

Town of Riverdale Park
Work Session Minutes
March 27, 2017
8:00 p.m.

In Attendance

Vernon S. Archer, Mayor
CM Marsha Dixon, Ward 1
CM Alan Thompson, Ward 2
CM David Lingua, Ward 3
CM Christopher Henry, Ward 4
CM Colleen Richardson, Ward 5
CM Alejandro Silva, Ward 6

John N. Lestitian, Town Manager
Leonard Addison, Director of Public Works
David Morris, Chief of Police
Jessica Barnes, Town Clerk
Paul Smith, Finance Director

Call to Order

Mayor Archer called the legislative meeting to order at 8:08 p.m.

Presentations

Budget: FY17 Update on Estimated Actuals

Town Manager John Lestitian and Finance Director Paul Smith gave an overview of the estimated actuals for FY 17 (revenues and expenses by category). Town Manager Lestitian explained that the presentation was a part of preparing for the FY 18 budget.

Discussion:

CM Thompson asked how much the operating expenses were impacted by the mild winter. Public Works Director Addison discussed how the mild weather impacted expenses.

CM Thompson explained to the public that during budget process the Town was very conservative in estimating revenues and not as conservative when estimating costs thus it was not unexpected for revenue to be higher than budgeted and expenses to be lower than budgeted.

CM Thompson asked about the employee wages/benefits category and Town Manager Lestitian discussed how vacancy savings had impacted that category. CM Dixon asked if vacant/unfunded positions would be filled in FY18 and Town Manager Lestitian replied that it remained undetermined.

Resident Corey Bettenhauser asked if the increase in revenue from local taxes was a result of reassessments and Town Manager Lestitian replied that reassessments were part of the reason for the increase.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Archer deferred his report to the April 3rd legislative meeting.

Town Manager's Report

Town Manager John N. Lestitian reported that he continues to have introductory meetings with groups working with the Town and he had met recently with Scott Rowe from the Prince George's County Planning Department and Larry Taub and Mark Regulinsky of the Cafritz team.

Department Manager Comments

Town Clerk Jessica Barnes updated the Council on the Town's continuing efforts to be more sustainable and the project to improve the cable channel.

Council Committee & Ward Report

CM Marsha Dixon, Ward 1

CM Marsha Dixon deferred her report to the April 3rd legislative meeting.

CM Alan Thompson, Ward 2

CM Alan Thompson announced that Whole Foods will open on April 12th.

CM David Lingua, Ward 3

CM David Lingua reported that Whole Foods will open at 8:45 a.m. on April 12 with an official "breaking of the bread".

CM Colleen Richardson, Ward 5

CM Richardson deferred her report to the April 3rd legislative meeting.

CM Alejandro Silva, Ward 6

CM Alejandro Silva deferred his report to the April 3rd legislative meeting.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Discussion Items

1. Fence Permit Application: 6-foot wooden backyard fence at 4604 Oliver Street (Ward 1)

CM Dixon stated that she had reviewed the fence permit request and invited the applicants to speak about their request. The applicants discussed their plans for the fence and comments from their neighbors. The applicants stated that they were willing to move the fence back from the front building line to halfway between the front and rear building line. They discussed their reason for the placement of the fence.

CM Lingua asked what type of fence material was going to be used and the applicant explained that they would be using wood and that they plan to remove the chain link fence (in the front of the house) in the future.

2. Chapter 68 of Town Code – Weeds, Rubbish and Garbage Maintenance

Chief Morris gave a brief overview of staff's recommendation to repeal and replace Chapter 68 of the Town Code. Chief Morris explained that the new language will allow for a more timely and efficient response from Code Enforcement.

Code Enforcement Manager Colleen Ferguson gave an overview of the proposed changes. Ms. Ferguson stated that the proposed changes will require property owners to take action which will lead to compliance.

CM Thompson asked for clarification regarding notification and fine collection. Town Manager Lestitian stated that the language in question was recommended by the Town Attorney.

CM Dixon stated that she was concerned about the notice portion of the recommended language and wanted to be sure that the property owner was notified as soon as possible in the process. Town Manager Lestitian stated that he would work with the Town Attorney regarding the Council's concerns.

Resident Lora Katz stated that she was happy that the Town was trying to improve a process for a better outcome. She expressed concerns regarding the definition of garbage as it may impact composting and suggested that the weeds section may need clarification for native species/plants.

Several residents stated that they were supportive of the changes as they are currently living near non-compliant properties.

CM Silva discussed issues with dumping in Ward 6.

CM Lingua asked if staff were reviewing Chapter 55 of the Town Code as well and Town Manager Lestitian replied that staff is looking at several areas of Town Code for possible revision.

3. Minutes from February 27, 2017 Special Legislative Meeting

Mayor Archer requested that the Council contact the Town Clerk if there were any changes or corrections to the minutes February 27, 2017 Special Legislative Meeting.

4. Minutes from February 27, 2017 Work Session

Mayor Archer requested that the Council contact the Town Clerk if there are any changes or corrections to the minutes from the February 27, 2017 Work Session.

5. Minutes from March 6, 2017 Legislative Meeting

Mayor Archer requested that the Council contact the Town Clerk if there are any changes or corrections to the minutes from March 6, 2017.

Unfinished Business

CM Lingua stated that he had not received any responses to the ATHA survey regarding MHAA five-year plan funding. He requested that Council provide responses by April 3rd.

New Business

- CM Silva discussed his concerns regarding dumping in Ward 6.
- Resident Lora Katz, member of the Riverdale Park Sustainability Committee, discussed the upcoming Earth Day Clean Up on April 22 and how a large part of the clean-up is

raising public awareness. She also suggested that the Town create a program to show appreciation for those that go over and above to improve their part of Town. CM Richardson stated that she would participate in the Earth Day Clean Up at Tanglewood Park.

- CM Lingua discussed a draft resolution to establish a no parking/standing section along Taylor Road at Riverdale Road near Riverdale Elementary School, which was identified during the Ward 3 Public Safety Community Walk. The Council discussed their concerns regarding parking, congestion and safety near Riverdale Elementary School during arrival and dismissal.
- CM Thompson discussed a recent phone call that he received from the Riverdale Park Business Association (RPBA) regarding wine that they regularly served at their meetings at Town Hall. CM Thompson stated that Town Manager Lestitian was concerned that the practice created a liability for the Town. CM Thompson discussed possibly creating a temporary resolution to allow alcohol use by certain groups while Town staff worked to develop a policy for the use of Town Hall. CM Dixon stated that she was concerned about creating an exception for certain groups. Town Manager Lestitian stated that RPBA leadership told him that they were fine with the decision to not allow alcohol at Town Hall and they would hold meetings at Town Center Market if they wanted to serve wine. Town Manager Lestitian reported that the majority of municipalities do not allow alcohol and those that do typically require additional insurance that lists the Town as additional insured. Town Manager Lestitian discussed other items that needed to be considered when allowing alcohol on Town property.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Typed from notes by JEB.