervisors Until The Results Of The Next Regular Election Have Been Certified And The Challenge Period Has Expired

Tuesday, April 14, 2009
7:15 p.m.

PRESENT: Mayor Brayman; Councilmembers Molinatto, Wojahn (arrived 7:38 p.m.), Catlin, Stullich (arrived 7:28 p.m.), Mark Cook, Hampton and Mary Cook; Student Liaison Dan Hartinger.

ABSENT: Councilmember Perry.

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Nagro, City Manager; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Sara Imhulse, Assistant to the City Manager; Jack Robson, Chief, Board of Election Supervisors.

Mayor Brayman called the Public Hearing to order at 7:15 p.m. He invited Jack Robson, Chief of the Board of Election Supervisors, to provide an overview. Mr. Robson stated the BOES has noted some areas in the City Code pertaining to elections that they would like to see updated. One is the current requirement that a notice of a runoff election has to be made by mail to all registered voters in that district. He commented this would cost a lot of money and that there are several other means of notifying voters of a runoff election, so the BOES feels this requirement can be removed. He stated other means of notification include the City’s public access cable channels, the City’s web site, the City’s bulletin board, civic association notification methods, and newspaper notices in the Gazette and Municipal Scene.

Councilmember Mark Cook asked about the number of viewers of the cable channels, the number of readers of the Gazette and Municipal Scene, and the level of participation in civic associations. He is concerned that using these methods alone would miss a large part of the population.

Mr. Robson stated his belief that anyone who participated in the election in the first place is tuned in to the City’s usual means of notification and would therefore be aware of the runoff.

Councilmember Mary Cook believes that a lot of people don't read the Gazette and that delivery of the Gazette is spotty, so that it is not a reliable form of providing notice.

There was discussion about the low voter turnout for municipal elections.

Councilmember Catlin pointed out that the language in the Ordinance only specifies what the City will do at a minimum for notification, and that the City can decide to do a mailing if it wants to.

Mayor Brayman invited public comment on the proposed Ordinance:

Larry Bleau, 4901 Niagara Road: He supports the proposed change and does not believe it will disenfranchise any voter.

Mayor Brayman stated that there would be no further public comment on this ordinance unless there is a substantial change, and declared the Public Hearing closed at 7:39 p.m.

Janeen S. Miller
City Clerk

Date Approved