

Town of Riverdale Park
Legislative Meeting Minutes
September 5, 2017
8:00 p.m.

In Attendance

Alan K. Thompson, Mayor
CM Marsha Dixon, Ward 1
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2
CM David Lingua, Ward 3
CM Alejandro Silva, Ward 6

John N. Lestitian, Town Manager
Jessica Barnes, Town Clerk
Paul Smith, Finance Director
Gentry Jones, Finance Services Specialist

Call to Order

Mayor Thompson called the legislative meeting to order at 8:02 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited followed by a moment of reflection.

Approval of Agenda

CM Faulx made a motion to approve the amended agenda. The motion was seconded by CM Lingua. Vote: 4-0-1 (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

Discussion:

CM Lingua requested that Legislative Action Items 5, 6 and 7 be removed from the agenda.

Presentations

Recognition of teachers who traveled to Ipala, Guatemala

Mayor Thompson read a proclamation honoring the teachers who traveled to Ipala, Guatemala as part of the Sister Cities Program in both English and Spanish.

Michael Levin discussed the impact that the program had on him directly such as the growth of his skills as a teacher and the opportunity to be immersed in a new culture.

Kenneth Jordan stated that it was an amazing program and he will be able to use his experience to connect with his students and he was thankful for the opportunity.

Vernon Archer gave an overview of the program and presented the Council with a proclamation from the municipality of Ipala, Guatemala.

CM Faulx thanked the teachers for being such great stewards for the Town.

National Hispanic Heritage Month Proclamation

Mayor Thompson read the Hispanic Heritage Month Proclamation in both English and Spanish.

Mayor's Report

Mayor Alan K. Thompson reported:

- Improvements to the intersection of East-West Highway and Riverdale Road have been funded and bids are coming in ahead of schedule
- Looks forward to working with the Town's new Development Services Director
- Update regarding the Discovery District: grand opening of the College Park Academy, significant progress on the new flex space and recent meeting with COPT
- Discussion regarding working with FEMA to have new flood maps created

Town Manager Report

Town Manager John N. Lestitian reported:

- Staffing update: Development Services Director Kevin Simpson started on September 5 and interviews will begin on September 6 for Neighborhood Improvement Inspectors (Town received 132 applications)
- Introduced Gentry Jones, the Town's new Finance Services Specialist
- September edition of the *Town Crier* went out on time and was properly edited
- Update on staff schedule for legislation review: met recently with CM Dixon and staff will be working on edits

Finance Report

Town Manager Lestitian gave an overview of a new report prepared for the Mayor and Council. Town Manager Lestitian stated that the majority of municipal revenue comes from real property taxes and those disbursements typically come in October.

CM Lingua made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report subject to audit. The motion was seconded by CM Faulx. Vote: 4-0-1 (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

Fire Department Report

The Fire Department's report was included in the meeting materials.

Council Committee & Ward Reports

CM Marsha Dixon, Ward 1 and Legislative Committee

CM Marsha Dixon reported:

- Welcome everyone back from summer break
- Ward 1 Community Public Safety Walk will be scheduled soon
- Legislative Committee will be working to update the Town's Charter

CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2 and Public Works Committee

CM Aaron Faulx reported:

- First movie night at Riversdale Mansion went well
- Next movie night will be held on October 28th
- Wish all students and teachers a great new year at school!

CM David Lingua, Ward 3

CM David Lingua reported:

- Movie night at the Mansion was great- thank you to Town staff and staff at Riversdale
- CKAR CDC meeting will be held on September 12th at 6801 Kenilworth Avenue

- More information regarding ESOL and Job Readiness training sessions can be found at www.ckarcdc.org
- Troops Frist Foundation held grand opening in June for the Leroy Perty Honor Village and residents have started to move in- welcome to new residents
- Discussion regarding speeding on Longfellow Street
- Discussion regarding Bates Trucking and recycling
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design for Trolley Trail
- Star spangled banner being flown in recognition of Battle of Bladensburg

CM Alejandro Silva, Ward 6

CM Alejandro Silva thanked the Police Department for their assistance. Ward 6 Community Public Safety Walk will be scheduled soon.

Public Comments on Non-Agenda Items and Consent Agenda Items

Resident Corey Bettenhausen asked if there were any updates regarding Pepco's tree planting along the Trolley Trail. Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff would include an update in the next Status and Information Report.

Mr. Bettenhauser asked who was responsible for the grass and weeds growing in the sidewalks in front of the businesses along Baltimore Avenue. Town Manager Lestitian stated that the Public Works Department would address the issue.

Mr. Bettenhauser asked if Movie Night will it replace Jazz on the Lawn. CM Faulx replied that it would not be a replacement.

Resident Lora Katz asked if there was a possibility of having the bridge widened when the replacement of bridge on Riverdale Road takes place. Town Manager Lestitian stated that SHA is not planning to expand the bridge but separate pedestrian bridge may be a great alternative.

CM Lingua asked Ms. Katz if there were any updates regarding the Town's recertification. Ms. Katz stated that an official announcement had not been made yet.

Resident Ryan McAlister stated that there were some cables down or slacking on Lafayette Avenue between Tuckerman Street and Somerset Street. He also suggested that improvements should be made under the 410 bridge such as lighting, cracked sidewalks, and trimming of vegetation. Mayor Thompson discussed the history related to the light under the bridge as lack of light under bridge has been an issue for many years. CM Lingua requested that staff reach out to SHA again to request that light under bridge be repaired.

Resident Margarita Martinez discussed the poor conditions in Park Tanglewood Apartments. Ms. Martinez reported that tenants are frustrated and do not know what to do. Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff would go to Park Tanglewood on September 6 to assess the situation.

CM Dixon suggested that the Council as a whole may need to get involved and possibly write a letter. Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff would report back to Council.

Consent Agenda

Motion to approve consent agenda items:

1. Fence Permit Request: 4504 Tuckerman Street for a 6-foot wooden backyard fence (Ward 1)

2. Street Closure Request: 6200 block of 43rd Street on September 23, 2017, from 12:00 noon to 7:00 p.m. for block party (Ward 1)
3. Fence Permit Request: 4705 Tuckerman Street for a 6-foot wooden fence (Ward 2)
4. Minutes from June 19, 2017 Special Legislative Meeting
5. Minutes from June 19, 2017 Work Session
6. Minutes from July 3, 2017 Legislative Meeting

CM Lingua made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. CM Dixon seconded the motion. Vote: 4-0-1 (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

Legislative Action Items:

1. Fence Permit Request: 4800 Chief Chris Kyle Court, 6-foot wooden fence (Ward 3)
2. Fence Permit Request: 4802 Chief Chris Kyle Court, 6-foot wooden fence (Ward 3)
3. Fence Permit Request: 4804 Chief Chris Kyle Court, 6-foot wooden fence (Ward 3)
4. Fence Permit Request: 4806 Chief Chris Kyle Court, 6-foot wooden fence (Ward 3)

CM Lingua made a motion to approve 6-foot backyard fences for 4800, 4802, 4804 and 4806 Chief Chris Kyle Court. The motion was seconded by CM Faulx. Vote: 4-0-1 (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

Discussion:

CM Lingua gave an overview of the fence permit requests and potential property line dispute. CM Lingua stated that he has some reservation due to continuous fence surrounding all seven properties however he wanted to move forward with the fence permit requests for the other properties until dispute was resolved.

Unfinished Business

Purple Line Art

The Mayor and Council reviewed the Art-in-Transit artist proposals and results of the community survey.

CM Lingua made a motion to send a letter to the Maryland Transit Administration recommending Artist Proposal 4 as a primary recommendation and Artist Proposal 2 as a secondary recommendation for the Purple Line station listed as “M-Square”. The motion was seconded by CM Dixon. Vote: 4-0-1 (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

CM Faulx made a motion to send a letter to the Maryland Transit Administration recommending Artist Proposal 3 as the Town’s primary recommendation but with additional plantings as seen in Artist Proposal 4 while trying to maintain space that can be readily activated for other purposes for the Purple Line station listed as “Riverdale Park”. The motion was seconded by CM Dixon. Vote: 4-0-1 (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

CM Dixon made a motion to reconsider an item previously adopted to allow for public comments. The motion was seconded by CM Faulx. Vote: 4-0-1 (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

The Council voted to readopt the previously adopted motion. Vote: 4-0-1 (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

Discussion:

Resident Lora Katz discussed the artist proposals that she liked. Ms. Katz also encouraged the Council to consider other art that will be near the Purple Line stations such as Gateway Park which will have large stand-alone objects.

Purple Line Station Naming

Mayor Thompson discussed his recent conversations with Senator Roaspepe and the University of Maryland. Mayor Thompson reported that there was a formal request from UMD to make the names consistent.

CM Lingua made a motion to recommend that the name of the station in north section of Riverdale Park be Riverdale Park North-UMD. CM Dixon seconded the motion. Vote: 3-1-1 (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained and CM Silva opposed)

CM Silva made a motion to recommend that the station at Kenilworth Avenue and East-West Highway be named Riverdale Park-Kenilworth. The motion was seconded by CM Dixon. Vote: 4-0-1 (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

Discussion:

Resident Lora Katz urged the Council to stay consistent with entire system and also recommend a station name with reference to the geographic location.

Resident Corey Bettenhauser suggested the name East Riverdale Station and encouraged the Council to choose their battles and show that we are good neighbors.

Resident Ryan McAlister suggested that the station names should not both be hyphenated.

CM Dixon stated that it was time to move forward and decide who we are as a Town.

New Business

Housing and Neighborhood – Vision and Commitment

Mayor Thompson stated that there would be further discussion of this item at the September 25 Work Session.

CM Lingua made a motion to publicize, for the purpose of soliciting feedback and garnering public opinion, the current draft of the resolution in the Town Crier and on the Town website (and other avenues readily available to the public) for discussion at the September 25 Work Session and October 2 Legislative Meeting. The motion was seconded by CM Dixon. Vote: 4-0-1 (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

Rental Licensing – Chapters 55 and 56; Policy Discussion

Town Manager Lestitian stated that staff was seeking direction on how the Council would like to address the issue of owner occupied dwellings where portions of the dwelling are leased to tenants. Town Manager Lestitian reported that online research has shown that Mount Rainer, College Park, Berwyn Heights and Hyattsville have language that would include owner occupied dwellings where portions of the dwelling are leased to tenants in their rental licensing process.

CM Dixon stated that the Legislative Committee would review and discuss the draft legislation prepared by staff and there may be additional changes before the legislation comes back to the full Council for review.

CM Dixon made a motion to provide staff with direction as to Chapters 55 and 56 to propose new legislation that would make owner occupied dwellings with two or more rented rooms subject to rental licensing regulation. The motion was seconded by CM Lingua. (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

CM Dixon made a motion to direct staff to create draft legislation that would establish a Board of Code Appeals comprised of 5 members and 1 alternate member to include at least one member a member of good standing in the volunteer fire department and an individual with like experience or knowledge of the building industry. The motion was seconded by CM Faulx. Vote: 4-0-1. (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

Anacostia Watershed Society Project at Riverdale Elementary School

CM Lingua discussed his concerns regarding the construction taking place around Riverdale Elementary School and the impact it may have on student, staff and parents. Town Clerk Barnes provided information regarding the project as well as her discussion with Riverdale Elementary School staff.

CM Lingua made a motion to direct staff to engage Prince George's County Public School regarding the Anacostia Watershed Society project to inquire and determine the scope and length of the project and offer any assistance needed. The motion was seconded by CM Faulx. Vote: 4-0-1. (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)

Adjournment

CM Dixon made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 11:48 p.m. The motion was seconded by CM Lingua. Vote: 4-0-1 (favorable, Mayor Thompson abstained)